

build

DAS ARCHITEKTEN-MAGAZIN



**Bazon Brock
David Adjaye
Christoph Mäckler
Antonino Cardillo
Jaime Hayon
Miles Aldridge
Felix Vogel
Alice Springs
Oki Sato**

BEAUTY





BEAUTY

*The wild must be drawn into paper at once
And if you got money then share it too
The race will begin when it's finished of course
And if there's some money then share it too
And if there's some money then share it too*
Mando Diao

Die Suche nach dem Schönen ist allgegenwärtig. Es gehört zu den menschlichen Grundbedürfnissen, Schönheit zu empfinden und, wenn möglich, herzustellen. Dem entsprechen die mannigfaltigen Bestrebungen, konsensfähige Schönheitsideale zu postulieren sowie Schönheit als objektivierbar und messbar zu begreifen. Das seit der Moderne in der Architektur bis auf wenige Ausnahmen gültige Tabu, mit dem Begriff der Schönheit zu argumentieren, entspricht einem offensichtlichen Mangel – nicht nur, weil vermeintlich oberflächliche Affekte nicht mehr bedient werden, sondern weil dieses Nicht-Bedienen einem basalen Missverständnis gegenüber der Ganzheit unserer Wahrnehmungen und sozialen Bedürfnisse entspricht. Der Begriff der Schönheit ist jenseits des fachinternen Diskurses, der allerdings durch neue Sozialisationsbedingungen und sich verändernde Selbstverständnisse zunehmend perforiert wird, nicht nur präsenter als jemals zuvor in den letzten 100 Jahren, sondern angesichts der Vielfalt kultureller und gesellschaftlicher Einflüsse, Überlagerungen und widersprüchlicher Gleichzeitigkeiten spannender und konfliktreicher zugleich.

Im einleitenden Beitrag zu dieser Ausgabe legt Bazon Brock die historischen Linien von Schönheit dar, bis hin zur Abkoppelung der Ästhetik von Fragen derselben, um zum Begriff der Kommunikation zu gelangen, der nicht mehr der einigenden Vereinbarung auch darüber, was Schönheit sei, bedarf. Mit David Adjaye sprechen wir über die Relation von Ästhetik, Ethik und Prozess sowie über Widersprüche in Biografie und Werk. Christoph Mäckler plädiert vor dem

Hintergrund eines historischen Verständnisses von Baukunst für eine zeitlose, nicht-modische Architektur, bei der objektivierbare Schönheit zugleich als Kriterium von Stadt benannt wird. Das Historische als Referenz kehrt derweil auf ganz verschiedene Weisen in den folgenden Gesprächen wieder – in jenem mit Antonino Cardillo, dessen von Licht und Skulpturalität geprägte Bauten unter anderem auf seiner sizilianischen Herkunft gründen, sowie bei Jaime Hayon, der als Kern seiner opulent sinnlichen Objekte und Interiors die Verbindung von Tradition, Vorstellung und Handwerklichkeit nennt.

Das Feld der Fotografie spannen mit Miles Aldridge und Alice Springs zwei international renommierte Künstler auf, die sowohl zwei Generationen als auch verschiedene Auffassungen visueller Erkundung vertreten: hier eine gewissermaßen hochglänzende, zuweilen surreal anmutende Bildersprache, dort eine eher das Auratische erspürende Balance von Distanz und Intimität. Inwieweit sich die freien, einstmals wenigstens in Teilen als schön bezeichneten Künste gewandelt haben, wo sie als explizit politische (und das Ästhetische in dieses Politische einbindende) begriffen werden, zeigt sich demgegenüber in den Ausführungen des jungen Kurators Felix Vogel. Das Gespräch mit Oki Sato und die Arbeiten seines Büros Nendo schließlich kehren zu einer unmittelbarer sinnlichen Entwurfssprache zurück, die über ihre hohe Konzeptualität zugleich ohne die vorausgegangenen Entwicklungen der Moderne kaum denkbar erscheint.

