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## **City Future: Methodological Guidelines for Balancing Interests**

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Cities have always been considered the fulcrum where the greatest density of human relationships takes place, evolving in material or immaterial form. However, it would be wrong to consider them as structures provided of their own metabolism, which can be in an equilibrium state. Actually they are systems constantly developing, characterized by a functional imbalance in relation to change processes. So they behave like real life forms which appear in part configurable, in part subjected to spontaneous mutations.

Consequently the form, taken by contemporary city, has emphasized hostility elements towards those who have not specific requirements and skills and for this reason cannot be able to “use” city as it is.

## Search Field

The main theme that the paper investigates is related to the relevance of contributions that urban space offers to the development and maturity processes of social relationships and identities, above all considering the significant influence of historical-architectural and natural elements. Discussing about urban questions means first of all understanding the clear and evident specificity of each city, in particular regarding not only structural and functional dimensions, but also its history, its landscape, its people and its times, also underlining how the city is organized according to different economic rhythms, in which the involved subjects are at the same time producers and consumers. So, City becomes the stage where the “social reproduction” takes place, including the whole system of processes through which individuals, families and communities are able to satisfy their immediate needs of production, growth and conservation, involving the use of different kind of resources: consumer goods, services, obtained from public sector or from market, and personal abilities, applied in every field of the structured organization and expressed in “one to one” relationships. We gather that all processes of “social reproduction” are deeply connected to the existence of people, connoting their physical well-being and their relational attitudes.

Nowadays it is widely demonstrated that the architecture and the shape of the contemporary City is a relevant factor to achieve a better quality of life. But the reading and the understanding of places look such fragmented and ungrammatical, that it is difficult to put together and relate various historical moments because of acceleration of consumerism, which has produced a social disadvantage, both for the built heritage and for individual architectural episodes.

Contemporary construction processes put in place by many designers at every dimensional scale have focused primarily on a concept of design and built, based on development of only its own function, without questioning what the architecture itself should transmit. So the attention to these works will result limited in time.

Through the reading of the relationships’ complexity of both spatial and temporal dimension, balancing different interests, it is possible to retrieve a conception which considers territory not as an operating field, almost abstract, but as a result of long and slow layers, which should be known by everyone to be able to intervene and cooperate. According to this vision, territory cannot be considered just a mere datum. It is the result of several processes, some of natural character, other man-induced one. Apart from structures, for example, also by using or choosing colours, which are part of the elements through which the senses filter, feel and understand the reality. In fact colours can be considered as the living language of nature, with which it is imaginable to establish a relationship of communication and an interpretative experience.

Colour seems subjective to most people, because it revives profound memories and develops multiple associations, involving large areas of the brain.

The flexibility of visual experience creates a necessary adaptation of image, that represents a scheme for colour processing with its surroundings and its contrast. Since this systemic reaction is embodied and “experiential”, colour is not purely subjective. People activate similar flexible and antagonists mechanisms in order to perceive and conceive colour. The analysis of the conceptual metaphors of colour reveals patterns of perception, cognition and processing of language. In accordance with the approach of cognitive linguistics, this mapping reflects the motivation embodied in the “double meaning” of each colour both as light and as material.

## The reasons for the research

In architecture, the use of symbols, conventions, colours and families of signs defines in its completeness the relationships between the object of the representation and the representation itself. So this relationship may be made explicit through the adoption of an iconic code, which establishes a link between sign and object, such as the sign reproduces one or more properties of the object represented, and another kind of relation, that establishes a correspondence between sign and the represented object, so that the sign, even if it does not possess any similarity with the object, reproduces the meanings by convention, contributing to



the construction of a mental image communicatively effective.

If the iconic language can appear readily understandable, at the same time it can be ambiguous and bring to different interpretations, when it is not supported by a specific set of rules and conventions. The symbolic language, on the contrary, appears rigid, disinclined to interpretations and variations. The choice of the kind of language to use depends on various factors such as the scaling of recipients of the message, whether or not rules and notation. In addition to the above reasons the alphanumeric codes are fundamental for the deployment of meanings, especially with the introduction of statistical surveys in the analysis of the territory, as already

“the three codes of urban design, which are the text, the design and number, not overlapping at all, they form a chain of disparate meanings, which correspond to a single meaning, urban planning, the drawing is very precise with regard to the morphology and location of activities, but it is too ambiguous in accounting internal reports, even if some of them are made visible by the differences in intensity of colour inks.”

(Cerdà, 1984)

Polychromy is a valuable tool for all Greek architecture without limitation in time or place. It is not only a tool to improve the effect of “majesty” and “elegance” of buildings, but also a system to integrate the built in a harmonious nature and vegetation. It oversees and ensures the “alliance of the three arts” in question, namely painting, sculpture and architecture, which can only complement each other to reach the “sublime”. A polychrome coating also provides a better stone conservation, as well as in primitive temples, ensured the preservation of wood.

