DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.14809338
Essay Received: December 6, 2024; Accepted: December 28, 2024

Pippo Ciorra*

Until the End of the Word

ABSTRACT: Thinkers of the Architecture world, and of the arts in general, love to play with the notion of the "end," often associated with death, which in turn is easily reflected in the modernist concept of *tabula rasa*, fueling the avant-garde spirit of twentieth-century architecture. From Duchamp to postmodernism, art—and architecture—seems to sustain itself and its social function by playing with the progressive disruption (an "end") of every representational code, continuously questioning the very possibility of existing and having agency in the world. In the middle decades of the second half of the century such permanent condition of de-construction was embodied by a leading architecture tendency, gaining most of its allure and authority by the close dialogue/collaboration with philosophers. This essay discusses how such design attitude has also come to an *end*. The reasons for this shift are to be found in two main areas. The first is today's *Weltaanschuuung*—the cultural and anthropological condition we live in, compared to the final decades of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first. This can be examined by looking at how philosophy and its sister disciplines are reacting to these new conditions, gradually distancing themselves from architecture. The second is the loss of a set of protocols that once governed the relationships between theory, practice, and representation, as well as the loss of philosophy as the main partner in defining these protocols—an arrangement that had existed since Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790).

KEYWORDS: representation, theory, image, technology, art, activism, science

* Pippo Ciorra: School of Architecture and Design (SAAD), University of Camerino; giuseppe.ciorra@unicam.it.

Archisophie

Thinkers of the architecture world, and of the arts in general, love to play with the notion of the "end," often associated with death. As Massimo Cacciari reminds us,[1] it all begins with Hegel,[2] who argues that art exhausts its original role at the time of his writings (the early nineteenth century), overwhelmed by both the spiritual power of religion and the density of philosophical thought. With modernism, Hegel's early influence on the theory of rational architecture and the aesthetics coming with them appears to bloom into the anxious *modernist* need for an endless tabula rasa, fueling the avant-garde spirit of twentieth-century art. The "short century"[3] is, in fact, an unbroken sequence of revolutions, "fractures,"[4] crises, breaks, turns, apocalypses, and collapses. From Duchamp to postmodernism, art—and architecture—seems to sustain itself and its social function by playing with the progressive disruption (an "end") of every representational code, continuously questioning the very possibility of existing and having agency in the world.

After WWII, architecture's cathartic meta-suicide seems to repeat in roughly decade-long cycles. In the late 1950s, it takes the form of a drama: Team X declares the death of modern architecture as it had been proposed by the masters thirty years earlier.[5] In the same years, in Italy, Ludovico Quaroni proclaims the death of the neo-realist approach—a design aesthetic he himself had launched just ten years earlier as a solution to the Italian post-fascist dilemma between modernism and classical architecture.[6] In 1961, it is Jane Jacobs' turn to explore *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, expanding the idea of the "end" (death) from architecture to the Western city itself. Ten years later, however, the implosion of architecture looks more like a celebration than a funeral. In

---

[1] Massimo Cacciari, lecture at the Philisophy Festival, Parma 2017 (title of the festival: "Fine dell'arte"), published on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=do5sbINO1nc&t=1273s. See also an interview from 2020 on the same subject: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67_mQ2coewU.

[2] A good start in order to navigate the redundant, nearly chaotic, literature about the subject could be E. Geulen, *The End of Art: Readings in a Rumor After Hegel*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 2006.

[3] E. Hobsbawm, T*he Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991*, Michael Joseph, London, 1994.

[4] See F. Menna, *La linea analitica dell'arte moderna*, Einaudi, Torino, 1975.

[5] D. van der Heuvel, M. Risselada (eds.), *Team 10: In Search of a Utopia of the Present 1953–1981*, nai010 publishers, Rotterdam, 2005.

