Designing the future of the past

A survey across the contemporary international debate

Quaderni Future *Urban Legacy* Lab

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This volume collects the outcomes of the International Seminar "Designing the Future of the Past," held on 17-18th February 2022 in Turin. The event was conducted in collaboration with the Doctoral programs in "Architecture: History and Project" and featured the participation of the PhD program in "Architectural and Landscape Heritage" at Politecnico di Torino. This intensive seminar served as an integral component of the DASP PhD Course titled "Designing the Future of the Past" for the academic year 2022-2023.

Quaderni Future *Urban Legacy* Lab

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Introduction

Elena Guidetti

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Elena is architect and Ph.D. in Architecture. She is a Post-Doc Research Fellow at F*UL*L – the Future *Urban Legacy* Lab, and a visiting assistant professor at the University of Ferrara. Since 2018, she has been lecturing and/or collaborating with the Politecnico di Torino, the University of Ferrara, the University of Hasselt, the University of Sarajevo and the POLIS University of Tirana. Her work focuses on the adaptive reuse of buildings following a morphological perspective based on stages of completeness and retroactive embodied energy.

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A survey across the contemporary international debate

The essence of this volume lies in acknowledging both the future and the past as intricate design challenges, shaped by past choices that eventually evolve into heritage. On one side, transformations, alterations, and conversions serve as interventions impacting the urban legacy inherited from the past, offering infinite ways to engage with it. Simultaneously, the past itself is neither singular nor objective but subjective and partial, a complex realm rife with paradoxes. This complexity is a fascinating topic, delving into how past designs influence the future, creating a continuous cycle of heritage and innovation.

Engaging in interdisciplinary conversation through lectures, essays, talks, and open questions, the preservation (or lack thereof) of what we inherit emerges as a crucial contemporary issue in shaping a sustainable and desirable future. Heritage borders are now more blurred than ever, where even what is not officially recognized as heritage can be considered a preservationist concern. Furthermore, the adaptation of existing buildings has surged in architectural practice and theoretical production over the last few decades. The legacy from the past may be perceived as either a positive or negative commons, depending on the social, cultural, economic, and environmental context.

This volume collects a selection of contributions from the international seminar “Designing the Future of the Past: A survey across the contemporary international debate,” organized

and hosted by The Future Urban Legacy Lab (FULL), the interdisciplinary research center of Politecnico di Torino, on February 17th-18th, 2023. The seminar aimed to provide an overview of current leading theories in the international debate and to promote dialogue across disciplines on the reuse of urban legacy, heritage, and landscape. Renowned experts, including Cornelius Holtorf, Caitlin DeSilvey, Daniela Sandler, Bie Plevoets, and Alexandre Monnin, delivered lectures focusing on the cross-field debate about the use of the past and its role in shaping futures.

The seminar was part of the homonymous PhD excellence Course, bringing together 5 host speakers and 17 PhD students from the "Architecture, History, and Project" and "Architectural and Landscape Heritage" Doctoral schools. This course explored emerging theories in Critical Heritage Studies, Counterpreservation, Curated Decay, Negative Legacies, and Ruination, challenging conventional relationships between design practice and preservation. It considers the past as an active force for shaping the future, offering new options for intervention (or non-intervention) in preexistences.

It is important to note that this volume continues our initiatives started in 2020 at the Future Urban Legacy Lab, aiming to create an international and interdisciplinary network among researchers in preservation, heritage studies, cultural geography, history of architecture, economics, and philosophy. This volume, the Intensive Seminar 2022, and the PhD Excellence Course 2022-2023 follow the tracks of FULL's Spring seminar series "Preservation and Decay" in 2021, which brought together leading researchers to discuss today's most experimental approaches in the field of preservation theory.

During the 2022 seminar, lively discussions were sparked, unfortunately, the full dimension of which could not be included in this publication. Initially, we considered naming the seminar "Heretical Heritage," but we felt it might be too extreme. Yet, in a community of designers, the consensus emerged that while predicting the future might be challenging, designing allows us to explore diverse possibilities.

Stemming from this complex interplay of questions: What should be the future of our past? What should we preserve, why, how, and for whom? This volume engages in a conversation on this topic through excerpts of guest speakers' lectures, the PhD students' essays, and a final Q/A talk - collecting questions that emerged during the process.

Cornelius Holtorf, archaeologist and UNESCO chair, challenged established constructs. Traditionally, archaeologists dig artifacts from the earth, but he is digging into the future, debunking constructs that shape it. Holtorf's lecture emphasized that the future is a social construct, not a natural phenomenon. His examples demonstrated that contemplating the future is essential. Simultaneously, we are learning that the past is also a project shaped by social constructs. For instance, the preservation of history is inherently nationalist. In the 1870s, the French and Germans, motivated by war, restored Gothic and Doric buildings, respectively. These decisions were deeply political, reflecting their ideologies and historical contexts.

Understanding heritage as a social construct liberates us from perceiving it as a fixed reality. It transforms heritage into a design challenge, demanding us to make decisions about what to preserve and what to demolish. Preservation, then, becomes

a matter of design choices and political positions. The term "heritage" encompasses not only cultural aspects but also technological and institutional dimensions. It's a multifaceted concept deeply ingrained in our background. Despite this heritage, technology-driven institutions seem apprehensive about engaging in conflicts that may arise from these conversations. There's a reluctance to confront political issues.

Alexandre Monnin unpacks these assumptions, challenging the perceived inevitability of technological trends and digitalization. It delves into the realm of heritage, highlighting that conservation extends beyond merely reading and preserving the past; it's about bridging the gap between our origins and our future trajectory, not taking for granted the impacts of the choices made in the past, including the "negative commons" that we have to deal with.

Caitlin DeSilvey sheds light on our need to expand our toolbox, introducing a post-preservation attitude that includes the "adaptive release" as a way of intervening in our built legacy. This opens up to the possibility of not reusing the building or consciously abandoning the buildings, or adaptively removing parts of varied age by considering destruction or driven destruction, as a matter of preservation, a tool to operate on the things we inherited from the past.

Daniela Sandler introduces political and social dimensions in the form of resistance and political action while presenting her concept of counterpreservation and its applications. This contribution acknowledges that the passage of time is a perpetual process, always eluding capture, and it can be actively embraced.

Bie Plevoets, represented in this volume in the Q&A section only, actively participates in the discussion, outlining ongoing research as an FWO post-doc fellow focused on buildings upon fragments that digs into the role of ruins and Spolia within the adaptive reuse theoretical framework and practice.

These speakers are committed not only to debunking assumptions and reframing concepts but also to practical activities, changing and chief operating practices, either institutionally or in research or in practical application. In doing so, they provide clues for possible design strategies that are much more far-reaching and barrier-breaking than we could expect, or also practical established practicalities.

The first section collecting the records from the seminar is not to be perceived as a final text published but more as a hint in an ongoing debate view. The second section, which collects the papers from the PhD students attending our course, gives an overview of ongoing works under development in the DASP and BAP doctoral courses. It aims to answer the question, “How does my research assess the interplay between past and Future?”. The final section outlines answers to 5 questions that have emerged from the PhD students during our intensive seminar. All contributions are meant as an ongoing conversation, not a final outcome of our shared research path, which is hopefully far from being fulfilled.

Cornelius Holtorf
Alexandre Monnin
Caitlin DeSilvey
Daniela Sandler

February 17th 2022, Politecnico di Torino

01

Records from lectures

Professor of Archaeology, UNESCO Chair on Heritage Futures at Linnaeus University in Kalmar, Sweden.

Cornelius Holtorf

Cornelius Holtorf is Professor of Archaeology and holds a UNESCO Chair on Heritage Futures at Linnaeus University in Kalmar, Sweden. He also directs the Graduate School in Contract Archaeology (GRASCA) at his University. His research interests lie in contemporary archaeology, heritage theory and heritage futures. Cornelius was a Co-Investigator and led the Uncertainty theme of the Heritage Futures research programme. He has collaborated for many years with the Swedish Nuclear Fuel and Waste Management Company (SKB) and other major stakeholders in the nuclear waste sector on memory across generations.

FUTURES LITERACY: HOW TO BRING WORLD HERITAGE UP TO DATE

Keywords
UNESCO, Alternative Futures, Alternative Heritage

«Heritage Futures»

«You may be wondering what Heritage Futures is. Your initial thought might be about the future of heritage, but no, it's not that. Is it about the future of conservation? No, it is not about the future of conservation. It is about the roles of heritage in managing the relations between present and future societies. It is about this relationship. It is about how the present and the future relate to each other and how heritage plays a crucial role in that relationship in several different ways. This covers, for example, those three areas: anticipation, planning, and prefiguration. Just to give you an idea of the scope, it is quite a wide field, and it has a lot to do with design, as you can see in these terms already. So that is what we are dealing with. Our vision, what we try to achieve, is that we attempt to build global capacity for future thinking among heritage professionals. That is the aim. All the research that we do contributes to that. How do we make our case, and how do we educate and train our colleagues all around the world, sometimes in universities, but most often not and in state authorities or locally employed? And how do we get them interested and build their capacity in the future? The term some are using in this context is futures literacy. That is something I also used in my title, and that is the key concept that lies behind a lot of what we are doing. I will give you, in a moment, a definition of what this means and how we are working with that. Then the rest of the lecture is going to be a case study and what that may mean specifically or how this sort of thinking could apply to the specific question of how we can work for peace, which is related to UNESCO and World Heritage.

«What is “futures literacy”?»

«It is crucial to note that it is not just “future” literacy but “futures” literacy, indicating literacy about multiple futures. This term has a rich history in future studies.

Concerning futures literacy: two key points must be emphasized. First and foremost, there is a pressing need to enhance awareness regarding our assumptions about cultural heritage in the future. Every conservation effort and heritage-related undertaking inherently involves assumptions about the future. Whether we realize it or not, we presume certain continuities from the present and expect people in the future to appreciate things similarly. However, many specialists in our field do not even consider which future they are contemplating. A study we conducted a few years ago among heritage experts globally, including those at UNESCO, revealed that no one could answer the question, “Which future are you working for?” This oversight is extraordinary given our mandate to preserve heritage for future generations.

It is imperative to acknowledge our time perspective and the assumptions we make about that time. We cannot assume that the future will mirror our current perceptions. Thus, we must become conscious of these assumptions, question them, and consider alternative scenarios.

Contrarily, a pitfall to avoid is assuming that the present will seamlessly extend into the future, a trend we often witness today. Relying too heavily on present conditions to frame our future assumptions can hinder our ability to foresee diverse and evolving futures.»

«Improving awareness of our many assumptions about culture heritage in the future»

«I often find intriguing insights in science fiction. Take Christopher Nolan's 'Interstellar' (2014), for instance, depicting human life on 'Cooper Station' in the mid-22nd century. The film, a captivating science fiction adventure, introduces numerous technological innovations. Towards the end, 'Cooper Station' portrays human life more than 100 years into the future, with the protagonist's childhood home now functioning as a heritage site. As the story concludes, the home becomes a museum, housing artifacts, although the preservation seems outdated by today's standards.

In the realm of science fiction, it's common to imagine futuristic technologies achieving remarkable feats. However, when it comes to culture and social relations, human life often remains conservative, as exemplified in the film's portrayal of heritage. This perspective, rooted in presentism, assumes that heritage remains unchanged while everything else evolves. Yet, this perspective is highly unrealistic, as heritage has transformed significantly over time and will likely continue evolving in the future.

This serves as an example of presentism and the need to become aware of such assumptions. The complementary aspect is considering what we need to do instead. It involves developing the capability to imagine alternative futures for heritage and liberating ourselves from the present system that constantly focuses on what needs to be done. The goal is to acquire the ability to think differently about the future and have a varied view of what heritage may mean.

It's important to note that this isn't about free-flowing speculation; rather, it involves relating to as much as we can at present. Looking ahead, even just a few decades, we can glean a great deal of factual information. For instance, trends within the heritage sector have shifted from preserving fabric to safeguarding human values and focusing on sustainability and resilience. The emergence of genetic heritage documentation and the impact of artificial intelligence on our perception of the past are trends in this field. These trends, along with global societal shifts, such as climate change, population growth, urbanization, globalization, and digitization, are crucial considerations for the future of heritage. Despite being slow to adapt, sectors like healthcare and culture need to take these trends seriously.

This highlights the importance of foresight, as futurologists discuss these trends in various ways. For example, climate change and population growth in Asia and Africa are predictable trends. Urbanization in parts of Asia, Africa, and globalization are ongoing, while social divisions persist and digitization of heritage raises questions about its value. It is essential to be prepared for change, even at the cultural level, and not assume that culture is timeless. These are the two main assumptions related to future literacy, and they are crucial aspects concerning heritage.»

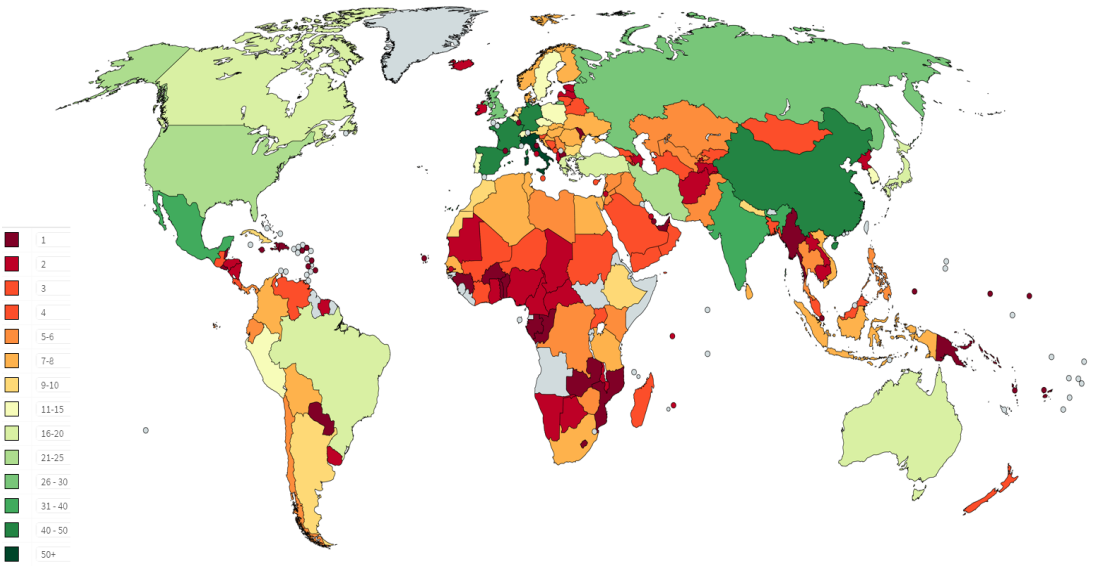

Figure 1) *UNESCO World Heritage Sites per country. (Vivid maps, 2016)*

«Case-study: World Heritage and the World Heritage Convention»

My case study focuses on World Heritage and the World Heritage Convention, illustrating a compelling example of how we are handling time-related issues. The UNESCO Constitution (1945) sheds light on why the World Heritage Convention exists and its underlying motivation. Despite being well-established, this connection is often overlooked in discussions about World Heritage. It's crucial to refer to the Constitution to understand UNESCO's broader agenda.

Immediately after World War II, UNESCO declared that since wars originate in the minds of humans, the defense of peace must be constructed in those minds. Education, science, and culture are crucial tools for achieving this goal globally. UNESCO aims to combat ignorance about each other's values and lives, which historically led to suspicion, mistrust, and ultimately, war. To foster peace, UNESCO emphasizes collaboration among nations and the conservation of the world's cultural heritage.

The World Heritage Convention, born out of this agenda, took almost 30 years to materialize, being officially passed in 1972. The convention's context is explicit – it's not merely about conservation but about peacemaking and fostering understanding among nations. However, 50 years later, while the convention has seen success, it also presents challenges.[...]

Examining a map of UNESCO World Heritage Sites per country, we see a striking visual representation of differences between nations. The map predominantly features boundaries, emphasizing national distinctions rather than commonalities. The map reflects variations between different world regions, with Africa marked in warm colors and North America and Western Europe in green. The number of World Heritage sites further highlights disparities, with Italy having the most.

This map prompts three important questions: Why does Italy

have the most World Heritage sites globally? What is the logic behind this within the United Nations framework? And why do countries engage in a competition for more sites? The competition reveals dynamics within the convention that were not initially intended by UNESCO, involving rivalry, mistrust, and suspicion about agendas and rankings.

While the convention was meant to contribute to peace and understanding, the competition for sites has created tensions and political issues. Nations collaborate against each other, and the dynamics involve political disputes, such as the situation between Israel and Palestine. This unintended consequence raises questions about whether the World Heritage Convention truly contributes to peace or inadvertently exacerbates existing political conflicts. [...]This statistical analysis delves into state-based conflicts since 1946, crucial for assessing progress in global warfare, aligning with UNESCO's focus on state-based conflicts. The graph displays annual worldwide conflict data, distinguishing between colonial conflicts (in gray) and conflicts between states (in black). The analysis spans from the aftermath of World War II to 2016.

Colonial conflicts, initially numerous, phased out by the mid-1970s as colonies gained independence, aligning with UNESCO's mission. Conflicts between states, resembling
World War II dynamics, have decreased since 1946, indicating a positive trend potentially influenced by World Heritage efforts. [...] However, civil conflicts (depicted in red) involving states and non-state entities surged post-1970s, reflecting challenges associated with decolonization. This dominant post-1970s conflict type complicates UNESCO's mission, emphasizing the organization's challenge in addressing conflicts between states and diverse ethnic groups, a departure from its initial focus.

The introduction of civil conflicts with foreign state intervention (represented by the red curve) is a post-1946 phenomenon, growing visibly until 2016. This highlights the evolving nature of conflicts involving external interventions, such as Russia in

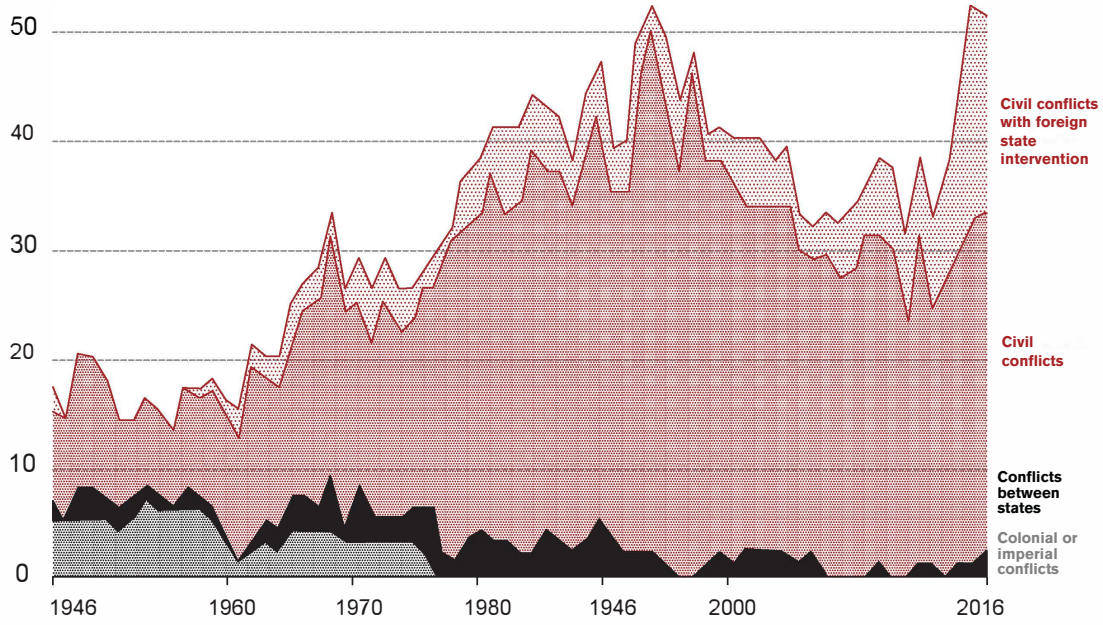

Figure 2) *Ongoing state-based conflicts by type. World (drawing by the editors based on ourworldindata.org, data source: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset 2016)*

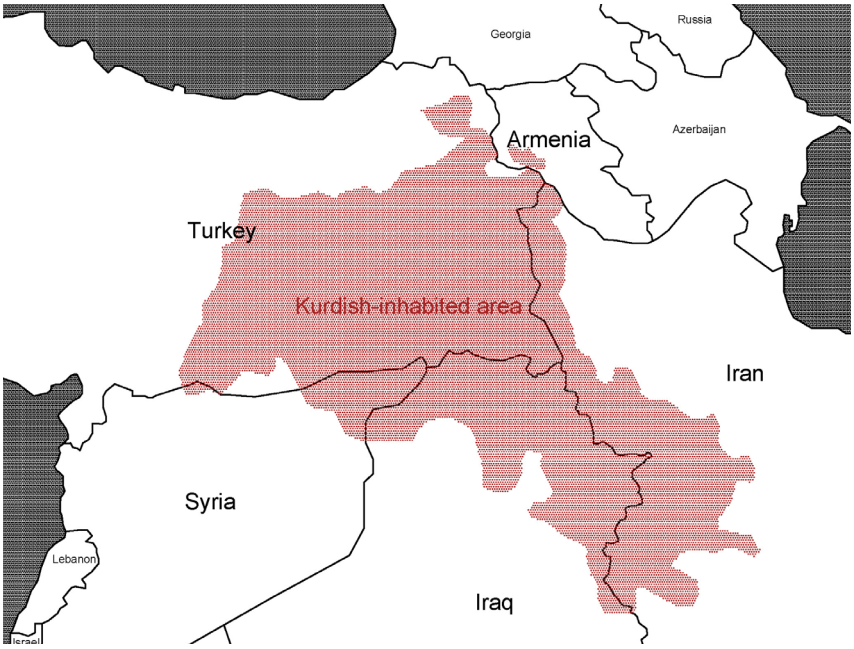

Figure 3) *Maps of Kurdish inhabited regions (drawing by the editors based on wikimedia commons via picryl.com)*

Syria or the U.S. in Afghanistan. [...] Despite positive trends in reducing state-to-state conflicts, the predominant current scenario involves conflicts between states and non-state entities. UNESCO's focus on a nation-centric paradigm may inadvertently favor state interests, potentially hindering its effectiveness in promoting peace.

The analysis suggests that UNESCO's structure, unintentionally or not, may lead to favoring the state's perspective over ethnic groups. This raises questions about UNESCO's ability to contribute effectively to peace, especially in cases involving conflicts between states and various ethnic groups. In contemplating the region encompassing Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey—territory the Kurdish people regard as their own—the query arises: How does World Heritage contribute to peace here? It seems evident that its contribution is limited, given that the dominating nations—Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey—exert influence on the global stage. Unfortunately, the Kurds lack a recognized state, impeding their sway over World Heritage sites and hindering the Convention's potential to foster understanding crucial for peacebuilding. This specific case, well-documented and not exclusive to the Middle East, underscores divisions within ethnic groups across various states. [...]

In grappling with this dilemma, I question UNESCO's efficacy, suggesting that it inadvertently exacerbates problems by favoring states and neglecting cultural and social solutions for those outside recognized states. To address this, I propose minimizing boundaries between nation-states and world regions, emphasizing shared values, and maximizing understanding, trust, solidarity, and collaboration on a global scale. The focus should shift from cultural diversity strategies to recognizing commonalities, particularly in facing global challenges like climate change.»

Note: *for a full account of the argument see Holtorf, Cornelius (2023) Towards a World Heritage for the Anthropocene. In: Nick Shepherd (ed) Rethinking Heritage in Precarious Times, pp. 111-126. London and New York: Routledge.*

«Alternative Heritage List»

«[...] I further propose a hypothetical set of criteria for the operational guidelines of the World Heritage Convention, advocating for an alternative list that promotes principles such as dignity, equality, and mutual respect. These criteria derive directly from the UNESCO constitution and Agenda 2030.

