

AGONISM, CONSENSUS, AND THE EXCEPTION: ON THE NEWEST MONUMENTALISTS

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ABSTRACT: The issue of monumental form has recently returned to the fore through the work of Pier Vittorio Aureli and Alexander D’Hooghe, whose speculative urban projects present an alternative to the sprawling developments of the neoliberal landscape with its privileging of procedural means over liberal ends. By analyzing their work through the lens of a pluralist, rather than a consensus-based socio-political model, along with a reading of executive exception in early liberal and American Constitutional thought, one can begin to more accurately formulate the contingent conditions that necessitate the use of monumental form in the promotion of civic memory and political practices of agonistic contestation.

KEYWORDS: globalisation, local identity, urban design, culture, public life, design strategies

To speak of architectural form in the context of an age beyond neoliberalism, it is necessary both to come to terms with the reasons for our presumed dissatisfaction with the dominant neoliberal regime, and to establish a framework within which form can become an operative catalyst for the production of alternative modes of social and political practice. Form itself is something which can no longer be taken for granted, having largely been stripped of its political power through both the proliferation of corporate icons under neoliberalism and through the contemporary architectural discipline’s focus on the appropriation of the informal and the tactical as a means of critique, which recently seems to have given way in favor of a “performative” trend that abdicates any responsibility of critique in favor of a diluted, quantifiable, realism underpinned by technical innovation. (i.e. “landscape urbanism” and/or parametric/scripted formalism)

I intend to argue that form can only regain its political relevance within an “agonistic” socio-political framework, rather than one based solely on the pursuit of popular consensus (i.e. the “deliberative democratic” model of Rawls and Habermas). Further, I would like to suggest that while a narrative unity of action is still necessary in times of socio-economic crisis, such unity should not be grounded in popular consensus, but rather should represent an executive exception to the desired norm of pluralism in order to heighten the effects of pluralism through a temporary corrective mechanism that lays bare the social contract, and namely, the ends that underpin the practice of pluralist contestation. Agonistic pluralism, popularised by Chantal Mouffe, seeks to address the innate contradictions of neoliberalism—namely, that between individual freedom and rational democratic procedures. In her differentiation of agonism (vigorous contest amongst equal adversaries) from antagonism (a fundamentalist position viewing the adversary as a force to be destroyed),¹ Mouffe’s position updates Henri Lefebvre’s account of the ancient Greek *polis* being a place of productive struggle amongst mutually-respected adversaries.

Neoliberalism’s pursuit of consensus, having privileged the procedural means of liberalism at the expense of substantive confrontational discourse among equals, has essentially eradicated civic space as a place of contestation and turned citizens with inherently different value sets into consumers with moderately varied preferences while simultaneously relegating difference to the fringe of identity politics, thus heightening the potential for extremist violence. Take, for example, Barack Obama’s controversial comment during his Presidential campaign that small-town Americans cling to issues such as “guns or religion”² when the economy is poor, versus his more recent statement that the supporters and opponents of abortion have

¹ Chantal Mouffe, *Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism*, Vienna, Institute for Advanced Studies, 2000, 15.

² Katharine Q. Seelye and Jeff Zeleny, “On the Defensive, Obama Calls His Words Ill-Chosen,” *The New York Times*, 13 April 2008.

irreconcilable positions that must be played out in the public sphere as a healthy debate amongst equals.³ The first statement represents a neoliberal attitude of difference as mere preference within a global system defined by economic security alone, with the second reflecting an agonistic position of difference as a tension between political values. Neoliberalism, having redefined discourse and procedure as ends in themselves, is decidedly ill-equipped to account for such ambivalence in the political sphere, having effectively diluted the possibility of exercising the kinds of difficult choices that Isaiah Berlin argued to be inherent in any system of liberty professing the free expression of pluralist differences.

