

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE 2
Degree in Architecture
Honors theses

The centrifuge from the transparent porthole. Notes for a critical study on the contemporary architectural form. On the theoretical and built work of Giorgio Grassi and Rem Koolhaas

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At to the two poles of *The centrifuge from the transparent porthole* is placed the theoretical and built work of Giorgio Grassi and Rem Koolhaas. Planned like a critical study on the contemporary architectural form, the work is developed by notes, so as to face a complexity not still metabolized. It is, then, a narration that takes the thought of the *difference* peculiar to the contemporaneity comparing the written texts and the works of the two architects in dicotomic way. We pass through public and private buildings, a habitation on the lake of Iseo (1962) of the "first" Grassi and the Lemoîne villa at Bordeaux (1998) of a more "recent" Koolhaas, libraries (Groningen and Paris), theatres and new places of the representation (Karlsruhe and Peking). The last projects are analyzed to coincide with the latest theoretical works.



Giorgio Grassi

So from the *Content* of Koolhaas (Köln, 2004) will be passed to the monographic text of Grassi on *The theatre of Brescia* (Milan, 2004). Here the hooks follow on with the declarations of intent that the two architects have shown at the beginning of their career with *The logical building of the architecture* (Padua, 1967) and *in Exodus or the voluntary prisoners of the architecture* (London, 1972) follow one another.

The antinomy between the two architects is formalized through a critical reflection on the form concept, on an architecture of time and speed, passing through scattered thoughts about the fundamental concepts of architecture. The most component aspects used by Grassi are different from Koolhaas's *retroactive refashioning*: go back to a kind of project traditional in some way, something that is discreet and in the same time magic and secret time, it leads to the idea of an architecture as synthetic act, taking us to the concept of *archetype*.



Rem Koolhaas

In the end an idea of architecture in which the recognizability becomes above all a different *ethical* attitude towards the project is advanced. But, we will say, if the architecture is also an ethical fact then the recognizability could become an aesthetic fact. The objectivity of the forms could take to a conceptual formula to obtain the architectural product. The way of the research stops to the *(opposing) trend* of the two architects. The last chapters are worth as a landing at the ground of the poetic one: one step more and the flag of the architecture leads to the archetype. Original myth and lasting and stable hypothesis of continuity, the lasting and stable form collides with the Koolhaas's preamble of a soft caducity which is satisfied with far victory messages. And still there is an architecture which has fact of his consciousness the keystone for the creation of a necessary sobriety. The will to create continuity is the necessary condition of an architecture which *The centrifuge from the transparent porthole* has tried to prove.

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