Sites inscribed on an Alternative World Heritage List must meet at least one of these four criteria:

1. **to counter significantly suspicion and mistrust between the people of the world;**

2. **to promote in unique ways an understanding of the principles of dignity, equality and mutual respect for all humans and for the human environment;**

3. **to enhance extensively the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace;**

4. **to advance in exceptional ways collaboration among people through education, science and culture.**

These could be the criteria for selecting sites for building out your sites, rather than what we currently have. Allow me to provide an example that illustrates this concept. There's a remarkable project known as Lego Lost at Sea, led by artist Tracey Williams, who recently published a book entitled "Adrift." She has been pursuing this project for over a decade. In the 1990s, a large container ship capsized off the coast of Cornwall, spilling various toys, including Lego pieces, which were washed ashore along the English coast. People, including Tracy, found these

Lego pieces and started creating art with them, exploring their origins. This project aligns
with the criterion I mentioned earlier, highlighting our mutual respect for both humans and the environment.
Tracy Williams's Lego pieces serve as symbols of the Anthropocene, representing plastic pollution found at sea and illustrating various aspects of environmental degradation.
Additionally, they exemplify global consumption and distribution patterns of major corporations. Almost every child worldwide has interacted with Lego or similar plastic toys, which occasionally wash up on beaches. This common experience unites children globally, although it poses a challenge, reminding us of our collective responsibility.
Consider finding a Lego piece on the beach; it symbolizes my world heritage. While it may not require protection, it deserves special attention and contextual framing. There are several other examples I won't delve into here, such as nuclear waste and space messages that could unite humanity, emphasizing our shared traits and fostering understanding.
This should not be seen as a criticism of UNESCO or the World Heritage List. This is a call for the cultural heritage sector to consider heritage futures and the benefits of future generations. How can we contribute to world peace? What heritage should we preserve or design to enhance understanding among global communities, emphasizing our commonalities? These questions necessitate a different approach within heritage, a topic often overlooked in current discussions. This presentation addresses a seldom-considered aspect of heritage, one focused on preventing wars and promoting peace.»

Professor at ESC Clermont Business School in ecological redirection and design, *Origens Media Lab*, Clermont-Ferrand, France

photo by Dorian Prost

Alexandre Monnin

Alexandre Monnin is Scientific Director of Origens Media Lab, Professor in a management school (ESC Clermont BS), co-initiator with Diego Landivar of Closing Worlds and Director of the Master of Science »Strategy and Design for the Anthropocene« in partnership with Strate School of Design in Lyon (the world's first training course on the Anthropocene with an operational focus). He received his PhD in Philosophy from Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University and dedicated his thesis to the philosophy of the Web, which he pioneered with Harry Halpin. He was the architect of ReSource, a digital platform for documentation used in artistic and educational contexts.

DESIGNING THE FUTURE OF THE PAST: TACKLING NEGATIVE COMMONS

Keywords
Negative commons, Technosphere, Art-of-Closing

«Legacy and closure»

«Our recent book's title, "Héritage et fermeture" can be translated as "Legacy and Closure," [it] is a common translation. Another possible translation is "Inheritance and closure." The discussion revolves around the Anthropocene, emphasizing that our connection extends beyond nature to what researchers term the "Technosphere." This connection poses both destructive challenges and essential dependencies. Criticizing elements like the technosphere won't erase them, prompting reflections on our posture towards these unavoidable realities, similar to the ongoing challenge of critiquing capitalism without eliminating it. They have been so many books written against capitalism and yet it still remains. So that was also part of our thinking about what should be our posture when we come to think about those realities. May be we don't like it, but we cannot make it disappear. [...]
The technosphere is an inheritance, not only in terms of built infrastructures but also models, including economic, business, management practices, and ideologies. The crucial question is how to deal with these outdated models, especially considering their inadequacy for the current times and the imperative

to maintain the planet's habitability. The book delves into exploring closure, the process of shutting down or dismantling these models, with nuances in the language used to describe these actions.
The urgency lies in dismantling structures that jeopardize the planet's habitability and achieving the most crucial goal at present.

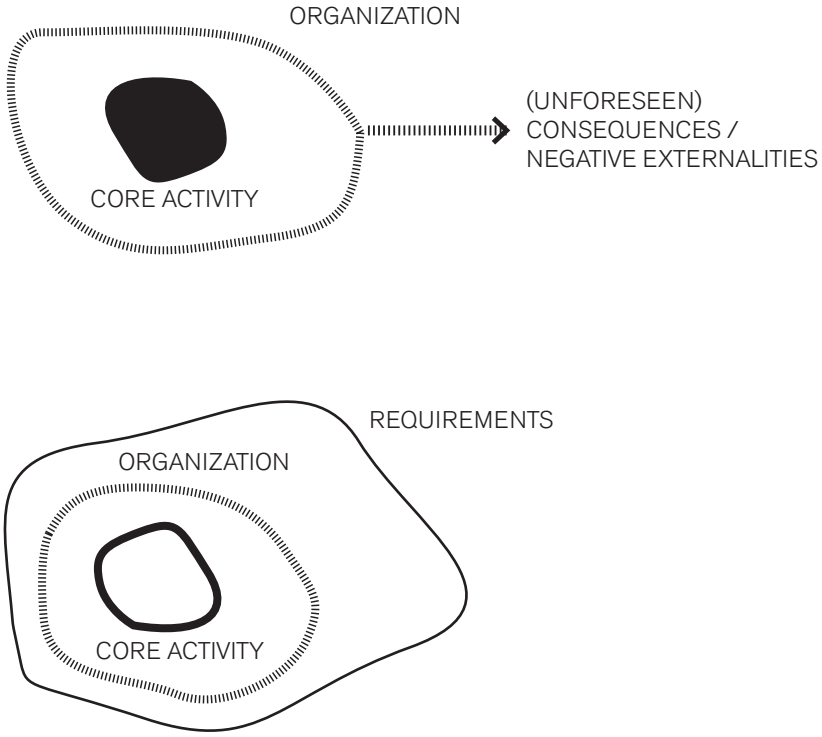

Figure 1) *Negative externalities and organizations (Adapted by author presentation, 2022)*

«Ecological redirection»

«The program “Ecological Redirection,” inspired by Australian designer Tony Fry, aims to guide organizations, institutions, and territories onto alternative paths. Acknowledging the global challenge, as outlined by German researcher Stefan Aykut, the conventional approach to climate change mitigation focuses on downstream tactical measures rather than addressing upstream strategic decisions. The need for a shift in direction is emphasized, moving beyond efficiency-driven technological responses to adopting fundamentally different policies. [...]

We aim to make our technologies highly efficient and environmentally friendly, eliminating pollution and reliance on extractivism. However, this goal is hindered by the lack of intervention in upstream strategic measures, leaving efficiency improvements as the primary option. While efficiency is a reality, the exponential increase in the use of digital technologies, for instance, has led to concerns about the rebound effect, resulting in overall increased pollution.

Similarly, organizations, driven by core business strategies, often face unintended consequences known as negative externalities. This term, coined by economists, refers to the unforeseen and unfortunate consequences of a transaction between two parties that adversely affect a third party not involved in the initial transaction. These innocent victims bear the burden of economic transactions, highlighting the need for critical discussions around this concept.

Negative externalities are not simply unfortunate consequences; they are more aptly regarded as legacies that demand strategic attention rather than being perceived as unforeseen outcomes. (See Figure 1) The prevailing approach leans towards tactical measures, frequently employing market mechanisms to compensate those impacted by negative externalities. However, this viewpoint asserts that negative externalities aren’t accidental repercussions but intrinsic prerequisites of specific activities.

Quoting Marx, we should the notion of expressing sorrow over societal consequences, contending that these ostensibly negative externalities are, in reality, essential requirements of social and organizational assemblages. The assertion is that, for instance, the destruction of forests is not an unfortunate consequence but rather a necessity for certain activities such as overall chocolate production. This paradigm shift in comprehension presents challenges for organizations, as they may grapple with moral and practical quandaries, particularly when depleting the resources they were dependent upon. [...]

Habitability? As my colleague Emmanuel Bonnet put it, "Organizations are now like low and medium mountain resorts, facing the announced disappearance of their current economic business model or importance, unavoidable." Looking ahead, it seems they won't be able to continue with business as usual. Despite the many trends discussed, including population growth, which is expected to bring about challenges, especially in countries like China, India, and Japan, I see many of these trends as zombie trends in the Anthropocene.[...]

Coming from a background in digital technologies, I question the longevity of such technologies in our future. Despite the prevailing belief in a digitized future, I suggest that our relationship with the future is inherited, and digitized futures may not be sustainable in the world we're heading towards.

Ecological redirection, a program distinct from traditional approaches like CSR, sustainable development, and green growth, acknowledges that it won't be possible to maintain everything. In France, the debate on lowering the energy budget by 40% by 2050 exemplifies the challenges and trade-offs we must address. I bring up the issue of frugality, pointing out the uncertainty in implementing it.

The discussion shifts towards trade-offs, indicating that some things are already being shut down, prompting the need for a better approach in managing closures. I allude to the challenge of shutting things down being more fictional in the past but increasingly becoming a reality.

«Negative externalities»

«[...] Moving on to negative externalities, I discuss the commons, not as resources but as institutions. I focus on how to take care of existing realities, such as depleted rivers and soils, that lack proper attention and care. I emphasize the need for proper institutionalization of the commons, arguing that our current situation hinders the identification and care of the commons.

The discussion touches upon the concept of obsolete innovations, using the example of connected objects and the Internet of Things. I question the wisdom of birthing billions of objects that demand more energy, considering the present environmental challenges. These innovations, conceptualized decades ago, are termed "obsolete innovations" in the context of the Anthropocene.

In summary, I want to explore the challenges posed by the Anthropocene, question the sustainability of certain trends and innovations, and advocate for a more thoughtful and strategic approach in addressing environmental concerns and technological advancements. [...]

The situation is more intricate than the current moment we are experiencing. Perhaps, it no longer effectively accommodates these innovations. While this might not have been the case in the eighties, our awareness of it has grown. The question that arises is: Should we still pursue these innovations? Individually, we can ponder this, but collectively, there are no institutions to seriously ask this question. This was evident in France during the 5G debates, ultimately settled by President Macron's decision to adopt the technology. A notable aspect of the debate was the dissent within the French telecom provider Orange, where two reports by employees opposed 5G adoption. It highlights the intriguing reason for innovation: doing what everyone else is doing. This conformity-driven innovation raises questions about our approach to such issues. I touched upon the concept of trade-offs, emphasizing that current trade-offs are unplanned,

authoritarian, and indifferent to the individuals affected. I argue for a move towards more democratic decision-making that considers the well-being of those impacted by these trade-offs. The term “negative commons” is briefly discussed, with its roots traced back to the early 2000s in German ecofeminist context. However, my interpretation focuses more on ruins, inherited realities that threaten the habitability of the Earth yet remain part of our landscape. [...] »

Figure 2) *Plastic polluted site in Nicaragua (licence Unsplash 2023)*

«Ruins or wastes…?»

«I distinguish between ruins that reflect the aesthetics of the Anthropocene, often seen in images of decaying infrastructures, "ruined ruins," which are deactivated structures, no longer in operation, and "ruinous ruins", with are stil operating but, by doing so, threaten the inhabitability of the planet. This distinction adds nuance to our understanding of the visual representation of the Anthropocene. [...]

Walter Benjamin's concept of the bourgeois city as the real ruins of his time resonates with my thinking. Instead of traditional ruins, consider the ruins that aren't immediately apparent, like our everyday devices that rely on destruction and slavery for production.

Take, for example, the smartphone, this ubiquitous device we all have. Despite its non-ruinous appearance, it's a ruin in itself, dependent on destructive processes. This technology is morally and environmentally burdensome, yet it's already pervasive.

The problem is not in the future; it's happening now.

Furthermore, consider the mining industry, depicted as another type of ruin in operation. What's intriguing about these ruins is that they don't conform to typical aesthetics but hold significant environmental consequences. Identifying such ruins requires an inquiry into valuation, differentiating positive commons from negative commons. [...] »

«Zombie vs Living tecnologies»

«The concept of “zombie technologies,” forged by José Halloy, aka technologies, which depend on finite resources, raising concerns about their availability rather than scarcity. These technologies persist, contributing to our geological strata. Shifting to living technologies that rely on renewables, with lasting working conditions and minimal waste, becomes imperative. While fossil technologies are labeled as zombies, the critique extends beyond to many of our current technologies originating from the Industrial Revolution. The emphasis is not against technology as a whole, but a call for a shift to more sustainable and renewable alternatives.

Living Technologies prompt questions about their links with resilience. I want to delve into resilience; however, my critique is specific, and it requires careful consideration. The central question is how we navigate living with or without negative commons. It’s about determining strategies to address these challenges and sustain the planet’s stability. I’ve introduced a typology of negative commons, a preliminary classification of ways to engage with them. Let’s briefly explore three examples.

Firstly, consider nuclear waste disposal sites. Regardless of one’s stance on nuclear power, dealing with the resulting waste is unavoidable. The approach has been to create designated spaces, almost taboo, to contain these wastes. It’s an intriguing method that involves projecting ourselves into the future, considering that the infrastructure must endure for a hundred thousand years.

Another challenge is invasive species like bacteria. Should our response always involve eradication, potentially exacerbating the situation, or can we find ways to coexist differently?

The discussion extends to viruses, a topical issue that won’t be addressed here.

Lastly, there’s the issue of zombie technologies, including digital

technologies. While it's currently impossible to eliminate them entirely, we must grapple with transitioning to a more digitized yet sustainable world. These are indeed interesting times.

To engage with these complex issues, we initiated the "Closing World Initiative." This platform doesn't provide answers but encourages thinking about these challenges and finding ways to act upon them. One example is the development of new protocols, such as the "Fresco of Renunciation," designed by Diego Landivar and Victor Ecrement. This tool aids organizations and institutions in contemplating how to renounce certain aspects while considering the attachments people have to these realities. When forsaking infrastructure or elements that people depend on, understanding and mapping these attachments becomes crucial to minimize unintended harm. [...]

My colleague and I have developed a Master of Science program, "Strategy and Design for the Anthropocene," focused on imparting skills related to the arts of closure. The core of the program revolves around addressing the question of how we can effectively care for negative commons. However, our intention goes beyond merely training individuals for academia. We are not advocating for the development of closing studies akin to maintenance or repair studies. The essence lies in moving past the neoliberal academy stance, where personal credit is derived from investing in new fields. Instead, we emphasize the need for a strategic approach—a critical element that might have been missing from the initial part of my presentation.

This strategic approach involves utilizing research findings, which are undeniably crucial, but it transcends the traditional boundaries of academia. Academic research can help identify strategic weaknesses, and the subsequent step is to act upon them. It requires a more proactive and, in some ways, a military approach to address these issues strategically.

So, what are we actively doing? One example involves our work on halting new construction in the Grand Paris. We assess not

only the possibility and benefits of this perspective but also its feasibility. This leads us to explore an economics-of-renovation approach, focusing on converting professional buildings into habitable spaces, especially as offices are becoming increasingly vacant due to various reasons, including the impact of COVID. This raises pertinent questions about the role of architects in a scenario where their primary task might no longer be construction. This has prompted some students in architecture to grapple with the notion of caring for negative commons in a post-industrial era, with some expressing reluctance to engage in traditional building practices.

We also engage with the city's growth using protocols of renunciation, particularly concerning the fate of dilapidated municipal swimming pools. Involving the inhabitants in this investigation raises questions about the necessity of building new pools in the future and prompts consideration of alternative approaches to aquatic spaces available in the region.

Working with parking lot managers in Lyon involves exploring the future of their infrastructure as cars face restrictions in city centers—an issue of significant concern for them. Simultaneously, we delve into the evolution of home insurance in the Anthropocene, where insurers grapple with scenarios that may no longer be insurable under current conditions, prompting a reevaluation of our social model. Lastly, amongst many other examples we've dealt with, we examine the evolution of mountain territories, particularly focusing on the Alps, addressing challenges posed by changing snow conditions and artificial snow production.

While the idea of artificial snow production may not be universally beneficial, some areas may simply find it unfeasible. This raises critical questions about how people will sustain themselves in such territories. In France, various regions are tackling this question in diverse ways, with some receiving financial support to cease activities and others resisting change.

Types of negative commons	Living with from now on	Living with in a different way	Linving without
Types of negativity	Immediate negativity	Mediate negativity	Systemic/infrastructural negativity
Examples	Yucca Moutain, Onkalo	Bacteria, Invasive species	Zombie technologies

Figure 3) *"Living with/ Living without" from author presentation (2022)*

Investigating these dynamics with the people involved has been the focus of approximately 30 commissions over the last two years. In conclusion, we must navigate a delicate balance between two pitfalls when dealing with negative commons: leaving the technosphere untouched, jeopardizing the habitability of the Earth in the medium term, or severing ties with it when the survival of a growing part of humanity depends on it thus threatening the lives of many. Navigating this middle ground requires considering the imperative of closure and recognizing the subsistence links with what needs to be closed. This dismantling process should occur in the most democratic, fairest, and least painful manner for these negative commons, deconstructing absolute futures intertwined with technology in a "business as usual" fashion.

Concluding on the importance of technology, I advocate for working towards a general economy of frugality. As frugality becomes integral to our future in the coming decades, developing strategies for its implementation is a pressing concern, although I won't delve into this hot topic at present.»

«Economy of frugality»

«Governments and institutions are already projecting scenarios which integrate sobriety as a fundamental factor. For example, in France, a recent report projects a 40% decrease in energy use in France by 2050. And it's not an overtly sober scenario.
Adaptation will apply to those scenarios of sobriety which are to be implemented for the coming decades whether or not they're already explicitly discussed in the public sphere.
These scenarios themselves aim to mitigate the effects of climate change and planetary boundaries crossing.
But sobriety (or frugality) is seen as somehow diminutive (which it is, in all fairness). To deepen this concept, have a look to the concept of "extensive sobriety" by anthropologist Eduardo Viveiros de Castro currently reworked by a young researcher I'm collaborating with, Nathan Ben Kemoun. [...]
Our imprint and the imprint of the Technosphere will have to shrink.
We cannot grow infinitely in a finite world as we were reminded today. But for the world to remain livable, how may we find infinity in this finite world (it's reminiscent of the Zapatist motto already mentioned "a world of many worlds")? That's the point of intensive sufficiency. Through repetition, it is possible to devrive enjoyement. Reading a book twice or manifold doesn't require multiplying it. Same with playing a musical instrument or playing some games.
Exploring the conditions under which intensive sufficiency can happen (the general economy of sobriety) is fundamental since the intensive sufficiency is the condition of possibility of extensive sobriety.
Equity and questions about the distribution of the efforts to be made are also paramount with regards to this general economy of sobriety. »

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Caitlin DeSilvey

Caitlin is a geographer whose research explores the cultural significance of change and transformation, with a particular focus on heritage ecologies and climate futures. She has worked with artists, archaeologists, environmental scientists and heritage practitioners on a range of interdisciplinary projects, exploring how cultural value and significance can be generated by working with ecological processes, rather than working against them. This focus on process, rather than preservation, has been articulated through collaborative development of a series of novel concepts, including 'curated decay' and 'adaptive release'.

Her monograph, Curated Decay: Heritage Beyond Saving (UMP 2017), received the 2018 Historic Preservation Book Prize. Recent publications include After Discourse: Things, Affects, Ethics (Routledge 2020), an edited collection stemming from a 2016-17 fellowship at the Centre for Advanced Study in Olso, and Heritage Futures: Comparative Approaches to Natural and Cultural Heritage Practices (UCL 2020), a co-authored volume arising from work on the Heritage Futures research project.

WHEN LOSS IS MORE: FROM MANAGED DECLINE TO ADAPTIVE RELEASE

Keywords

Adaptive Release, Curated Decay, Loss

«The central focus of my research revolves around attending to the dynamic aspects of heritage, emphasizing change and transformation. I explore alternatives to traditional preservation and protection methods. One of the most urgent changes we are currently facing is climate change, a phenomenon that is having, and will have, far-reaching consequences. Cultural heritage is not immune to these effects, and it's crucial to acknowledge that the repercussions of climate change will disproportionately affect those already affected by inequality and injustice . Scholars in the heritage sector must confront this reality, and seek ways of responding appropriately. [...]»

Note: a *published version of this talk appeared in 2021 in The Historic Environment: Policy and Practice, Volume 12, 3-4.*

«Managing loss»

«Given the inevitability of change, the pertinent question becomes: How do we respond and adapt heritage practice to confront these challenges? In recent years, there has been a notable mobilization within the heritage sector concerning these issues. In October 2019, I attended the launch of the Climate Heritage Network in Edinburgh, a global initiative
connecting climate activists, heritage practitioners, and academics. This event coincided with the release of a crucial report, "The Future of Our Past: Engaging Cultural Heritage in Climate Action." [...]
Signs of a paradigm shift are evident in statements within the report; it acknowledges that in certain situations the loss of a heritage place may be necessary, managed through processes such as documentation, monitoring, and controlled decay. The report also emphasizes the emerging need for farewell processes of valediction and documentation, integrating digital recording techniques and virtual reality to interpret stories and convey them to future generations as heritage sites face progressive loss. [...]
The evolving discourse around loss indicates the imperative for new ways of conceptualizing and discussing how heritage can adapt to these challenging circumstances. Over the past decade, I have engaged in collaborative thinking with various individuals, including Cornelius [Holtorf]. This collaborative effort is exemplified by our work at locations like the Orfordness Lighthouse on the Suffolk coast. [...]
I want to emphasize the crucial role of language in our response to the challenges we face at this moment. Often, when we discuss heritage and climate change, the discourse is saturated with risk-related terminology—heritage at risk, assessing risk, monitoring

risk. However, there's a compelling opportunity to reframe perceived risk as a chance to transition to a new relationship with the heritage in question.

Consider the case of the lighthouse, initially deemed a heritage asset at risk. The community rallied, turning the situation into an opportunity for a collective farewell, designing a 'wake' for the structure and repurposing elements for other uses. Similarly, the language of 'loss' tends to dominate discussions, suggesting that we need to accept and manage loss. Yet, every loss signifies some form of transformation, as things evolve into different forms or integrate into other systems.

Recognizing that lost elements can generate or release value is crucial. Disintegration of built structures, for example, entails regeneration as materials become integrated into new ecologies. The concept of 'retreat' is often viewed negatively as a form of failure, but reframing it as a generative act of 'relinquishment', as suggested by Jem Bendell in discussions of deep adaptation, challenges this perception.

[…] My most recent project, Landscape Futures and the Challenge of Change, focused on how heritage regulations can be aligned with the active accommodation of change and transformation , particularly in relation to protected heritage features listed on the National Heritage List for England.

Collaborating with heritage practitioners from organizations like Historic England and the National Trust, our unique team sought to shift attention from the loss of discrete heritage assets to focus attention on broader landscape contexts. We aimed to investigate whether existing regulatory frameworks could accommodate transformative practices. Our work, although specific to the English context, raises questions about the

adaptability of regulatory frameworks globally.
This collaborative effort, with input from heritage practitioners and academic researchers, led to the exploration of options available for managing inevitable change in heritage assets. We started by exploring existing conservation guidance, , from maintenance and repair to relocation and removal.
The focus of our project was on the space below the dotted line, where managing loss is recognized to be the only viable option. In our exploration of current strategies for managed loss and managed decline, there was an acknowledgment that application of these approaches will become increasingly necessary in the future. However, the project revealed a significant gap in shared understanding of what these practices entail in detail, and in practice. Particularly, we realized that much of the attention in this area tends to focus on prioritization, creating hierarchies of value that often overlook the potential significance of structures undergoing inevitable change.
The most common approach taken involves protecting the most significant assets while managing loss and decline for those deemed less essential. However, this static perspective fails to consider that even highly significant buildings may require managed decline. It also fails to acknowledge the potential value generated by the perception of endangerment, as noted by Cornelius Holtorf. Practitioners lack detailed guidance on how to effectively implement managed decline, and there’s often a misunderstanding of the concept,.

To address these challenges, our project introduced the concept of ‘adaptive release’. This innovative term seeks to introduce a new form of heritage practice that acknowledges and learns from transformative change. It encourages intentional and proactive management of change, recognizing that a building’s significance may evolve through process of alteration and apparent deterioration. This approach does not involve ‘letting go’, but instead emphasizes the need for structured opportunities for iterative monitoring, evaluation and engagement. It promotes an active approach to change, where practitioners work with communities to understand, accept, and find value in evolving heritage structures and places.»