By way of redressing the ills of neoliberalism and the global socio-economic crises that have emerged from this system, architects such as Pier Vittorio Aureli and Alexander D'Hooghe are beginning to articulate a case for strong strategic measures enabled by the tactical deployment of large-scale form. Aureli's "project of autonomy" and D'Hooghe's "theory of the New Monumentality" both embody a desire for the political and actively seek to contrast the concept of the political against what both acknowledge to be a debilitating and uncritical techno-economic capitalist datum that is largely taken for granted—or worse, conflated with the political—both by contemporary governments/societies and by the architectural discipline itself. Aureli and D'Hooghe view crisis as the operative moment in which to invoke the necessity for the political as a distinct entity. Despite the apparent formal similarities in their projects, however, the way in which each architect situates his work reflects two fundamentally different conceptions of political engagement, which can tentatively be referred to as the Socratic (Aureli) and the Periclean (D'Hooghe). The divergence between these two projects makes legible the complex relationship between icon and monument; locus and infrastructure, and their varied abilities to engender either active or passive forms of politics.

1 THE "GREY GOO" AND THE DATUM OF THE NEOLIBERAL CITY/SUBURB

Without delving too much into the recent history of architectural and social development, the environment in which both architects position their projects is one in which active political practice has become co-opted by the seemingly inevitable logic of a global economic system with the capacity to internalise and neutralise all that is foreign to its trajectory through, among other things, a conflation of the ends and means of liberalism. In the wake of such developments, architectural practice after High Modernism has devolved into an endless string of uncoordinated tactical operations, which Aureli equates with the small-scale destabilisation maneuvers advocated by Antonio Negri's post-political "Autonomia" project.⁴ The field within which such operations have played out is represented by D'Hooghe's notion of the "grey goo,"⁵ a fragmented and alienating, yet systematically integrated congealment of the suburbs and the remnants of industrial urban centers. The city is thus everywhere and nowhere; its politics incoherent and without delimited form, having been overtaken by a singular economic drive or ideology against which all competing strategic movements have fallen victim. Aureli illuminates the workings of this process through the writings of the Italian Marxist scholar Mario Tronti, who proposes that capitalism advances itself in response to the demands of its working class, first by improving working conditions and later by establishing the comforts of a consumer culture augmented by a welfare state. Such moves of continual adaptive appeasement defuse the potential for veritable antagonism between workers and the system within which they are employed, thus removing the possibility of a separate form of political agency from the table through a systemic sleight of hand.⁶ The architectural icon can be seen as the emblematic symbol of capitalist performance, a landmark that rises from within the visually-incoherent field of which it is a product, yet manages both to justify and divert attention from the dominant system it represents. Fig.1 If the icon is the benevolent object of economic teleology, then infrastructure, both digital and physical, is its silent procedural enforcer, exerting a logic that is seemingly Baroque in its calibrated managerial organisation of human interaction. It would not be much of a stretch to imply that a Las Vegas casino, with its programmatic

³ Remarks by the President in Commencement Address at the University of Notre Dame, 17 May 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Notre-Dame-Commencement/ accessed 2 September 2009.

⁴ Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture within and against Capitalism*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2008, 8.

⁵ Alexander D'Hooghe, "Monument or Armageddon," *Volume* no. 9 (2006), 42.

⁶ Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy*, 40.

hybridity, consumer diversity, and perceptually blurry, yet economically and technically precise organisation, is the neoliberal (and perhaps, the landscape urbanist) consensus project *par excellence*.

2 THE MONUMENT

It should be said that the icon is not merely a freak of excess, as it is inextricably linked to the monument. The icon serves many of the same functions addressed by the kind of large-scale urban artifacts that Aureli and D’Hooghe celebrate, as it is a singular landmark that anchors the landscape and engenders performance through its presence. The problem of the icon is not that it exists, but rather that its underlying economic agency has gone unopposed by equally strong acts of form underwritten by an ethic of politics. The notion of locus, popularized by Aldo Rossi and O.M. Ungers, is the hinge that ties the icon to the monument. Few would characterise Gehry’s Guggenheim or Foster’s ‘gherkin’ as being without place—in fact, the icon is the very locus of the “post-political” human subject—but rather they lack that which is inherent to the political locus, namely the strength of civic memory that gives form to the monument. The *visual* legibility offered by the large-scale forms of Aureli or D’Hooghe is less vital to their arguments precisely because the icon accomplishes such visual affects through a similar breach of scale. What is important, however, is the ability of the monument to make legible the socio-political conflicts that the icon/infrastructure pairing is content to bury and smoothen with an operational mode based in hybridity and commodified multiculturalism or weak difference. A monument, then, does not solely seek to provoke conflict as an end in itself (as was the goal of the tactical destabilisation project of Autonomia), but rather serves the critical function of providing both a subjective distance and a political counterweight to the icon’s self-possessed sense of inevitability. As alluded to earlier, the major distinction between the icon and the monument is not a question of form or scale per se, but rather the type of subject to which they cater—the icon engendering a passive, amnesiac body, with the monument requiring an active renewal of its mandate via the process of civic memory. This rejection of amnesia is the strongest thread that binds the work of Aureli and D’Hooghe.