Ralf Ferdinand Broekman



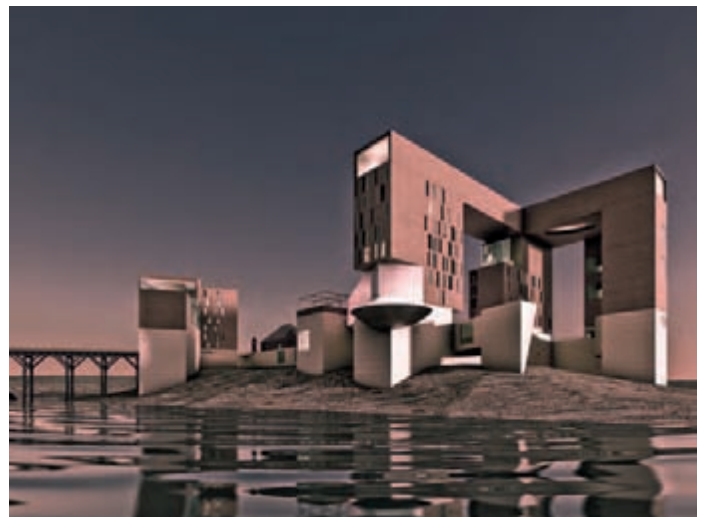
text | ralf f. broekman, olaf winkler
foto | simone greggi

VALUES TRANSCENDING TIME

**Ralf F. Broekman and Olaf Winkler in conversation
with Antonino Cardillo**

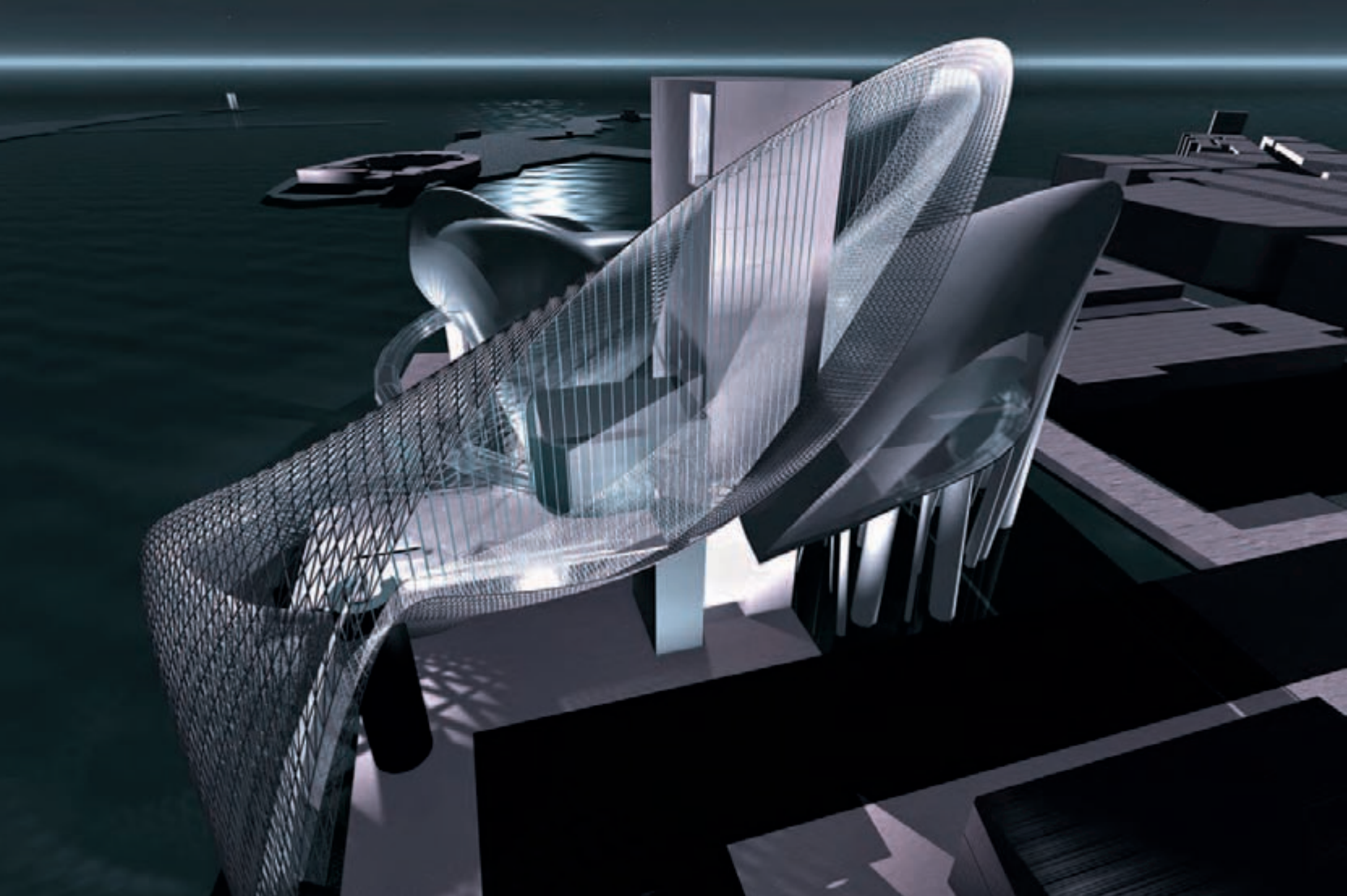
Antonino Cardillo, you were brought up and went to university in Sicily, today your office is in Rome. How important is your regional background for you? Do you see influences in your work which are specifically Italian, maybe Sicilian?