[6] L. Quaroni, "Il paese dei Barocchi," *Casabella-continuità*, 215, 1957, p. 24

fact, the international network of radical architects engages for a decade with a spectacularized version of the "death of architecture," a conceptual stance not far from Gordon Matta-Clark's "anarchitecture."[7] In 1971, at an event in a Florence nightclub, Superstudio presents *Life, Death and Miracles of Architecture*, a catalog of an exhibition involving the many anti-architectural teams of the Italian "radical" avant-garde.[8] Two years later, art theorist Jack Burnham publishes *The Structure of Art*, which pushes toward an approach to conceptualism that implies the disappearance of the object, and thus of art itself.[9]

Another decade on, in 1980, Paolo Portoghesi introduces the book published in coincidence with the opening of the [first] architecture Biennale *(La presenza del passato*) with an essay bearing a sounding title "*La fine del proibizionismo*" ("The End of Prohibitionism"[10]), celebrating the victory of nostalgia and decoration over minimalism and the historical tabula rasa of modernism. It would take just another decade before Francis Fukuyama epitomizes postmodernism with *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992)? Between the two, a major essay—widely quoted as a fundamental reference by the editors of this issue—"The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning and the End of the End" by Peter Eisenman.[11] We could go on much further, maybe all the way to include the inevitable personal contribution to this periodic tendency toward "archicide,"[12] but for the scope of this text—and of this issue of *Khōrein*—it would probably be more interesting to stay in the conceptual space between Jacques Derrida's *Writing and Difference* (1967) and a memorable installation by Eisenman and Frank Gehry at the US pavilion in the 1991 Venice Architecture Biennale. Derrida's book, alongside some of Eisenman's writings and other post-structuralist

---

[7] M. Wigley, *Cutting Matta-Clark: The Anarchitecture Investigation*, Lars Müller Publishers, Zurich, 2018.

[8] *Aa.Vv.*, *Superstudio presentano: vita, morte e miracoli dell'architettura*, G. & G. edizioni, Firenze, 1971.

[9] Vered Maimon develops a seminal reading of Burnham's idea of the relations between arts and science in "Communication as a mental touch: Jack Burnham and the end of art," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 79–80, 2023, pp. 255–269.

[10] P. Portoghesi, "La fine del proibizionismo,", in *Dopo l'architettura moderna*, Laterza, Roma/Bari, 1980, pp. 9–14. In the English version (Rizzoli international, 1982) the title of the essay is changed into "The Trail of Ashes".

[11] "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning and the End of the End" is published in *Perspecta*, 21, 1984, pp. 154–173.

[12] P. Ciorra, *Senza Architettura: le ragioni di una crisi*, Laterza, Roma/Bari, 2011, is an essay focused on the "disapperance" of Italian Architecture at the end of the 20th century.

gospels (especially Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) by Deleuze and Guattari), marks the golden age of an alliance between philosophers and architects—a collaboration that will define both design and theory for nearly two decades.

Starting in the late 1970s, under the cultural umbrella of postmodernist theory, a number of collaborative experiments involving Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi, Rem Koolhaas, Jacques Derrida, Paul Virilio, and others opened the way for a progressive approach to postmodern architecture. This approach meant to move beyond the ethics and aesthetics of both modernism and nostalgia, in order to achieve *la condition postmoderne* through the development of "conceptual" design and an exasperated focus on the power of language.[13] Eisenman and Gehry's performative dialogue in Venice,[14] orchestrated by Philip Johnson in the early 1990s, likely marks the (beginning of the) end of that era—a moment when the fragile balance between lògos and form[15] is broken in favor of the latter, in line with a social culture increasingly devoted to the *screened* image (versus the text). This was initially signaled by a building—the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao—that made "dreams come true."[16]

Johnson's narrative was explicit. In the play staged in the American pavilion, Eisenman's character was the philosopher-architect, devoted to a process where the project was much more about the dialogue between the designer and the intellectual than the building itself (which rarely materialized).[17] Gehry, "obviously" from the West Coast, pushed

---

[13] The exchange between Derrida and Eisenman documented in J. Kipnis, T. Leeser, *Chora L Works: Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman*, Monacelli, New York, 1997, is generally considered the manifesto of the productive collaboration between architects and philosophers in the last decades of the twentieth century.

