

## Attempts at a new historiography of twentieth-century architecture

Review of:

Marianna Charitonidou, *Drawing and Experiencing Architecture: The Evolving Significance of City's Inhabitants in the 20th Century*, Transcript Verlag, series *Architekturen*, vol. 67, Bielefeld 2022, 350 pp., 95 b. & w. illus., 15 col. plates, <https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839464885> (open access), Print-ISBN 978-3-8376-6488-1, PDF-ISBN 978-3-8394-6488-5, ISSN of series: 2702-8070, eISSN of series: 2702-8089, hdbk, EUR 45,00 / \$55,00.\*

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The historiography of twentieth-century architecture was dominated for many decades by the views of Nicolaus Pevsner, Siegfried Giedion and Emil Kaufman, which assumed that modernist architecture overcame the old architecture of the nineteenth century, especially the currents of historicism. According to the opinion of these historians, the new architecture is an expression of its times, first and foremost of the features of scientific and technological civilization, and also of collectivist tendencies characteristic of modern societies and the diminished status of individuality. Their research also proclaims the thesis that it is also morally a better architecture than it was in the 19th century. In the 1920s, similar views were also preached by architects Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier. After the end of 1939–45 war, architectural historians such as Bruno Zevi, Leonardo Benevolo, Reyner Banham and Peter Collins pointed out that avant-garde modernism in architecture was based on forms for which the aesthetics of classicist buildings were the source. In 1968, Manfredo Tafuri published a book titled *Teoria e storia dell'architettura*, which included the thesis that modernist architecture is mainly contained in the works of architectural historians and theorists who are expressions of the false political consciousness of contemporary societies. Observations on the differences and changes in defining modernism were the content of Panayotis Tournikiotis' book *Historiography of Modern Architecture*.<sup>1</sup> The work of this author has fulfilled Tafuri's postulate of demonstrating contradictions in the books of the main historians of modern architecture and has influenced further research into the history of contemporary architecture. In 2018, Tournikiotis was a member of the doctoral committee for Marianna Charitonidou's

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\* See also: Marianna Charitonidou, *Architectural Drawings as Investigating Devices: Architecture's Changing Scope in the 20th Century*, publishing series: *Routledge Research in Architecture*, Routledge, ISBN 978-1-032-43110-9 (hbk), 978-1-032-44418-5 (pbk), 978-1-003-37208-0 (ebk), DOI: 10.4324/9781003372080, 298 pp, 39 b. & w. illus., Oxon-New York 2023, hbk £104.00, eBook £31.19.

<sup>1</sup> Panayotis Tournikiotis, *Historiography of Modern Architecture*, Cambridge (Mass.) and London: The MIT Press, 1999.

thesis *The Relationship Between Interpretation and Elaboration of Architectural Form: Investigating the Mutations of Architecture's Scope*, which was the beginning for a long series of articles and two books: *Drawing and Experiencing Architecture* and *Architectural Drawings as Investigating Devices*. The author of these publications has greatly developed the initial program of presenting the diversity of architectural attitudes in the 20th century and has led to a situation in which the architectural work of individuals is only slightly related to the old groupings of works into architectural styles. To put the problem metaphorically: currently, instead of several large continents described by the terms modernism or postmodernism, we have archipelagos of loosely connected islands. Even the larger of these territories, such as the CIAM grouping's *island*, are now understood to be divided into disputed areas between which strong controversies exist. As a result, we can only describe the attitudes of individual creators, whose activities sometimes reveal threads linking them with external conditions. However, arriving at such a situation required meticulous research based on unknown or less known facts, usually from the beginnings of the work of famous architects. Charitonidou's research met this requirement and incorporated information drawn from public and private archives, including Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal, Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris, Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., Museum of Modern Art in New York, Avery Library's Department of Drawings & Archives at Columbia University and Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo in Rome.