When I was 17 I came across this phrase: "Italien ohne Sizilien macht gar kein Bild in der Seele: hier ist erst der Schlüssel zu allem". Goethe wrote it on 13 April, 1787 in his Sicilian travel diary during his stay in Palermo. For years I have tried to understand the reason for such a neat yet at times surprising affirmation. I was walking in my native Palermo searching for a sense of all that pain, looking for the reason for that dying beauty. Unlike other cities which boast cleanliness and order, Palermo seems forcibly to demand what is the ultimate sense of time, the sense of history. In Palermo I breathed possible futures which never materialised, futures which remained

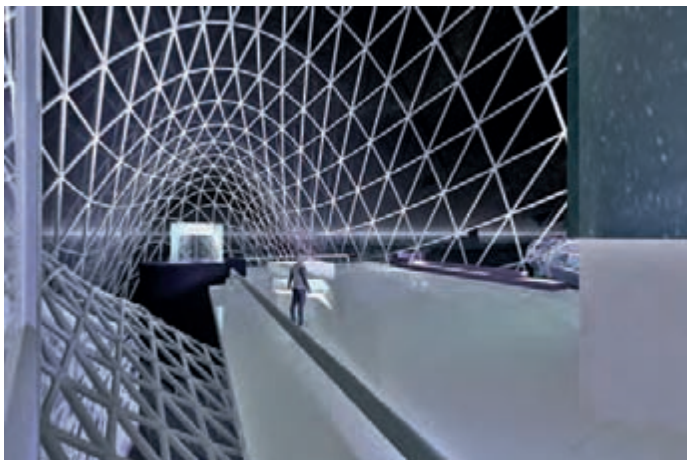


Birnbeck Island, RIBA competition,
Weston-Super-Mare, United Kingdom, 2007

antonino cardillo



antonino cardillo (5)



Let There Be More Light,
Aquarium for Drepanum, Italy, 2002

on the contrary latent in stones, in the ground and in bodies. As in literature, I believe that architecture is a critical act over the reality that surrounds it and at the same time an act of interpreting history. Architecture is more than function, which is just a casual pretext that gives life to it. Definitely, the essence of architecture resides in its narrative, which structures time in space: great architecture, the city in fact, is like an endless novel, in which the personal experience of the protagonist, seen from his viewpoint, continually modifies the sense of the work of time. Aside from this human, historic and geographical dimension, architecture is destined for technological obsolescence and premature ageing. Why Rome? Perhaps for voluntary exile. To create I need silence and distance. But I would say it is more a kind of historical-aesthetic interest. I think its urban essence is more interesting and communicative than other cities because Rome has a fragmentary structure, given by an extremely wide and complex historical stratification. It could seem a paradox, but this ancient city, even if it is devoid of skyscrapers, curtain walls, exposed concrete and other fetishes of modernity, offers a story that is uniquely in line with contemporary feeling. More than any other city in the world, it reveals itself through a multiplicity of meanings presented in a disorganised and not very classical fashion.

If one looks at the specific character of your architecture, most of your designs rely very much on atmospheric qualities. How do you transfer and integrate the client's wishes into your designs? And, the other way round: Do you find it difficult to communicate the qualities of a future design to your client, while planning it?

I would advise those who have – or dream of having – a large-screen television in the living room not to commission work from Antonino Cardillo. They would be disappointed with it. My archi-

texture is for the few, that is a risk I have to run and am prepared to run. To make architecture takes special clients, but not necessarily rich ones. Architecture is the transfiguration of material and this expresses its true nature with the fewest of means. It is made not of precious stones nor fine fabrics, nor of costly furnitures. I do not believe in the architecture of entertainment, my research is intimate, almost sacred (but not religious) and it tends to be emancipated from the dictates of fake happiness created from images and luxury goods.

In your designs you work a lot with light, treating it almost like a physical material. How do you actually proceed when designing; in how far do you rely on models, material, testing surfaces – and how important is working with the computer?