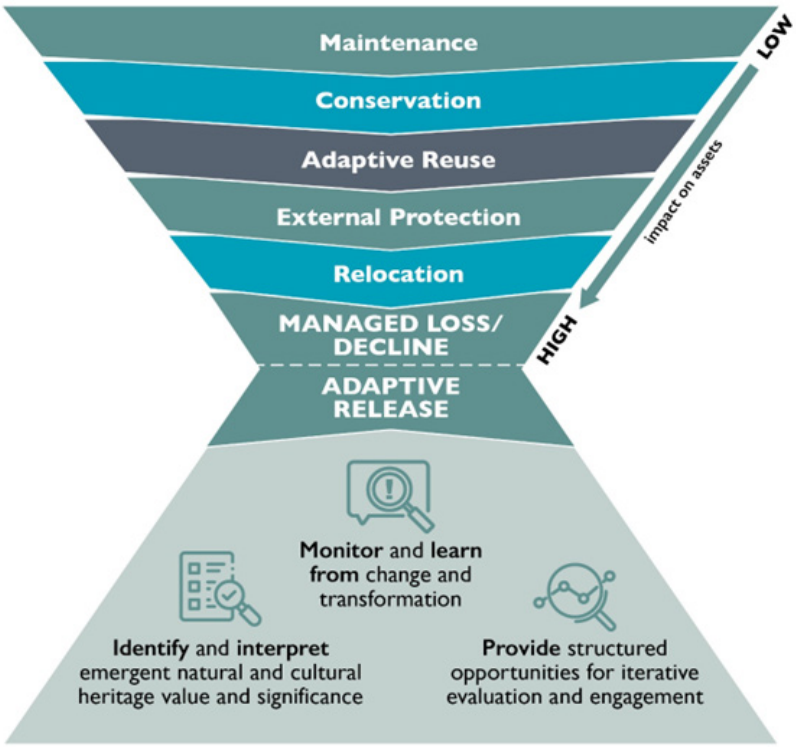

Figure 1) *Adaptive release diagram, taken from, Adaptive Release: Guidance Framework for Sites Affected by Coastal Erosion and Flood Management, Sefryn Penrose and Nadia Bartolini, https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/85-2022.*

«Adaptive release»

«Adaptive release represents a departure from traditional preservation paradigms. It suggests a more dynamic, integrated approach, fostering landscape resilience and continuity by bridging natural and cultural heritage practices. The term serves as a provocation, challenging existing norms and prompting discussions about the adaptability of heritage management in the face of inevitable change.
While the concept is still in its early stages, we envision adaptive release as a transformative practice that offers a new language for heritage practitioners to use in navigating the complex terrain of managing designated heritage assets amid environmental changes. The goal is to inspire collaborative efforts that go

beyond preservation, actively engaging with the evolving dynamics of natural and cultural heritage. [...]
Delving into the intricacies of managing discrete heritage assets at risk, the project emphasizes the importance of considering not only the individual asset but also its broader landscape setting and character. In working with natural processes of change, interpreting them as valuable contributions to the cultural heritage of a site, adaptive release allows built heritage assets to gradually become landscape features, blurring the line between architecture and archaeology by generating novel ecocultural assemblages.»

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Daniela Sandler

Daniela Sandler is an associate professor of architectural and urban history at the University at Buffalo's School of Architecture and Planning. She holds a PhD in Visual and Cultural Studies from the University of Rochester, and a professional degree in Architecture and Urbanism from the University of São Paulo. Her work examines social inequalities in the built environment, spotlighting the ways in which groups and individuals fight for more inclusive cities through the intersection of bottom-up tactics and official policies.

Sandler's book, Counterpreservation: Architectural Decay in Berlin since 1989 (Cornell University Press, 2016), investigates how Berlin residents appropriated architectural decay to engage a difficult past, resist gentrification, and create alternative housing and cultural spaces.

COUNTERPRESERVATION. ARCHITECTURAL MEMOIRS FOR THE FUTURE.

Keywords

Counterpreservation, Architectural Memoirs for the Future

«Couterpreservation in Berlin»

«The concept of counterpreservation, which I introduced in my book on Berlin, encompasses a historical phenomenon observed in post-wall Berlin, a theoretical concept with broad implications, and a practical, applicable principle. It is intriguing to discuss this in the context of Italy, as many pointed out resonances during my work in Berlin, even though I may not fully grasp the Italian context. I invite those familiar with it to share insights on what aligns and what might not.

Starting with the historical phenomenon, my fieldwork in Berlin initially focused on heritage and preservation policies in relation to politics. However, I was puzzled by the fact that people, including those I met personally, willingly inhabited buildings that appeared to be falling apart. This contrasted with my background in Brazil, where similar conditions were typically associated with poverty and lack of choice. In Berlin, individuals, often architects, designers, or artists, with comparable financial means to mine, chose to live and work in these seemingly dilapidated structures. They took pride in these environments,

Figure 1) *Decay in Berlin vs Sao Paulo, 2004, Daniela Sandler*

My question was whether the phenomenon I observed in Berlin, where people proudly inhabited seemingly deteriorating buildings, was anecdotal or widespread. Through my research, I found that it was indeed widespread and held significant social relevance. This wasn't a random occurrence; it was deeply connected to the context of Berlin, driven by factors such as the city's gentrification.

Berlin underwent a remarkable transformation, with extensive renovations, fresh paint in pastel colors, new buildings, and revamped monuments, creating what is now termed the "new Berlin." However, this process, while visually appealing, contributed to a severe affordable housing crisis and intensified gentrification. The city became commodified, touristy, and a hotspot for real estate development, investment, and speculation.

The gentrification process didn't happen overnight. It began after the fall of the Wall in 1989 and the subsequent reunification of Germany. The neglected inner city of East Berlin and many working-class or immigrant neighborhoods in West Berlin became attractive to private developers. The gentrification process, documented in the pioneer phase, involved artists, developers, and changes gradually unfolding over two decades. The areas around the former Berlin Wall, initially underdeveloped, became ripe for development. [...]

The preservation dilemma surfaced as renovations often led to gentrification. The challenge was to find a balance or separation between renovation efforts and preventing the adverse effects of gentrification. Some attempts have been made to address this issue through specific policies, but it remains a complex challenge.

In Berlin, the majority of renovations to everyday buildings, as opposed to notable monuments, were closely tied to real estate development. This tight link between renovation and gentrification led many to view both processes negatively. Those most affected were individuals involved in alternative cultures—residents of living communities, cooperatives, participants

in alternative art projects, and attendees of unconventional nightclubs and parties. Predominantly consisting of financially constrained young students who rejected traditional capitalist norms, this demographic perceived the merging of gentrification and renovation unfavorably.

In response to this perceived negative connection, these communities adopted a distinctive approach. Instead of merely showcasing decay, they actively fostered and took pride in the deterioration of their surroundings. The crumbling buildings became symbolic markers of resistance against gentrification, surpassing mere aesthetic statements. The communities engaged in a social practice, embodying alternative lifestyles and participating in political movements, notably the robust anti-gentrification movement in Berlin.

Within these alternative communities, the interweaving of aesthetics and social practices became a defining characteristic. While the term “counter preservation” wasn’t explicitly used, the communities employed this tactic to make a statement in the city. Whether through visibly crumbling facades adorned with painted signs or other distinctive markers, these spaces became urban signifiers of resistance, standing out amidst the ongoing renovations and gentrification surrounding them.

However, over time, many of these counter preservation communities faced eviction, leading to a paradoxical situation where they transformed from resistors of mainstream culture into tourist attractions. This commodification and objectification introduced contradictions into the counter preservation process. Nevertheless, it’s essential to recognize that, over 25 to 30 years, counter preservation played a significant role in shaping Berlin’s narrative. While it may have diminished in strength with the evictions and redevelopments, its historical importance and impact endure, creating an afterimage in the city’s collective memory. Despite its rarity in the present, counter preservation remains an influential concept, transcending Berlin’s specific context and contributing to broader discussions about urban

transformation and cultural resistance.

Hence, one might question whether counter preservation has failed. From a historical standpoint, I would argue that counter preservation itself was a historical phenomenon. Emphasizing the prolonged duration of 25 to 30 years for the city to gentrify—a span encompassing an entire generation—it becomes apparent that counter preservation held historical significance. For a concept to wield such importance in the city, it speaks to its historical relevance. In terms of lived experience, over this period, a generation had the opportunity to inhabit these spaces, and even those not residing in them were exposed to counter preservation. This underscores the phenomenon's importance, firmly embedding it in the city's transitional history.

Approaching this from a historian's perspective, counter preservation may have somewhat diminished and is on the decline. However, it has left an afterimage in the city. Despite its current weakened state, the memory, meaning, and political force of counter preservation persist. Observing the city and its renovated buildings, there may be a latent remembrance of counter preservation. This sparks my interest in exploring the concept of an afterimage and how we construct narratives about our urban experiences—be they individual, collective, or even akin to biographies and autobiographies of the city.»

«Counterpreservation as a concept»

«Transitioning from the historical context of Berlin, I now delve into a broader consideration of Counterpreservation as a concept. Passionate about its broader implications, I believe Counterpreservation transcends Berlin's specific postwar transformation context. Reflecting on preservation theories, counter preservation can be seen as part of a genealogy within cultural preservation. From the inception of preservation as a modern discipline, debates about conserving versus restoring, preserving patina, and maintaining the temporal pattern have been inherent tensions in the field. Thus, the roots of counter preservation are deeply entwined with preservation discourse, extending beyond Berlin to a more universal contex

[...] I trace the genealogy of the term to historical preservation theories and recent contributions from art and architectural history. I explore ideas about memory—how we process it individually and collectively—and the concept of memorialization, embodying memories into socially meaningful objects, narratives, or images. I won't delve too deeply into theoretical aspects or create a comprehensive family tree of cultural preservation. I'm excited about the kinship between cultural preservation and contemporary developments, including your work, contributions from other seminar speakers, and efforts by students and researchers at the Future Urban Legacy Lab.

Let's discuss Counterpreservation as a concept using an example, emphasizing the relationship between buildings, preservation, and time. While it may seem obvious that preservation involves time, many preservation practices worldwide prioritize materiality and space over time. They aim to stop time by restoring a building to its initial state or a significant past event. Counterpreservation, however, reintroduces time into the equation, acknowledging that the passage of time is a perpetual process, always eluding capture.

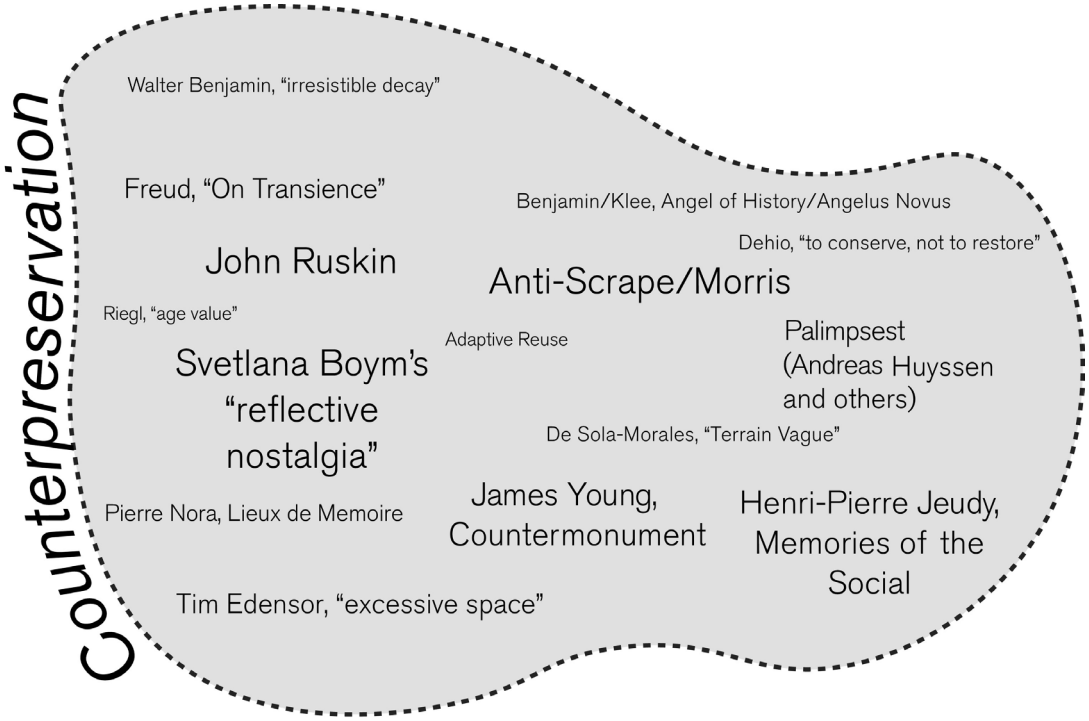

Figure 2) *Counterpreservation as a concept, adapted by curators from Daniela Sandler's presentation, 17/02/22, Politecnico di Torino.*

In the case of a specific building—a cultural center in Berlin [Haus Schwarzenberg Cultural Center]— Counterpreservation serves as a historical lens, portraying various periods in the city's history. From the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, marked by intense urbanization and industrialization, to the Weimar Republic, the Roaring Twenties, and the challenges of World War I, the building reflects the struggles of Berlin's working class. During the Nazi era, it became a site of resistance, with the owner hiring Jewish employees and protecting them. The building survived the Battle of Berlin but endured war-induced damage. In the years of division, located in East Berlin, maintenance was not a priority, contributing to its enduring state of grime and disrepair throughout most of its existence.» [...]

«Counterpreservation as a principle»

« I would discuss Counterpreservation as a potentially useful principle. Reflecting on post-book dialogues and conversations, the speaker emphasizes the evolving understanding of preservation and its applicability. While historians like the speaker can offer insights, practitioners in design and preservation contribute valuable perspectives on the practical side.

Counterpreservation holds immediate applicability for historians in understanding various global examples employing similar tactics. Recent instances, even in the speaker's hometown of São Paulo, showcase its potential, albeit not yet a widespread practice. The evolving concept of Counterpreservation sparks excitement, prompting exploration of its usefulness and transformation in diverse contexts. [...]

Another application of Counterpreservation that emerged from a conversation with a colleague, Charles Davis, an architectural historian focusing on race. He expressed how counter

preservation could aid his project on reviving the value of black architecture in the United States and African American spatial practices. [...]
Structural racism has devalued African American spaces and practices, with many lost over time. Charles uses Counterpreservation to find value in discarded aspects, connecting preservation to social narratives rather than specific aesthetics. This application of counter preservation is particularly poignant given the ongoing challenges faced by African Americans, making Charles's work about justice, racial inclusion, and envisioning a more just society in the present and future.»

«Architectural memoirs»

«[...] I propose the concept of "Architectural Memoirs for the Future." This idea, inspired by recent conversations and interactions, is still tentative and incomplete. I'm inviting you to speculate along with me on this concept. Architectural memoirs, in this context, refer to narratives connected to memories, remembrance, and storytelling, not just from the perspective of individuals but also groups and collectives.
I propose expanding this concept to include non-human agents, such as broader social forces, economic and political factors, and the built environment itself.
These memoirs incorporate human and non-human perspectives, emphasizing the role of material presence in shaping narratives. This approach aims to move beyond merely reading narratives to actively writing them, propelling ourselves into an open-ended future. As a speculative idea, I welcome your comments and questions to further develop and refine this concept.»

Francisco Dìaz
Francesca la Monaca
Giulia Montanaro
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Simona Canepa
Xiao Xiao

February - June 2022, Politecnico di Torino

02

PhD Students' Papers

Author: Francesco Díaz

PhD Student: 37th Cycle, DASP

PhD Research Title: Interrupted utopias: State Agencies under Urban Renewal

PAST BUILDINGS IN A FUTURELESS PRESENT

Abstract

Within an age that several authors have theorized as a futureless moment, the question for architects is unescapable: what to do with our projective drive when there's no telos to design for? In an attempt to get out of this conundrum, this text proposes a double move. First, to retrace our steps to the moment before we lost hope in the future. Then, and since anything we produce will deepen the futurelessness, to redesign the past instead of building the future.

Introduction

Hopelessness. That's what we felt during the last weeks while watching the news from Ukraine. We can't do anything to stop the Russian invasion. There's nothing in our hands – at a personal level – that may help change something. Moreover, we guess that the solution won't come from an epiphany on the side of the invader; instead, it seems it can only come as an answer of similar magnitude. A war to stop the war. When our only hope is such an uncivilized solution, we become hopeless.

But that feeling is not new. It's somehow the same I feel every day when I think of the fate of our planet. It's hard to think the human race will reach an epiphany and change its habits to stop damaging our habitat. At a personal level, we can decide not to have a car, kids, minimize our carbon footprint, or recycle a large percentage of the garbage we produce. But we know the solution is not personal but rather political. And that's when hopelessness arises.

That feeling is grounded. The 2021 United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report demonstrated

that global warming reached a point of irreversibility. This conclusion was reinforced on February 27, 2022, when a new IPCC report stated that "The rise in weather and climate extremes has led to some irreversible impacts as natural and human systems are pushed beyond their ability to adapt."[1] In other words, there's nothing to fix. The damage can't be repaired. At best, we can help detox the planet, but that implies halting human actions. A sort of return to Covid-19 quarantines, when only "essential" production was permitted. This possibility – the best chance we have – comes with a question to all of us, non-essential producers: what do we do in the meanwhile?

As a provisional answer, I propose a double move. First, like when we lose in a table game and have to move back to a previous position, I recommend retracing our steps to find the moment in which we lost hope in the future. Second, and considering that anything we produce will deepen the environmental crisis, I suggest a strategy to do something without making anything. That is, to keep working as architects and thinking towards the future but exerting the least possible damage to the planet.

What went wrong?

The current "futureless ontology," as Madina Tlostanova called it,[2] did not arise last week. However, already in 1977, the Sex Pistols showed their unrest singing "no future." Ten years after The Beatles released "Getting Better," it was clear that something was going wrong. The reasons behind this process are so many that going through them is outside the scope of this paper. However, we can show some groundings for this futureless condition.

In her 1997 book Voices from Chernobyl, Svetlana Aleksievich

[1] IPCC WGII, Sixth Assessment Report, Summary for Policymakers. Released on February 27, 2022., 7-8

[2] Tlostanova, Madina. What does it mean to be post-Soviet decolonial art from the ruins of the Soviet empire. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018).

wrote that "We cannot go on believing, like characters in a Chekhov play, that in a hundred years' time mankind will be thriving. [...] We have lost that future." Walking between the ruins of a failed nuclear plant and interviewing the survivors, the Belarusian journalist and writer came to the conclusion that she was actually "recording the future."[3]

Two years later, to critically assess this condition, Tony Fry coined the concept of "defuturing," which he defines as "a key characteristic of our anthropocentricity." If the "self-centeredness of our actions has come to be a defining quality of our species," Fry argues, "with the numbers that we now are [...] our self-interest has started to turn back upon itself." Thus, "we act to defuture because we do not understand how the values, knowledge, worlds and things we create go on designing after we have designed and made them."[4] In Fry's thought, the things we designed ended up designing us, but that convoluted process led us to a crisis; thus, defuturing refers to an age in which we have dug our own grave. Following this mood, English philosopher Mark Fisher wrote in 2014 that "The slow cancellation of the future has been accompanied by a deflation of expectations (…) The feeling of belatedness, of living after the gold rush, is as omnipresent as it is disavowed."[5] Three years later, he committed suicide.

Also referring to this terminal mindset, another remarkable theorization is the notion of "posthumous condition" coined in 2017 by Spanish philosopher Marina Garcés. She explains that, after a 'postmodern condition' that liberated us "from the load of the past and the alibi of the future," globalization brought "an eternal present of hyper-consumption, unlimited production, and the political unification of the world. (...) In this present, the future was no longer necessary because it was somehow achieved or in the process of being done"[6]. Thus, in a present

[3] Aleksievich, Svetlana, Chernobyl prayer: a chronicle of the future. Translated by Anna Gunin and Arch Tait (London: Penguin Classics, 2016).
[4] Fry, Tony. A new design philosophy: an introduction to defuturing. (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999), 10
[5] Fisher, Mark, Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures (Hampshire, UK: Zero Books, 2014), 8.
[6] Garcés, Marina. Nueva ilustración radical (Barcelona: Anagrama, 2017), 23.

with no future but only past, and where we can only look back, our age would be living in a "posthumous condition."
All these ideas share both the impossibility of optimism and the certainty that this process was not natural but human-made. Hence, if once there was some hope in the future that is no longer available, it follows that there should have been a moment in which things turned wrong. In other words, we have to ask, what happened between "getting better" and "no future"?

Stepping back

The late sixties were the last remnants of what we may call a modern ethos. Since then, the changes that occurred are massive and have been detailed by thinkers from the entire ideological spectrum, ranging from Daniel Bell's Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism (1976)[7] to Michel Foucault's The Birth of Biopolitics (1978)[8]. In the field of architecture, the changes were also noted by a wide range of theorists, from Venturi, Scott-Brown, and Izenour's Learning from Las Vegas (1972)[9] to Manfredo Tafuri's Architecture and Utopia (1969)[10]. Here, we can highlight some of their ideas that are key to describing the process. First, the challenge that cybernetics imposed on centralized production (Tafuri). Second, the advent of a conservative culture paired with a liberalized economy (Bell). Third, the implementation of neoliberalism, which happened through a critique to the bureaucracies that sustained the Welfare State while trying, at the same time, to take political control of the State (Foucault). And fourth, the rise of a consumerist culture that favored customization instead of massification – or, in architectural terms, pluralism instead of brutalism (Venturi et al).
In architecture, the Welfare State's brutalist structures were the main target of criticism from this new ethos. Their aesthetics and political ideals were condemned as a State

[7] Bell, Daniel. The cultural contradictions of capitalism. (New York: Basic Books, 1976).
[8] Foucault, Michel. The birth of biopolitics: lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979. (New York: Picador, 2010).
[9] Venturi, Robert; Scott-Brown, Denise; Izenour, Steven. Learning from Las Vegas. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1972).
[10] Tafuri, Manfredo. Architecture and utopia: design and capitalist development. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976). This book is the English translation of a text first published in Italian in 1969. See: Tafuri, Manfredo. "Per una critica dell'ideologia architettonica." Contropiano 1 (1969).

response uncapable of representing particular identities and free choice. And although some of those arguments hold a kernel of truth, these critiques tore down the very notion of an architecture made by the State. The demolition of Pruitt-Igoe in 1972 – celebrated by Jenks as the end of modernism[11] – was the symbol of a changing era.

However, in parallel and in different parts of the world, there were still some projects conceived under the ideals of the Welfare State. These, in my view, were the last architectures built with an idea of future. Examples like the Barbican Centre in London, UK (1962-76); the Olympiades complex in Paris, France (1969-74); or the San Borja Remodeling in Santiago, Chile (1967-76), among others, are the last witnesses of a specific moment. One in which architecture – through State agencies – still had the power to propose new city models through projects that would become fragments to build a more egalitarian society. These complexes not only gathered housing, commerce, community facilities, parks, and public spaces, but they also did it in already established areas in the city centers. In this way, they managed to offer their dwellers the benefits of good locations, along with the space, light, and views that suburban areas were supposed to provide. But beyond that, the urban structure and architectural logic of these complexes hid an underlying goal: to become the model of a new city by changing the urban fabric. Such projects aimed at establishing a rationality that could be replicated or expanded, so that the urban benefits could reach a larger population. In this way, and unlike contemporary pragmatism, these examples were ambitious and embodied an idea of the future by showing a path the city could follow.

But the changes mentioned above arrived. Briefly summarizing their effects, we can say that although some experiments to centralize production through cybernetics were made – notably in the Chilean case with Cybersyn – these new technologies aligned better with deregulation than with a

[11] Jencks, Charles. The language of post-modern architecture. (New York: Rizzoli, 1976).

centralized economy; thus, they anticipated neoliberalism, as Adrian Lahoud noted.[12] Also, under right-wing governments in the seventies, the pairing between a conservative culture and deregulated economy ended up privatizing the Welfare State apparatuses – with UK and Chile as the spearheads of this process. Likewise, the neoliberal project changed the role of the government: from an instrument to ensure welfare to a caretaker of the free market. And, within the latter, the rise of a consumerist culture replaced rights for the freedom to choose within the market's offer. The outcomes of these processes are well known: a State that ceased to build the city since the new ethos wanted to promote private investment. But investors are not interested in envisioning the city to come – unless the interest rate could make it profitable. For private investors, the future is just a question of speculating on returns.