Reading Charitonidou's publication encourages us to try to present her achievements and at the same time add some additional information and reflections. The author divided the history of 20th century architecture into four generational groups. The first group covers the 1920s and is represented by Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe. The characteristics of their work showed a change of views several times in Le Corbusier (especially in the period after the end of 1939–45 war), and internal tensions in the theories of Mies van der Rohe, which occur between approval and distance from the main trends of civilization. The second generation was described as a group of opponents to the CIAM environment centred around the Team X grouping and the activities of Alison and Peter Smithson and Aldo van Eyck. Beginning with the *Dorn Manifesto*, signed in 1954, members of this group aimed to expand the recommendations of the *Athens Charter* to include increased attention to the social and humanistic factors of architecture. Generation three again focused on the autonomy of architecture and its dependence on the development of the logic of syntax and form. In this context, the author mainly discussed the work of Aldo Rossi, although the aspirations of Peter Eisenman and John Hejduk were also recalled. Aldo Rossi has been described in a distinctive way, because his work has marked a growing interest in the subject of the city, which will be taken up more and more explicitly by future generations. The attitude of negotiating the project with the users, whose activity will give the space its proper meaning, the author noted especially in Giancarlo Piretti. This architect's Nuova Villaggio Mateotti estate in Terni (1969–1974) was Italy's most important manifestation of participatory design, in which meetings were conducted between designers and future users. The fourth generation, active since the 1980s, has been associated with

the activities of Rem Koolhaas and Bernard Tschumi, whose early works were saturated with revolutionary political beliefs. This generation can be associated not only with the further development of interest in the features of the city, but also with questioning the metaphysical foundations of traditionally understood architecture.

In all the discoveries about the architects mentioned, the author discovers connections not only with the general ideological trends of the era, but also links to the distinctive philosophers of the times in which the individual architects worked. Le Corbusier was interested in Matila Ghyki's writings and beliefs about the relationship between mathematics and the deeper principles of the world's existence. Among the books annotated by this architect was Eduard Schuré's work *The Great Initiates*, a reminder of the role of esoteric thought for generations of the early twentieth century. Charitonidou also sees Le Corbusier's ties to the philosophy of Bergson, who was interested in scientific research in neurophysiology, while the philosopher's sister Moina Mathers was a famous esotericist. Mies van der Rohe also had an extensive library with a number of carefully read books, among which notes in the margins show Oswald Spengler's work *Man and Technique* and Romano Guarini's *Letters from Lake Como* devoted to the same problem. The humanization of the second generation of CIAM's architectural principles was influenced by Rudolf Wittkower's work *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, which contributed to the anthropologization of architecture. Similar threads in Denise Scott Brown's urban planning had their source in the works of sociologist Herbert Gans. Bernard Tschumi, like Peter Eisenman, was influenced by a very large group of philosophers, ranging from the structuralists to the post-structuralists and ending with his close collaboration with Jacques Derrida and his own interpretation of the philosophy of deconstruction.

Knowledge about contemporary architecture in the first decade of the 20th century has long focused on Le Corbusier, the activities of CIAM, Walter Gropius and the activities of Bauhaus, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. The history of these architects has been accompanied by a huge number of publications, among which, since the 1970s, the trend of showing the diversity of ideological content and ambiguity of their work stands out. In the case of Le Corbusier, the publications of Jean-Louis Cohen, who was also among the members of Charitonidou's doctoral committee, are particularly noteworthy. Characteristically, this author's work outlines the relationship between Le Corbusier's work and the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, which makes the architect very different from his image as a master of rational architecture.<sup>2</sup> Charitonidou, too, brought to light rarely discussed issues of the architect's work. The author presented the tension stretched across Le Corbusier's entire oeuvre between the opposing goals of architecture, specifically between its rational and aesthetic sense. This problem was traced based on the architect's complex attitude to architectural drawing, the definition of architecture and space, and urban concepts. For Le Corbusier, drawing was a rational research

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<sup>2</sup> Jean-Louis Cohen, 'Le Corbusier's Nietzschean Metaphors', in *Nietzsche and "An Architecture of Our Minds"*, Alexandre Kostka and Irwing Wohlfarth (eds), Los Angeles: The Getty Center Research for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999, 311-332.