In 1984 four researchers at Cornell University – C. Goral, B. Battaile, K. E. Torrance, and D. P. Greenberg – presented a calculation algorithm called Radiosity. This new technique for simulating light environments radically transformed the field of computer graphics, which until then was based on the Raytracing algorithm, invented in 1979 by Turner Whitted. Obviously many years went by before the respective techniques could be used on personal computers. I began to experiment with the Raytracing algorithm in 1994 – in my first years at university in Palermo – and with Radiosity in 2001 during the preparation of my degree thesis. In Raytracing the simulation gives back in the image only rays directly emitted from a light source; Radiosity, on the other hand, also calculates the physical reactions of incident light on surfaces, known as radiance. In my opinion these two very diverse techniques offer interesting insights into the way in which light is considered in modern and contemporary design. The first method considers light like an operator who divides luminous areas from darkness, and since the algorithm gives shadows without detail (no radiance), the designer – in order to improve the quality of the simulated image – reduces the shadows, expanding the sources of primary light, the glass surfaces and artificial light. Therefore the “Raytracing” architect ends up believing that light in architecture is merely directed, and he mistrusts windows, which are considered as strange holes in the walls. Conversely, working with the Radiosity algorithm, we rediscover an old lesson, too often forgotten at present, that is that light, when it encounters solid material, changing its nature and form, reverberates other surfaces in turn in a game of divisions until it decays into darkness. I firmly believe that architecture is identified in light, but architecture is not manifested only in solid material illuminated, but through the interpretation which it gives of the light.

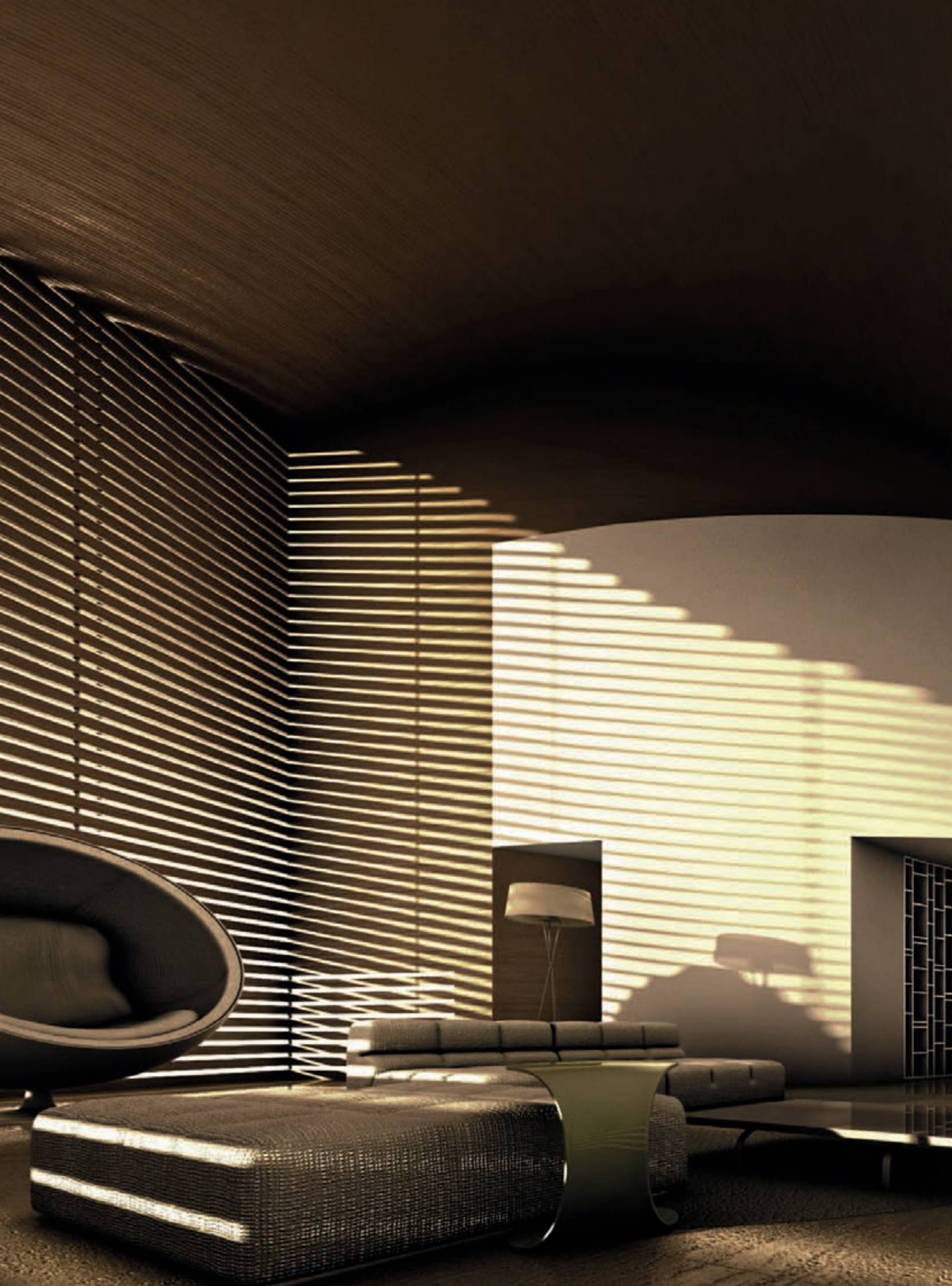
In general: How do you deal with the tension between architecture as a rational discipline and the notion of the irrational, the expressive potential of a decidedly individual artist? How do you cope with the imponderability of subjectivity?