That the postmodern ethos did not offered a vision of the future is not the big problem. Rather, as thinkers like Fry or Garcés have noted, it is what was produced under this ethos in the last decades that brought us to the current defutured, post-humous condition. The notion of "zombie technologies" proposed by Alexandre Monnin – that is, those technological products whose afterlife is longer than their operative life – is a perfect example for this.[13] Thus, besides having no vision towards the future, the postmodern ethos also affected the very possibilities of having a future.

In our own field, with the nostalgia after the excesses of starchitecture, Jorge Otero-Pailos reminded us of "an earlier, more authentic postwar architecture concerned with social welfare and paid for with public funds", stating as well that, for Koolhaas, "the deregulation of the market economy initially made it impossible to practice this sort of socially committed architecture."[14]

[12] Lahoud, Adrian. "Error Correction: Chilean Cybernetics and Chicago's Economists." In: Alleys of Your Mind: Augmented Intelligence and its Traumas. Edited by Matteo Pasquinelli. (Lüneburg: Meson Press, 2015).
[13] Monnin, Alexandre, "Zombie Technologies". Envisioning, Masterclass. Streamed live on Dec 11, 2020. Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2q0jWbmFqaU> Accessed on March 10, 2022.

Moving forward

Now, what can we do with those structures from the past in our futureless present? How can we process and absorb a future that did not happen? Leaving aside the chance of dismissing them as naïve attempts, we can look at them closely to unpack the conditions of possibility available at that moment. But we have to be aware that these conditions can't be brought back to the present. It's not only impossible to rebuild a myriad of aspects that made these projects possible, but it is also a mistake, as the teleological bias of enlightenment – that was still present in late-modern undertakings – is no longer an option. What we can do, however, is to highlight these cases and explain why they were important. Since today the arrow doesn't point towards a better future, the alternative may be to rewrite the narratives of these buildings produced in the late-modernity as a way to preserve – for the future – the ideas instead of the buildings.

The same Jorge Otero-Pailos highlighted this possibility when, quoting the Soviet preservationist Evgenii Mikhailovskii, he asserts that "the work of preservation did not involve changing architecture but changing the way that architecture was perceived," through a "continuous framing and reframing of a visitor's aesthetic experience of architecture."[15] According to the Spanish architect, artist, and scholar, "preservation's mode of creativity is not based on the production of new forms but rather on the installation of formless aesthetics to mediate between the viewer and the building."[16]

In this way, even writing a paper on a building would help change its relationship with a spectator. Knowing why a building matters, the viewer could look at it with new eyes, even in the total absence of a physical intervention to highlight it. Thus, instead of turning a building into a monument or

[14] Otero-Pailos, Jorge. "Supplement to OMA's Preservation Manifesto." In: Preservation is overtaking us. (New York: GSAPP Books, 2014), 60.
[15] Ibid., 74.
[16] Ibid., 86.

architecturally intervening to refurbish it, the most logical solution would be to research, write, and publish on it. At the end of the day, this is the most productive way of not producing anything tangible, thus reducing our contribution to the climate crisis. It is a strategy to keep working as architects and thinking towards the future but exerting the least possible damage to the planet. Also, as with any intellectual work, it is a way of doing something without making anything – a way to keep our minds occupied in this long, hopeless meanwhile.

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FACING NEW HORIZONS OF DOMESTICITY IN EVOLVING MARKET

Abstract

The evolution of China's real estate market is intricately linked to the country's multifaceted political and social transformations amidst rapid development. China's swift ascent to economic superpower status has not only fueled domestic and international trade but has also significantly impacted the lifestyle of its populace. Western influences have played a pivotal role, reshaping individuals' perspectives on domestic living.

Current trends underscore a heightened emphasis on home designs catering to dynamic and comfortable lifestyles, reflecting the rising standards driven by an expanding middle class. Dwellings now prioritize flexibility in space, furnished amenities, aesthetic appeal, and technology and privacy considerations, aligning with evolving family life needs.

However, the relentless urbanization has led to a pronounced disconnect between urban centers and rural areas, resulting in both social and environmental challenges. Government initiatives outlined in the 2013 and 2017 countryside plans advocate for village redevelopment, judicious resource utilization, and the creation of environments attractive to individuals seeking refuge from urban chaos.

In response to these directives, a burgeoning sector within the real estate market has emerged, characterized by private villas, resorts, and tourist facilities situated outside urban hubs. These developments adhere to standardized city models while incorporating elements of traditional architecture, creating a new paradigm in rural and natural settings. This interplay between urbanization, government policies, and evolving societal needs highlights the intricate dynamics shaping China's real estate landscape.

Domesticity in evolving market

China's tremendous development in recent decades has led to a major social and economic change, which in turn has changed the needs and lifestyle of the inhabitants. Needs have grown. The desire for more affluent living conditions has led to a net market response in terms of comfort, variety, selectivity, and adaptability.

Real estate trends in contemporary China now reflect not only the desire for efficiency in the home, but also the need to find renewed solutions for the design of residential spaces. Technology, sustainability, environment, and society are the hot topics in today's debate.[1]

The 21st century has led to an in-depth exploration of the topic of living with countless experiments both in the marketplace and in academia, culminating in the promulgation of guidelines for the design of residential systems.

Today's housing standards proposed by the Department of Buildings concretely reflect the dramatic change that has taken place in recent decades. Comparing the "Evaluation Method and Index System of Commercial Housing" with the average housing standards of the previous century, it is evident that newly constructed buildings "have adequately increased floor area, have improved housing functions, are fully equipped with support facilities, and have a better environment."[2]

In particular, in enunciating the housing standards, described in the document "Active Building Evaluation Standard" approved by "The Architectural Society of China" it is interesting to note that the issue of improving the environment is also taken into account, which is understood both in terms of light, ventilation, livability of the house, and in its relationship with the outside space.

This last issue in particular is the one that I consider pregnant in thinking about new proposals for living spaces today.[3]

The relationship between domestic space and the natural context

[1] Zhang Lei, Contemporary Architecture in China – Houses, translated by Yan Ge (LST Publishing House, 2013) p.3

[2] Wu Liangyong, Kim Seok Chul, China Housing 2000, Cité de l'architecture & du Patrimoine Bibliotheque, Outer-City: Creative Housing City for Bejing Area at BDA

has often taken a back seat in residential design from the post-war period to the present, in favor of solutions that would solve the problems of overcrowding in cities.

Due to dramatic urban development and population concentration, the real estate industry has experienced a dramatic increase in demand, as a result, real estate developers have found themselves having to erect more clustered housing in order to match supply to demand.[4]

From the traditional residential complexes there has been a shift to the western model, with results that are often "poor" and lacking in architectural value. The solutions are often only a superficial imitation of foreign styles, with a systematic attention to the functionalization of spaces.

This type of construction actually reflects the economic, technical and cultural conditions in the boom from the 70s. High-density housing was the answer to a strong need of the Chinese population and for this reason it was finally embraced despite the distance from previous housing models.

Certainly the race for profit and uncontrolled urbanization led to an almost total disregard for aesthetics and context in the previous century, however sustainable, cultural and modern ways of living are beginning to appear on the market now that housing needs are moving towards diversified contemporary models that are more careful and demanding in their relationship with the environment.

However, in order to understand how the current housing standard in contemporary China was achieved, it is necessary to quickly summarize the rapid changes in Chinese society in 160 of modernization, 1840 to 2000. This particular period can be divided into three recognizable phases.[5]

In the first phase, from 1840 to 1949, China underwent great change at the urban level, housing was associated with a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society. In particular, from 1840 to 1842, China was forced to open its borders, thus causing the first commercial cities to spring up. Increased in those years the

[3] Assessment Standard for Active House, 20 Dicembre 2020 (approval department: Architectural Society of China) Beijing 2020

[4] Zhu Qiana, Hongyan Li, Urban morphology and local citizens in China's historic neighborhoods: A case study of the Stele Forest Neighborhood in Xi'an, Cities,The International Journal of Urban Policy and Planning, 2017

sale of opium. The product was in such high demand as to cause the conflict which would lead to the defeat of the Qing dynasty. This was followed, over the years, by the Westernization Movement, the Reform Movement of 1890 and the Revolution of 1911. During this time, capitalist industry and commerce began to flourish, causing rapid development of both commercial and inland industrial and commercial cities, and also causing a shift in China's social structure.

The War of Resistance against Japan, which lasted from 1937 to 1945, and the War of Liberation, which took place between 1945 and 1949, ended this first period, a period of relative immobility in urban construction. The century that followed, however, brought the rise of urban housing in the modern sense. This caused changes in living patterns, housing styles and building systems.

Looking at the first thirty years after the founding of the People's Republic of China (New China), from 1949 to 1978, the socialist planned economy led to a prevalence of public housing. This period was affected not only by the People's Revolution and the Great Leap Forward, but also by the external influence of the former Soviet Union. All of this provoked continuous changes in housing policy, despite the political turbulence and economic fluctuations. While the Chinese state decided to shoulder the heavy burden of providing housing to increase social welfare, it proved powerless to monitor the deteriorating living conditions of residents.

About two decades after China adopted the reform and open-door policies, that is, from 1979 to 2000, there was increasing economic growth and rapidly developing housing reform, geared toward the emerging market and promoting housing development in Chinese cities.[6]

These years in particular saw an unprecedented market development in China, which allowed for an explosion in the construction of new residences and a significant increase in the middle class. The real estate agencies and open construction sites mirrored the post-Mao policies that had led to economic

[5] Lu Junhua, Peter G. Rowe, Zhang Jie, Modern Urban Housing in China 1840-2000, Prestel, 2001, p.38

growth and capital accumulation in the country, a sign of the nation's economic rise to superpower status.[7]
It was during those years that the modernization of the real estate sector was put on the national agenda as a major component of economic growth.
In the 1990s, the state spread the propaganda of making housing the new consumer good. These changes in the social structure, the economy, the stratification of city dwellers, and the diversification of needs led housing to change its form, moving toward a desire to meet market demands.
In the last 160 years of urban development, two major changes in Chinese housing types have emerged: the first occurred within the organization itself, where from a complex (or floor) occupied by one family, there has been a shift to diversified housing forms, dominated by multi-story structured residential buildings. This initial change began in commercial cities, later expanding gradually to other centers. It was a slow change, occurring over a period of more than fifty years, which was not consolidated until the beginning of the twentieth century. The second change came after the founding of New China when, along with the implementation of the First Five-Year Plan that took place from 1956 to 1960, standardized multi-story residential buildings were developed in cities (large, medium and small) and residential districts in mining areas.
At the end of the 1970s, the first skyscrapers were built in large cities such as Shanghai and Beijing. This was a rapid and influential change that continued into contemporary times, but although the national drive was directed towards reform and openness, promoting a diversification of housing types, multi-storey buildings remained the main form of construction.
Analyzing the evolution in both social life and political-economic visions, we can come to the conclusion that this dual trajectory has played a fundamental role, further changing people's life patterns, as well as the outward appearance of urban areas.
According to a broader view, the process of development

[6] Junhua Lu, Rowe Peter G., Zhang Jie, Modern Urban Housing in China 1840-2000, Prestel, 2001, p.39
[7] Zhang Li, in Search of Paradise: Middle-Class Living in a Chinese Metropoli, Cornell University Press, 2019, p 211

described above occurred independently of individual will, it was and still is an inevitable dynamic, occurring in a specific place and at a specific time. The two major transformations of housing typology, fast or slow, seem to have followed, through the continuous adjustments and adaptations, a fairly fluid development. Social modernization, in particular the rise of the real estate sector, can be considered as the reason for the first change, since at that time industrial and commercial owners, as well as country nobility, were looking for development opportunities, or - alternatively - took refuge in commercial areas, while merchants and workers reached urban areas, looking for a different lifestyle.

Nowadays, Linongs[8] have become part of the tradition in cities such as Shanghai and Tianjin, while the second transformation of the housing typology, on the other hand, was a direct consequence of the change in the political system, particularly the transfer of housing to public ownership. Although many complexes were occupied by numerous families and Linong housing had, jokingly, the reputation of housing "seventy-two tenants," prior to the founding of the People's Republic of China, complexes consisting of courtyards or Lilong housing were initially designed for a Ningle family. The founding of New China led the state to place a higher priority on solving the workers' housing problem; in fact, in the 1950s and 1960s, newly constructed housing areas found in areas such as Shanghai were called "new workers' villages." In light of the alternatives, a factory worker was quite happy to get a small unit of publicly owned housing. Also - during the same period - old courtyard complexes were given their first introduction in Beijing.[9]

As seen in this brief summary of the phases of the residential market, real estate development has undergone a drastic change that brings with it both improvements in the living conditions of the inhabitants and a significant loss in the population's ability for contact with the land.

When talking about traditional Chinese architecture, the

[8] According to the definition of Françoise Ged, 1989, p. 57: "A lilong is a coherent set of strip dwellings served by a network of hierarchical inner alleys. The lilong appeared within Shanghai's concessions and primarily because of the construction fever and real estate speculation that marked this city at different times, and especially in the 1860s and 1920s"

reference to the issue of the relationship with the natural and social landscape is not new. The architectural tradition of feudal China is replete with examples where sensitivity to the environment is an integral part of the design of spaces.
I find the courtyard to be an excellent example of a residence typology that embodies those values enunciated at the beginning of the paper whereby housing must take into account its surroundings.
Sustainable ways of life, cultural and modern, are beginning to appear on the market now that the housing needs are directing towards contemporary models diversified but more careful and demanding in the relationship with the environment.

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[9] Lu Junhua, Peter G. Rowe, Zhang Jie, Modern Urban Housing in China 1840-2000, Prestel, 2001, p.81

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INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE: TOOL TO BUILD THE FUTURE

Abstract

Under the leveling globalization process, cultural heritage remains an opportunity. According to Brian Graham, cultural heritage is "that part of the past which we select in the present for contemporary purposes, be they economic, cultural, political, or social." Can cultural heritage become a tool for developing more integrative and sustainable urbanism?

The psycho-physical impact of the built environment's form on our being, and how architectural form transforms into space and tactile matter, will connect architecture to the societies that created them, showcasing globally-recognized intangible cultural heritage. Architecture, particularly the built space, if understood as the result of actions aimed at or derived from construction, creates, in itself, a natural language common to designers from different backgrounds. It is capable of acting as a "bridge" between cultures and attitudes for the critical reading of design. This applies as much to tectonics in the case of analysis at the scale of the building as to morphology in the case of studies at the urban scale. It shows how the development of a built environment can be culturally integrated, providing the opportunity to plan and design socially sustainable urban development that could reconnect disjunctions resulting from the intensified development of the last decades

Intangible architectural cultural heritage: tool to build the future

Under the levelling globalization process, cultural heritage remains an opportunity.

What do I mean by cultural heritage? UNESCO defines it as "the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations". According to Brian Graham, Cultural heritage is "that part of the past which we select in the present for contemporary purposes, be they economic, cultural, political, or social", to bring it in the future. (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge 2000)

Historically, the interest in preservation is recent, it was being developed in the late 19th century in England when many historic sites were damaged by the spread of the railway network throughout the United Kingdom. (Ashbrook 2013) Soon, a campaign began in Parliament for legislation to protect the monuments from destruction. The law came to an end under the liberal rule of William Gladstone under the name Ancient Monuments Protection Act 1882. In 1877, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings was created, by designer William Morris, to prevent the destruction of historic buildings, followed by the National Trust, in 1895, which purchased estates from their owners for conservation.[1]

State production of normative and legislative bodies for governing and protecting heritage and cultural diversity has in most instances become during the time a catalyst for change. (Bendix, Eggert, and Peselmann 2012) Yet, even though they integrate a sustainable approach, involving both the built environment and local communities attached to the place for a better transmission

[1] https://www.spab.org.uk/, visited on 05/03/2022

to future generations, disjunctions constantly occur between the expectation and the results. The negative impact on the economy, the social sphere and the environment for concerned areas seem difficult to avoid. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006) Rupture in the local economic network, rapid change in living standards, the eviction of the local population, implementation of new commercial services all inevitably produce new forms of social and economic marginalization (locals vs outsiders or migrants, wealthy inhabitants vs dispossessed) and transform former lifestyles (gentrification of neighbourhoods, dislocation of residential communities, relocation of affected inhabitants to outlying neighbourhoods).

Furthermore, the rich past of legacies in both tangible and intangible heritage, are increasingly challenged due to the pressure to create new development, modern infrastructure and a better lifestyle for their inhabitants (Labaldi and Logan 2016) going towards what is called "Global Culture". A completely new cultural system, or system of culture, emerging from the diffusion of cultural values, beliefs and practices worldwide and which takes on new attributes, and becomes transformed in the process(Hexham and Poewe 1997) reating 'a single 'homogenized' system of meaning'(Tomlinson 1999), set on universally shared images and practices and thus, on an altered condition of universality.

What we call "globalisation" is a phenomenon that always accompanied the historical evolution of human beings, curious and experimenters of new techniques since prehistoric times. However, there is no doubt that exchanges and contacts are a phenomenon that in the last two centuries, and even more so in the last decades, have experienced an unprecedented intensification to reach the present day in which we speak, rightly, of globalisation. (Cronin 2003)

These topics set up some research questions: What is the

relationship between today's cultural plurality and their cultural heritage? What are the implications of transcultural models on the human condition, transformation, and hence their effects on the society that live in the built environment? What factors from the past inform these processes?

This new set of universally shared images and practices (Franklin, Lury, and Stacey 2000) disregarded human experiences, both in terms of place attachments and identity as well as everyday life practices linked to intangible heritage. Since the place is a specific space with its historical phases that sculpt its character, people are attached to their places, as the place derives its very existence from the people who shaped it over time. People adopt intangible elements that shape their personality from their place's collective consciousness (Norberg Schulz 1992) and at the same time their constructions, an essential element of a place, reflect the expression of the societies and the people who created them, showcasing that worldly-recognized intangible cultural heritage.

From the architectural point of view, and in the modern conception of space, where priority is given to the space that is revealed thanks to the movement of the subject over time, reconsidering the construction and the structural modalities through which it must necessarily be completed, bring back the inevitably earthly nature of the building to a tectonic and tactile character as well as scenographic and visual, even if none of these attributes can deny the spatiality (Frampton 2005) and the empiricism of the different architectural spatial experience based on the cultural place where it is built and lived. While Kenneth Frampton in his book "Studies on Tectonic Culture" analyzes construction methods and characteristic architectures of some countries, such as the Roman methods of brick commissures, the traditional Japanese house, up to some works by Gaudi, reflecting on some keywords such as etymology, topography and ethnography that we they

help to contextualize the built and therefore to understand it, the Danish architect Jørn Utzon, proposes in his writings "Platforms and Plateaus: Ideas of a danish architect" a series of intercultural comparisons of an empirical nature, working on the transcultural element of buildings technologies and their physical and body perceptual impact in a critical approach.

Both reveal, leaving aside transcultural elements deriving from human anthropology, that there exists a strong link between construction, the space and the human approach and perception of it derived from one's own culture. This is the manifestation of how, in addition to tangible heritage, represents from the material construction, it reveals an intangible heritage too strongly linked to the place as they incorporate cultural, social and economic conditions found in a specific context from which historical processes and needs derive.(Picon 2005)

The discourse wants to transcend the importance given to ornament, an element of cultural explanation[2], and from complex epidermal formalisms, created in contemporary design, but wants to mend a detachment between container and content, returning to as the architectural element and its composition is perceived in different ways by different cultures.

Following these reasons, globalization has to be seen as "a complex and diverse phenomenon consisting of global cultures from many different nations and regions", and no longer conceptualized in terms of the emergence of a homogenized global culture. (Crane, Kawashima, and Kawasaki 2002) Used with the indefinite article, the global culture, in the singular, somehow implies processes of cultural homogenization taking place on a global scale, rather there are global cultures in the plural, a view that accords with Featherstone. (Featherstone 1990)

Cross-cultural actions need relentless reinterpretation, rethinking and re-signification, to not be formally transposed, to have the

[2] Luis Sullivan believed strongly in the power of ornament as a symbol and vehicle of transformation.

power to create future unique transcultural identities.
How it can happen in the architecture field? Can cultural heritage become a tool for developing more integrative and sustainable urbanism?
To address the paradigm of cultural heritage as a tool of sustainable urbanism has to be involved social and cultural anthropology and heritage studies. Despite narratives on cultural heritage giving rise to social engineering, changes can be implemented via architectural and urban models and planning. The societal impacts of the uses of cultural heritage are associated with the creation of a harmonious society in urban transformation.
Operations related to culture are frequently used to diffuse new ideas and mitigate the impacts of projects within society by insisting on the continuity between the past and the future, useful to reconnect the disjunctions mentioned above, balancing urban heritage with sustainable conservations across generations and providing urban transformation that respects to living traditions and their associated identity values (Taylor, Mitchell, and st. Clair 2017; Bandarin and Oers 2015; Osborne 2010), but able to adapt to a constantly changing culture through time and cultural exchange.
The psycho-physical impact of form on our being and how the architectural form is transformed into space and the tactile matter is a concept expressed by the Neapolitan philosopher Gianbattista Vico not only in metaphorical terms but also in corporeal terms, exposing how this is part of the legacy of a species that is going through a cultural evolution with which it also identifies its own way of experiencing space and building it. (Mooney 1985)
The built space has the power to create a common language for designers with different backgrounds and cultures becoming a bridge if we read constructions as the results of actions at or derived from it. This applies as much to tectonics at the scale of the building scale, as to morphologies in the case of urban studies.

(Bologna 2019) Because, as Frampton wrote ”Architecture process a marked capacity for being experienced by the entire sensorium; that is to say, senses other than the optic nerve are involving in experiencing architecture” and “ under most circumstances, materials and surface can be as much a part of an overall perception of architecture as the presence of visual form”. (Frampton 2005)
Architects can be able to read through an existing tangible cultural heritage, coming from the past, which preserves within itself intangible architectural cultural heritage of which the building itself is an expression, and is today a readable object of how a space or a building is culturally integrated, it becomes an opportunity that gives the possibility of planning and design socially sustainable urban development that could reconnect those disjunctions given by the intensified development of the last decades.

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PhD Research Title: The Shapers of Urban Form: Explorations on Urban Coding within Urban Morphology Agency

CITY IN TIME. TOOLS TO HANDLE URBAN PAST AND URBAN FUTURE

Abstract

Aiming at exploring the involvement of Urban Coding among the main agents of Urban Morphology formation, the PhD research brings together two tools - urban codes and typo-morphological analysis - that handle the city in their individual ways; in doing so, they set different values onto the past and the future of a city, therefore establishing certain prior connections between the two portions of time.

The present paper starts from the general assumption that urban morphology, as a multidisciplinary field where history, geography, anthropology, sociology, art history, engineering, all operate analyses on the form of the cities, and bring with them their views of time, all expressed more or less explicitly through their singular tools. The observation of the two means consisted of the reading of publications focused on their origin, development, debate, which allow to draw conclusions on their ways of considering time.

These early considerations on the view of time for this work of thesis, helped raise useful questions on the nature of the instruments intended to be used - codes and typologies - and to understand their potential, limits, and relations.

Introduction

When confronted with the question of how past and future are connected in the present PhD research, not being focused on specific case studies yet, the reflection led back to the central object of observation, the city itself, and to the two instruments that manage it and that characterize this research in its assumptions: urban codes and typo-morphological analysis. Taking a position towards the past - future relation, necessarily means going through the possible positions that the instruments of such research allow, and therefore that they take or took in the past. For this reason, readings on the history and debate of urban codes, are at the base of the present text.

