City of future and cinema: 1990-2004
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Among many instruments allowing the studying of urban phenomena, still not so common is the use of cinema as a creator of visual ideas, suggesting a reciprocal exchange of impulses for the future. It would allow the realization of a two-sides relationship bringing the urban projects for future to a collective and popular level and, in the same time, carrying out the opposite aspect: making scholars know people’s fears and expectations about the future. This thesis, then, will discuss future cities, by using movies as a tool which permits an analysis of urban phenomenon. In the first part of this job I have treated the relationship between cities and cinema images (intended mainly as urban culture), referring to the representation’s problems of urban space and underlining the different aspects that link architecture to cinema. The second part gives prominence to the importance and usefulness of cinema in city planning, mainly as a source of historical and narrative research in the city’s past and as realizer of urban general prefigurations which, through images, bring visions to collectivity and, at the same time, pick from it the spurs to create visions, giving a description of community’s current condition. In the third section are collected and quickly described some film visions of the future developed in the past from 1926 to 1990, to show which is the starting point of this discussion and which were in those times the conceptions about the future.
The fourth part is the most complex and articulated: in it, actually, eight different cinematographic images are proposed (vertical city, global city, theme park city, virtual city, underground city, armoured city, rubbish’s city, disaster city). Each one of them was chosen on the grounds of principles regarding, in most of the cases, future visions of prefigurations already existing in city planning sphere (as deduced from the analysis of recent text about urban future). In a couple of cases the inspiration for typology comes from a merely cinematographic hint, instead of coming from the specific sphere of city survey. This division anyway is not clean and the visions aren’t univocal: one of them can often contain another one, so they can also be present at the same time.
With the purpose of understanding where these visions are originated, in terms of context and precedents of ideas and history, each tipology was briefly presented. Every category meets both the disciplines, crossing them. What was attempted to be done was an interpolation between the visions present in film imagery and the developing processes of urban ideas, so to create a chessboard on which we are able to move and think about the possible future of cities and, therefore, their present.
This thesis wanted also to underline how in cinema future reality we can find, exploded and projected, diseases and worries of modern society. In that way cinema, by dealing with future collectivity’s prefigurations, is a useful instrument for looking into today’s cities and society.

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