

## THE BOOKS OF THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY

Curated by Victoria Easton, Kersten Geers and Guido Tesio

15 September - 22 October 2016

Opening: Wednesday 14 September, 18.30

Opening hours: Monday - Friday 10:30-17:30; Saturday  
14-18, free entrance

Friday 23 September 18.30 - Launch  
The Architecture of the City - A Palimpsest

Saturday 22 October 18.00 - Discussion  
Books in Footnotes

Istituto Svizzero  
Via Vecchio Politecnico 3 - 20121 Milano  
T. +39 02 76 01 61 18 - [milano@istitutosvizzero.it](mailto:milano@istitutosvizzero.it)

In 1966, Aldo Rossi published a book that refuted the then current arguments on the city and its design, and whose reception exceeded all expectations: *L'architettura della città* was fast internationally hailed as a classic. Built upon a combination of unconventional fragments from various disciplines, cultures and authors, the book engendered a conceptual framework – as opaque as it appeared – for effective exploration of the complexity of the contemporary city, the success of which persisted at least until the work of Rossi himself, with all its later simplifications and cartoonish positions, began to colour people's perceptions of his theories. Now, on the 50th anniversary of the original launch of *L'architettura della città*, this exhibition presents itself as a formal exercise both in celebrating this 'mythical' work and taking it off its pedestal, dusting it down so as to be able to (re-)engage with its tenets.

The importance of the book manifests in the uncertainty that accompanies us still, when interpreting and designing the city today. The issues raised by Rossi in the 1960s have by no means been resolved: cities are still complex; their physical configuration still mirrors their history in a non-linear, contradictory manner; and urban phenomena remain inexplicable unless approached in the light of the city as a whole. Is Rossi's 'city-as-a-book' or 'book-as-a-city' a metaphor we need to hang on to? Perhaps it is, given that the construction of this book results in many ways from the construction of the architect: the architecture of the city built Aldo Rossi, so to speak. Or should it perhaps be dismissed or deconstructed once and for all? We – in presenting here a Difficult Whole, scrutinised but not unravelled – take the liberty of not letting that happen.

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In returning to the sources on which Rossi drew in order to construct his book, in recovering the original editions so as to expound both their literary and iconographic value, **The Books of the Architecture of the City** exhibition celebrates the generosity of the book, beyond the fame of its author, and therewith proposes that Aldo Rossi be regarded as only one among many contributors to an intimately multifaceted and collective project called *L'architettura della città*: a book made of books.

**The Books of the Architecture of the City** does not present a thoroughly researched 'new' claim regarding the truth (or not) of Rossi's flawed masterpiece. It is rather, a simple survey of all that Rossi explicitly included within its pages. Thus, the exhibition shows everything and nothing simultaneously. Here, all the books of *The Architecture of the City* are brought together and made accessible for the first time. They are displayed alongside a set of books made of facsimiles in which all the quoted text excerpts and graphical excerpts from the original editions are compiled. A photographic essay by Stefano Graziani visually resonates with the fragments of text.

In drawing on more than 150 books, on a multiplicity of origins and references, *L'architettura della città* is resolutely an organism that prompts the on-going mutation of its own content as well as ample opportunities for a continuous internal and external dialogue. By showing nothing but what was already there, **The Books of the Architecture of the City** plainly exposes the contents of the original text, thus calling upon the visitor to explore Rossi's fiction as well as to venture into building new sets of analogies and *correspondences*.

Friday 23 September 18.30

**The Architecture of the City - A Palimpsest**

Launch of CARTHA magazine's Lisbon Architecture Triennale edition

Saturday 22 October 18.00

**Books in Footnotes**

Discussion with Eric Lapierre (Eric Lapierre Expérience, Paris), Elli Mosayebi (EMI Architekten, Zurich), André Tavares (Lisbon Architecture Triennale), Milica Topalovic (ETH Zurich) and the curators.

In collaboration with Form - ENAC – EPFL and Fondazione Aldo Rossi.

**Victoria Easton** (\*Lausanne, 1981) studied architecture at the EPF Lausanne and at the ETH Zurich, where she graduated in 2005. Since then, she has been a collaborator of Christ & Gantenbein in Basel, where she became Associate in 2012. As a Head of Research in Emanuel Christ and Christoph Gantenbein's studio at the ETH Zurich (2010 – 15), she published the two encyclopaedias "Typology: Hong Kong, Rome, New York, Buenos Aires" (2012) and "Typology: Paris, Delhi, São Paulo, Athens" (2015). Easton frequently publishes essays on architecture in magazines and has taught and lectured at the Berlage Institute, TU Delft and IIT.

**Kersten Geers** (\*Ghent, 1975) graduated in Architecture and Urbanism at the University of Ghent, Belgium and at the Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura in Madrid, Spain. He worked with Maxwan Architects and Urbanists and with Neutelings Riedijk Architects in Rotterdam. He was professor at the University of Ghent, and visiting professor at Columbia University, NYC, and the Academy of Architecture in Mendrisio (CH), and is currently teaching at the EPFL, Lausanne (CH) and at the Harvard GSD (US). He is a founding member of the architecture magazine San Rocco. In 2002 he founded Office Kersten Geers David Van Severen together with David Van Severen, based in Brussels.

**Guido Tesio** (\*Milan, 1984) graduated in Architecture at the Politecnico di Milano, Italy, where he is currently teaching assistant. After previous experiences with Baukuh (Milan, Italy), Office kgdvs (Brussels, Belgium), Standardarchitecture (Beijing, China) and Christ & Gantenbein (Basel, Switzerland), he established GANKO in 2015. Working on a wide range of projects: from private assignments, to international competitions, publications and exhibitions, the office is currently based in Milan.

Information:

Istituto Svizzero +02 76016118  
milano@istitutosvizzero.it

Press office:

Alessandra Santerini +39 335 6853767  
alessandrasanterini@gmail.com