[14] Gehry and Eisenman's work were displayed in the US pavilion at Giardini di Castello as part of the Fifth International Exhibition of Architecture at the Venice Biennale. Commissioner was Philip Johnson. The design of catalog was strongly influenced by the editorial format of the *ANY* magazine. The oversized publications features excerpts from a conversation between Peter Eisenman and Frank Gehry and a text by Sanford Kwinter and Thomas Hines. P. Johnson, *Peter Eisenman & Frank Gehry*, Fifth International Exhibition of Architecture, Venice Biennale, Rizzoli International, New York, 1991.

[15] P. Ciorra, "No-lògos," in E. Costantopoulos (ed.), *The Significance of Philosophy in Architecture Education*, Panayotis & Effie Michelis Foundation, Athens, 2012.

[16] "Dreams come true" was a recurring slogan in the series of articles written by Herbert Muschamp for *The New York Times* at the time of the opening of Gehry's Guggenheim in Bilbao. See for instance "The Miracle in Bilbao," *The New York Times*, 7 September, 1997, p. 54.

[17] The old seminal essay written in the form of a report between 1978 and 1982 by Jean-Louis Cohen about Italian architecture and to the figure of the "*architetto intellettuale*"

architecture towards a direction mostly defined by art: visual, glamorous, sculptural, surprising, installative, mesmerizing—a "work" to be judged phenomenologically by aesthetic and emotional means, and hardly a "text" for philosophical speculation. The main argument of this essay is to show how both design attitudes—the philosophical and the sculptural—that dominated the architecture scene between 1970 and 2010, have now come to an *end*. Or, more precisely, we could say that while the tendency to turn the main generating idea of a project (*diagram*[18]) into some unexpected and "uncanny" form, even after losing much of its groundbreaking allure, still finds an audience and wealthy clients in specific areas of the world (especially the Middle and Far East), architecture research and production based on philosophical depth and the hybridization of linguistics and spatial geometry seems to be out of place—or at least attracting much less interest—in the contemporary context.

The reasons for this shift are obviously many and varied, but they can probably be found in two main areas. The first is today's Weltanschauung—the cultural and anthropological condition we live in, compared to the final decades of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first. This can be examined by looking at how philosophy and its sister disciplines are reacting to these new conditions, gradually distancing themselves from architecture. The second is the loss of a set of protocols that once governed the relationships between theory, practice, and representation, as well as the loss of philosophy as the main partner in defining these protocols—an arrangement that had existed since Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790). For argumentative clarity, we will start with the latter.

Problem 1: *The End of Representation*

On February 9, 2012, the Yale School of Architecture (YSOA) hosted a symposium titled "Is Drawing Dead?" Organized by Victor Argan, the event featured a number of renowned speakers, including Massimo Scolari, Juhani Pallasmaa, and Peter Cook. It was accompanied by the

may be useful to understand how the NY based cell of post-structuralist thinkers/designers developed a mutual interest with the area of scholars and architects gravitating around IUAV, Aldo Rossi and Manfredo Tafuri. See, J. L. Cohen, *La coupure entre architectes et intellectuels: ou les enseignements de l'italophilie*, Mardaga, Bruxelles, 2015.

[18] For a clear definition of the diagram in architecture see G. Corbellini, *Exlibris: 16 Keywords of Contemporary Architecture*, LetteraVentidue, Milano 201, p. 40.

exhibition *Massimo Scolari: The Representation of Architecture*, whose contents served as a bold statement and a clear negative response to the symposium's provocative title. However, the defense of traditional drawing offered by the speakers, alongside the artistic aura of Scolari's work, seemed insufficient to ease the concerns of Yale's faculty. Seven years later, in February 2018, the same institution hosted another exhibition—*The Drawing Show*, curated by Dora Epstein Jones and previously displayed at the A+D Museum in Los Angeles. This exhibition revisited many of the unresolved arguments left in the wake of the 2011 symposium.