Urban codes and time

Codes are hard to take into one precise definition, as they vary in form, purpose, and contents. For example, when observing the Vastu Purusha Mandala (fig. 1), a traditional Indian conceptual grid for design, and the Diagrams for the Law of the Indies (fig. 2), one could not even say that they serve the same purpose of regulating forms that would eventually be built and compose

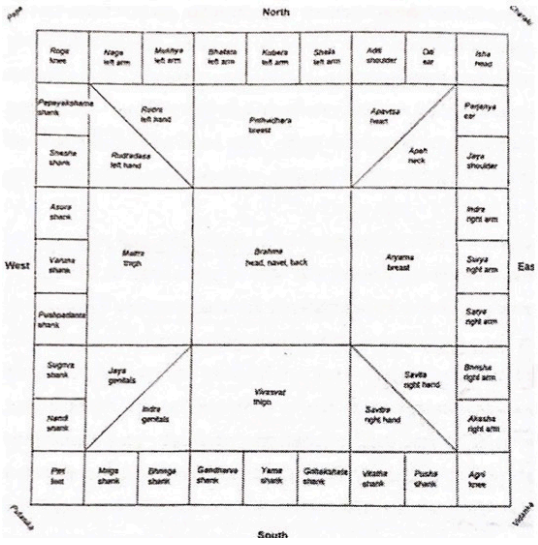

Figure 1.
Vastu Purusha Mandala, conceptual grid for design.
Source: *Sachdev, in Marshall* 2011

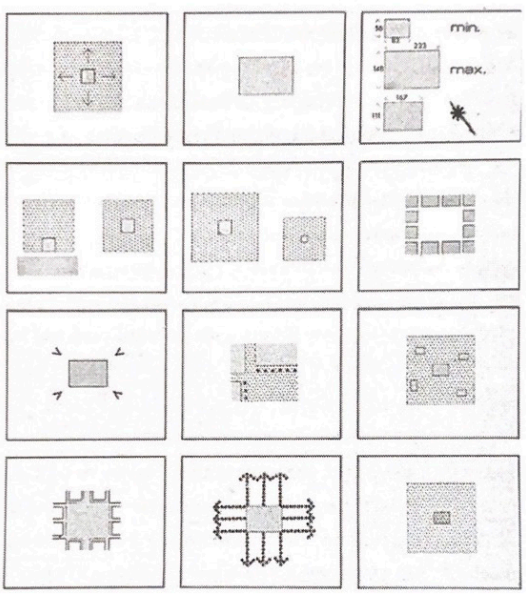

Figure 2.
Diagram of the Laws of the Indies.
Source: *Lejeune, in Marshall* 2011

cities; within urban codes fall building codes, design codes, development codes, safety codes, hygienic codes, which are all norms that generally take care of the urban realm serving its different needs (Marshall, 2011).

If one considers the wider explanation of urban codes, as the result of agreements taken by people onto the physical outcome of the city, for the need to occupy a piece of land, the history of codes on a global scale trace back to 2000 BC as Ben-Joseph shows in his timeline.

In a more European-centered perspective, Decandia (2006) finds the origin of the deliberate human action on land in the nomos, an archaic Greek concept and system that directly related the form of land to the exercise of its occupation by a subject. In this system an overall conception of the settlement's form was not present, it just consisted of placing the different parts of occupied land, close to each other in a not-so-thoughtful way. This behavior presented a profound connection of the oikos (house and family) to the land it occupied, rooting it not only in space but in time too. In fact, archaic Greeks believed in a cosmic structure that placed the Earth in between the underground Hades, home to the oikos' ancestors, and the Gods' realm above. Therefore, being present in the world and occupying it meant being the connection of the three dimensions, it meant being the

representative of your lineage in the present, and in charge of preservation for the future.

Between the VI and IV century BC this idea was replaced by Anaximander whose view of the Earth was one of realm independent and free from underground roots, therefore from the past, in which Cleisthenes re-organized Athens and its society following the political intent of providing people with a place where democracy could be exercised. He proposed a system where the family tribes were reorganized not following the blood ties, and inside areas limited by new borders (Decandia, 2006). This represents a transition from a nomos - based model to a norm - based model of settlement, one where humans are deprived of their animality, and respond to logical operations; also, this turn is significant of a rising interest towards the idea of collectivity, parallel and balanced to the interest of the individuals.

These opposites (nomos vs norms, or bottom-up vs top-down) are the two extremes among which the nature of urban regulations have swung back and forth in history; like in the later early-middle ages, when several settlements saw their local-based trade economy become stronger than central power's landowning economy, people developed independent local-based regulations whose norms derived from habits that were culturally accepted and shared within the group (Larkham and Conzen; Decandia). This individuality of settlements' formation and regulation was replaced by a top-down urban rationale with the introduction of the perspective as a man-made representation tool for the world, and successively re-affirmed by the rise of the Modern State which did not look at territories as a multiplicity of individualities, but a land onto which impose an overall ordering system.

Although the nomos and norm systems, models of the two approaches to city formation, are rooted in two opposite conceptions of the past of territory, of humans; the regulations they produce share the same attitude towards the future, as something inevitable and for which a position must be taken in the present.

Typo-morphology and time

If Urban Codes hold within them a prescriptive attitude towards reality, geared to operate in the present for the future, they may find their opposites in the typo-morphological instruments that handle the city. Widely diffused in the late-modern times through the works of Giovannoni, Muratori, Caniggia, the typo-morphological studies keep a specific position towards the history of a city, as a process which through building types affirms a past character of the city in the present.

Divergence among the field can be found in the positions expressed on the role of building type: Muratori, and his successors, insisted on the conception of the city as a living organism, and viewed building types as the "unstable and unpredictable outcomes" of the continuously developing city; opposing to the Rossi's concept that privileges the idea of type as the set of transmissible rules resulting from the "intellectual and rational competence of the designer" (Larkham and Conzen, 2014); to Rossi the type is itself the essence of architecture, that through changes allows different solutions - models - but maintains its typological nature (Rossi, 1966). A similar view to this comes from Moneo, who describes type as a theoretical framework useful to describe architecture, counter-parted by its tangible form: the prototype (Moneo, 1978).

Apart from the divergent opinions and views on type, which each establishes a different dialectic between past, present, and possible futures through its use, the typo-morphological approach is provided to urban morphology studies as a lens through which observe the existing city, mainly through its most powerful tool - the typological map - that evidently positions the field as very much focused on the present and past form of the city. In fact, a typological map, defined as the plan view of the ground floors of a specific settlement at a specific time, is by nature a descriptive tool for the city that has already been, or currently is (fig. 3). The map provides overviews on the condition of the city, on its building types, the relationships they establish with each other, relations of public and private parts of the city, the quality of ground floor's living in a place. In displaying on one single level the stratification of the city, it

cancels the portions of time and their linear succession: it offers in the present an image of the city available to interpretations, comments, analysis, descriptions, of what is the nature of the past that influenced the city inherited in the present.

Figure 3.
Rilievo murario al centro storico, Roma.
Muratori S., 1960
Fonte: shorturl.at/dkDNY

Conclusions

Urban codes and typo-morphology are two diverse tools that allow scholars and designers to handle the city, either describing it, reviewing it, or pre-viewing it. The usefulness for matters regarding the urban realm is shared among the two tools; but in their assumptions, objectives, forms, and contents, they diverge towards two different portions of time: past and future.
Codes, by their legislative nature, exist as a response to the need of organizations for the future, prescribing norms, and either allowing or prohibiting certain behaviors; they come as textual documents, not necessarily accompanied by images. While typo-morphological analysis roots its functioning and relevance in the observation of the past, describing existing and old behaviors; it bases its expression in the typological map, a solely visual tool at the same time architectural and urban. In this prescriptive - descriptive dichotomy lie the different positions the tools assume for the city in time: one predicts the city, the other records it.
It would be wrong to state that either the urban codes or the typo-morphological analysis escape from the all-encompassing

dimension that time is, by excluding one of its portions, to dive exclusively in its opposite; it would rather be more appropriate saying that they prioritize differently past and future. Codes are projected in the future but, depending on where the oscillation mentioned above is, the past is consequently considered; in the same way, typo-morphological observations are applied onto the past forms, but keeping in mind the eventual implications for the future.

The questions posed in the paper on the relation between these instruments and time, between past and future in the research, inevitably brought questions on the limits, potential, and comparisons between urban codes and building types, necessary for further exploration in the next research phases.

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PhD Research Title: Transformative Energy Morphologies

ENVISIONING TOMORROW: NUCLEAR ENERGY PRODUCTION SITES AS FUTURE LEGACIES

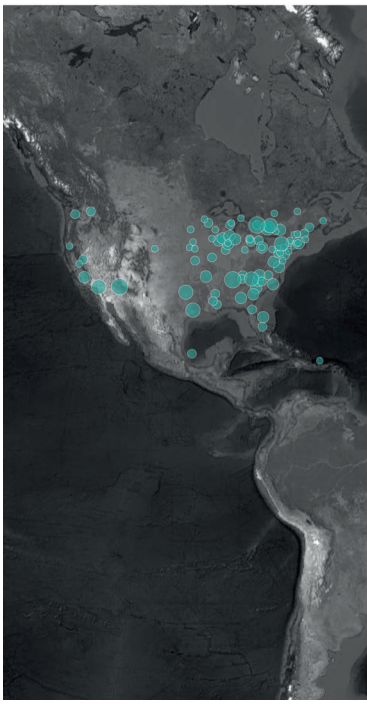
Abstract

Nuclear power plants are often poorly considered objects from an architectural and landscape perspective. The extreme functionalism that determines their shapes and sizes, the socially controversial debate that characterizes this form of energy, the fear of radioactivity and unhealthiness of the places... are all characteristics that lead to the lack of a vision for these places after their shut down.

The following paper aims to investigate the possible futures of these places. In fact, decommissioned nuclear power plants today are characterized by dismantling plans in order to return the site to greenfield status. However, the long time required, and the high costs involved invite reflection on the nature of such an operation. We could imagine if, with similar timing and costs, one could not envisage a reuse of these places, to preserve their memory on the one hand, and to take advantage of a building capital already invested on the other.

The paper investigates the current situation starting from the analysis of some case studies, and then reflects on the nature of a reuse project for these places. In this case, the relationship between past and future would be distributed over many decades, and this opens interesting considerations on the objectives that should guide the design intention.

Nuclear Plants as heritage



The inclusion of nuclear energy in the EU taxonomy for sustainable activities has increased public interest and media attention on this controversial subject.[1] Regardless of the debate about the legitimacy of this form of energy, its relevant role in the current global energy landscape must be recognized.

The multitude of nuclear power plants in thirty countries around the world (of which sixteen in Europe alone)[2] constitute an architectural and landscape heritage that is not recognized as having a positive quality value, but which, to quote Holtorf and Högberg, will constitute "part of the human legacy of the 20th and 21st centuries" for the world of tomorrow. These landscapes of energy production – energy as "the oxygen of economic life on the planet" (Colombo, 2000) – are in most cases destined for complete dismantling through a process that may exceed a century.

This paper proposes a reflection on the possible futures for nuclear production sites. The decommissioning commonly envisaged for these sites could be replaced by unexplored opportunities to conceive of nuclear power plants as a legacy to be transmitted and transformed. Through the comparison between two European power plants in the process of decommissioning, we propose to investigate the possible paths to follow for the recovery of these productive places, to make them a legacy to be handed over to the future.

The landscape in which these places are stratified becomes the testimony of an important part of human history, the history of energy in the contemporary world[3], which is a history that perhaps we should learn to know, to avoid, taking up the words of Adriano Prosperi, «to consign it to oblivion of future memory» (Prosperi, 2021).

[1] European Commission – press release, EU Taxonomy: Commission begins expert consultations on Complementary Delegated Act covering certain nuclear and gas activities, Brussels, January 1, 2022

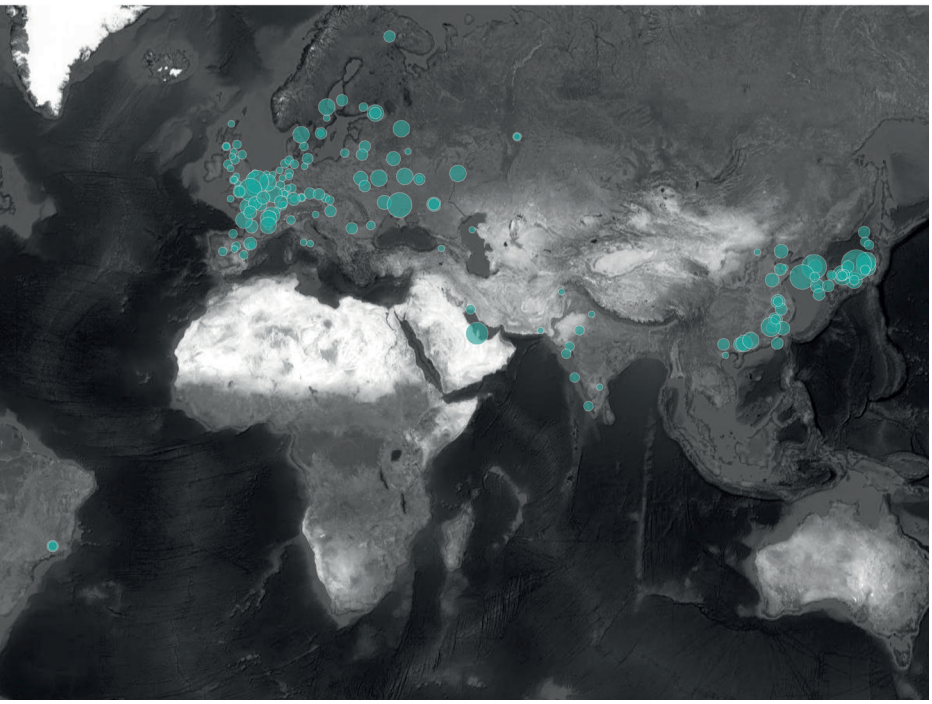
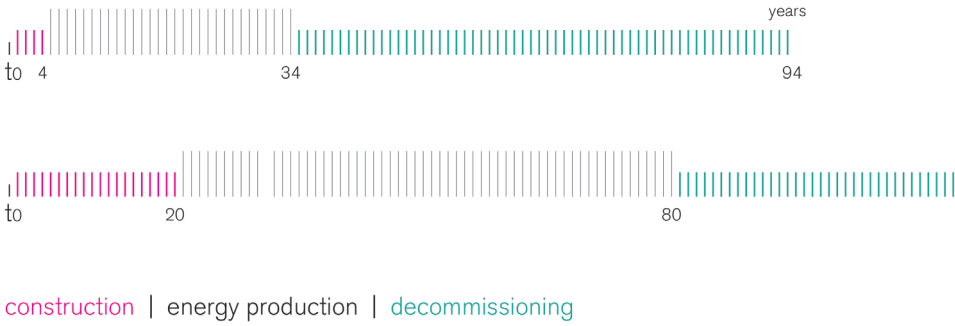


Figure 1) *Diffusion of nuclear power plants all over the world, reported by power output, author: Riccardo Ronzani, March 2022, Turin / source: www.carbonbrief.org*

Landscapes and production over time

«Every society produces its own space, a necessary theatre of economic production, social hierarchies, power, knowledge, and rituals: this is why the space of an industrial civilization is so radically different from that of a peasant culture» (Settis, 2010).[4] In this way, Salvatore Settis relates the landscape to the society that inhabits it: the dynamics that generate the landscape are not only social but also political and economic. Nuclear power plants design industrial landscapes, which in different ways remain productive throughout the life cycle of the plant. In 95%

[2] World Nuclear Association, World Nuclear Power Reactors & Uranium Requirements, datasheet, February 2022



of cases, a nuclear power plant is built in a time range of four to twenty years[5]. From the moment of entry into operation, a plant remains active for about forty years[6] (many studies propose the extension of the operation of these places up to sixty years[7]), after which it is necessarily closed for economic unsustainability and safety reasons. At this point, given the radioactivity of the now unproductive sites, the decommissioning phase begins, which involves the sanitization and remediation of materials and finally the demolition of the various buildings and infrastructure, until the land returns to greenfield status. This process of decommissioning lasts at least sixty years, and in some cases can exceed a century[8]. Two considerations follow: the first is that, unlike a normal non-operative industry, which ceases to have any function at the moment of the shutdown, nuclear power plants maintain constant functions throughout the entire cycle of closure and compulsory decommissioning. They remain workplaces from the beginning of the construction site, until the end of their decommissioning (the workers employed in the decommissioning of the four former Italian nuclear power plants are 322).[9]

[3] Vaclav Smil, Energy in World History, Routledge – Taylor and Francis Group, New York, October 19, 2000 (copyright 1994)
[4] Translation by the author - Original text: « Ogni società produce il proprio spazio, teatro necessario della produzione economica, delle gerarchie sociali, del potere, del sapere e dei riti: perciò lo spazio di una civiltà industriale è così radicalmente diverso da quello di una cultura contadina»

Figure 2) *representation of the shortes and longest possible life cycle of a nuclear power plant, author: Riccardo Ronzani, March 2022, Turin / source: AEN NEA 2006 - report*

A second consideration concerns the disproportion, in terms of years, costs and invested resources, between the energy production period and the time required for the complete decommissioning of the plant. This second issue brings out several questions about the possibility of rethinking these places today to make a heritage that will be usable again in the future.

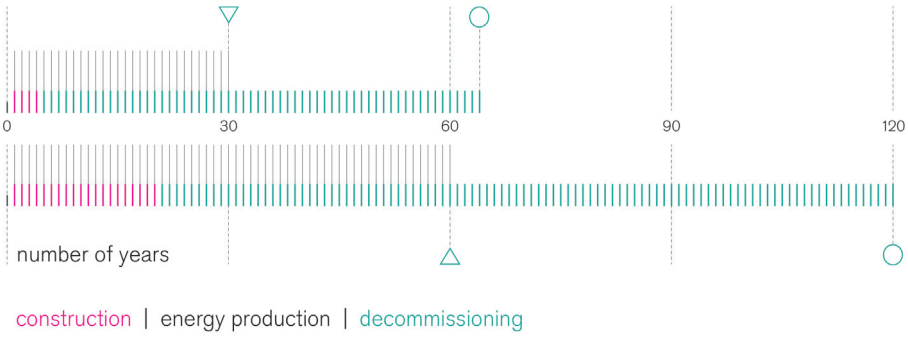
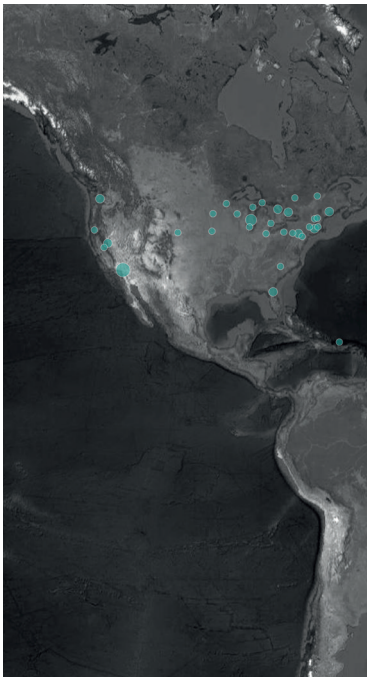


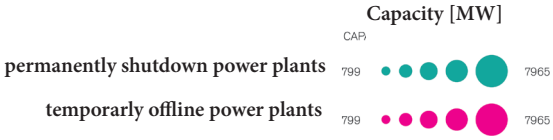
Figure 3) *comparison of the productive and unproductive period in the shortest and longest possible life cycle - the production period is about half of those of construction and demolition; author: Riccardo Ronzani, March 2022, Turin / source: AEN NEA 2006 - report*

[5] Carajilescov Pedro, M. L. Moreira João, Costruction time of PWRs, 2011
[6] AEN NEA, Nuclear Power Plant Life Management and Longer-term Operation, report 2006
[7] Eric English, Jeffrey Donovan, IAEA Data Animation: Nuclear Power Plant Life Extensions Enable Clean Energy Transition - IAEA agency – 2020
See also:
Paul Voosen, How Long can a nuclear reactor last?, Scientific America – 20 novembre 2009
[8] Nuclear Energy Institute, Decommissioning of Nuclear Power Plants, Factsheet, Agosto 2016

About decommissioning

Nuclear energy is active in thirty countries around the world, where four hundred and thirty-seven active power plants are currently deployed, and while the construction of fifty-eight new reactors is proceeding, ninety-six more are being planned.[10] At the same time, in the next decade it is foreseen the shutdown of about one hundred power plants[11], which will be added to the one hundred and ninety-nine already closed in past decades[12]. In this scenario, knowledge of these places and a strategic vision for their future is more urgent than ever.





Decommissioned power plants, in fact, continue to draw landscapes for periods that can even exceed a hundred years, especially when the necessary technical timing is compounded by a confusing lack of future planning.

This is the case of the Brennilis Power Plant in France, which began operating in 1965 as an "industrial prototype" destined to soon come to terms with more efficient technologies. Its definitive closure in 1985 triggered a political, economic and social debate that has repeatedly and cyclically opened and closed the possibility of its complete dismantling, until a last enquête publique organized between November 2021 and

[10] World Nuclear Association, World Nuclear Power Reactors & Uranium Requirements, datasheet, February 2022
[11] Giorgia Marino, Agenzia internazionale per l'energia atomica: così il decomissioning nucleare diventa circolare, in the online magazine Materia Rinnovabile, March 11, 2021
[12] IAEA-PRIS (Power Reactor Information System), Permanent Shutdown Reactors, datasheet, March 2022

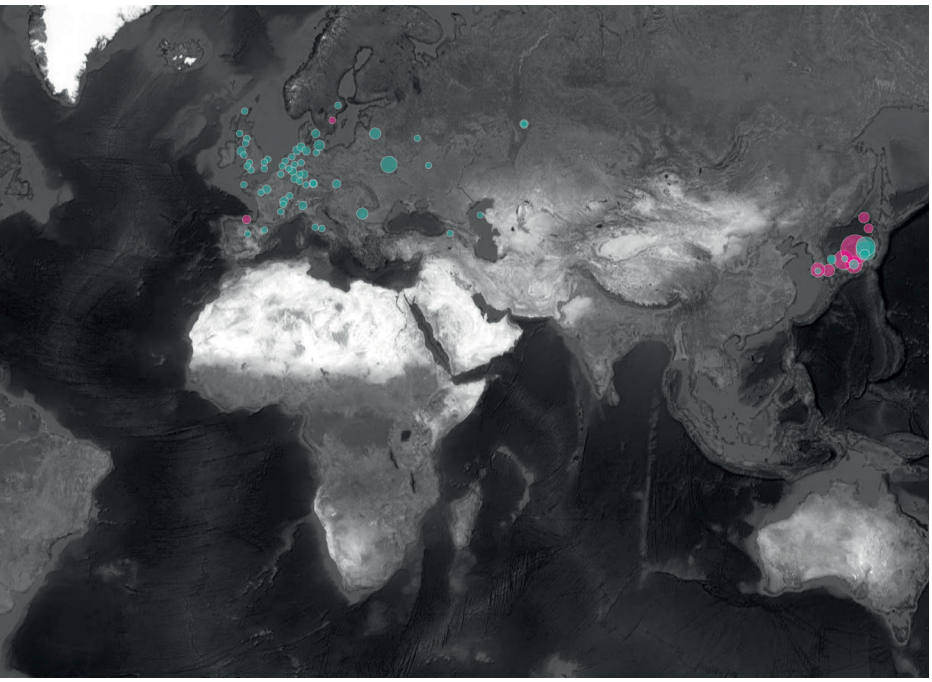


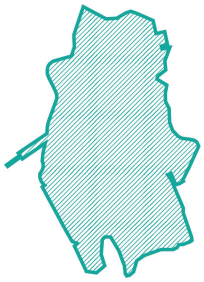
Figure 4) *Diffusion of the offline nuclear power plants all over the world, reported by power output, author: Riccardo Ronzani, March 2022, Turin / source: www.carbonbrief.org*

January 2022[13]. The future of Brennilis Power Plant has been suspended for almost forty years, and the deconstruction phase – «une étape normale dans la vie d'une centrale nucléaire»[14] – appears today as a socially and politically controversial topic, as well as economically more and more disadvantageous (the costs are increased by twenty times compared to what was originally planned[15]).