THE POLITICS OF CRISIS

The moment of crisis is the point at which society can choose to either embrace or reject amnesia; and thus where it is helpful to turn to the lessons of ancient Greece, where the trial of Socrates becomes the fundamental battle of a society enthralled by crisis, which nevertheless chooses—as contemporary society has done up to this point—to defer the moment of critical antagonism by sentencing Socrates to death and thus smoothing the path of uncritical progress. Socrates’ project, like Aureli’s, was to “construct a new political subject,”⁷ through a method of making legible the inherent tensions of the city. Fig. 2 The Socrates of Plato’s *Republic* establishes a thorough blueprint for the ideal city in order to demonstrate, through an exhaustive agonistic process, that the means required to attain such a city undermines the very possibility of its becoming. Recalling Cicero’s analysis, Leo Strauss writes:

. . . the *Republic* does not bring to light the best possible regime but rather the nature of political things—the nature of the city. Socrates makes it clear in the *Republic* of what character the city would have to be in order to satisfy the highest need of man. By letting us see that the city constructed in accordance with this requirement is not possible, he lets us see the essential limits, the nature, of the city.⁸

Socrates’ project, then, is one that activates the necessity of conflict between the political and the economic *techne*, or rather against the notion of a city founded solely on the desire to maximise performance. Superstudio’s *Twelve Ideal Cities* project of 1971 also posits such an endgame scenario in order to establish the limits of the High Modernist project of techno-capitalist determinism, Fig. 3. Such speculative work manifests a desire to reject blind faith in the economic modes of Enlightenment thought, in favor of a discursive model requiring a form of conflict that perpetually renegotiates the balance between ends and

⁷ Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy*, 79.

⁸ Leo Strauss, *The City and Man*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1964, 111.

means. Such a move is thus not a wholehearted rejection of technology, but rather, as Carl Schmitt (one of Aureli's preferred references) acknowledges, a call for the subjective power of the political, since "a grouping which sees on the one side only spirit and life and on the other only death and mechanism signifies nothing more than a renunciation of the struggle and amounts to nothing more than a romantic lament."⁹ The logical brutality of the endgame as embodied in the work of Plato and Superstudio is a nihilistic precondition for the construction of an active political subject able to exert his/her will over the instrument of technology—an effect not demanded by the icon. In this sense, Socrates the agent-provocateur, "a corrupter of youth" who "does not believe in the gods of the state"¹⁰ is not an *Autonomia* figure pursuing tactical destabilisation for its own sake, but rather represents the crux of Aureli's bottom-up practice of strategic operation through the formation of a new political will to power, or at the very least, consciousness, Fig. 4.

D'Hooghe's "emancipation from above"¹¹ takes a decidedly different approach to the procurement of, if not political power, then political memory. The New Monumentality project is one that readily appropriates both the operational and symbolic logic of FDR's New Deal (The Works Progress Administration and the Tennessee Valley Authority) that forged a tableau of workers and cultural figures (such as the Federal Writers' Project) into a larger civic narrative of singular progress and national redemption, Fig. 5. The manner in which such a project is put forth invites comparison to the oratorical strategy of Pericles, who, in his tribute to the strength of Athenian character in the face of tragedy invited his listeners to forget the individual flaws of Athens' dead heroes in favor of the overwhelming righteousness of the city as a whole. It is paradoxically a call to political memory and a rejection of the critical processes that underwrite the practice of the political. The city becomes an icon of unity rather than a place of discourse, perhaps necessary in a time of crisis, but ultimately not a long term precedent. The Athenian tradition of the funeral oration was a systematically-inscribed mechanism for moving beyond crisis rather than directly engaging with its difficulty and Pericles' treatment of this rite was one that only asked of Athens' citizens to remain on course: "you must yourselves realise the power of Athens, and feed your eyes upon her from day to day, till love of her fills your hearts."¹² The rhetoric of the funeral oration does little more than clothe passivity in a larger historical narrative of collective action. It is precisely this uncritical approach to the city that the Socrates of Plato's *Menexenus* attacks by deriding the rhetoricians' speeches as being "ready made"¹³ bandages for national pride that conflate man and the city in such a way that the *Republic* shows to be immensely problematic.