In a certain sense my works themselves answer your question. Often my projects are built on the relationships between recognisable geometric elements. You won't find many fantastic splines or arbitrarily isolated shapes. With time I have come to believe that the excess formalism which characterises much architecture today is the outcome of a frenzy – pathetic and often clumsy – towards information technology. In my work relationships between the parts develop irrational aspects, which sometimes echo memories of Suprematism and Expressionism. I am interested in demonstrating how it is possible in architecture to construct a complex creative narrative but starting from simple ingredients, recognisable and often inexpensive. It is the “already spoken” or “already seen” of architecture which interests me, one, however, that in my works finds a new, often incoherent collocation. In each of the houses I have designed, I have explored several aspects of my identity. I have often discovered some aspects of myself I couldn't even have imagined. I



House of Twelve, Melbourne, 2010

House of Convexities, Barcelona, 2008
(p. 44/45, image: Antonino Cardillo)







Ellipse 1501 House, Rome, 2007 (l.)

Sergio Rossi Ephemeral Store,
in collaboration with Wallpaper magazine,
Milan, 2010 (r.)



Art" is so boring and so elitist and I think this way of seeing things is a dead end. I believe art is in street and in this sense cinema and music are closer to life. I believe they are the real "arts" of today.

How important is the term "beauty" for you? Does it exist disconnected from function, purpose, engineering structures? And, possibly relating to that: How important is timelessness of architecture vs. being adequate for the time in which it was developed?

If beauty is research, then that is the ultimate end of architecture. "Gravity" is not the enemy of architecture and beauty is also structure. I want to tell you a story: some time ago I was at Sarnic, a hypogee restaurant in Istanbul derived from a Byzantine cistern. I was so fascinated by that space and I realized a building is great when its spaces are eloquent inasmuch as they can resist the changes of their primary purpose. I affirm one more time: function is a pretext. Architecture should be able to convey values transcending time and the day-to-day.

like to imagine that the research behind each of them is firmly linked to my life: maybe my works are often portraits of the people I've loved.

As a lot of your designs are private houses, what is specifically fascinating about this task?

Housing has always exerted a great fascination for me. It is an ancestral theme which goes beyond a specific historical period: eating, working, reading, washing, pissing, playing, thinking, loving are all fundamental activities unchanged in human history. Thus a house at the potential stage possesses a universal, I should say archetypal, quality. Furthermore, in architecture, my first loves were Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright, who developed in the 20th century the theme of the modern house starting from diametrically opposed positions. Their research has definitely oriented certain aspects of my development.

How important are other cultural disciplines – music, art, films – for your work, for your understanding and development of space? Are any of these disciplines primarily influential for you, maybe important for your self-perception as an architect?

Music and film have in common the topic of sequence. I believe that they are closer to architecture than painting or sculpture. Today, in the common sense, art is made of objects: paintings, installations, sculptures. But it was not always so. Before the modern era, painting and sculpture were part of architecture: a separation between them and the space of architecture was unthinkable. The idea of using art as a commodity exchange is typical of our bourgeois times. From my point of view, so called "Contemporary

Antonino Cardillo was born in Erice, Sicily, in 1975 and studied architecture at Palermo. Having trained at Palermo under Antonietta Iolanda Lima (architect, critic, and historian of architecture and urbanism), Cardillo founded his own practice for architecture, interior design, and urban design in Rome in 2004. Since then, he has become known with projects often combining a monolithic appearance and sculptural traits. In 2009 Antonino Cardillo was selected among the 30 best new young architectural practices from around the world in Wallpaper magazine's Architect Directory. His works were exhibited at different occasions, including the 4th International Architecture Biennale of Rotterdam 2009/2010.
www.antoninocardillo.com

