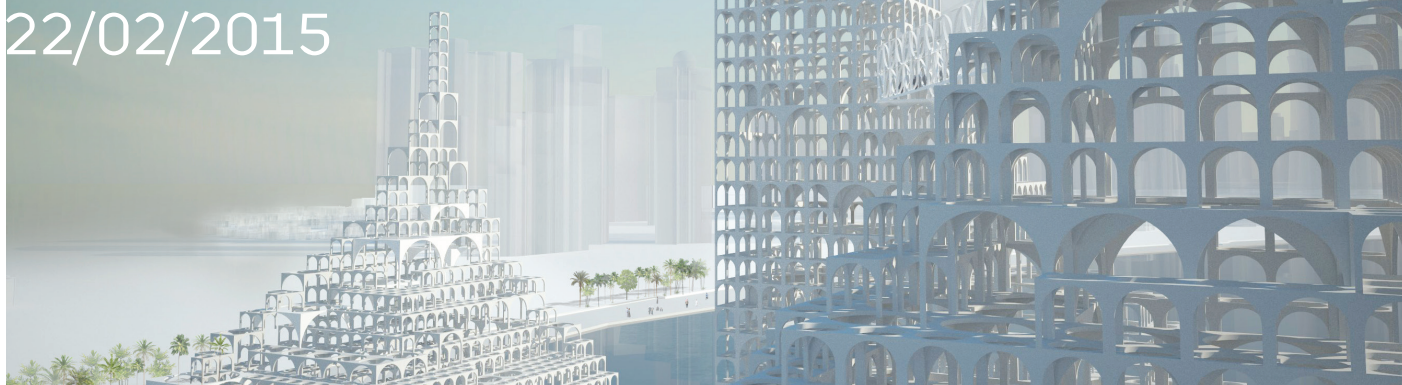


THE CITY AS A VISION

Tribute to Michel Ragon

19/09/2014

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Sou Fujimoto Architects, *Souk Mirage*, 2013. © Sou Fujimoto Architects

Divided into two sections – one historical, the other prospective – this exhibition pays tribute to historian and critic Michel Ragon who, in his books *Où vivrons-nous demain?* [Where will we live tomorrow?] (1963) and *Prospective et Futurologie* [Forecasting and Futurology] (1978), gave an introduction to the issues of experimental architecture – a field that lies at the heart of the Frac Centre’s collection.

After World War II, architects refused to follow the diktats of functionalist architecture and engaged in a radical redefinition of the city. By carrying out a precise analysis of the sociological mutations of their times, they created “urban systems” capable of globally organising and anticipating new Western lifestyles.

Yona Friedman was one of the first to theorise the principles of spatial urban planning on a global scale. His studies on mobility, which he presented at the International Congress of Modern Architecture in 1956, considerably influenced the development of the “futurologist” movement, which spanned the 1960s and of which Michel Ragon became an advocate.

Through publications in magazines and as a member of the GIAP (International Group for Prospective Architecture), he shared the many researches carried out on this form of “prospective” urban planning: the towns imagined were plastic or organic, aerial or underground, helicoidal or oblique, shaped as arches, hills, or bridges – cities of the future that stretched out into gigantic above-ground infrastructures, thus encouraging a free and continuous circulation of people and information.

Through six thematic sections, along with a hundred or so scale models, drawings, and photomontages, the exhibition focuses on giving an overview of this search for new territories and urban configurations capable of welcoming future city-dwellers.

It illustrates how, for this generation of “visionaries”, experimentation and patenting innovative technical solutions always came hand in hand with the assertion of imagery as a field for creation and anticipation.

Between pragmatism and utopia, the featured projects, mostly taken from the Frac Centre’s collection, embody the optimism of the “Pop years”, the myth of a culture craving for leisure and consumption, and fascinated by the cybernetic dream and space exploration.

Yet by the late 60s, these infinitely expandable “megastructure” cities started becoming a symbol of oppression, the ultimate avatar for a depressed modernity. Radical architects then ironically laid the foundations for a new environmental conscience, delivering “negative” visions of a humanity enslaved by the ideology of progress.

At the end of the historical overview, the exhibition presents the contemporary projects of twenty or so internationally acknowledged agencies and examines the way these issues are re-appropriated on a wider scale today. “The futurology of cities has spread throughout the entire world”, Michel Ragon wrote in the 1970s. Globalised urban environment has now become reality, emerging at the crossroads between what is built and connected, what is wild and controlled.

The projects presented all answer the necessity to rethink new uses for cities, to generate resources and connect the micro-scale of the individual with the macro-scale of the expanding urban territory. What logics can architects develop to generate or regenerate the contemporary city between local and global scales?

FEATURED ARCHITECTS

Historical section

Archigram- Peter cook
Architecture Principe (Claude Parent – Paul Virilio)
Archizoom Associati
Chanéac
Constant
Justus Dahinden
Domenig + Huth
Günther Feuerstein
Yona Friedman
Klaus Gartler & Helmut Rieder
Vittorio Giorgini
James Guitet
Günter Günschel
Bernhard Hafner
Angela Hareiter
Haus-Rückert-Co
Pascal Häusermann
Hans Hollein
Arata Isozaki
Jozef Jankovic
Paul Maymont
MIASTO
Manfredi Nicoletti
Luigi Pellegrin
Charles Péré-Lahaille
Aldo Loris Rossi
Guy Rottier
Jacques Rougerie
Nicolas Schöffner
Eckhard Schulze-Fielitz
Paolo Soleri
Alina Slesinska et Eustachy Kossakowski
Superstudio
Pierre Székely
Iannis Xenakis
Zünd up

Prospective section

Ateliers Jean Nouvel
Asymptote Architecture (Hani Rashid + Lise Anne Couture)
BIG (Bjarke Ingels Group)
BNKR Arquitectura
Delhi 2050
Diller Scofidio + Renfro
DOMAIN Office + KAAAN Architecten
Dominique Perrault Architecture
Foster + Partners
Sou Fujimoto Architects
Future Cape Town
GRAU
Heatherwick Studio
MAD Architects
NLÉ
OMA
Oppenheim Architecture + Design
The Petropolis of Tomorrow
SL Rasch GmbH Special & Lightweight Structures
SNØHETTA
Urban Think Tank
WOHA



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OPENING DAYS AND HOURS

Wednesday to Sunday : 12pm-7pm
Late night opening until 8pm every first Thursday of the month
Exceptional closure : 25th December, 1st January and 1st May



The Frac Centre is primarily supported by the Region Centre and the Ministry of Culture and Communication (Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles du Centre).

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