



**POLITECNICO
DI TORINO**

Honors thesis

COURSE OF
ARCHITETTURA COSTRUZIONE CITTA'

Abstract

THE CITY IN THE CITY

Berlin as a magnetic archipelago

Tutor

Pierre – Alain Croset
Jean - Philippe Vassal
Angelo Sampieri

by

Alberto Geuna

December 2014

“ The idea of the city in the city is the basic concept for a future urbanistic model of Berlin. It is substantiated in the image of Berlin as a city-archipelago. ”

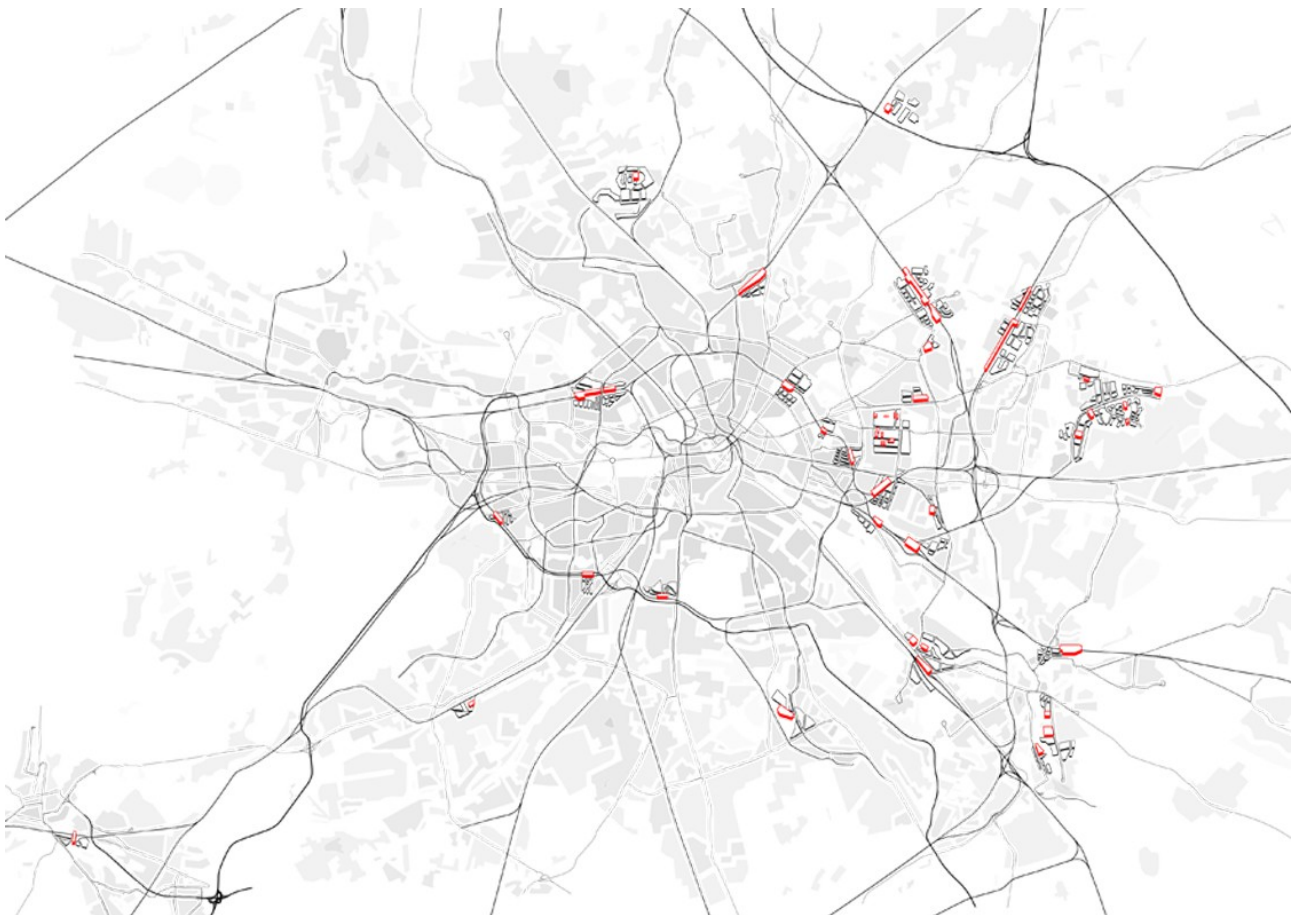
O.M.Ungers, *The Green Archipelago*, 1977