tool with which to make observations, memorize, then trigger memory to come up with shapes and communicate the results of thoughts. Crucial to these processes was the role of memory as both a tool that influences perception and a decisive one in the production of images. In the process, the distinction between observation as a work of memory and thinking as a creative activity was disappearing. Le Corbusier also changed his views relating to the effects of his work. On the one hand, these were to be solids perfect in their proportions and juxtaposition with others, and therefore the result of the pursuit of harmony achieved through mathematical methods, while on the other hand, the purpose of these works was to be purely aesthetic delight, they were supposed to evoke strong emotions of an almost physiological nature. The architect sought essential certainty in the games of orthogonal solids and, moreover, used horizontal straight lines and right angles, as he wished to thus limit undisciplined subjectivity and bring it in line with the demands of the times of rationality. As time passed, his artistic inclinations overcame this approach, and he recognized that the rational conquest of space could not be the sole purpose of architecture. The dimension of the fullness of humanity was to find its place among the tasks of architecture and thus it ceased to serve the purpose of showing itself and satisfying simple needs of convenience and utility but became a way of dwelling in which deeper human needs were also involved. In 1921, Le Corbusier used the expression *machine for living*, in 1925 he used the term *house-tool*, while 1928 was the turning point, after which the house or dwelling began to be understood as tools for quieting the mind, a kind of private temple enabling contemplation. The anthropocentrism of this phase of his work evolved from satisfying the needs of the body to meeting spiritual needs. This transition cannot be clearly read from his urban planning concepts, but these changes were made by his successors, the second generation of CIAM. The 1922 plan *Une ville contemporaine*, the 1925 *Le Plan Voisin*, and the 1930-1933 *La Ville Radieuse* shaped the memory of Le Corbusier as an advocate of building skyscrapers amidst tree-lined areas, but a 1961 drawing showing how the end-of-era CIAM generation is emerging proves his awareness that new architects will respond to other conditions of collective architecture. The 1922 plan *Une ville contemporaine*, the 1925 *Le Plan Voisin* and the 1930–1933 *La Ville Radieuse* shaped the memory of Le Corbusier as a supporter of building skyscrapers amidst tree-lined areas, but a 1961 drawing showing how the end-of-era CIAM generation is emerging proves his awareness that new architects will respond to different conditions of collective architecture. The most important change noted by Charitonidou, however, is the shift in defining architecture from capturing it as a set of static solids to a collection of images in a changing space. Architecture in the latter view is a sequential perception resulting from walking through the successive rooms of an architectural object. An indispensable part of learning about architecture becomes movement, which allows a series of events to occur that arrange themselves into a collection reminiscent of a movie performance.

The Bauhaus centennial in 2019 has brought a very large number of publications and museum exhibitions on many previously unknown circumstances of the Bauhaus. Similarly, the person of Mies van der Rohe, the last director of the school, has attracted the interest of many researchers. The year 2024 will also see the

publication of the architect's collected writings.<sup>3</sup> Charitonidou focused on examining Mies' drawings, the specifics of which concern attempts to make the viewer imagine moving through the space represented by the drawings. By broadly extending the perspective in front of the viewer, he is as if absorbed by the proposed spatial structure. In completed works, such as the Barcelona Pavilion, an assemblage of parts, each made of different stone materials, was used in addition to the effect of movement. Walking through the rooms opens up different views and combines spatial experiences in the likeness of film sequences. The language of these film-like frames is universal and universally understandable. In the purity, clarity and order of the syntax of Mies' spatial assemblages there is a message that the works are an expression of the rational spirit of the era, but also the result of the transformation of historical ideological trends into perpetual, unchanging and classical values.

The spaces designed by Mies are, in his view, a record of *Zeitwille*, the will of the times. The concept of *Zeitwille* in his views oscillates between the concept of *Wille* according to Schopenhauer and the philosophy of *Geist* according to Hegel. The difference is that *Wille* is synonymous with elemental, Dionysian divinity, while *Geist* expresses rational, Apollonian divinity. In a distinct view of the inner guiding force of the world embodied in Mies' views, architecture should not only discover and express the main ideals of the era, but also interpret and change them. The creative individual is called to not only give expression to the aspirations of his times, but also to influence and create these aspirations. The creative individual is both the representative and the creator of his era. Architecture has the ability to materialize progressive ideas, but also to tie them to timeless values.

