Honors thesis

Master of Science in

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Abstract

JOINT STUDIO 2016 – Winter Olympic site reuse: Bob Track of Cesana Torinese

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by

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Some projects, trying to solve conflicts rather than to find answers, contribute to underline new questions and to further expand the discourse. Perhaps, this is the fundamental premise to find an interpretation key to this work. A work composed of a first part that presents a designing proposal to improve the critical situation of an abandoned Olympic site and a second part which develops more theoretical-reflexive aspects taken on in the project entering in a larger speech, both geographically and rhetorically. Some topics are taken in a deepen analysis in the part that follows the project, in particular the one that I mostly considered in the project, the same that found fertile terrain in the journey and in exchanges with China. Although these two parts of the same volume may seem distant or even independents, they are in fact essential to each other, or rather, they are one the linear evolution of the other in a still open speech.

The project focuses on the reuse of an Olympic site because these structures insist on the territory by offering outstanding questions. Meanwhile, attempting to offer a solution to the current condition, the project proposal for the Olympic bobsleigh track of Cesana Torinese contribute to underline many issues, including the relational relationship between a project and its context or the paradigm of modernity in territories. The project accepts, and perhaps it shows, the *slipping* - as Mollino wrote – from the unique functional solution to the search for other topics such as nowadays mountains which are not anymore only sport and winter icon. A mountain that becomes again a place where many different activities are thought for different people, in a site that seems to have lost its identity since now. This way, the pre-existence becomes the excuse to investigate how much contemporary architecture has – or still has - the ability to solve relational conflicts between environment, human activities, traditions, archetypes, materials. Therefore, the project learns from traditional alpine architecture, maybe not from the solutions it offers but most of all from the questions to which these solutions try to respond. More precisely, the search for an alpine contemporary architecture, as fare as it separates from building tradition, it needs to build a relational relationship, a dialogue with the context. The project aims to diversify and expand the tourist offer of these valleys, trying to show how contemporary Alps can be plural and flexible, suitable for every kind of tourist demand. The track, interrupted and broken down in some points, loses its impressive infrastructure scale to acquire a more human one. Finally, it ends as a concrete silent and hidden landmark. The same place that was the icon of speed, now it assumes again the rhythm of the nature by which it is surrounded.

In fact, the second part entitled "Between Alps and China, paradigms of modernity" deals with the paradigm of modernity associated with urban and architectural models, analysed through a reading that starts from the history of twentieth-century in the Alps and arrives in contemporary China. Even if distances are extreme, it is possible to find a common thread that marks a shared direction; a sort of experimental attitude. A research that, if possible,

tries to find a modernity in places, something able not to deny the local identity but to become its natural evolution. The analysis is divided into a vocabulary, where certain words are analysed in relation to the meaning that they can assume, and a collection of 20 representative projects of this trend in contemporary China. What emerges is a fickle modernity, something that invests and elevates some models with the same ease with which it separates from them. The described examples show how much nowadays the best Chinese architecture is mature and emancipated from external cultural models and how it is able to rediscover the value of its own culture.

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