In 1977 O.M. Ungers and a group of his colleagues from Cornell University published a pamphlet called *The City in the City: Berlin as a Green Archipelago*. This document belongs to a larger context, meaning the production of site-specific manifestos in the late seventies, such as Rem Koolhaas’ *“Delirious New York”* and Scott Brown and Venturi’s *“Learning from Las Vegas”*. Although never reaching the extensive attention of the previous examples, the *“City in the City”* has been attracting the interests of many architects throughout the years.

This thesis takes its steps from this document. Not as historical inquiry, though, but rather as a critical review based on the assumption that site specific manifestos in general - and *The City in the City* in particular - could still constitute a significant tool to trace design narratives today. The exercise here is that of rewriting the *“City in the City”* by keeping its fundamental framework, scrolling through its eleven thesis in search of continuity with today’s situation, but simultaneously putting in discussion its ideological background and all those assumptions and theories that don’t seem to be valuable anymore.

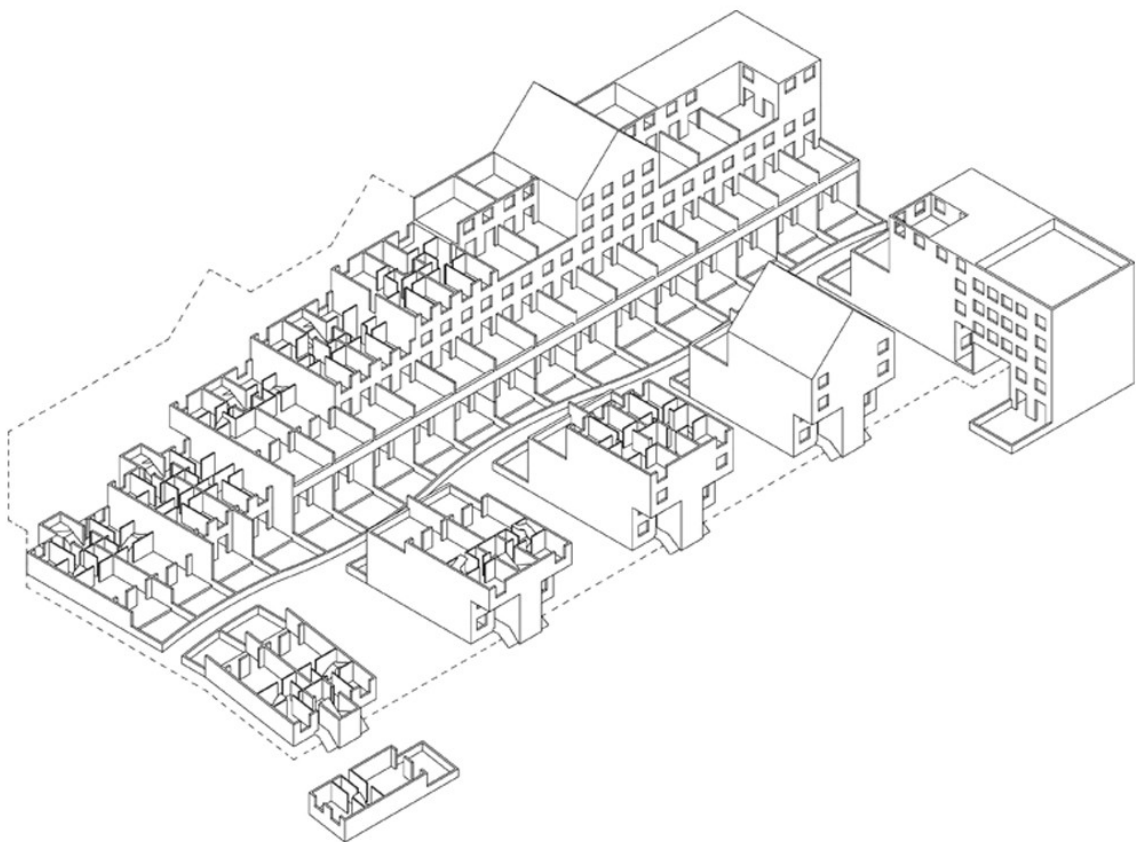
As the *“City in the City”* triggered both the metropolitan and the architectural scale, so does this thesis. While the first part is a discussion of the manifesto itself and delineates a scenario for Berlin, the second part of the work focuses on the architectural scale and it constitutes of a research on the typological level.