Mies' buildings, such as the Pavilion in Barcelona, the Tugendhats' villa in Brno, Edith Farnsworth's house in Plano and the New National Gallery in Berlin, are based on playing with very limited formal means with extensive use of flat surfaces and empty spaces. Their unique purposes, however, do not prevent them from also becoming models for housing in metropolitan areas. The emptiness contained in Mies' works is supposed to encourage us to distance ourselves from the hasty rhythms of the city and the era and turn us towards eternity. Mies' architecture is in many cases transpositions of ancient temple buildings or classicist museums. They contain the spirit of contemplative places or refuges such as suburban Roman villas from the end of the Roman Empire. These buildings are noble wrappings for the frozen divinity, but at the same time they remind us of the Nietzschean thesis of the inseparability of the Apollonian and Dionysian factors. Such a thesis, therefore, prompts us to see them not only as means of intellectual rigor, but at the same time as a tool for focusing and strengthening vital forces and enabling life to manifest itself in its elemental forms as well. It should be recalled in this context that the design of a glass skyscraper for Berlin from 1922 can be related to the interest in the mystique of the crystal form and other trends of esoteric thought that was fashionable at the time, typical of Expressionism and the beginnings of the Bauhaus. Mies' constructions thus make real, visible and concrete the hidden forces of the world in both their rational and irrational dimensions.

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<sup>3</sup> Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: *Complete Writings 1922–1969*, Vittorio Pizzigoni, Michelangelo Sabatino (eds), Berlin: DOM Publishers, 2024.

After the end of 1939–45 war, the needs for housing construction were so great that many European countries adopted the principles of the *Athens Charter* in a simplified sense, along with proposals added by Le Corbusier to increase the importance of high-rise buildings. The separation of residential functions from places of work or leisure functions in new cities, as well as the separation of routes for high-speed car traffic, has contributed to a crisis in traditional forms of urban living. This trend was questioned by a new generation of architects as early as the early 1950s. The new goals were defined as striving to humanize architecture. The origins of these ideas can be traced to more general social and ideological changes, which were expressed, for example, in Sartre's essay *Existentialism is Humanism* (1945-1946), Heidegger's polemic with Sartre in his *Letter on Humanism* (1947), but also in Wittkower's book *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* (1949).

The development of the discourse on humanism in architecture was expressed during the Milan conference on proportions in art in 1951. The next stage of change was the CIAM summer schools, especially the 1953 meeting of young architects in Venice. Italian architects, including Giancarlo Da Carlo, also played a strong role at the time. In 1954, in the Dutch town of Doorn, a group of architects with the participation of Alison and Peter Smithson, Joseph Bakema and Aldo van Eyck signed a manifesto stating that urban buildings should form wholes more organic than the *Athens Charter* envisioned. In line with these principles, back in 1952 the Smithsons came up with a design for the Golden Lane district of London that, instead of an orderly group of skyscrapers, proposed a layout resembling a branch tying together buildings of different heights. The sketches they presented also attempted to restore the importance of streets for pedestrians, which was partially realized in their 1966–1972 Robin Hood Gardens project. The group of architects who followed these paths were united by the term Team X, because they participated in the preparations for the tenth CIAM conference, which was held in Dubrovnik in 1956 and ended with the dissolution of CIAM. Team X's activities were later sustained by the activities of Joseph Bakema and the newsletter he ran for exchanging views called *Mailbox for Habitat Development* (1959–1971).

The issues of humanization of architecture, including the role of the Smithsonians and the patterns initiated by the Golden Lane Housing project, are the subject of keen interest of architectural historians also in the twenty-first century. A transcript of speeches at a symposium organized by the Architectural Association in London on the Smithsonian and its major works was published in 2005. The volume containing speeches and discussions at the symposium is emotionally titled *Architecture is not made with the brain: the labour of Alison and Peter Smithson*.<sup>4</sup> Detailed research is also being done on individual Smithsonian works. The Robin Hood Gardens development, threatened with demolition, was dedicated in 2010 to a book

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<sup>4</sup> Rosa Ainley, Clare Barrett, Niall Hobhouse, Louisa Hutton, Bruno Kru, Pamela Johnston, *Architecture is not made with the Brain. The Labour of Alison and Peter Smithson*, series: *Architecture landscape urbanism*, vol. 9, London: Architectural Association, 2005.

by Alan Powers.<sup>5</sup> Charitonidou, too, has devoted her attention to issues of deviation from the principles of the *Athens Charter* in a separate article and in excerpts from her two books. The change in historiography is that previously the work of the Smithsons was considered important within Brutalism, while now care is shown to recognize the individual contribution of each architect, so to recognize those values that set them apart from the group.