D'Hooghe's formulation of monumentality drifts quite close to the Periclean mode of oration. His adoption of the notion of empathy—"the intuited fact that object and self are one"—does a great deal of harm to the aspects of his argument that focus on the monument as a critical delimiter of the space between such interventions, as it removes the notion of critical distance through the promotion of empathetic "myth-making" that "assigns human attributes to dead things."¹⁴ By conflating man with the object, D'Hooghe's monument becomes a prosthetic device that demands little from the public beyond identification with a liberal will that is not fully its own. The monument offers "consolation, hope and optimism,"¹⁵ rather than a provocative charge. Unlike Aureli's project, D'Hooghe asserts that his new monumentality requires "no wholesale transformation" as "the private sphere is left untouched" and these formal deployments make use of the interstices of the built fabric rather than demanding any kind of sacrifice from the polity (in terms of imminent domain, or anything else). Even D'Hooghe's desire to pre-emptively avert crisis would likely draw a similar kind criticism from Aureli and Tronti that they level against the New Deal, namely that its emphasis on a comforting narrative of renewal coupled with the expansion of the welfare state did more to conceal the fundamental systemic causes of crisis than it did to actively engage with them.

D'Hooghe's argument becomes most problematic when he attempts to deploy his formal logic across a range of scales. His conflation of monument with container, as exemplified in his discussion of the frame of

⁹ Carl Schmitt, "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations," in *The Concept of the Political* (expanded ed.), Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2007, 95.

¹⁰ Plato, *The Apology of Socrates* (trans. Benjamin Jowett), New York, P.F. Collier & Son Corp, 1937, 12.

¹¹ D'Hooghe, "Monument or Armageddon," 48.

¹² Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Penguin Classics, 1954 (Book 2.34-46).

¹³ Plato, *Menexenus* (trans. Benjamin Jowett), Dodo Press, 2007.

¹⁴ Alexander D'Hooghe, "A Theory of the New Monumentality," *Volume* no. 9 (2006), 157.

¹⁵ D'Hooghe, "Monument or Armageddon," 43.

the IKEA superstore as being an ideal form for a diverse spectrum of interaction, is an unfortunate detour that is not wholly satisfying¹⁶, Fig. 6. For Aureli, the boundless container conjured in Archizoom's *No-Stop City* of 1969, is the ultimate realisation of an infinite realm of weak consumerist difference that refuses to take a positive political position toward the activity conducted within its limitless space.¹⁷ The logic of the container is not that of the monument. The blankness of a strategically-deployed form is ultimately the more operative element in the work of Aureli and D'Hooghe. The blankness of the monumental form allows both for projection and echo—a feedback of subjective wills reinforced by critical distance that prompts individuals to remember. The container belongs to an entirely different operational dispute—that of the best form of infrastructural layout—as the container asks for individual projection alone and does not prompt the activation of memory. Like the icon, the container possesses no inherent provisions for furthering anamnesis.