If in 1977 Ungers proposed the urban villa as a possible *“architectural tool”*, so the objective of this research is to find an urban typology that could be appropriate to the requirements of the contemporary city and that, in this case, is based on the density and complexity of the Berlin Block.

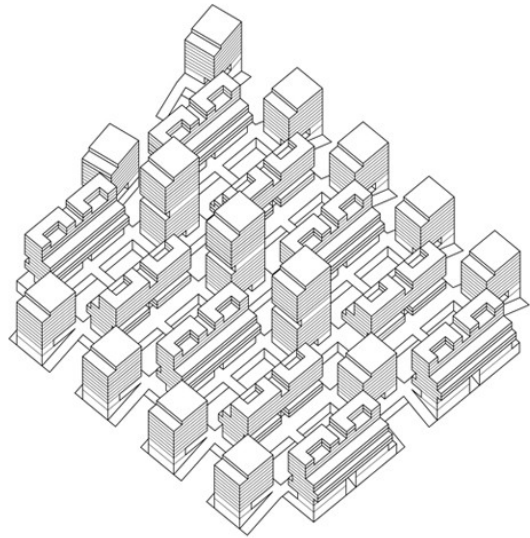
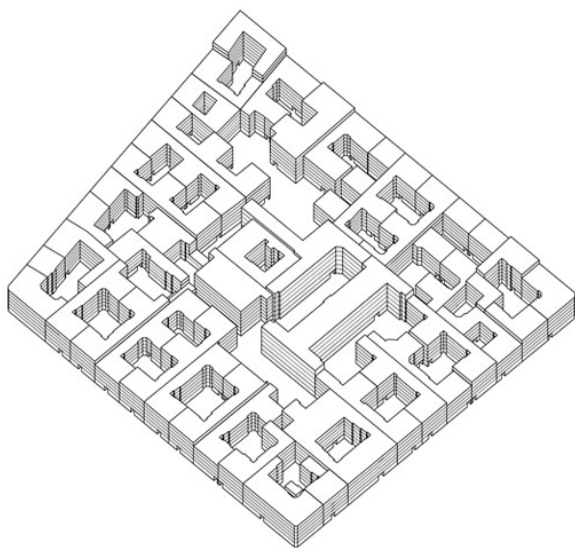


Map of the magnetic archipelago

This work is an experiment in terms of procedure and an exploration of the logic behind a project. It begins with the assumption that some documents within the discipline could still be source of teaching and an active instrument to change the ways in which we look at the practice of architecture. This doesn't mean transforming these tools into venerable relics and segregate them in the autonomous world of architecture, though, but it rather means forcing them to face reality, testing their potential on the contemporary city, on contemporary society, on the contemporary way of living.



O.M.Ungers – Residential block - Lützowplatz (Berlin) - 1981



Development of a block scheme starting from a Berliner Block

For further information please contact:
Alberto Geuna, alberto.geuna@gmail.com