Among the active members of Team X, new architectural values can be noted in the work of Aldo van Eyck, who specifically broke the separation between the architecture of a single building and the architecture of a city. This architect's orphanage, built between 1955 and 1960 in Amsterdam, consists of repetitive units that are connected in a large complex of buildings in a non-hierarchical manner. The use of an orthogonal grid to compose the rooms did not exclude diversity or produce a secluded orphanage atmosphere. The layout of the domestic rooms was considered a model for the layout of the entire complex of buildings through which this almost urban complex gained an unprecedented character of inclusiveness. Aldo van Eyck's activities focused on building mood and evoking associations uniquely distinguished him from earlier generations of CIAM. Knowledge of the work of this Dutch structuralist was enriched in 2018 with a comprehensive article by Matthias Noell.<sup>6</sup>

The direction toward adopting urban patterns into architecture and at the same time strengthening its poetic qualities was perfectly implemented in the work of Aldo Rossi. In 2012, a monograph on this architect was presented by Panayotis Pangalos,<sup>7</sup> while Charitonidou reinforced the knowledge of the breakthrough that occurred in the architect's work under the influence of his cognition of American cities large and small. Rossi's 1966 book *L'architettura della città* brought spectacular result in the design for the San Cataldo cemetery in Modena (1971). The reservations that the realization of this work aroused in the public indicate that at that time the importance of architectural drawings and admiration for them was sometimes greater than for works materializing unusual ideas. The point of his designs was to take a familiar type of building or recognizable urban layout and process it in a spirit similar to Giorgio de Chirico's painting. The analogies that these proposals aroused in the recipients were the predictable result of the architect's intentions.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Alan Powers, *Robin Hood Gardens: Re-Visions: 10*, Series: *Twentieth Century Architecture*, London: The Twentieth Century Society, 2011. See also: Ang Li, 'Raised by Association: Robin Hood Gardens and its Interpretations', *Scandalous*, 43, 2015, 110-119, 292-299.

<sup>6</sup> Matthias Noell, 'Zwischen Wohnung und Stadt. Aldo van Eyck und die Suche nach einer humanen und petischen Architektur', in: *Selbstentwurf: das Architektenhaus von der Renaissance bis zur Gegenwart*, Dietrich Boschung, Julian Jachmann (eds), Internationale Kolleg Morphomata, series: *Morphomata*, vol. 38, Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2018, 209-232.

<sup>7</sup> Panayotis Pangalos, *The significance of time in architecture of Aldo Rossi*, Phd dissertation, University of Patras, Greece, Athens: Gutenberg editions, 2012. See also: *Aldo Rossi, Perspectives from the World. Theory, Teaching, Design and Legacy*, Marco Bovatti, Michele Caja, Martina Landsberger, Angelo Lorenzi (eds), series: *Biblioteca di Architettura*, vol. 24, Padova: Il Poligrafo casa editrice, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel Sherer, *Aldo Rossi: The Architecture and Art of The Analogous City*, School of Architecture, Princeton University 2018, 4-24.

When, during his stay in New York at the Cooper Union School, he was confronted with Thomas Jefferson's project for a university village at the University of Virginia, he was able to see how important a role traditional patterns play in architecture and urban planning. The model solutions to certain architectural problems that appear in the architect's mind are memory records not only of a distant starting moment, a certain paradigm, but also of later transformations. Architecture is a work of memory and its material representations contain the history of changes in the type of building and its meanings. This position leads to understanding of architecture as a continuation, rather than from a series of radical changes. Architectural forms accumulate meanings and are objects for recording and evoking feelings, especially nostalgia and melancholy. Architectural forms accumulate meanings and are objects for recording and evoking feelings, especially nostalgia and melancholy.<sup>9</sup> Charitonidou reminded in this context of Diogo Seixas Lopes' book characterizing Rossi's architecture precisely as works of melancholy.<sup>10</sup> The aesthetic and poetic dimension of architecture, towards which Aldo Rossi was inclined, did not turn out to be a denial of functionality, but an indication of the neglected functions of architecture. It can be considered that this emotive form of architecture fulfils itself as a rhetorical tool in the construction of more diverse societies.