3 THE EXECUTIVE EXCEPTION OR THE ARCHITECTURAL PREROGATIVE

The resurgence in monumentalist thought is seemingly driven both by a dissatisfaction with current forms of urban hybridity and illegibility (i.e. procedural complexity for its own sake), and also out of a desire to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the advent of socio-economic crisis to rethink the ways in which cities can be reorganised, or perhaps, more appropriately, *reconstituted*. For the founders of liberal thought such as Locke and Rousseau, the notion of the constitution of political entities was both an act (to constitute, agency) and a framework (the Constitution, procedure). The productive tension between these two inherent elements of liberal governance, embodied in the notion of the separation of powers (legislative, executive, judicial) perpetuates a precarious balancing act between means (transparency, rule of law) and ends (liberty, personal expression). Political theory scholars such as Harvey Mansfield and Clement Fatovic argue that the ambivalence embedded within the liberal constitution, and more specifically, Article II of the American Constitution, permits decisive and temporary corrective acts bordering on extra-legality that both circumvent and reorient liberal procedure in times of crisis. Such acts promote anamnesis, prompting a recovery of the fundamental memory of the necessity that prompted persons to adopt a social contract in the first place—instilling a shot in the arm to a citizenry that has momentarily forgotten the fundamental commonality of its underlying vision. Such acts can perhaps point toward an innate distinction between urbanism (planning and procedure) and architecture (executive acts of will) and the need to oscillate between the two depending upon matters of necessity.

As Mansfield argues in his description of the latent Machiavellian roots of the American Constitution, the sovereign as executive possesses a power to execute on behalf of the people those acts that the people cannot bring themselves to conjure.¹⁸ Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson, often considered to be the polarising figures in the formation of the American Constitution, were, nevertheless in agreement that the executive must be free to act upon contingent matters in a manner not appropriate to the mandate of the legislature.¹⁹ Such acts of executive will inevitably possess an element of risk to the system as a whole, but they agreed that the risks of procedural privilege were far greater. Both founders were adamant that executive acts had to be judged and evaluated upon the specificity of the contingent contexts in which they were employed and that such acts could not become a body of legal precedents to justify a subsequent expansion of executive power. In essence, the exceptional act was exactly that, a unique and context-specific mechanism to save and correct the norm when procedure devolved into a crisis situation. Executive abuse always remains a very real possibility, as Richard Nixon's post-Watergate reflection that "when the President does it that means that it is not illegal," yet systemic or procedural failure, exemplified by the current economic crisis, often proves to be a far worse fate for a larger number of people.

Architecture, then, can serve as a crucial mechanism to cope with contingency, acting as a check both on the dominance of procedure (i.e. sprawl, suburbanization, bureaucratic inertia), and popular passions that often resist the kinds of sweeping changes that crisis and necessity demand. Consider, for example, Aureli's

¹⁶ Alexander D'Hooghe, "Platforms for a Permanent Modernity," *New Geographies*, no. 0 (2008), 83.

¹⁷ Pier Vittorio Aureli, "Towards the Archipelago," *Log* no. 11 (Winter 2008), 103.

¹⁸ Harvey Mansfield, *Taming the Prince: The Ambivalence of Modern Executive Power*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, 278.

¹⁹ Clement Fatovic, "Constitutionalism and Presidential Prerogative: Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian Perspectives," *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 48, no. 3, (July 2004), 429.

description of the plinth that removes itself from the urban fabric so as to allow its inhabitant achieve a certain critical distance from the city: “One of the most remarkable things felt by anyone climbing a Mies plinth, whether in New York or Berlin, is the experience of turning one’s back to the building in order to look at the city. Suddenly, and for a brief moment, one is estranged from the flows and organisational patterns that animate the city, although one still confronts them.”²⁰, Fig. 7.

The exception, then, heightens one’s perception of the norm and permits the critical distance so crucial for the enabling of agonistic political confrontation—it is the feedback mechanism embodied in the notion of the Constitutional separation of powers. This description echoes Hashim Sarkis’ argument that, “in order to effect change, to be engaged, architecture has to remain partly disengaged. ...to encourage diversity by making choice ever more real.”²¹ At the same time, however, I would argue that the project of monumental executive action is one that cannot take the shape of a dogmatic or permanent system. It cannot become a blanket prescription or precedent for all ills, but rather, acts of monumentality must be employed in such a way that permits their removal when the situations that necessitated the emergence of such acts no longer exist, though such contingent temporal constraints could range in duration from days to decades. *Exceptional* form, then, is more akin to a temporary formwork, or perhaps even the metaphorical equivalent of bicycle training wheels for the practice of the political, abandoned and destroyed like the agent-provocateur Socrates (though, perhaps, presented in the executive and narrative guise of Pericles), once the message becomes clear and legible, and pluralism is reinstated once again.

