

Lukáš Machalický
In the park

He always had a very ambiguous feeling about architecture shows. All those models and floor plans spread around spaces made him uncertain and actually even doubt the ability of architects to transform all their wonderful ideas into a comprehensible, yet challenging set-up. As if architects would have some kind of inner hatred towards the representation of their work besides the actual realisation of the projects in question. No sensitivity towards the character of a given space, no imagination to evolve things further than a couple of simplifying formats and media. A rendering, a 3D model, a little paper house and all around those immensely annoying panels shouting out loud: "I don't give a shit about graphic design". For him, walking through the architectural biennial was the biggest imaginable bore and there were never enough beer stands in the vicinity to put his mind to rest. The only thing he loved and enjoyed every time was the vivid experience of the actual masterplan of the Giardini, layered like pages from a textbook of modern political history. The pavilions resonating with 19th century national sentiments, reflecting already obsolete political contexts and relations of a group of respected nation states back then shining with the pride of modern independence and currently rather manifesting the total failure of numerous utopias. Like a miniature model of the European project and it's changing moods.

Maybe even more important than the actual structures, he thought, were all the paths, staircases, canals and bridges over them, connecting everything, forming a Raumplan of relationships.

The general idea of a park, historically a pleasurable hideout for the aristocracy, later on opening its gates to the public, made him think of bio-power and social control of any kind of a society. Just imagine the Central Park, a chaotic tangle of representational references, formed in the strongest possible contrast to a precise grid structure of the city surrounding it. "You are obliged to work 24/7, yet for little moments of rest we decided to generously grant you the privilege to step through the rabbit's hole and relax, amongst a decently wild vegetation, possibly also to observe caged animals and eat an ice-cream, no drinks or cigarettes though."

The park is our urban illusionary representation of the idea of tamed nature, a safe haven precisely designed for the mindset of a modern human being. Such an approach goes hand in hand with the model of entertainment parks, as if we are talking Disneyland, miniature Europe or some random rollercoaster playground. They are all evoking possible dangers, mimicking real means to activate our emotions; fear, joy, pleasure, yet keeping their visitors on the safe side. The Wicked Witch is just a wax figurine and her spells - smoke and mirrors.

How far is all this from ideas of the world as a mere projection - a form of Matrix?

Architectural exhibitions, models and floorplans are entertainment parks for a specific audience. An audience tuned to a unique form of perception. He knew that, and he felt entitled to be in sync. Nevertheless, he remained convinced that he was being lied to and those architects just wanted to trick him into believing that there is just one and only option.

Architecture performs far beyond materials and shapes, he was certain of that, and not alone in such thinking, so he started to imagine an ideal model, expressed as a landscape, keeping the idea of a park in mind. A park as a fundamental manifestation of human desire to escape from their prevalent conditions. Not in a real scale, staying representational, yet already palpable. Almost like a diorama you can enter. His intention was to stay quite metaphorical, present real elements in vicarious form reaching out for help to banal objects and tools. To take into account natural elements as fire, water, air and earth and keeping in mind Semper's Four Elements of Architecture: hearth, roof, enclosure and mound. Merging them into one variously interpretable melange.

But he was a person of quick passing thoughts, so he never realised such a project.