The further development of 20th century architecture was marked by a tension between efforts to maintain architecture's autonomy from traditional goals and activities to increase user involvement in the creation of concrete solutions especially at the city level. Giancarlo Da Carlo's work represents a participatory approach and attempts to involve users directly in the design processes for the objects to be used by them. An example of such involvement was the design process for the Nuovo Villaggio Matteotti estate in Terni (1969–1975), which was shaped by meetings with future inhabitants of the estate and collaboration with sociologist Domenico De Masi of La Sapienza University in Rome. Documentation of the architect's activities has been transferred to the Archivio Progetti at the Istituto Universitario di Architettura in Venice and, after processing, is now available electronically.<sup>11</sup> The Matteotti estate was recently described by Alberto Franchini.<sup>12</sup> Collaboration with future residents cannot be considered successful, but such an attempt has become legendary in the history of modern urban planning. The architect's anarchist and socialist views had a significant impact on the situation. As Charitonidou recalled, De Masi summarized the design process in an article published in 1977 in the Italian magazine *Casabella*.<sup>13</sup> She also drew attention to the

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<sup>9</sup> Edna Langenthal, Hagit Leshem, 'Three Aspects of Nostalgia: Thoughts on the Work of Aldo Rossi', *Plan Journal*, 8, 2023, 153-175.

<sup>10</sup> Diogo Seixas Lopes, *Melancholy and architecture: On Aldo Rossi*, Zurich: Park Books 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Giancarlo Da Carlo,

<https://cataloghidedicati.iuav.it/it/ricerca/archivistico/?search=Giancarlo+Da+Carlo&documents=archive> (online: 24.01.2024).

<sup>12</sup> Alberto Franchini, *Il Villaggio Matteotti a Terni. Giancarlo De Carlo e l'abitare collettivo*, series: *L'Erma per l'Arte Contemporanea*, vol. 2, Roma: L'Erma Di Bretschneider, 2020.

<sup>13</sup> Domenico De Masi, *Sociologia e nuovo ruolo degli utenti*, *Casabella*, 421, 1977, 15-16.

publication of Luca Molinari, who contrasted Da Carlo's aspirations with Ernesto Nathan Rogers, who argued with him.<sup>14</sup>

Da Carlo's other important projects were addressed to academic communities in Urbino Il Tridente, La Vela, L'Aquilone, among which the Collegio del Cole (1962–1965) stands out. As Charitonidou noted, these projects no longer involved future users, but an understanding of everyday needs still remained the guiding idea of the architect's conduct. The apartments in the Collegio del Cole are currently undergoing restoration work, which also indicates their prominence in the history of contemporary architecture.<sup>15</sup>

The most radical approach to social problems in urban planning was represented in 20th century architecture by Denise Scott Brown, a representative of the United States, which can be explained by the influence of her European studies and the influence of the views of Giuseppe Vaccaro and Ludovico Quaroni. At the CIAM summer school in Venice in 1956, Quaroni gave a lecture in which he advocated the levelling of boundaries between architecture and urbanism and the need to expand the concept of function to include social needs, moral and psychological issues. Quaroni, moreover, urged architecture students to take into account the diversity contained in urban structures. During Scott Brown's further studies at the University of Pennsylvania, she was similarly influenced by sociologist Herbert Gans, who in 1967 published a paper, *The Levittowners*, discussing life in Willingboro Township, New Jersey, where the Levitt and Sohn company built its third consecutive Levittown development of 11,000 homes. As a resident of Levittown from 1958 to 1962, Gans studied the daily life of the neighbourhood, drawing a conclusion about the vitality of the residential area. He took a similarly affirmative approach to the issue of poverty in his 1972 work entitled *The Positive Function of Poverty*.

Scott Brown's research followed similar sociological paths when she, along with Steven Izenour and Robert Venturi, conducted a research program, *Remedial Housing for Architects or Learning from Levittown*, with Yale University students in 1970. One observation was to note the use of old technical elements, such as wagon wheels and horse-drawn carriage lights, to decorate middle-class homes. On a larger scale, similar observations have been made for Las Vegas, where countless forms of urban symbolism have been studied. The book *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972) has been translated into more than a dozen languages, resulting in widespread appreciation of the contribution of popular art to shaping the image of cities and building their identity. The book *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972) has been translated into more than a dozen languages, resulting in widespread appreciation of the contribution of popular art to shaping the image of cities and building their

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<sup>14</sup> Luca Molinari, 'Theories and Practices of Re-Humanizing Postwar Italian Architecture: Ernesto Nathan Rogers and Giancarlo De Carlo, in Re-humanizing Architecture: New Forms of Community, 1950–1970', *East West Central: Re-Building Europe, 1950–1990*, Ákos Moravánszky, Judith Hopfengartner, Torsten Lange, Karl R. Kegler (eds), vol. 1, Basel: Birkhäuser, 2017, 229–242.

