

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture
Honors theses

From the experience of self-building in Arcosanti to the project of a living box

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Since the choice of our thesis title, we tried to clarify the route of our work and our life experience. Because first of all it has been an experience of life. Everything started from Arcosanti (Arizona) and finished with the participation to the architectural ideas competition

at the Triennale in Milan. The relation between these two widely separated and different cities is the main content of our thesis.

Our activity actually started with the three months workshop in Arcosanti, where we contributed to the realization of a small part of the Soleri's Arcologia project. In Arcosanti we really made experience of self-building, meaning the organization between unskilled people who share their efforts to realize public interest facilities.

Which is the link between Arcosanti and the Triennale in Milan?

The idea was born at the end of our workshop. From concepts like **'self-building'**, **'pre-fabrication'**, **'Camp'**, **'voluntary action'**, **'temporary house'**, we thought about the possibility of re-projecting and re-invent the lime cubic buildings used as temporary house for volunteers in Arcosanti since 1970. These are minimal houses (only 8,5 mq) where we lived for 2 months.

The idea is to project a new 'cubic house' made of more ecological and recyclable materials. We applied new technologies to achieve a more comfortable atmosphere, enduring and energetically self-sufficient. An option for short period accommodations. We accidentally found the ideas competition of Triennale in Milan, which title was **'House for everybody'**. It was an international competition to project an emergency living module. Thinking carefully about it, we realized that it was perfectly suitable with our building concepts developed in Arcosanti.

The steps of our project work are the following.

In primis we focused our attention on the idea of self-building, meaning that our project should be centered on the concept of 'self-making'. Self-building practically "with one's own hands" can create a strong relationship between the future user and the building.

For this reason, our point of view is 'building up our own house'. This idea and the project flexibility lead us to the choice of a living box composed of pre-fabricated elements, easy to assemble and disassemble following simple instructions (as for IKEA low cost furnitures). At the same time, we always take care of the design details and the respect of low environmental effects.

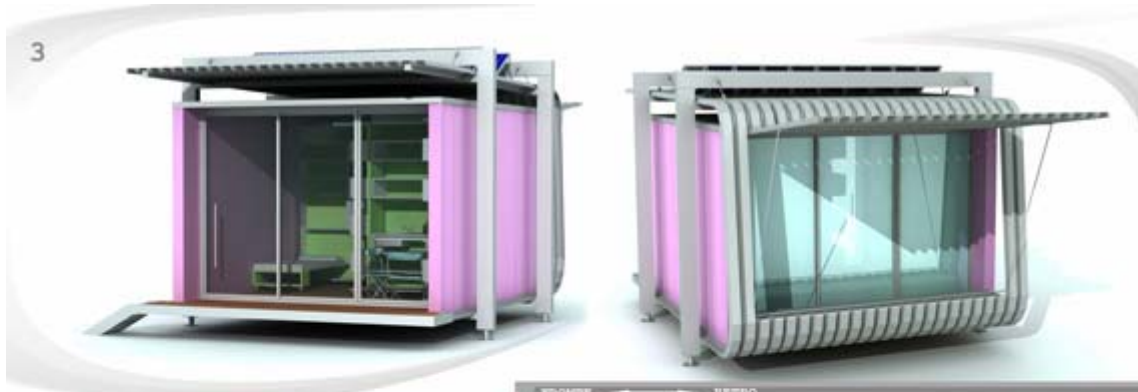
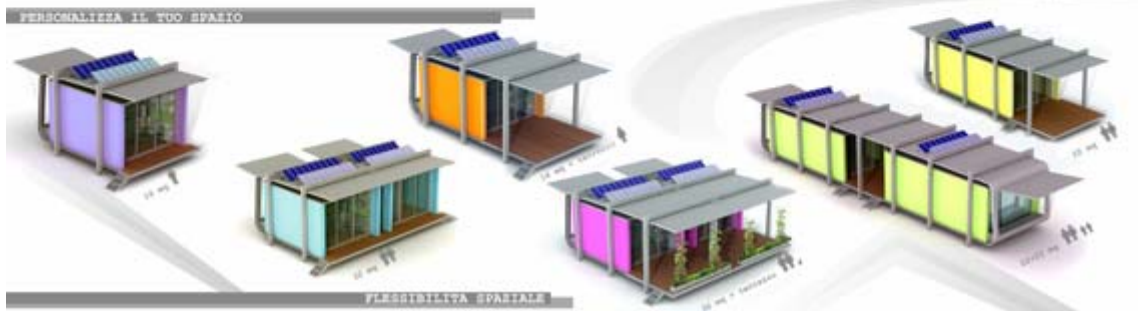
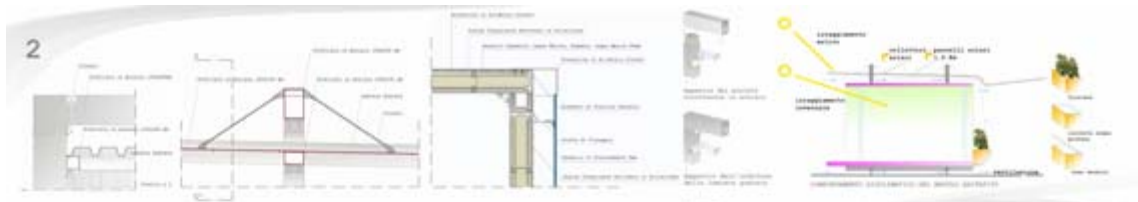
We loved figuring out the house like a mutable element, never identical, which can change following the user needs.

Without limiting us to a style exercise, in the second step of our thesis work, we tried to figure out whether our project could be realized in practice. We take advantage of two main tools to do it, the cost analysis and the analysis of physical and technical features of our projected building.

After all our activity, we realized that it is difficult to join quality of life, good energetic performances and low costs. The main role of the architect is the mediation among these three aspects.

Below we reported some explicative tables of our project.





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