"We now find ourselves," said Dean Deborah Berke in her opening statement, "entering a new phase of representation as the fear of losing authorship, identity, and control to the computer subsides."[19] Epstein Jones joined the conversation, passionately observing: "The practice of architectural drawing has changed dramatically over the past twenty-five years. The traditional pro forma of the sketch (or *parti*) that would eventually lead to a plan, section, and elevation has given way to exploratory forms of representation."[20] Berke, along with Scolari, makes a wise step by moving the conversation from the concept of "drawing" to the deeper and more comprehensive one of "representation."

From Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* (1452) to the end of the twentieth century, representation is what defines architecture's identity as the space of ideas (*lineamenta*) versus the obvious space of construction. Representation is also where a grammar of signs and images defines a language of communication and consequently a platform for the dialogue between spatial concepts (architecture) and abstract ones (philosophy). Together with the concept of representation, such a platform has been denied in the last decades not only by the fast growth of technology, but by at least three main changes that took place in the architecture environment.

The End of Representation / The Digital and the Tech Utopia

The first and more obvious change, well pictured by the Yale story, is the one provoked by the evolution of technology and design tools. Albeit from opposite positions, two books brought the Yale debate on

[19] Deborah Berke's remarks on the exhibition on YSoA website, https://www.architecture.yale.edu/exhibitions/14-the-drawing-show, (accessed 5 December 2024).

[20] Dora Epstein Jones' presentation of the exhibition on YSoA website, https://www.architecture.yale.edu/exhibitions/14-the-drawing-show, (accessed 5 December 2024).

representation to an end: David Sheer's *The Death of Drawing* (2014) on the side of the technophobes and Mario Carpo's *The Second Digital Turn*[21] on the side of the technophiles. Both agree that architecture is moving from the field of representation to that of simulation. Simulation is intended as a space where the design and representation processes are synthesized in a no-stop sequence of automatic actions, going from the data feedback to the final product.[22] In this space, the designer/user has no room for interaction with the single phase/element of the design and therefore no chance for interpretation (*hermeneutics*), which is deeply founded on *representation* and which is the base for any dialogue between architecture and disciplines like philosophy that are searching for meanings, ideologies, and concepts.

The End of Representation / Artistic Practices

While the domination of digital culture has a major and growing impact on both the theory and practice of the design world, there are other aspects of the crisis of the idea of representation that have a strong influence on how spaces and structures are manufactured and communicated today. The one discussed in this paragraph is the relationship between architecture and art.[23] Indeed, it is widely clear how this relationship has changed over the past 60 to 70 years. From the fifteenth century till the 1970s, this relationship was mainly epitomized by the production of drawings and aesthetically autonomous images—exactly the aesthetic and hermeneutic condition we find in Scolari's drawings (and paintings) referenced earlier. For more than five centuries, architectural drawings (and representation in general) created an exchange with the world that was autonomous and independent from the building process,

---

[21] "Today, at long last, the demise of projected images may be happening for good—this time around, however, not by proclamation, but by sheer technological obsolescence", in M. Carpo, "The End of the Projected Image," in *The Second Digital Turn: Design Beyond Intelligence*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2017, p. 99.

[22] "The divorce of design from construction, theorized by Alberti and realized in modern practice, is being overthrown by the replacement of drawing by simulation. Whereas drawing is based on a clear distinction between the two, simulation strives to eliminate any space between them. Whereas architectural drawings exist to represent construction, architectural simulations exist to anticipate building performance". D. Sheer, "Introduction," in *The Death of Drawing; Architecture in the Age of Simulation*, Routledge London, 2018, p. 9.

[23] Literature about the mutual relations between architecture and art is virtually endless, with infinite ramifications and a multiplicity of approaches. To limit this reference to a recent and productive contribution we may refer to some publications by Sylvia Lavin, starting with *Kissing Architecture*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2011.

embodying Alberti's idea of the creative process of design. These drawings were an essential component of the dialogue between architects and philosophers,[24] highly contributing to the development of the discipline, defining the legal boundaries of the profession,[25] and creating a market for drawings and other forms of bidimensional representation, similar to the art market.[26]