<sup>15</sup> *Giancarlo Da Carlo "Collegi" in Urbino. Conservation Plan*, The Getty Foundation, Urbino: Università degli studi di Urbino Carlo Bo, Technical department, 2017.

identity. The work *La controverse - Learning from Las Vegas* by Valéry Didelon, a French researcher at the École Nationale supérieure d'architecture in Paris, returns years later to the problem of valuing popular art in popular culture.<sup>16</sup> In Charitonidou's view, Scott Brown's main achievement remains the recognition of the city as a collection of diverse, interrelated activities and the extension of functionalism to understanding the daily needs of urban residents.

Interest in the city's architecture more than ever before is characteristic of the generation active since the 1970s. Rem Koolhaas' career began with a book on New York based on several years of research and in 1975 the established architectural firm took over the name Office for Metropolitan Architecture.<sup>17</sup> Charitonidou noted a similar focus on research and the use of urban knowledge to create architecture for Bernard Tschumi. The author focused particularly on the architect's years of education and the period of his early work. Tschumi was educated in London during the upcoming student revolution of the May 1968 period. When he became a lecturer himself, he initially held the belief that architecture could continue and participate in the drive for radical political change. This position can be found in his educational activities summarized in the brochure *A Chronicle in Urban Politics* (1973–1974). However, just a year later, the booklet *Chronicle of Space 1974-1975* documents the transition from urban policy to space issues. Undoubtedly, the views of leftist thinkers such as Henri Lefebvre influenced his theories, but over time he was also inspired by many other thinkers from the post-structuralist and deconstructionist philosophers. Even without recognizing architecture as an important political factor, he appreciated its importance in transforming culture and intellectual life. His concepts recognized that space was most strongly influenced by groups with economic and political power, but users are also always able to resist the compulsions created by existing urban structures and influence the ultimate character of the city. As Charitonidou noted, space as understood by Tschumi thus depended on the influence of the forces of traditional economic and political orders, but also on discourses about space and the events that take place in it. As Charitonidou noted, space as understood by Tschumi thus depended on the influence of the forces of traditional economic and political orders, but also on discourses about space and the events that take place in it. Architecture, however, is not only a place of events, but an effect of the events happening in it, and is itself an event. Within these concepts, architecture is both a space and an event.

The greatest achievement of Tschumi's work is his recognition of the role of contradictions in architecture, which he defines by various terms, such as disjunction. In the opinion of this architect, space is produced as an expression of the contradiction between the economic and political conditions that determine the creation of the object, the mental conditions (therefore, different types of concepts of space) and the events provoked by its users, whose intentions are assumed to be different from those of the economic owners of the space. The resulting space is saturated with resistance, which should be considered more often as a component of

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<sup>16</sup> Valéry Didelon, *La controverse - Learning from Las Vegas*, Wavre: (Pierre) Mardaga, 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York. A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*, New York: Oxford University Press 1978.

the design process. Understanding the need for resistance architecture is now becoming more common among architects and architectural scholars with aspirations to aid social change.<sup>18</sup>

Charitonidou's work confirms the thesis once put forth by Tournikiotis that the historiography of 20th century architecture is an activity that influences the creation of architecture, but also, a more recent discovery, contemporary concepts of architecture aspire to influence social policy. If there is any doubt about such a statement, it should be recalled, following the author in question, that Tschumi, in *Chronicle in Urban Politics*, recommended distancing oneself from an institutional understanding of politics and seeking to understand it in terms that have not yet been defined and perhaps must remain undefined.

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<sup>18</sup> Katarzyna Wiącek, *Czy potrzebujemy "architektury oporu"*, *Prace Kulturoznawcze*, 4, 2017, 135-152.