I would like to end with a brief and preliminary selection of projects and referents that begin to point towards a more concrete conception of exceptional form and its potential for the promotion of anamnesis and/or agonistic political contestation:

1. Loosely based on the *Stadtarchipel* thinking of O.M. Ungers, Rem Koolhaas’ *City of the Captive Globe* creates something of an archipelago of feverish cities that pursue unique ideological projects (including, but not limited to the pursuit of profit) atop their pedestal blocks, Fig. 8. The project acts against the pervasiveness of totalising ideologies and weak choice. By separating distinct ideological cities upon separate plinths within a larger grid, Koolhaas amplifies the critical act of choice and makes legible the consequences of such choice. Through limiting the cities’ potential for horizontal expansion, each construct is forced to build upward to propagate its position and stake its claim. Programmatic or political hybridity is replaced with the soft cross fertilisation of propaganda, and agonistic tensions emerge that are at once irresolvable in terms of consensus and performance, yet are nevertheless productive in the sense that successful constructs are placed in full view of failing ones, prompting self-reflection, internal adjustment, and adaptation for purposes of survival. Ideological contamination occurs here not through homogenisation, but through separation. Ostensibly, if each city were contained within a black box (instead of upon a pedestal) and rendered unable to perceive the cities surrounding it, then vertical expansion would be sufficient for a totalising ideology to be content that it had become manifest throughout the bounds of its perceptible universe—a problem that comes to the fore in Koolhaas’ later assessment that John Portman’s interiorised atrium buildings in Atlanta represent neoliberalism’s active negation of urbanity, undermining civic practice with solipsism.

2. Koolhaas’ interpretation of the Berlin wall in his *Exodus* project is also worth reconsidering. In the context of the Cold War, the wall served both to delimit an ideological enemy and to humanise the struggles of those attempting to flee. Difference and empathy were held in a suspended state of ambivalence, paradoxically charging Carl Schmitt’s antagonistic “friend/enemy” distinction with a streak of particularistic humanity, thus transforming conflict from the ambivalence-resolving essentialism of “us” versus “them” into a more agonistic and complex framework of legibility within ambivalence underwritten with a certain level of common ground—i.e. respect for humanity, Fig. 9. The notion of exodus also has a decidedly ambivalent legacy, being inextricably bound to the notion of return. By giving Londoners an exceptional linear datum from which to escape and subsequently view the city they’ve chosen to left behind (not unlike Aureli’s description of the Miesian plinth), it would seem as though the “voluntary prisoners” of Koolhaas’ scheme

²⁰ Pier Vittorio Aureli, “More and More About Less and Less,” *Log* no. 16 (Spring/Summer 2009), 17.

²¹ Hashim Sarkis, “Space for Recognition,” in *The Promise of Multiculturalism: Education and Autonomy in the 21st Century*, New York, Routledge, 1998, 164-165.

might eventually choose to return to the remnants of the city, reinvigorating it with the knowledge gained through a momentary position of critical distance—direct monumental form indirectly prompting socio-political action, Fig. 10.

3. Designed in 1983, the *Monument Against Fascism* in Harburg, Germany is one of the foremost examples of the so-called “counter monument” trend. A towering orthogonal column was sited in the center of a busy working class neighborhood and a stylus was provided for passers-by to leave inscriptions on the column’s surface, Fig. 11. Over time, the column would descend into the ground, leaving only a plaque as a trace of its former existence. Fig. 12 The project was intended as a form to promote active engagement with the surface and prompt memory in its absence. That the inscriptions ranged from banal or cheeky comments to Neo-Nazi sentiments and the requisite pledges against fascism served to demonstrate that civic tensions still remained, suggesting the limits of architecture’s capacity to resolve social ills through its presence alone. The project did, however, amplify and make legible the need for perpetual political action and confrontation.