Despite the positive energy balance, the inconvenience of this operation in logistical and economic terms is a key point. The case study of the Sellafield Nuclear Power Plant (overlooking the Irish Sea in Cumbria, Great Britain) is particularly

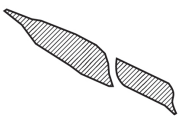
[13] Public inquiry 2021-2022
[14] EDF, Dossier de presse 2020 - centrale nucléaire en démantelèment de Brennilis, May 2020
Translation by the author: «a normal step in the life of a nuclear power plant»
[15] Christian Gouerou, Finistère. Combien va réellement coûter le démantèllement de la centrale nucléaire de Brennilis?, in Ouest-France, December 12, 2021

significant in addressing this issue.
This plant, whose reactor was shut down in 2003, occupies a territory of two hundred and seventy-six hectares[16], has more than one thousand buildings[17] and currently more than ten thousand employees[18], making it one of the largest repositories of radioactive materials in the world. The NDA (Nuclear Decommissioning Authority) has predicted a time needed for dismantling of 120 years: more than double the time of activity[19]. This is the reason why University of Manchester's Dalton Nuclear Institute has considered the possibility of proposing possible alternative scenarios for this site. Back in 2007, the NDA commissioned a renowned engineering firm to conduct a feasibility study[20] to transform the Sellafield site into an industrial tourism attraction in about a hundred years. The study also included the possibility of configuring the site as one of the first attractors of a real nuclear energy tourism. What is evident in the case of the Sellafield power plant is that such a strongly anthropized territory has the potential to generate development possibilities other than simple

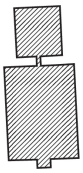


Sellafield

San Pietro



Ile de la Cité e Ile Saint-Louis



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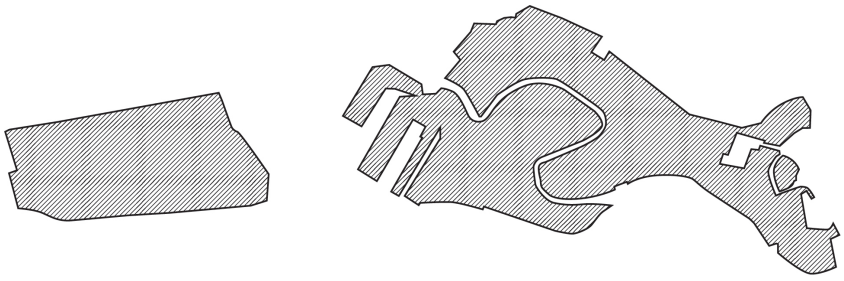
[16] Government commission, SDP factsheet Sellafield – GOV
[17] Sellafield Ltd, annual report 2017-2018, retrieved Sept 2019
[18] Sellafield nuclear decommissioning work 'significantly' delayed and nearly £1bn over budget, report reveals, in The Independent, December 15, 2019
[19] National Audit Office, The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority: taking forward decommissioning, London, January 2008
[20] NDA (Nuclear Decommissioning Authority), Calder Hall Nuclear Power Station Feasibility Study, 2007

dismantling. Abandoned industrial sites have generated and are generating very different solutions in contemporary times: from adaptive reuse hypothesis, with minimal interventions to ensure new functions and the satisfaction of new requirements[21], to the exaltation of post-industrial landscape and Industriekultur (industrial heritage) as, for example, the Landschaftspark in Duisburg, Germany[22]. Despite this, the sites of energy production (especially nuclear) are often destined only to be dismantled, even when their presence, their morphology, and their consistency, could on the contrary open up a series of potential future scenarios of reuse.

«Patterns of intention»[23]

Nuclear sites, although characterized by buildings with iconic and futuristic shapes (from spherical reactor buildings to hyperbolic cooling towers), are designed and defined for essentially functional purposes. To borrow a concept well



Hyde Park *Venezia*

Figure 5) *Shape and size of the Sellafield nuclear site, compared with some famous orographic or architectural-urban features, author: Riccardo Ronzani, March 2022, Turin*

[21] Matteo Robiglio, RE-USA. 20 american stories of adaptive reuse. A toolkit for post-industrial cities, Jovis Verlag GmbH, Berlino, 2017 / Page 169
[22] Caitlin DeSilvey, Curated Decay. Heritage beyond saving, University of Minnesota Press, 2017 / Pages 99 and onwards

expressed in the past by Michael Baxandall, the shape of these places derives little from intention, while it derives much from what he calls «binding causes», those causes that define the program (Baxandall, 1987). These same buildings inherently possess transformative potential for future uses; possible scenarios range from ruin preservation to full adaptive reuse.
However, one consideration must be made. Places designed today, at the beginning of the decommissioning process, will see the light of day at the end of the process, which takes at least fifty if not a hundred or more years. It means, ultimately, designing with an intention, as Baxandall would call it, but for a future context that will have potentially entirely different "binding causes." The need is to be designer-futurologists, in a way, by designing in the present an object for the future world. It is true that every architectural project looks at the future as a time horizon, but this case is different: it is no longer a matter of designing a place that from today will live until tomorrow, modified by the action of the people who will inhabit it (as Heidegger understands the term inhabit[24]), but instead it means designing today a building that in tens if not hundreds of years will be delivered into the hands of future generations. It means designing a place that the designers themselves will probably never see completed.
As described by the diagram, the lens constitutes the moment when «past and future are preceived based on certain assumptions about pasts and futures» (Holtorf and Högberg, 2021). All of us obviously stand at that midpoint, and with that lens we look at the past and imagine the future.
Ours is, in most cases, an interpretive attitude. The design intention, in the case of nuclear power plants, would mean transforming the present moment from a lens for observing into a set of telescopes for projecting towards all possible futures and envisaging development scenarios. That is, from the stasis of

[23] Michael Baxandall, Patterns of Intention: on the historical explanation of pictures, Yale University Press, London, 1987
[24] Martin Heidegger, Costruire, abitare e pensare, in Gianni Vattimo (curated by), Saggi e Discorsi, Edizioni Mursia, Milano, 1976

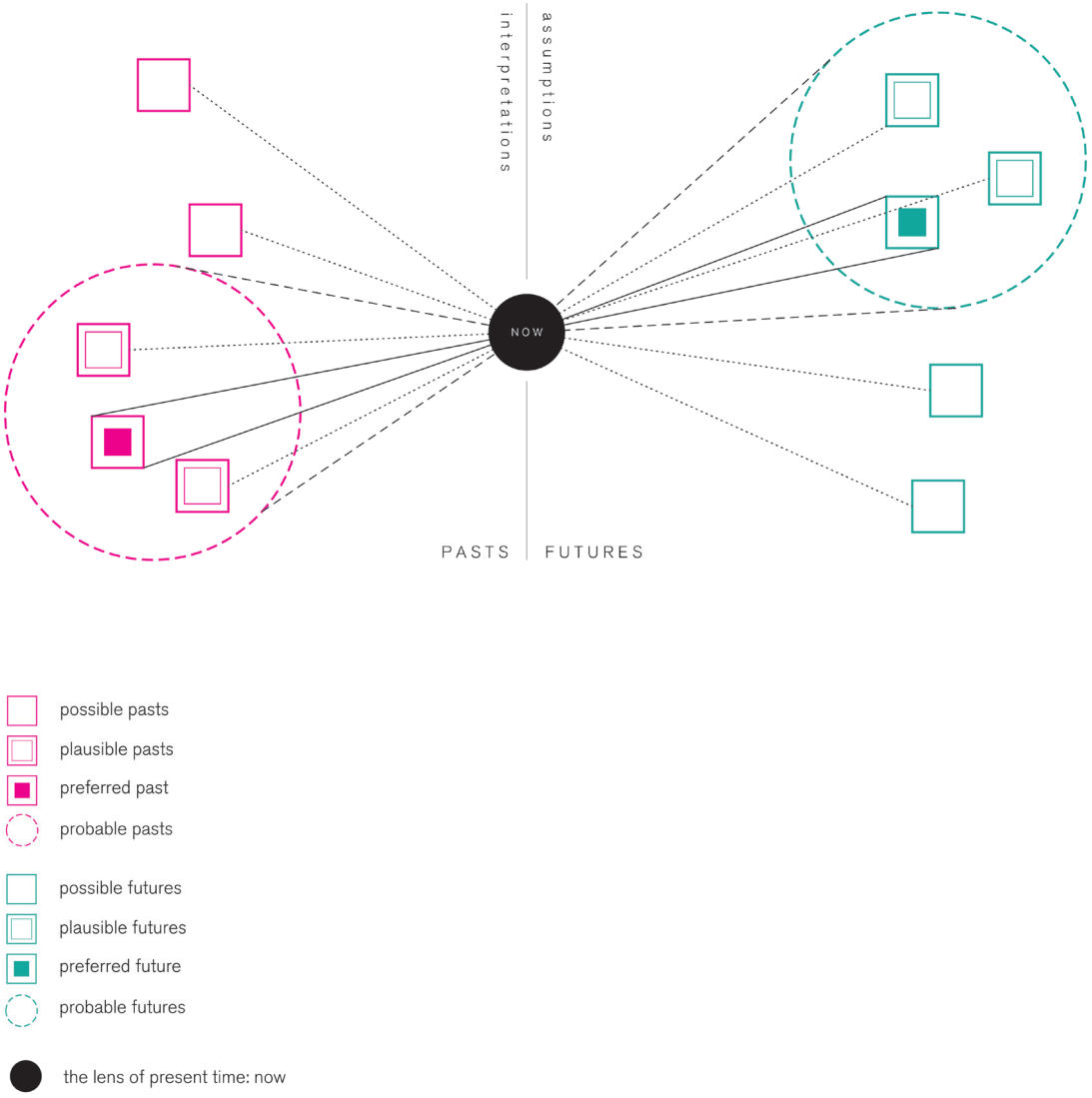


Figure 6) *Schematization of "how the lens of the present affects the narrative of the past" and assumptions about the future, author: Riccardo Ronzani, March 2022, Turin (based on original graphics by Stephan Magnus)*

observation it is necessary to come alive with the will to move, to leave the present and try to oscillate between past moments and expected futures. In this action of understanding the futures that may occur, the project should be configured as a flexible platform, open to all possible futures and moving away from the idea that there are necessarily probable ones. Otherwise, the risk would be that of proposing projects in dialogue with futures that, in the end, might never come true. From a more operational point of view, perhaps it would be interesting to revisit the concept of Adaptive Reuse. It would not only be a matter of adapting a place, with the minimum of possible interventions, to the needs of a new present, but rather of adapting a building in the present to make it in turn adaptive to a series of possible future requirements. From this point of view, the ability to conceive adaptable, modifiable, flexible solutions acquires even greater importance than the current situation.

Conclusion

At the end of this brief writing, we would like to emphasize the need to imagine possible futures for shutdown nuclear power plants, capable of preserving the evidence that these places represent on the one hand, while on the other hand capable of offering a response to future needs and requirements. Such projects, developed in the present, capable of mobilizing substantial capital, are aimed at the future, and will be usable for generations to come. «The question is not how to create a long-term strategy based on our-own perspectives and perceptions of the challenges. Instead, we need [...] to create a long-term strategy that appreciates what will happen in the future nows» (Holtorf and Högberg, 2021). The objective of those who are called upon to rethink these places is to recognize the legacy to be handed over to the future, preserving and enhancing it,

opening up the possibility for the future itself to recognize a potential use for the needs of the future. We will therefore speak of flexible, adaptable, long-term projects, open in some way to novelty and change. It would be dangerously inconclusive to turn the lens of the present into a viewfinder, focused on a specific future direction, especially for projects so projected in time. As Holtorf and Högberg remind us: «planning for the future thus requires a new approach» that avoids the unsuccessful will to forecast and instead proposes an attempt to become part of a world whose essential characteristic is continuous change.

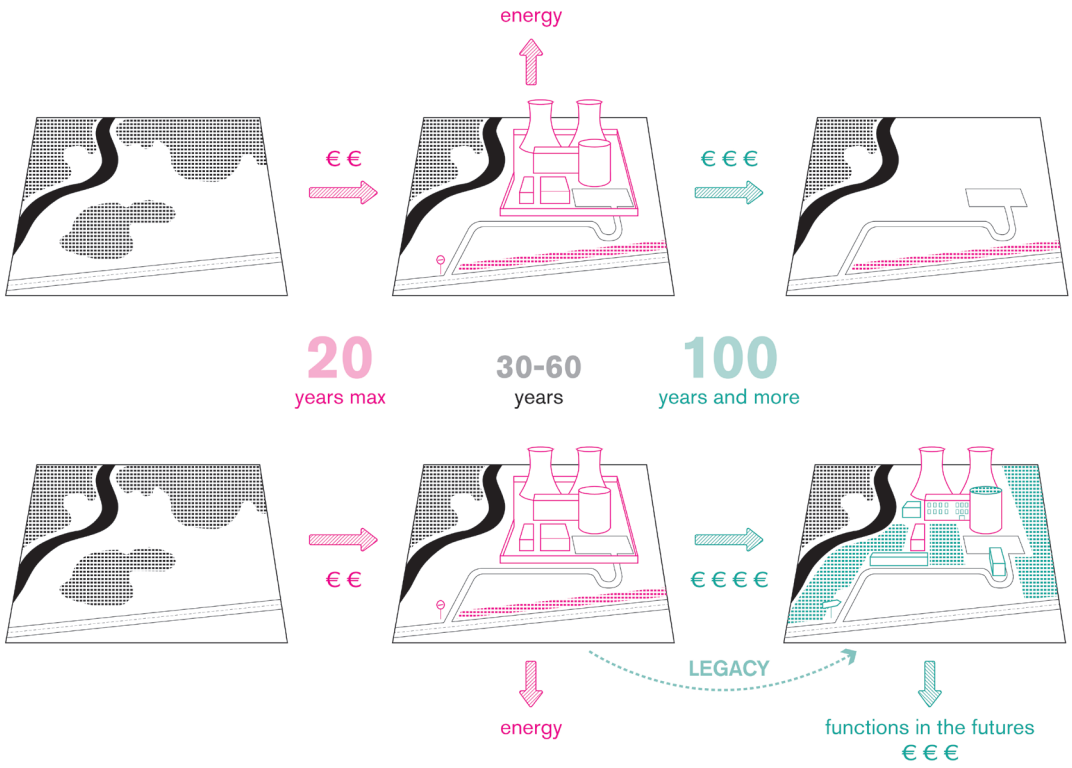


Figure 7) *Representative diagram of the life cycle of nuclear power plants: state of the art and potential, author: Riccardo Ronzani, March 2022, Turin*

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PhD Research Title: Prison as a place of rehabilitation

DECLINATIONS OF PRISON FROM PAST TO FUTURE

Abstract

Over the centuries prisons have been and still are the place where people lost their personal freedom. In the past, imprisonment had a strictly punitive character: it was the place where prisoners served their punishment, often in inhuman conditions precisely because guilty. In more recent times, legislators achieved improvements for the condition of inmates, transforming the prison into a place of rehabilitation leading to the reintegration into civil society. Many complexes have lost their original function over time: some have become places of memory of a past that should not be forgotten, others have been converted to new uses compatible with the original structure.

Introduction

Prisons have ancient origins, and can be said to have originated with the birth of cities. Until the middle of the 18th century, imprisonment was a way of preventing the accused from evading punishment while awaiting conviction or execution: prison was therefore not a purpose-built place of detention, but a building usually close to the court. From the middle of the 18th century prison became a place of detention and acquired social importance, because deprivation of liberty had become the predominant penalty for offenders. The first modern prison model was theorised at the end of the 18th century by Jeremy Bentham, who proposed the Panopticon: the prison design was arranged in a circle shape with an observation point located in the centre and cells organized in tiers; in this way few jailers could control many inmates. From this shape the architectural structure consisting of arms or radius and roundabouts derived. At the end of the 19th century the so-called telegraph pole model was proposed, where parallel blocks were connected by a central corridor forming courtyards closed or open on one side only. Both types are still in use today.

Prisons from past to future

The concept of place of memory was defined in the 1980s by the French historian Pierre Nora: «A lieu de mémoire is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community»[1]. The place therefore enables memories to be preserved and passed on and prevents certain situations or events from being forgotten. Referring to the prison type, these are generally buildings, not necessarily characterised from an architectural point of view, which bear witness to the anguish experienced by prisoners who knew they were far from everyone and everything, made famous by books and moovies, such as the Alcatraz prison across the bay of San Francisco, or because these places represented a fundamental part of the men's lives who in prison continued to struggle for their ideas.

In the suburbs of Berlin, since 1994 it has been possible to visit a complex that after the Second World War the Soviets used as a jail for Nazi prisoners or those supposed to be. The strongest part of the visit is the U-Boot: an armful of damp, windowless underground cells in which there was only a wooden bench and a bucket. In 1951 the prison was transferred to the German Democratic Republic which used it until the end of the 1950s when it was replaced by a new building in which psychological torture partly replaced physical one: prisoners lived here in total physical and sensorial isolation until the fall of the Wall in 1989. Visits are often carried out by former prisoners who give clear feelings of the atrocities they suffered.

The same is true of Robben Island prison off the coast of South Africa. The building was used in the 20th century as a prison for political prisoners at the time of apartheid and owes its notoriety

[1] Nora, Pierre. "Preface to the English-Language edition" in Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past, ed. Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xvii.

in the world because Nelson Mandela was imprisoned there from 1964 to 1982: the years spent in cell number 5 and in the stone quarries were told in his autobiography.
These examples tell stories of pain: the stories speak through small cells, long corridors, narrow slits, few furniture, writings on the walls, but all strongly full of meaning; emotional stories that want to remind those who visit these places the pain which prisoners had to suffer.
Prisons are today included in the so-called dark tourism[2], a term coined by John Lennon and Marc Folley in 2000 and taken up shortly afterwards by Philip Stone to indicate that particular category of tourism that leads to visiting places of tragedy and coming into contact with an intangible dimension of suffering, pain and death.

Prison and reuse

Adaptive reuse is the process of reusing an existing building, but we can also refer to a site, which has lost the function it was designed for, by adapting it to a new use and purpose. The process of building adaptation is a practice that has its roots in past centuries, but it was not until the 1970s that it became a reality: it came to establish itself as a creative discipline in its own right with a philosophy or a theory behind it»[3] with different approaches and models of intervention.
Prison buildings are not limited to housing units - in fact, prisons feature an array of spaces that have great potential for reuse including buildings for training activities, office buildings, relational areas and large outdoor spaces. These elements offer a wide variety of real estate for new uses, and cities around the world have begun to discover their potential and there are several examples.

[2] Stone, Philip, "A Dark Tourism Spectrum: Towards a typology of death and macabre related tourist sites, attractions and exhibitions" Tourism: An Interdisciplinary International Journal, 54, no. 2 (2016), 145-160. https://works.bepress.com/philip_stone/4/
[3] Plevoets, Bie, and Van Cleempoel, Koenraad. "Adaptive reuse of the built heritage". (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 16-23.

I'd like to start with a former 19th-century prison redesign as a hotel in Offenburg, Germany[4]. The first stage of the jail's adaptive reuse joined the prison's two historic wings, originally separated, together thanks to a new light-filled atrium with soaring glass ceilings and walls which now houses the restaurant and the living space with a mezzanine-level lounge overlooking it. The brick structure's internal spaces were transformed into a place for stay and relax. The hotel hosts 38 bedroom suites which have been set inside the former inmate blocks: some cell walls have been knocked through to create suitable guestrooms. It's easy to find traces of the buildings past: many of its extra-thick brick walls and steel doors have been retained. The old cell doors, for example, were reused, not as actual room doors but as features next to them, to remember the former function. Similarly the old window bars have been incorporated into mirrors in the bathrooms.

The prison in Hassel, Belgium, built in 1859 closed its activity in 2005. Its design took inspiration by the tipology of the panopticon with five arms and an observation point in its centre. It was organized in 58 cells back to back facing on small corridors. The transformation of the building came out through a competition won by noArchitecten[5]: their design proposed the restoration and extension of the former prison plus the proposal of two new buildings for the Faculty of Law and the Rector's Office of Hasselt University. The star shaped composition of the prison building with its many lateral corridors made it possible to fit two auditoria and a cafeteria into the outdoor areas between the wings. The centre of the panopticon serves as a hall and the former prisoner cells host individual rooms for students. The redesign of the building includes several entrances and exits, squares, streets, courtyards connecting the pre-existence with the new functions.

[4] https://www.hotel-liberty.de/en (access: 03-03-2022).
[5] https://noaarchitecten.net/projects/5/041-city-campus-hasselt-university (access: 03-03-2022).

Figure 1) *Liberty Hotel: connection between old and new, Jürgen Grossmann, 2017, Offenburg, Germany (©Liberty Hotel source https://www.hotel-liberty.de/en/)*

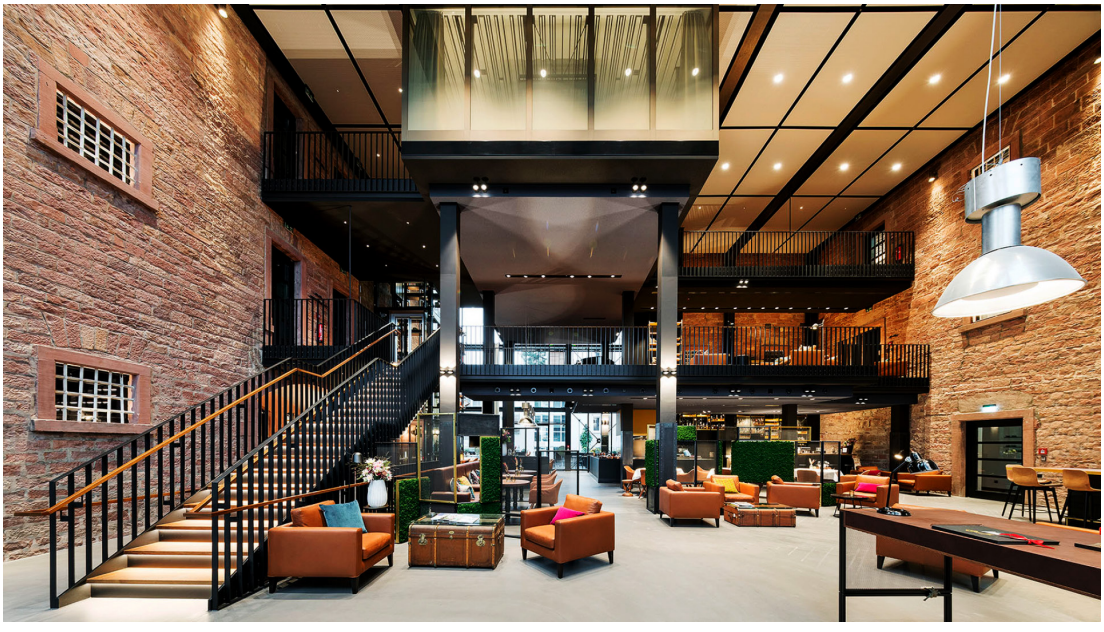

Figure 2) *Liberty Hotel: interior of the new glass building, Jürgen Grossmann, 2017, Offenburg, Germany (©Liberty Hotel source https://www.hotel-liberty.de/en/)*

Figure 3) *Liberty Hotel: room corridor, Jürgen Grossmann, 2017, Offenburg, Germany (©Liberty Hotel source https://www.hotel-liberty.de/en/)*

Figure 4) *Hasselt University: aerial view of the former prison and new additions, noArchitecten, 2015, Hasselt, Belgium (© Uhasselt source https://noaarchitecten.net)*

Figure 5) *Hasselt University: access corridor to auditorium and study cell, noArchitecten, 2015, Hasselt, Belgium (© Zim Zwarts source https://noaarchitecten.net)*
Figure 6) *Hasselt University: a former prison cell turned into a study cell, noArchitecten, 2015, Hasselt, Belgium (© Zim Zwarts source https://noaarchitecten.net)*

The Murate complex[6], rebuilt several times in its history due to floods and fires, was the men's prison of the city of Florence for more than a century (1883-1985), but it was born in the 15th century as a convent, later transformed into barracks. In the 1990s, the municipality of Florence, having become the owner, began a project of urban reconversion under the supervision of Renzo Piano that transformed it into a new centre for the city through different steps. Given the size of the complex, it is almost a district within the city, and the transformation was intended to emphasise its multifunctional nature, with particular attention to social housing

[6] Gensini, Valentina. "Le Murate: esperienza di riappropriazione" in Patrimoni inattesi Riusare per valorizzare. Ex-carceri pratiche e progetti per un patrimonio difficile, ed. Lanz Francesca. (Siracusa: LetteraVentidue, 2018), 167-185.

for young couples and services for young people and workers; it is also a centre for the contemporary art, where shows, exhibitions, meetings, conventions, and opportunities for exchange, comparison and cultural growth among different cultures are held.

