Schön! 5

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architectural designs / Antonino Cardillo

HOUSE OF TWELVE

Born and bred in Sicily, Antonino Cardillo is a one of a kind architect. Named as one of the top 30 best new young architects of 2009 by Wallpaper Magazine and had his work published in over 50 international publications and books, his work speaks for itself. His grand and spacious creations are jaw-droppingly beautiful and modern, making him one of the youngest innovators within his field. He talks exclusively to Schön! Magazine about his newest work 'House of Twelve' and what makes him the architect he is today.

Who are you?

I am 34 years old. Certain aspects of my architecture could be defined as Mediterranean. But at the same time I should like my research not to have pre-set boundaries. I should like my research to remain permeable to the diverse cultures of the world. For me the possibility of giving a voice, through architecture, to that which has not been, to interrupted solutions, to missing or tragic endings or fragmented cultural processes is extraordinarily interesting.

What influences the thought processes behind your design?

Cinema and music are my cultural references. They are technically linked to architecture, because both are built on time. I have little interest in contemporary architecture; that of the past fascinates me more. The architecture of the past appears unstable and mutable, because evidently it is impossible to comprehend it definitively. This gap, generated by a partial knowledge, stimulates the imagination, calling on the most obscure loops of the mind, so liberating from it unexpressed potential.

What do you aim to create when you design?

My architecture is an attempt to interpret the most hidden and irrational wishes of the client. I do not follow a straight line to achieve that. I begin by gathering different information, I analyse the plan. I believe that the creative process is a holistic one, where apparently distant and incongruous elements find unforeseen connections and syntheses.
This, I believe, is architecture.

Do you create architecture for purpose or beauty?

I think that in architecture the function is only a pretext. I design houses for clients who love to live their life inside contemplative spaces.. But I know full well that my houses aren't for everybody. My architectures need a different way of inhabiting the house, maybe a more evolved way of living contemporary life: more aesthetical frugal and poetic too.

What do you think are the most important things in architecture?

Independently of the dimensional scale, for me each element is a pretext to create relationships. The single thing in itself is not important, but rather the possibility of realising a dialogue between the parts. Often the more the ingredients of a work have a weak identity, the more interesting the final result.

A lot of your structures incorporate walls of glass, creating a light airy space. Is this part of your signature style as an architect?

Light mutates space, giving it voice. Sometimes it makes it sing, but most of all it makes it unpredictable. I believe that architecture is identified in light. Light is to architecture what sound is to music. The building constructed is an instrument that makes light vibrate, forming that luminous web that we call architecture.

How do you unwind when you aren't working?

Listening to music, seeing old movies, walking around Rome, dreaming, meeting people, making love.

How did you come up with the name 'House of Twelve' for your newest work?

I designed this house for Australian client with roots in the Veneto. "House of Twelve" is a reference to the late ancient Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople. The church was the model of several Basilicas of the Christian Mediterranean, but above all it was probably the model of the St Mark's Basilica in Venice. So 'House of Twelve' tries to invent a fantastic response to an interrupted story, following an empirical path made by progressive mutation of ideas contemporary and late antiquity ones.

Architectural Designs / Antonino Cardillo