Today's architecture, following again the path traced by art, is increasingly influenced by non-formal, processual, non-iconic artistic methods. Three pivotal moments in this evolution were the introduction of collage, then installation, and later, performance. Collage, starting from some of the Bauhaus heroes—László Moholy-Nagy, Josef Albers, and El Lissitzky—then entered the world of architecture through Mies van der Rohe and the growing presence of photography. It challenges the traditional relationship between image and paper, becoming the first betrayal of the two dimensions of drawing. Collage moved from regulated lines to the freedom of materiality, potentially embracing three-dimensionality.[27]

For architecture, the focus on installation has a clear and acknowledged point of spatial and historical radiation in the exhibition *This is Tomorrow*,[28] the first event where artists and architects collaborated as peers to define a common three-dimensional idea of the display. Performance, particularly in the 1960s, represented the artists' desire to transcend the boundaries of the museum and directly impact the physical and political space of the city. The United States—with Hanna and Lawrence

---

[24] In the quoted publication testifying the collaboration between Jack Derrida and Peter Eisenman (see footnote 15) there is the iconic proof of this interchange, with the famous couple of white pages with only the footnotes and no text visible, something completely *in between* a drawing and a text.

[25] In Italy, the first *Manuale dell'architetto, dell'ingegnere e del capomastro*—defining through drawings and measures the minimum "legal" requirements for architecture components – rooms, windows, stairs etc.—was published in 1830. The most recent version published by the Architects' chapter in 2000 is based on the version curated by Bruno Zevi and Mario Ridolfi in 1946 and funded by USIS (the information department of the US Army) and CNR (National Research Agency).

[26] See P. Ciorra, "The 'No Nonsense' Fountain Pen," in B. Penner *et al*. (eds.), *Extinct: A Compendium of Obsolete Objects*, Reaktion Books, London, 2021, pp. 202–216. The focus of this short text is on a particular drawing tool, however it bears a number of bibliographic suggestions on the subject.

[27] See M. Stierli, *Montage and the Metropolis: Architecture, Modernity, and the Representation of Space*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2018.

[28] *This Is Tomorrow* is a well-known exhibition in August 1956 at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London. The core of the exhibition was the ICA Independent Group. The catalog was published by the Gallery and contained texts by Rheiner Banham and Lawrence Halloway. See also A. and P. Smithson, "Architecture and Art," *Le Carré Bleu*, 1, 1960, p. 8.

Halprin[29] in mind—and then Italy were perhaps the first places where the idea of architecture as performance took root. These multidisciplinary experiences, from urban art to groundbreaking political experiments such as *Estate Romana* (1975–1988), focused on ephemeral projects and an extremely successful form of "action design."[30]

Today, a broader range of art practices and performative actions are becoming part of architects' toolkits, moving away from traditional drawing processes. The ever-expanding range goes from the still rather conventional choice of designing by "making models" (as in Frank Gehry's practice) to performative actions, choreography, video-making, textiles, programming, and sound production.

The End of Representation / Activism or the Eco-Utopia of the Unbuilt Space

The third, perhaps more obvious, area of resistance to the centrality of *disegno* (in Alberti's sense) comes from those advocating for the (more or less) complete subordination of architecture to political engagement in global struggles such as ecology, resource management, inclusion, race and gender equality, post-humanism, and decolonization.[31] This attitude often produces two distinct types of agencies. Individual "authors" tend to view this form of engagement as a theoretical tool, developing it into editorial or institutional projects. Teams, or more accurately, "collectives," instead adopt a hands-on approach, merging the concept of "radical" collective design, popularized in the 1960s, with direct, politically performative involvement in the creation of "events" within the social context.

While this approach, very popular among younger generations, literally denies Alberti's separation between design and construction, it implies a couple of contradictory conditions. Firstly, it limits the conversation between designers and the community to politically relevant actions, potentially excluding exactly the younger and more committed

---

[29] See: S. Massimo, "The Performative Power of Architecture: Anna's Halprin's Dance Deck as the Source of her 'Transformational Dance'," *Itinera: rivista di filosofia e teoria delle arti*, 25, 2023, pp. 105–125.