4. Acting as something not unlike an American version of an ancient Greek comedy festival, the annual Burning Man event in the Black Rock desert of Nevada is a cathartic libertine ceremony of massive proportions, with attendance in recent years reaching in excess of 40,000 people. The week long event, which begins with the formation of a veritable city of participants organized in a radial plan, Fig. 13, culminates in the burning of a monumental wooden effigy of a man at the center, Fig. 14. This seemingly radical exercise of self-reliance and free expression, has in recent years, been limited by the addition of admission fees and an expanding list of regulations, but its principle offers an alternative, albeit brief, to accepted modes and procedures of urban life. Self-sufficiency in extreme summer conditions is a requirement and attendees must leave no trace of their presence behind upon leaving the festival. While this exceptional moment may not set a realistic precedent for a new kind of urbanism, it may nonetheless offer a model that could engender a certain after-effect in the minds of participants, encouraging more extreme practices of sustainability, personal liberty, and a healthy questioning of authority in people’s daily lives as they return to their hometowns—performing as an inverted colonisation, contaminating the everyday with the seeds from their voluntary, short-term pilgrimage and exile.

To conclude, monuments are and will continue to be necessary, but they are meant to be outgrown.



Figure 1 Collage of Icons, Pier Vittorio Aureli



Figure 2 Project for South Korea, Pier Vittorio Aureli, Dogma

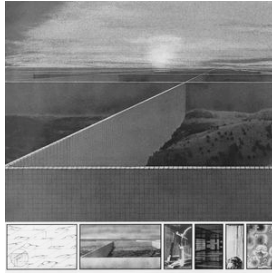


Figure 3 2000-ton City from the Twelve Ideal Cities, Superstudio

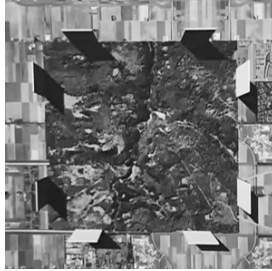


Figure 4 Stop City, Pier Vittorio Aureli

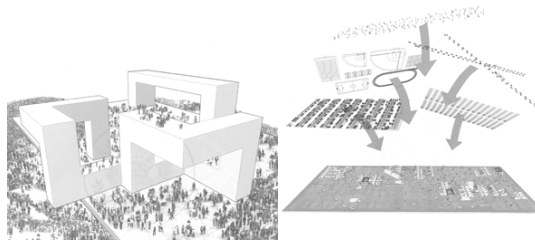


Figure 5-6 Platform for a Permanent Modernity Studio, MIT, Alexander D'Hooghe and James Shen



Figure 7 Neue Nationalgalerie, Mies van der Rohe

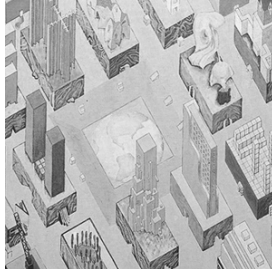


Figure 8 The City of the Captive Globe, Rem Koolhaas and Elia Zenghelis

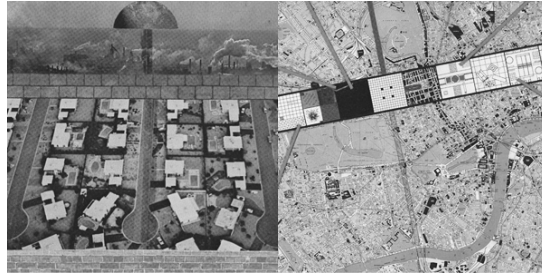


Figure 9-10 Exodus or The Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture, Rem Koolhaas and Elia Zenghelis

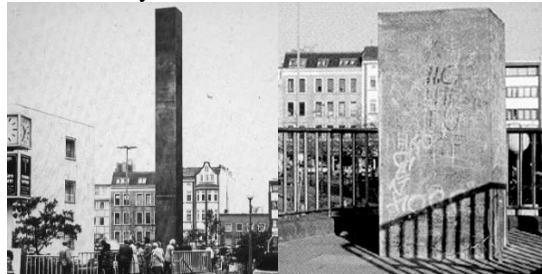


Figure 11-12 Harburg Monument Against Fascism, Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz



Figure 13-14 Plan of "Black Rock City," Burning Man and Burning Man effigy

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