

Pólemos no. 1, 2024:

Architecture, Emotions, Empathy.

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Call for Papers

Perception

Experiencing (as well as knowing) architecture takes on a double meaning and implies more complex modalities than other arts or human practices. On the one hand, we can make use of the pervasive power of images (prints, photographs, films) which allow us to have some perception of architecture, to «get an idea» of it. On the other hand, we have the on-site experience, where our body is completely invested, always involving several senses - not only sight, hearing, smell, touch and, if we wish, even taste - but also proprioception, the vestibular and somatosensory systems, in a multisensory and synaesthetic mode, not simplistically ascribable to a summation of senses in relation to their schematic distinction. When we inhabit a space, we enter it with our living body, bringing our entire perception and experience into play: the work envelops us and we derive from it an effect that from time to time may be one of enthusiasm, astonishment, bewilderment or fear, even disgust.

Neuroscience

The paths taken by the most recent studies in neuroscience in general and neurophysiology in particular open new possibilities for the design, interpretation and reinterpretation of architecture. Precisely in the light of neuroscientific achievements, we cannot overlook the effects that architecture exerts on individuals in an affective sense, i.e. in the way in which human beings are involved, enraptured and emotionally influenced by the spaces created or reconfigured by human beings. Neurophysiology helps us to understand how this relationship is not nested in a «rational» or of «full consciousness» or «abstraction» level. On the contrary, it is a «body-to-body», between the inescapable materiality of architecture and the living body that experiences it, where emotions, memories, suggestions, empathy and identification are *primarily* to emerge. The relationship with architecture is grafted onto a level of unreflection, preceding fully conscious activity, since architecture comes to touch the individual through the manifestation of the phenomena themselves, without the filter or mediation of rational faculties. A gap of unpredictability is therefore maintained, due to the singularity endowed with a feeling of its own that may or may not coincide with the effect that the project intends to suggest: in this sense, a possibility of negotiation may open up between those who create the architectural work and those who enjoy it.

Architecture and sociality

Given then that architecture, perhaps more than other arts, grafts itself very deeply into the social dimension, the question arises of possible personal interrelationships in the spaces it creates or contributes to creating. In the case of the other arts, the work is very often museified, protected, removed from the workings of time, reserved for spaces and times of enjoyment separate from everyday life, kept away from hands, lights and temperatures that could damage it and compromise its durability. Instead, the architectural work is constantly confronted with the wear and tear imposed by the environment in which it is immersed and is destined to be traversed by human presence and co-presence. Many types of buildings even invite sociality, promote it, enhance it. Many types of buildings even invite sociality, promote it, enhance it. The co-presence of lives and bodies turns, for architecture, into a specific importance of the element of time. Time transforms the work by the fact that the latter is exposed to human beings, who enter and leave it, trample on it, decorate it, illuminate it, modify it to «feel better», use it to carry out activities different with respect to the original project, entering into a new relationship – sometimes a more conscious one – with the space in which they find themselves. The time factor can have an unexpected impact on the project or lack thereof, suggesting how human beings themselves, either by entering the architectural space or by moving away from it, or even by staying within it, contribute to conforming, configuring and reconfiguring it incessantly.

This volume of *Pólemos. Materiali di filosofia e critica sociale* intends to reflect on architecture in such a way as to highlight the complexity of the aspects just mentioned, not least in order to grasp unprecedented implications of the architectural work considered from an aesthetic point of view.

Instructions for submission:

Send full articles already complete and drafted following the editorial rules of the Rivista, accompanied by an abstract of 1000 characters (in Italian and English), to the e-mail address cfp@rivistapolemos.it by 31 May 2024. Please send articles and abstracts (in one of the following formats: .doc, .docx, .odt) in a single document with a maximum limit - abstract+paper - of 40,000 characters (including spaces) suitable for blind review. Contributions directly relevant to the suggested lines of research are particularly welcome. Articles concerning areas related to the subject of the volume will also be considered. Contributions are accepted in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.