[30] There are not many thoroughly documented studies about the history and legacy of Estate Romana, a very important chapter in the urban and political history of Rome. The only serious contribution we can think of—F. Fava, *Estate romana: tempi e pratiche della città effimera*, Quodlibet, Macerata, 2017—still leaves wide space for further research and elaboration.

[31] See J. Till, A. Nishat, T. Schneider, *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*, Routledge, London, 2011.

generations from a design conversation with their expected "clients," leaving the solution of their spatial problems to larger and more "cynical" firms. Secondly, it paradoxically creates a new form of acknowledged "authorship," as in the case of teams like Raumlabor, Assemble, Recetas Urbanas, and Lacol, all awarded as "best architects (or artists)" in various awarding projects around the world.

The End of Representation / Drawing Nostalgia

When analyzing the attitudes of contemporary self-conscious architects, we must acknowledge the presence of a fourth, different stance concerning the relationships between design, meaning, and representation. Since the early 2010s, numerous publications, exhibitions, and theoretical projects have sought to display a design attitude aimed at resisting the three tendencies discussed above, considering them enemies of the architectural discipline, undermining its very foundations (or "fundamentals"). The "absolute architecture"[32] discussed by Pier Vittorio Aureli stands as an uncertain manifesto of this stance, drawing much of its energy from attempting to resuscitate the biunivocal relationship between ideology and form that marked a very successful season of (mainly) Italian architecture between the 1960s and 1970s.

It is clear that this proposal to revive the focus on the autonomy of architecture and to bring back power to "language"—especially the language of representation—has achieved relevance and visibility (particularly in academia) and evolved into a solid network among architects born between the late 1960s and the mid-1980s.[33] Among the strong arguments used to proselytize this stance are political opposition to the digital revolution in architecture, considered an obvious tool for the hegemony of techno-capitalism, and disciplinary opposition to artistic and activist attitudes, which, while politically correct, are seen as threats to the discipline.

However, this inclination toward the centrality of a very twentieth-century idea of language, coupled with the benevolent sympathy of some old "conceptual" masters—Eisenman, Zenghelis, and partly

---

[32] P. V. Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 2011.

[33] A very visible manifestation of this approach, and a reference for a large group of young designers and thinkers, has been the journal *San Rocco*, produced by the groups Baukuh and Salottobuono, published from 2010 thru 2019 and then evolved in a wider program of books production.

Koolhaas—did not seem sufficient to bring philosophers back to sit at the same table and cooperate as they did in the 1980s. Perhaps the old protocols of the relationship between form and ideology no longer work in today's completely changed social and political context. Or perhaps, as we plan to discuss briefly in the next paragraph, philosophers are now drawn to other audiences and fields of speculation.

Problem 2: *La philosophie dans le boudoir vert*

In 1984, Jean-Louis Cohen published an essay titled *La coupure entre architectes et intellectuels, ou les enseignements de l'Italophilie*. The scope of the book was clear: a comprehensive comparison between the French and Italian architectural scenes in the first decades after WWII. Cohen's argument was equally clear: in Italy, architecture's openness to dialogue with related disciplines—philosophy, sociology, linguistics, political theory, etc.—had been the reason for the emergence of a generation of "intellectual architects," equipped to produce both hegemonic theories, often in written form, and powerful projects. Cohen wrote his report between 1978 and 1982, perhaps too early to register the impact Italian theory was having on the conceptual scene in the U.S.,[34] particularly around Cooper Union and the IAUS in New York.[35] However, he makes it clear that the common ground for the development of such productive interdisciplinary conversations in Italy was mostly ideological, based on the complex interchange between post-Marxist ideas developed within the Italian political-academic environment (and among France philosophers),[36] an *engagé* version of [post]criticism, and the powerful imagery produced by a leading generation of designers.

---

[34] For a long time, the house organ of this exchange was the journal *October*, founded in 1976 by Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, Rosalind E. Krauss, and Annette Michelson. Many of the ideas and interests that were feeding the first decade of the journal's issues can be found in H. Foster, *Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, Bay Press, Washington, 1983.