Figure 7) *Le Murate: a new public square surrounded by the restored buildings of the former prison, E.R.P. Office of the Municipality of Florence, 2014, Florence, Italy (© Comune di Firenze, source https://cultura.comune.fi.it/leMurate)*

These few example show how it is possibile to transform entire complexes into new vital functions for the city and the area they belong to without consuming land use: the discipline of adaptive reuse allows buildings to be reborn and this is particularly significant when they represent a cultural heritage value.

Prison and rehabilitation

Prison is the place where inmates serve their guilt. The concept of punishment has changed over time, and so the prison should also have adapted its spaces to meet the new prisoners' prospectives. The design of quality spaces such as bright, harmonious in size and well-proportioned in the organisation of functions., can be a valid support in the re-education and rehabilitation of the inmates. In this sense, many European countries have implemented projects in which efforts have been made to encourage interaction between staff and prisoners, to reduce conflict, and to foster internal sociality.

Halden Prison in Norway designed by Erik Møller Arkitekter + HLM arkitektur has been featured as the world's most human prison in the pages of The Guardian[7]. Opened in 2010, each block houses 10-12 cells, each equipped with a television, refrigerator and barred windows to allow more light in. As well as kitchens, prisoners have communal areas for physical, creative and educational activities. The facility boasts amenities like a sound studio, jogging trails, a climbing wall and a freestanding two-bedroom house where inmates can host their families during overnight visits.

Great importance is concerning to the spaces devoted to conversation with family members, where inmates can reappropriate, even if only temporarily, the concept of family. At the Lorusso Cotugno Prison in Turin in 2015, an open-air meeting space was designed for conversation among inmates with family members and inmates with minor children[8].

[7] Gentleman, Amelia. "Inside Halden, the most humane prison in the world", The Guardian, May 18, 2012. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2012/may/18/halden-most-humane-prison-in-world (access: 08-03-2022).

[8] The project was led by Spaziviolenti student team from a joint idea of the Departments of Architecture and Design of Politecnico di Torino and Law of University of Torino under the supervision of professors of both departments.

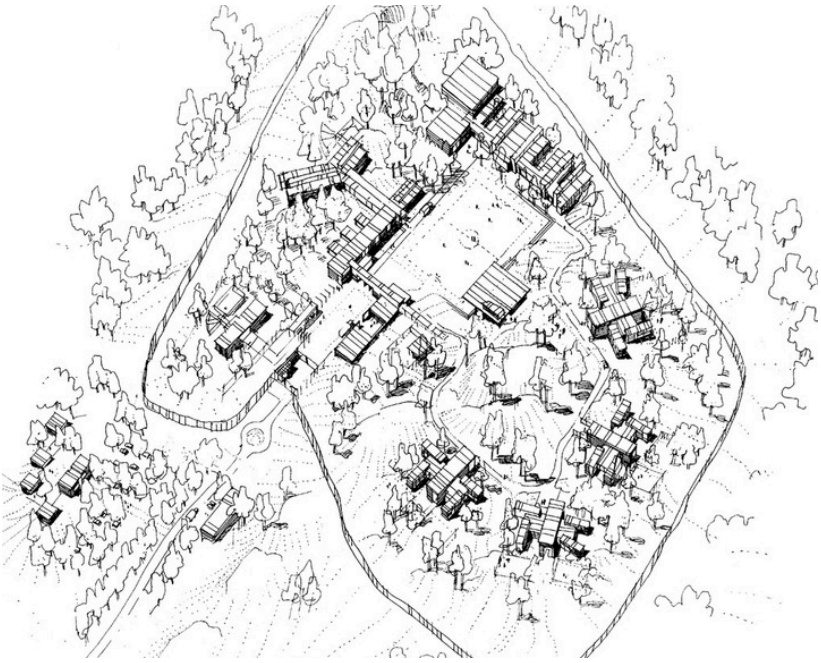

Figure 8) *Halden Prison: sketch of the complex inserted in the forest landscape, Erik Møller Arkitekter + HLM arkitektur, 2010, Halden, Norway, (© Erik Møller Arkitekter source https://www.archdaily.com/154665/halden-prison-erik-moller-arkitekter-the-most-humane-prison-in-the-world)*

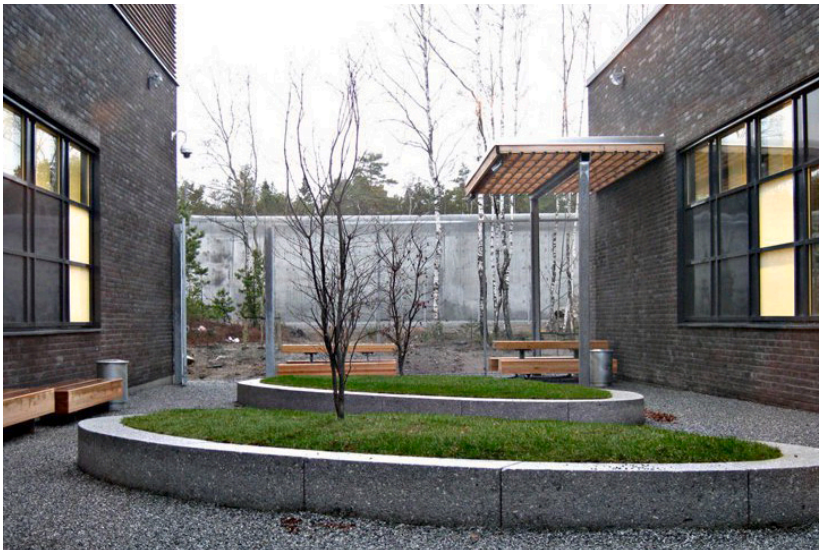

Figure 9) *Halden Prison: open air courtyard between the blocks, Erik Møller Arkitekter + HLM arkitektur, 2010, Halden, Norway, (© Erik Møller Arkitekter source https://www.archdaily.com/154665/halden-prison-erik-moller-arkitekter-the-most-humane-prison-in-the-world)*

Figure 10) *Lorusso Cotugno Prison: open-air meeting space with some of the equipment made by students and prisoners, Spaziviolenti student team, 2015, Torino, Italy (© Spaziviolenti source https://spaziviolenti.wordpress.com/)*

The unused area of about 1000 sqm. was equipped with eleven conversation areas and a playground for children. Each meeting place is shaded by a system of movable fabric curtains and is equipped with modular seating and tables arranged in different patterns. The children's games are scattered among the adults places. All furniture were realized by students and inmates in a process of participated design using recycled materials found in the prison structure.

Conclusion

We have seen how prisons, with their high walls that defined a real and symbolic enclosure of loss of freedom, with the cramped spaces of the cells, where light was little more than a mirage, where humidity was breathed and where the writing on the walls accompanied the passing of the prisoner's time, are opened to the public to bear witness to an often cruel reality: prison is transformed into a place to visit in order to know, to know in order not to forget and maintain the memory of what it was.

At the same time, the typology lends itself to different types of refunctionalisation which could help to preserve the historical value of the building, in some cases with the mere transformation of the interior spaces to the new destination, in others by inserting new blocks functional to the new activity installed.

We must not forget that the prison must still fulfil its primary function, but it must do so bearing in mind that it must prepare prisoners for reintegration into civil society at the end of their punishemet. It is therefore necessary that the private space of the cells, the common spaces and the meeting places with the outside world would be equipped with the right features to guarantee physical and psychological well-being for prisoners, operators and family members, because it has been shown that repressive prisons do not work and that treating prisoners humanely boosts their chances of reintegrating into society, so tranforming prisons mean transforming futures.

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PhD Research Title: Mathematics of Urban Morphology

RECREATING COLLECTIVE MEMORIES TO INVENT THE NEW PAST

Abstract

China is in the process of urban renewal from micro-scale to large-block scale. There are indeed some blind-spot areas in the city where they leap from the fringe to the centre of the region, yet the infrastructure and other services there cannot support their central positions. This paper focuses on this certain phenomenon, and plan to address this problem by a design project, which utilizes the methods of collage and morphology to restore a potential urban heritage building.

Introduction

What links past and future? Possibly, recreating collective old memories of people and buildings is a good way to represent the identity of these buildings and thus create the new past. The new past is also a kind of future.

In China's urban renewal process, some urban areas and spatial types that have been neglected in the conventional sense, have become the focus. How to find new possibilities for those areas and buildings that are lagging in development or gradually decaying for various reasons, is a question.

Background

The (New) Da Jing'an District has initiated a new phase of urban design subsequent to the removal of the Zhabei and Jing'an districts. Following the merger, the areas along the Suzhou River have transitioned from marginal zones to core areas, presenting challenges and opportunities for developmental capacity, urban function conversion, renewal, and transformation. Within this context, the leapfrog development of the Suzhou River areas, progressing from peripheral to central spaces, has brought to light neglected urban areas and spatial types, forming blind spots within the city.

Specifically, these blind spots encompass areas and structures that are lagging or decaying for various reasons, existing buildings that have not reached the end of their useful life and are poised for functional conversion in the new development process, and infrastructure that is "misused" or "misapplied," among other aspects.

The project focuses on the "one river - two sides" area, spanning from North Henan Road in the east to the Suzhou River district boundary in the west and from Tian Tong Road in the north to Wuding Road in the south. The site is situated at the intersection of Haifang Road and Jiangning Road, with a particular emphasis on the Jingjiyuan Primary School within the site.

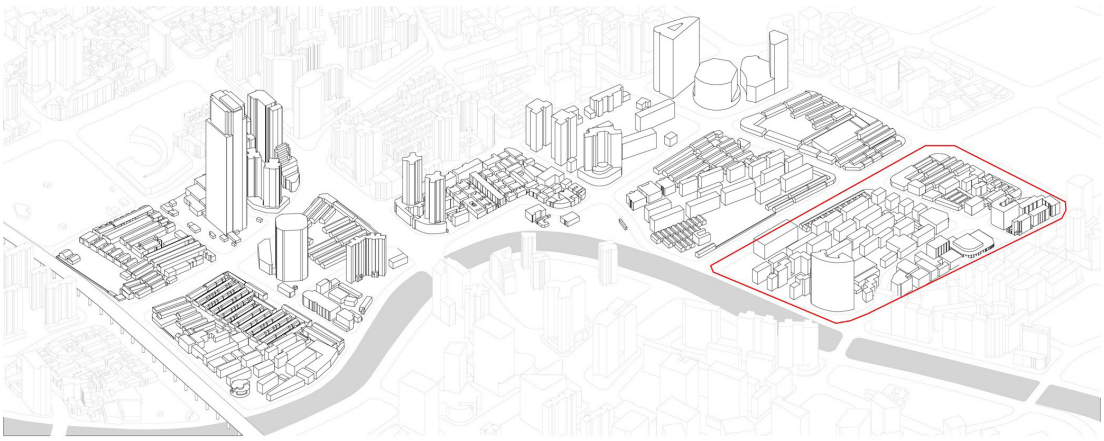

Figure 1) *Axonometric Image of the site, Xiao Xiao, February 2022, Turin*

This teaching building was built in the 1960s and was seismically reinforced in the 1980s, with a distinctive and well-preserved façade (Figure 3). In the next few years, the elementary school will move to a new campus two blocks away, and the building itself will be left unused, which can become an urban architectural heritage. This paper will focus on how it can be transformed adaptively in the unique urban renewal process.

Methods

Method 1) Collage, It refers to the multitude of ways in which things or phenomena coexist, acknowledging and utilizing differences between them. These differences can be merged through techniques like superimposing, juxtaposing, and collocating, resulting in the formation of a new whole.

Collages, depending on the chosen materials, can yield various visual and spatial effects. For instance, valuable image materials, extracted from original photos, can be creatively used to construct and organize new images, depicting spatial scenes, as seen in Hamilton's interior collage (Figure 4). Alternatively, architecture can be viewed as a film, employing cinematography to connect different parts of the architectural space. Cinematic framing, sequencing, turning, event sequences, and superimpositions are applied in Bernard Tschumi's Parc De La Villette. Another approach involves adding virtual elements to a work that may be temporarily or never built. This transcends the time frame, eliciting memories of ancient times and foreshadowing future ideals. This "re-collage" of virtual foundations serves as a tool for architects to express emotions and thoughts, akin to Giovanni Battista Piranesi's "Prison."

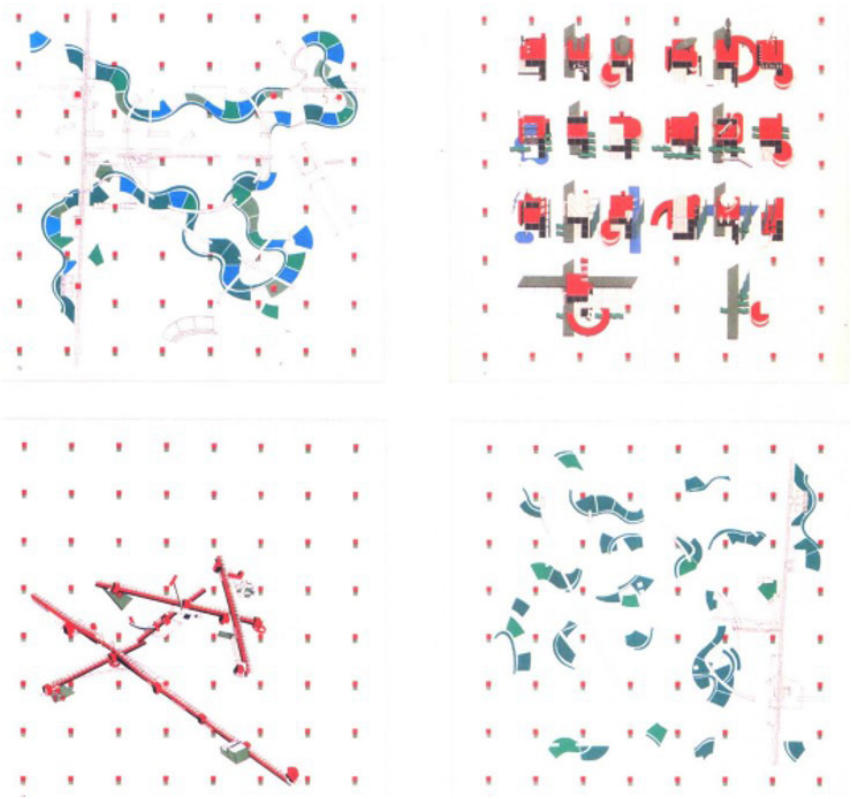

Figure 2) *Interior Collage, Richard Hamilton, 1956, Kunsthalle Tübingen, Tubinga. https://www.frammentirivista.it/richard-hamilton-pop-art/*
Figure 5) *Parc De La Villette, Bernard Tschumi, 2012, Architectural concepts: Red is not a color*

method 2) "Morphology", as mentioned in this paper mainly refers to the morphological theories of the Italian school, the representatives of which are Saverio Muratori and Gianfranco Caniggia. Muratori, in his research on the urban history of Venice, initially defined terms such as house type and urban fabric. He thought that urban architecture could be interpreted through the development process of types, and morphological analysis of various types of houses, fabrics, and structures in urban history has become a necessary preparatory step before the start of architectural design and urban design (Muratori,1960). Caniggia analyzed the historical process of Como's urban development in an architect's rather than a historian's way, trying to isolate the basic principles of urban construction (Caniggia, 1963). In

their cities research, the type definition is the capacity to become aware of a specific area in a specific city at a particular point of history.

However, this is not enough. The school of Muratori further developed the discovered types into models that can be reused again and again to build cities. They experimented with different building layouts in practice. They discovered, compared, and understood the structural model of the plots, the blocks, and so on (which do not exist in the disciplinary knowledge). These concepts came from the surveys of cities and then returned to reality in projects. Whenever we use the words plot and block unconsciously, we repeat a process of giving meaning to the object, a kind of philosophical "reproduction" (Marzot, 2018).

Design proposal

Most of the Jingjiao Primary School neighborhoods are old and have a long history of 80 or 90 years. Many residents of the communities used to study and grow up in this elementary school. However, a decade or two ago, due to the school district policy that excluded the surrounding neighborhoods from the school district, and the fact that the elementary school was becoming one of the top-quality schools in Jing'an District, children living in the surrounding neighborhoods were no longer able to attend this school, and elderly residents who had attended the school no longer had access to this childhood paradise. The presence of this school thus physically and psychologically cut off the surrounding communication and interaction.

Based on the future urban planning, Jingjiao Primary School will be relocated to a new campus two blocks away, and a commercial complex will be planned to the west of the school, as well as a bridge across the river to connect both sides of the Suzhou River in the southeast corner of the school (Figure 3). Therefore, this future urban heritage building with preservation value can become an urban public space that bridges the surrounding community with the commercial complex. The author hopes to integrate the open community function into the previous formal teaching function, making it a joint anchor of the surrounding urban environment, integrating it into the surrounding area in a

collage manner, and introducing "planting" as an informal educational tool so that Jingjiao Primary School can gradually be transformed into a comprehensive urban planting park of the future. The school will also be gradually transformed from a closed space for students to an open planting park for the public.

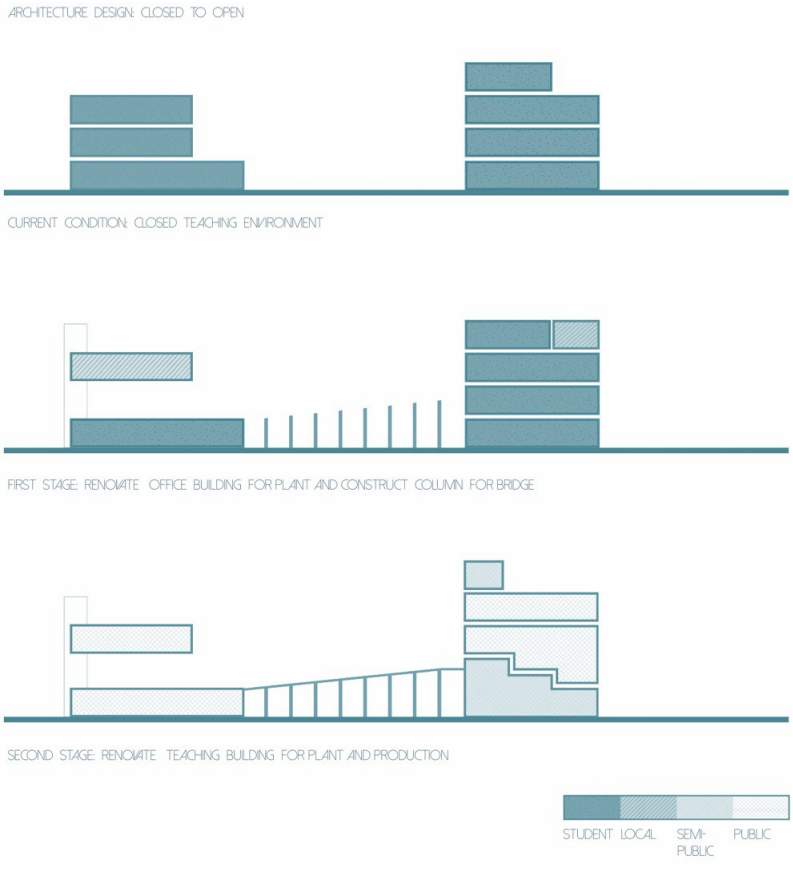

Figure 3) *Design prospect of Jingjiao Primary School, Xiao Xiao, February 2022, Turin*

Design research

People, activities and elements

I researched various individuals and their daily routines, gathering data from different locations. I then translated this information into three distinct diagrams representing students, residents, and public activities. The addition of certain elements in these diagrams can create diverse spaces, fostering plant growth and facilitating interaction and communication among people (see Figure 4).

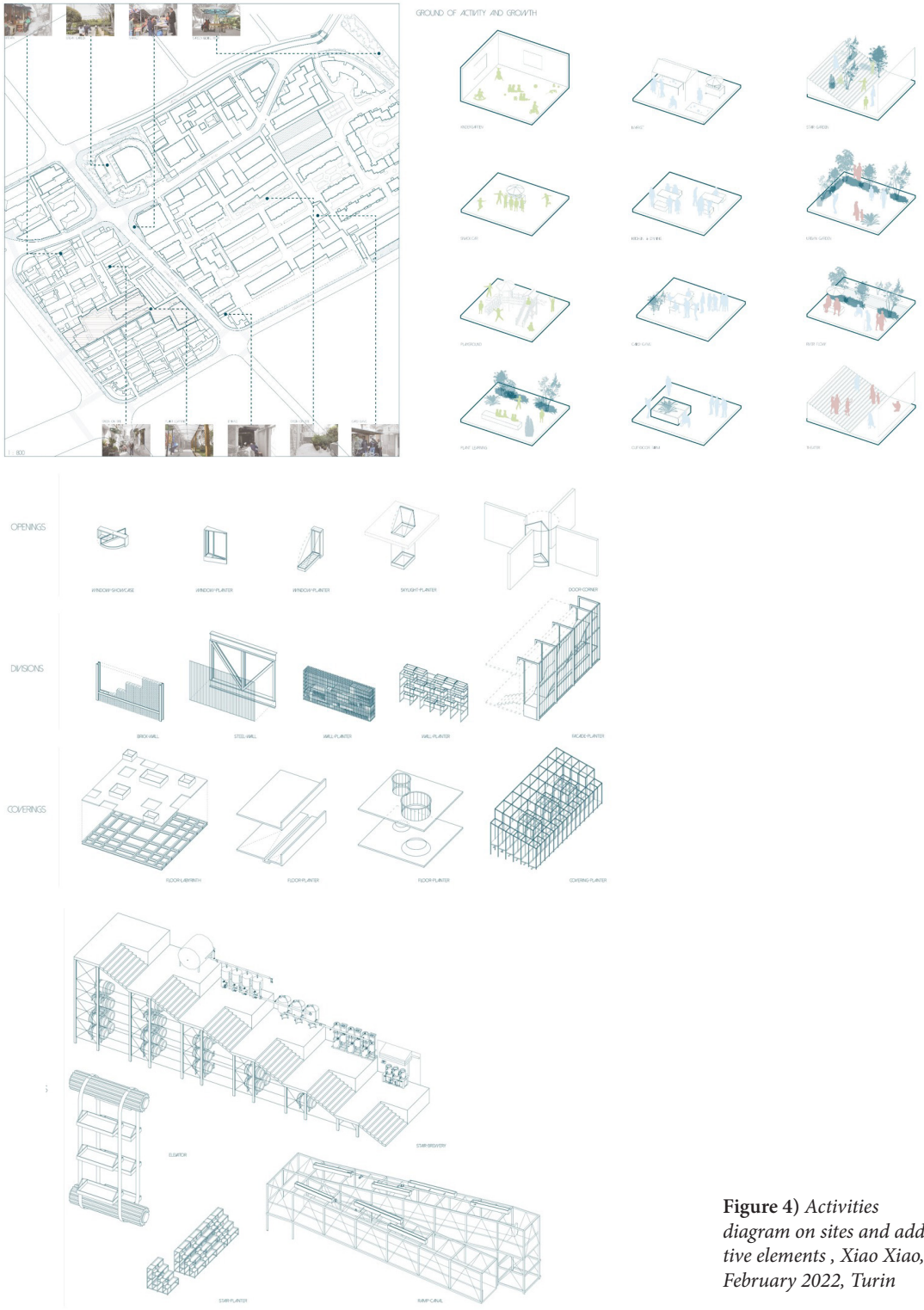

Figure 4) *Activities diagram on sites and additive elements , Xiao Xiao, February 2022, Turin*

Collage generation

I captured photographs of ruins, educational institutes, machine spaces, materials, people, and various activities on the site. Subsequently, I collaged these images onto the framed base representing teaching buildings at a 1:25 scale, using a large cardboard attached to the wall. Although the collage process appears random, the resulting "Collage" images can be creatively transformed to produce architecturally intriguing spaces characterized by locality, co-occurrence, and narrative (refer to Figure 5).

Figure 5) *Collage, Xiao Xiao, February 2022, Turin*

Collage generation

During this phase, the envisioned 2D collage samples are chosen and integrated with the planned elements of growth. This culminates in the creation of 3D architectural space segments, which can be incorporated into the school buildings (refer to Figure 6).