## Objectives

In this context, also the sense of luxury in architecture is related to the basic desire of regain possession of small beauties and truths of daily life: the feelings of intimacy. It is related to empty spaces rather than full ones, it is much more a mental matter than a physical one, it is not wealth, but transparency. We talk about a new story, which comes from the past, bringing with it the flavour of faraway places, but projected in the near future and beyond. A future not made of imitation, emulation, but of a truth and a uniqueness which envelop us in their protective cocoon, allowing us to live and survive in an increasingly restless and alienating

Visual harmony combined with inner one, a mirror of our mood that becomes more calm and balanced. Harmony that also impacts relationships and daily interactions, enriching them with passion and feeling.

Besides the use of colour in architecture is completely analogous to that of statuary and mural painting, as already Quatremère de Quincy noted, so that the silence of the ancient writers, who had deceived Winckelmann, is attributable to the universal use of this system that has ceased ipso facto to be a noteworthy feature. Talking about of non-places, natural habitats where everyone can bring out his/her personality most deep and sincere, where people can find the real contact with themselves and with nature that gave us life. In this sense there are various references at present time which we can look at and give a clear signal of how the chosen colour, together with architecture, refer to different sensations and perceptions, creating wealth for the users of the spaces. The red of the Kilometer Zero by J. Nouvel or the pedestrian underpass in Misano Adriatico by Italo Rota for example, suggests that colour gives great identity to the place, and architecture becomes a sign of strong character of the place and conferring emotions, one for a pedestrian crossing area transit, usually disused, in a hurry to move, and so instead becomes a pleasant linkage that give the site in improving the quality of life that communicates feelings of pleasure, the other rather than put colour in relation to company to which the red symbolizes reliability, security and high performance, indicating a match between technology and identity.

The City, as a whole of spaces and built forms, is able to tell us its story widely, showing in the concrete its subject marked by the passage through time, traces of its stories, through the observation of its forms, in full and in detail, we can recognize, understand and take possession, transforming, by sharing, in common

cultural heritage. Without this fundamental intellectual and interpretative process, it will be difficult or impossible to store and deliver to the future testimonies of art and history.

## Purposes

The most important step, at this point, is represented by the ability to recognize the genius loci, which is present in every single place where history and memory have grown. It's very difficult to outline exactly what the genius loci is formed by, because its understanding is often influenced by individual sensibility and culture.

We could say that it is the combination of suggestions, moods, emotions, history, forms, beauty, materials, fonts, colours, lights, shadows, patinas, sounds, stories, legends, signs of the passage of time and so much more, which make every historical site unique and different from each other, almost as if a guardian angel would watch over its soul, to reveal it only to those who are able to approach and listen.

At this point, we could also say that the ability to recognize the genius loci is a prerequisite for a good restorer and a conservator otherwise he will never be able to be guided by historic places to restore them, but eventually, in the best cases, he will impoverish, prevaricate or worse, distort them.

In short, a good restoration is never excessive and totalizing; it knows how to stop at the right moment and in the right place, it reduces to a strict minimum the interventions, preferring not to do rather than doing too much, it respects and highlights, after searching, that recognized and studied genius loci as we have said.

## Conclusions

Through a short list of references to different themes, finally we want to outline that the state of fact of many urban realities complaints that we are experiencing a general loss of identity of places, with the gradual disappearance of most of the architectural features that characterize a precise historical period, testifying, at the same time, the continuity of the architectural evolution and its use.

The lack of these tracks, which specify the uniqueness of each area, is significant, as it is clear, from the modus operandi grown in the last few decades, the marks left by our passage involve the intrusion of anonymous structures and stereotypes, which are inadequate to interact and relate harmoniously to the pre-existent context. Because of aseptic and unrelated changes, which badly alter the architectural language and the image of the restored sites, we are no more able to recognize the originality of places. The direct consequence of this flattening trend is the lost of the human being identification and historical and cultural belonging to a place where he cannot recognize himself and his natural origins.

Often historical buildings are transformed through repeated random changes, make them losing their own characteristic features and conforming with other new already depersonalized contexts. The interventions, planned and designed with extreme superficiality, replacing parts with structures "highly efficient", but morphologically anonymous and inappropriate. So it is necessary more knowledge which establishes a relationship of interdependence along two lines where the representation has two different and fundamental roles: that one of the creation and maturation of understanding (investigation and processing) where the representation is the instrument through which it becomes possible to study the territory and interpret the determinants of variable keys, quantitatively and qualitatively, contributing to the development of critical interpretations, and that one of the transmission of knowledge where the representation has the aim of spreading meanings and messages.

Opening structured and organized spaces, suitable for the dialogue, it means to encourage a new level of participation of all citizens, of the governance, without circumventing the accountability of executive power in the system of representative democracy, for sharing decisional paths and compose conflict, for balancing all different political, economical, social, cultural interests.

The new lines for the recovery of City's true meaning need to be based on a designed method, where both the creative process of the mind and the executive process of the hand converge and identify, but we believe that the most perfect operability remains inert if it does not become, moment by moment, action.



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