[35] Founded in 1967 (and active till 1984) by Peter Eiseinman, Emilio Ambasz, Diana Agrest and Mario Gandelsonas and a few other New York architects interested in urban studies as an independent institution, IAUS has been the hub for the most interesting experiences and exchanges led by the group of designers we tend to identify with the post-structuralist ideology of the time. Most of all IAUS was the promoter of the collaboration with the Venice crowd from IUAV. The most recent and comprehensive study on the history of IAUS is K. Förster, *Building Institution: The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies 1967–1985* by, transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, 2023.

[36] Cohen makes clear how French philosophers received much more attention and proposals for collaboration among foreign architecture communities. especially Italy and US—than in their own country.

It is relatively easy to say that such a triangle of political ideas, critical thinking, and design attitudes (or *Kunstwollen*) is no longer present today. All three components have radically mutated.

Ideology is certainly a much less popular word today. The most powerful ideologies—such as late capitalism or tech hegemony, or the horrifying combined version of the two—are the ones that never present themselves as such. A similar shift has occurred in what we once would have called counter-culture: social opposition is now seen as a constellation of single issues that fiercely resist being comprehended within a general political or ideological framework. Eco-fairness, gender and race agendas, migration, even the housing crisis or the struggle for workers' rights, are often presented as individual issues to be addressed by distinct groups or, at times, by individuals, within a power-society framework largely informed by social media. This is far removed from any possibility of uniting under a singular political project.

The boundaries of critical thinking in the last century were also strongly defined by ideological frames: utopian thought on one side and post-criticism (or an updated version of historical materialism) on the other. Philosophy was mostly philosophy of language, because the structures of language were seen as the space where the conflicts and contradictions of the social structure became visible—whether in the written language of literature or in the geometry of urban blocks and architectural façades. By the end of the century, philosophers' curiosity shifted away from hermeneutics to focus on two more timely directions: the power of the screen,[37] where the image loses one of its spatial dimensions in favor of the temporal dimension granted by movement, and the redefinition of the relations between human and non-human beings—animals, plants, and other elements of nature.[38] The former would fold into neo-iconology, an abstract discourse on visual culture, while the latter would aim toward a non-mediated, non-academic dialogue with the public, something that often comes under the definition of pop-philosophy. It is not

[37] Also in this case the literature is virtually endless. As immediate references we can quote the exemplary works of two very successful writers: A. Pinotti, *Alla soglia dell'immagine: da Narciso alla realtà virtuale*, Einaudi, Torino 2021, A. Pinotti, "Self-Negating Images: Towards An-iconology,", *Proceedings* 1, 18, 2017, pp. 45–68, G. Bruno, *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2014.

[38] The (rather easy) reference is, among many others, to authors like Emanuele Coccia (*La vita delle piante: metafisica della mescolanza*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2018), or Slavoj Žižek (*Too Late to Awaken: What Lies Ahead When There is no Future?*, Allen Lane, London, 2024).

hard to understand how challenging it would be for philosophers to view architects—those who inevitably continue building the world—as allies in their present speculations.

The third pole of this conversation—the changing modalities and tools for design—has already been discussed in the previous paragraphs. Here, we can only reiterate how the presence of advanced digital tools, A.I., virtual spaces, robotics, and even simple BIM, inevitably removes the possibility of representation, i.e., the primary matter that once allowed for productive exchanges between architects and philosophers around the creation of meaningful design. To reconnect with today's philosophy, designers and architectural thinkers must venture into territories whose rules they scarcely know—fields like neuro- and natural sciences, advanced technology, anthropology, bio-chemistry, and so on. However clumsy and immature, the early results of such "cross-pollination" may be interesting, but they certainly do not encourage us to expect a revival of the previous, language-based protocols of collaboration between architects and philosophers.

References

Aa.Vv. (1971), *Superstudio presentano: vita, morte e miracoli dell'architettura*, Firenze: G. & G. edizioni.