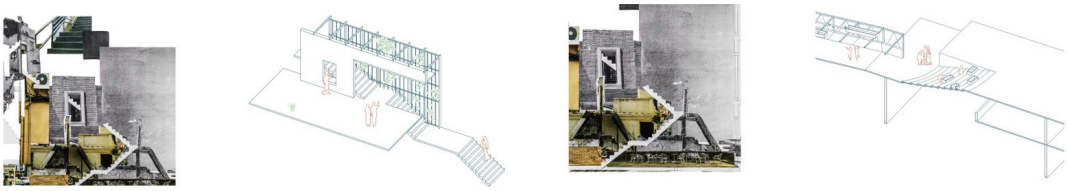

Figure 6) *Space segments transformed from Collage, Xiao Xiao, February 2022, Turin*

Design results

Phase 1

The primary restoration efforts will be concentrated on the service and office building. Initially, students will gradually relocate from the teaching building, and teachers will transition from the office building to the vacated section of the teaching building. This aims to generate more space for surrounding residents to engage in activities and for elementary students to conduct planting activities concurrently with the residents. Simultaneously, the construction of the first bridge connecting this small building with the vacant eastern space and the base pillar of a second bridge above the playground will commence. This is intended to alleviate traffic congestion and enhance students' access to the school (refer to Figure 7).

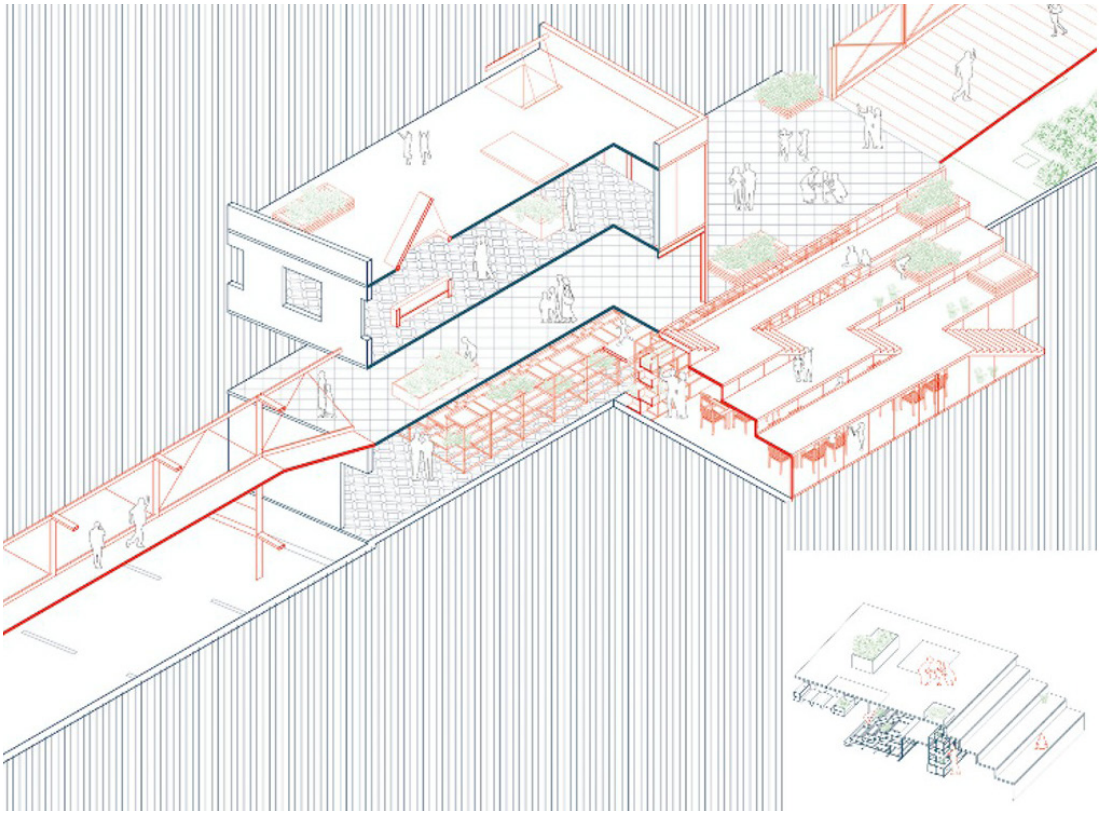

Figure 7) *Phase 1 design result, Xiao Xiao, February 2022, Turin*

Phase 2

Following the complete relocation of the elementary school, the teaching building will be vacated for extensive restoration and functional reversion. Simultaneously, the construction of the second bridge connecting the two school buildings and surrounding communities is finalized. Ultimately, the campus will undergo a gradual transformation into an urban park, featuring activities such as planting and gardening, and it will be fully accessible to the public (refer to Figure 8).

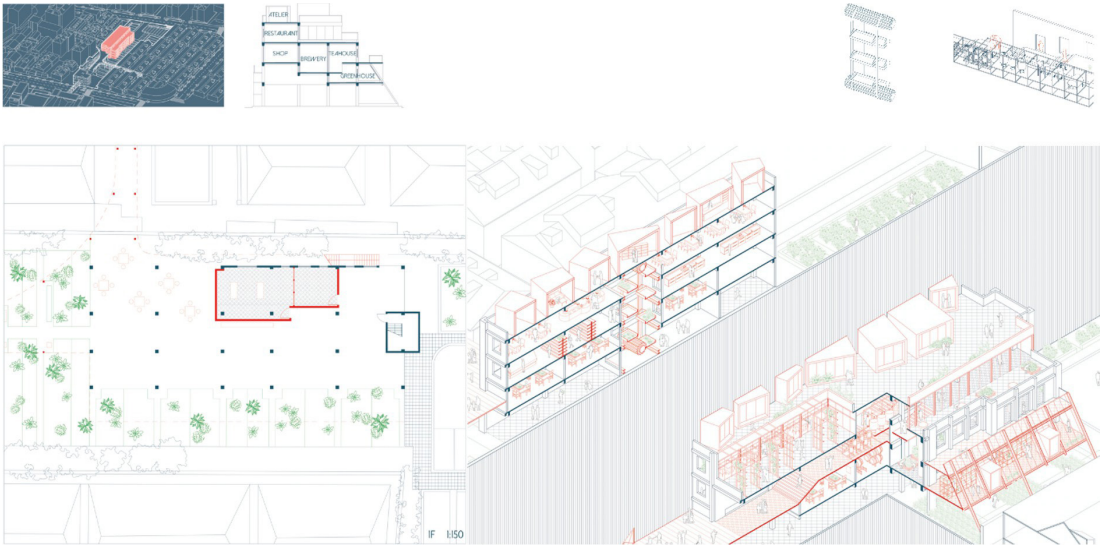

Figure 8) *Phase 2 design result, Xiao Xiao, February 2022, Turin*

Figure 9) *Final result compared with original appearance, Xiao Xiao, February 2022, Turin*

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Cornelius Holtorf
Alexandre Monnin
Caitlin DeSilvey
Daniela Sandler
Bie Plevoets

03

Open Talk
Q & A

«Assuming we are in a futureless present, what would be the in that scenario the role of architecture? What is the task of architecture in a futureless present?»

Cornelius Holtorf

«In a futureless present, architecture's task is to create futures due to its will to persist and its destiny to last or leave traces behind. Without futures, no hope.»

Alexandre Monnin

«This obviously depends on what is meant by futurless. It is not so much a question of thinking that there would be no future (avenir) as the fact that tomorrow, the future initially planned, will not take place. In this sense, architecture has a role to play as a discipline of what lasts. When the future becomes obsolete, the question arises of creating forms of continuity and duration in opposition to these trends.»

Daniela Sandler

«If we are cynical, the task would be hospice care—architecture would make it bearable for us to subsist in untenable conditions, prolonging our survival under climate change, social inequality, wars. But if we are idealistic (maybe naïvely), architecture could reinstate the possibility of a future. It could help us see another present, as it did in the past with utopias and visionary plans. Architecture can produce verisimilar images of another world—images that could engage and inspire publics beyond architects. Now, of course, architecture cannot engender the politics necessary to enact these images. Architecture is not self-sufficient, but it can be meaningful if it preserves some idealism. Perhaps architecture needs to be a little naïve again.»

Caitlin DeSilvey

«I believe my initial reaction to this question revolves around the assumption that we are living in a futureless present. While I acknowledge that the future is likely to be complex and involve various stages of collapse, I still believe it will unfold. There exists a version of the future, and it may not necessarily center around us as human beings. In this context, the role of architecture becomes that of facilitating a transition from the present we are living in to the unfolding future. This transition may require us to hold things more lightly than we are accustomed to, as there will likely be a need for triage in choosing where our resources go.
[...] There will be a need for a certain amount of architecture to gracefully disintegrate in order to focus on preserving essential elements. It might be the task of some architects and certain types of architecture to let go of things gracefully, doing so in an informed and attentive manner.»

Bie Plevoets

«The "futureless present" is characterized by the understanding that the trajectory of perpetual growth and unceasing improvement is unsustainable. [...]
The role of architecture in a "futureless present" involves a profound shift in perspective. Architects must move beyond the traditional notion of ceaseless progress and embrace a more responsible, sustainable, and resource-conscious approach. They must work towards maximizing positive social impacts while minimizing the ecological footprint. The "as found" concept, or adapting what already exists, becomes pivotal. This transformation extends to design, construction, material management, legislation, and education. Architects, as agents of the built environment, must take a lead in reimagining a world where the future is less certain, but where their actions can have a lasting positive impact. [...] »

«How can we perceive the past to foster a sustainable future? Is it our duty to foster a more sustainable environment by assuming a more inclusive perspective?»

Cornelius Holtorf

«Inclusivity is not necessarily more sustainable. A more sustainable future requires pasts that can adapt to changing circumstances, framed by varying desires and demands. We will need (to keep) the capability of innovating the past in regular intervals.»

Alexandre Monnin

«It is a question of keeping two pitfalls at equal distance: seeing the past as a resource from which to extract recipes for the future, or the temptation to turn back to a more authentic world. It is our responsibility to fight to improve sustainability while taking into account issues of inclusiveness. This means tackling technical issues head on, without any "ontological" conception of modernity that would require an exit from it and its offspring and making room for the vulnerable, be they indigenous peoples as well as people with disabilities.»

Daniela Sandler

«Yes, it's a duty and a moral choice. We know what kind of world has been produced by the exploitation of people and natural resources. Most of this world, our world, is catastrophic, even if a few of us are clinging to the tip of the sinking ship. We can't go back in time and undo colonialism, industrialization, financial speculation, racism, slavery, etc. But we can start by telling these histories, making them visible in preservation, memorials, public art. For me, as a historian, this means questioning the premises of my discipline—what counts as development, science, rigor? Incorporating different epistemologies, such as indigenous worldviews, goes beyond a broader repertoire of examples. It means changing the concepts and criteria we use to assess and think about history in the first place—it means changing our theories.»

Bie Plevoets

«The past provides valuable resources for sustainable architecture in various ways. Initially, the existing built environment serves as a reservoir of materials and structures that can be repurposed. [...] We should also explore the potential reuse of structures lacking specific architectural or historical value, considering the ecological benefits. Moreover, architecture from bygone eras provides inspiration and models for contemporary design, offering insights, especially from vernacular building practices. These structures were ingeniously adapted to their climates and changing weather conditions, often without reliance on modern technology. [...] While an inclusive perspective is crucial, its adoption is not readily apparent. [...] Expanding inclusivity within the construction sector is a shared responsibility; it cannot be borne solely by architects. [...] The development of protocols and procedures that mandate and ensure a more inclusive approach is urgently needed to promote comprehensive thinking and action in the architectural realm.»

Caitlin DeSilvey

«I'm deeply skeptical of language surrounding sustainability, and I'm equally skeptical about the discourse on duty. To be honest, there are quite problematic elements in those questions. Moreover, I'm somewhat skeptical about the language of inclusion, primarily because it seems to be used in an extremely instrumental way, particularly in the educational institutions where I work. It's often invoked but not practiced.

[...] I do acknowledge that certain aspects of the past may guide us toward a more or less sustainable future. There are skills we can learn from how people occupied environments in the past that we may need to relearn to thrive in the future we have created for ourselves. Some of these skills are architectural in nature. [...]

Thus, there is a possibility. Perhaps considering a more inclusive perspective involves acknowledging other costs. It entails being open to contemplating alternative versions of the past as relevant for the future, rather than adhering to a singular narrative about what we value from history. After all, the buildings most valued from an architectural and heritage perspective may not necessarily provide what we need for a sustainable future.»

«Who has the right to define what is worthy of preservation? Can we imagine a framework that also considers other voices currently excluded from the debate?»

Cornelius Holtorf

«The history of preservation illustrates changing stakeholders recognised by society and changing practices of selection for preservation. That should help us imagining changes to the present set-up in the future.»

Alexandre Monnin

«We will not be able to maintain everything in the future. It is the very purpose of ecological redirection to make this observation its starting point. Today, however, there are no protocols or institutions to make the necessary trade-offs that we are faced with: what to do with ski resorts in the absence of snow? What about seaside resorts threatened with being swallowed up? These questions are democratic questions by excellence in the sense that they involve the public attached to these realities which must be active with regards to the detachments which will be necessary.»

Daniela Sandler

«This question is close to my current project on grassroots urbanism in São Paulo. The groups I study are telling the history of the city from the viewpoint of Native Brazilians, Afro-Brazilians, slum-dwellers, sexual minorities. The spaces they honor don't fit the traditional mold. They include buildings that look ramshackle and improvised, or focus on something like a tree that holds spiritual value. These groups insist on the power of cultural representation even as they struggle with basic challenges related to housing, health, employment, violence. Preservation is not secondary; it is essential to their social and cultural existence. This kind of preservation needs to be supported from top down at the same time as it needs to involve participatory decision-making from the bottom up. There are participatory-design projects in housing and planning that offer models of how to do it in practice [...]. But for me, it goes back to the question of knowledge production: the excluded voices need to be included not only to give input on how and what to preserve, but also input on theory, on the conceptual assumptions and tenets of preservation as a scholarly discipline. This is a politically charged task for us as preservationists and historians, as it means relinquishing our power over our field, admitting our limitations and errors, and sharing authorship in a way that is more dynamic, open-ended, and altruistic than the current academic model of individual credit and reward for "academic productivity," "originality," and individual authorship.»

Bie Plevoets

«If we embrace the idea that architects will increasingly work with existing structures, prioritizing preservation over demolition will become the prevailing norm, with demolition reserved for exceptional cases. [...] In the 21st century, these preservation lists should become obsolete, and instead, we should focus on establishing criteria for determining when demolition is warranted.

When we discuss "other voices," we typically refer to the broader community, encompassing not only the vocal majority but also less represented and minority groups. Evidently, I believe this is absolutely necessary. However, given the profound paradigm shift we are currently experiencing, it's imperative to recognize the need for a new class of experts. These experts specialize in areas such as materials flows and regenerative construction. Their knowledge is vital in navigating the complexities of sustainable and resource-conscious architectural practices.

[...] We must also lend an ear to the voices that typically go unheard: those of non-human entities, including animals, plants, and the stratosphere. Their perspectives and needs are equally significant in shaping a more responsible and sustainable approach to architecture in our evolving world.»

Caitlin DeSilvey

«I feel like we're in the middle of that conversation. It's not necessarily a new question, and there has been progress in defining who has a say in it. Opening up the discussion has involved many other people in defining what holds value. Various objects, structures, and entities are considered worthy of preservation, which is wonderful. However, it also creates problems with the proliferation of things brought into the preservation space.

But what's more interesting for me is imagining a framework that considers not just other human voices—though that is obviously very important—but also other-than-human voices. How do we bring in other ecologies, other agents, and entities that are not anthropogenic but are much more embedded in, perhaps, ecological perspectives or even the non-living?»

«What did you find engaging in carrying out this interdisciplinary conversation?»

Cornelius Holtorf

«I was most inspired by the sincerity with which the students engaged in the conversation, and by the intellectual sophistication of my colleagues' thinking.»

Alexandre Monnin

«I enjoyed crossing approaches. The world of heritage is extremely rich for thinking about these questions and rarely understood and mobilized, to my knowledge, in militant circles, at least in France. I find it absolutely crucial to irrigate our reflections from such rich conceptions of time, duration and the past.»

Daniela Sandler

«I am interested in conversation as a productive action in and of itself, rather than an instrument towards something else. The questions asked here, the questions in seminar presentations and discussions, the off-the-cuff comments that lead us to unexpected directions—they are all ideas I wouldn't have thought of by myself. These questions lift me up from any comfort or complacency with relation to my "areas of expertise." It's an exercise in humility, and I appreciate the tentative search and the stumbles more than any brilliant insight at the end. I like conversations that might feel meandering, where we might not always feel that we "answered the original question," because they lead us not only to new discoveries but also to further dialogue and collaboration. Which is exactly what these questions and this publication are…»

Bie Plevoets

«The practice of architecture is undergoing a notable shift towards greater interdisciplinarity, with fields such as sociology, management, legislation, ecology, and landscape becoming integral to the evolution of the discipline. This interdisciplinary exchange has proven to be highly inspiring. Notably, concepts like Daniela Sandler's "Counterpreservation" and Caitlin DeSilvey's "Curated Decay" may initially challenge traditional conservation discourse, but they hold significant relevance in the context of our "futureless present."

In the face of our current reality, characterized by uncertainty about the future, these concepts provide fresh and insightful perspectives for contemporary architectural practice. They encourage us to reevaluate the boundaries of conservation and the role of architectural professionals. I wholeheartedly advocate for the significance of interdisciplinary training and collaborative research groups focused on topics relevant to the built environment. It is my sincere hope that we can sustain and foster this dialogue, as it promises to drive innovation and shape a more resilient and responsible architecture that aligns with the unique challenges of our times.»

Caitlin DeSilvey

«I think, for me, this dialogue with you was one of several opportunities I had over the last year to specifically engage with students in the discipline of architecture who were exploring and seeking new perspectives. I found it really stimulating, partly due to the willingness to be theoretically ambitious while also being grounded in a relatively applied discipline, with the potential for actual construction in environments, for example. The curiosity exhibited was quite interesting. [...]

When considering the people you brought together, working closely with Cornelius wasn't a surprise as I've had that experience. However, Daniele's work, which I have followed and been interested in, fascinated me. Bie's work focuses on some of the things we've been discussing regarding the origins of adaptive reuse and ideas of adaptation, or perspectives on thinking about adaptation into the future in relation to architecture. I found that interesting, although I don't think I participated as intensively as I could have, being remote. I was only partially involved, not fully.»

03

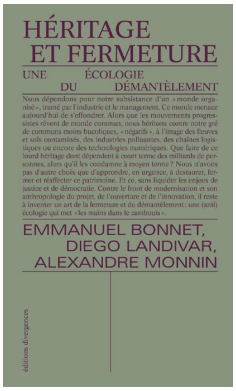
Final Remarks

A survey of trjectories

Upon reflection, this one-year retrospective affords us a chance to see the outcomes take shape, offering a modest glimpse into selected researches surrounding the “Future of the Past“. Bringing up these perspective as architects it’s a reminder that not everything is designed for everlasting endurance, and perhaps it’s wise not to presume we hold all the answers for envisioning a future with unwavering certainty and definitive solutions. Is it not worth our while to reassess what we’ve inherited, considering our genuine capacity to address it? Could we find value in embracing the inherent uncertainty of defining heritage, attuned to the ever-evolving needs of potential users, steering away from offering solutions that may be too final for the complexities of today (or even yesterday)?

This volume represents a humble attempt to venture beyond disciplinary boundaries, posing questions, presenting visions, and hinting at potential shifts in perspective that are often overlooked, particularly within the European and Italian context. Perhaps architectural and urban designers might consider a recalibration of their outlook—reconstructing prevailing narratives, exercising patience, and resisting the urge to relentlessly create something entirely new, understanding that reality is a stratification of complexities and defies a singular solution. At the very least, it becomes imperative to take into account each of these design choices, remaining mindful of the “why,” “for whom,” and “how.”

“Designing the future of the past” is undoubtedly a weighty responsibility. Instead of offering a universally applicable solutions, this volume presents alternative possibilities to take into account in prefiguring potential trajectories for urban legacies.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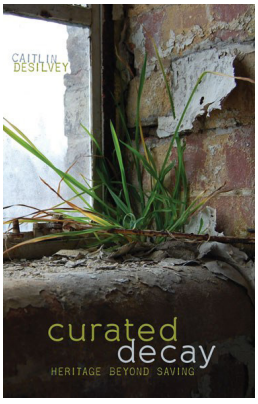
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curated decay
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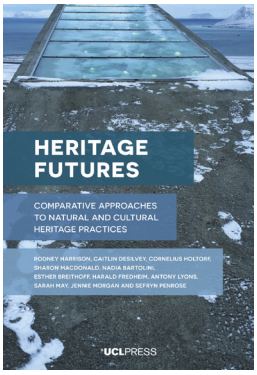
Edited by Caitlin Desilvey, Simon Naylor & Colin Sackett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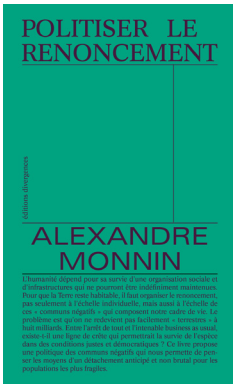
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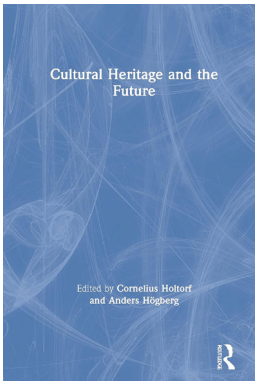
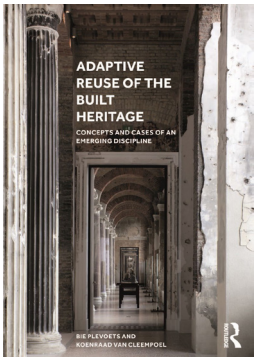
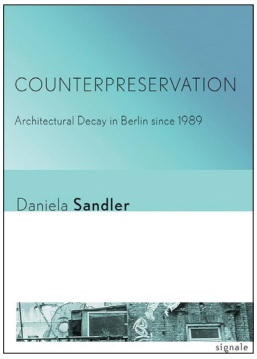

Cultural Heritage and the Future
Edited by Cornelius Holtorf and Anders Högberg


ADAPTIVE REUSE OF THE BUILT HERITAGE
CONCEPTS AND CASES OF AN EMERGING DISCIPLINE
RIE PLEVOETS AND KOENRAAD VAN CLEEMPOEL


COUNTERPRESERVATION
Architectural Decay in Berlin since 1989
Daniela Sandler
signale

Selected readings

These selected readings outline a landscape of references, exploring the preservation—or lack thereof—of legacies from the past, embracing a novel perspective. The selection comprises recommended readings by the contributors to this volume. This selection encapsulates the insights of the contributors to this academic volume, offering a substantive and thoughtful exploration on the potential future of the past.

Bonnet, Emmanuel, Diego Landivar, and Alexandre Monnin. *Héritage et fermeture - Une écologie du démantèlement*. Editions Divergences, 2021.

Desilvey, Caitlin. *Curated Decay: Heritage Beyond Saving*. University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

DeSilvey, C., S. Naylor, C. Sackett, and S. Daniels. *Anticipatory History*. Uniformbooks, 2011.

Harrison, R., C. DeSilvey, C. Holtorf, S. Macdonald, N. Bartolini, E. Breithoff, H. Fredheim, A. Lyons, S. May, and J. Morgan. *Heritage Futures: Comparative Approaches to Natural and Cultural Heritage Practices.* University College London, 2020.

Holtorf, C., and A. Högberg. *Cultural Heritage and the Future*. Routledge, 2020.

Monnin, Alexandre. *Politiser le renoncement*. Editions Divergences, 2023.

Plevoets, Bie, and Koenraad van Cleempoel. *Adaptive Reuse of the Built Heritage : Concepts and Cases of an Emerging Discipline*. New York: Routledge, 2019.

Sandler, Daniela. *Counterpreservation*. Edited by Peter Uwe Hohendahl. 1st ed. Cornell University Press, 2016.