Aureli, Pier Vittorio (2011), *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Bruno, Giuliana (2014), *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Carpo, Mario (2013), *The Second Digital Turn: Design Beyond Intelligence*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Ciorra, Pippo (2011), *Senza Architettura: le ragioni di una crisi*, Roma-Bari: Laterza.

Ciorra, Pippo (2012), "No-lògos," in Elia Costantopoulos (ed.), The Significance of Philosophy in Architecture Education, Athens: Panayotis & Effie Michelis Foundation, Athens, pp. 500–505.

Ciorra, Pippo (2021), "The 'No Nonsense' Fountain Pen," in Barbara Penner *et al* (eds.), *Extinct: A Compendium of Obsolete Objects*, London: Reaktion Books, pp. 202–216.

Coccia, Emanuele (2018), *La vita delle piante: metafisica della mescolanza*, Bologna: Il Mulino.

Cohen, Jean-Louis (2015), *La coupure entre architectes et intellectuels: ou les enseignements de l'italophilie*, Bruxelles: Mardaga.

Corbellini, Giovanni (2018), *Exlibris: 16 Keywords of Contemporary Architecture*, Milano: LetteraVentidue.

Eisenman, Peter (1984), "The End of the Classical: The End of the Beginning and the End of the End," *Perspecta*, 21, pp. 154–173.
Fava, Federica (2017), *Estate romana: tempi e pratiche della città effimera*, Macerata: Quodlibet.
Förster, Kim (2023), *Building Institution: The Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies 1967–1985*, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.
Foster, Hal (1983), *Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, Washington: Bay Press.
Geulen, Eva (2006), *The End of Art: Readings in a Rumor After Hegel*, trans. James McFarland, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Hobsbawm, Eric (1994), T*he Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991*, London: Michael Joseph.
Johnson, Philip (1991), *Peter Eisenman & Frank Gehry*, Fifth International Exhibition of Architecture, Venice Biennale, Rizzoli International, New York.
Kipnis, Jeffrey, Thomas Leeser (1997), *Chora L Works: Jacques Derrida and Peter Eisenman*, New York: Monacelli.
Lavin, Sylvia (2011), *Kissing Architecture*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Maimon, Vered (2023), "Communication as Mental Touch: Jack Burnam and the End of Art," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 79–80, pp. 255–269.
Massimo, Serena (2023), "The Performative Power of Architecture. Anna's Halprin's Dance Deck as the Source of her 'Transformational Dance'," *Itinera: rivista di filosofia e teoria delle arti*, 25, pp. 105–125.
Menna, Filiberto (1975), *La linea analitica dell'arte moderna*, Torino: Einaudi.
Muschap, Herbert (1997), "The Miracle in Bilbao," *The New York Times*, 7 September, p. 54.
Pinotti, Andrea (2021), *Alla soglia dell'immagine: da Narciso alla realtà virtuale*, Torino: Einaudi.
Pinotti, Andrea (2017), "Self-Negating Images: Towards An-iconology," *Proceedings*, 1, 18, pp. 45–68.
Portoghesi, Paolo (1980), "La fine del proibizionismo," in *Dopo l'architettura moderna*, Roma-Bari: Laterza, pp. 9–14.
Quaroni, Ludovico (1957), "Il paese dei Barocchi," *Casabella-continuità*, 215, p. 24.
Sheer, David (2018), *The Death of Drawing: Architecture in the Age of Simulation*, London: Routledge.
Smithson, Alison, Peter Smithson (1960), "Architecture and Art," *Le Carré Bleu*, 1, p. 8.
Stierli, Martino (2018). *Montage and the Metropolis: Architecture, Modernity, and the Representation of Space*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
Till, Jeremy, Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider (2011), *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*, London: Routledge.
Van der Heuvel, Dirk, Max Risselada (eds.) (2005), *Team 10: In Search of a Utopia of the Present 1953-1981*, Rotterdam: nai010 publishers.
Wigley, Mark (2018), *Cutting Matta-Clark: The Anarchitecture Investigation*, Lars Müller Publishers, Zurich.
Žižek, Slavoj (2024), *Too Late to Awaken: What Lies Ahead When There is no Future?*, London: Allen Lane.