Ron Galella, Antonino Cardillo, Michael Bastian, James Valeri, Sergio Ramazzotti, Jon Kortajarena
ANTONINO CARDILLO

Interview and Photography by Roberto Santoro

Worldwide hailed as great talented, he’s conducting his architectural research with inflexible ethic and aesthetic coherence.
He designs space as if he composed music.
He’s an artist, and his architecture is a heartfelt architecture.
Dear Autumn, the spaces you create immediately raise a particular essential impression: a sort of deep blue breath.

That's stunning! Ten years ago I drew a plan through which I sampled for the first time dualism between fluid elements and rigid parts. I was listening to Pink Floyd's "The Wall" and I called that plan Breathe.

Someone said that my spaces imposed silence; others observed that my houses looked like bunkers, inside which light impinged on the things of architecture. Clashing them, in a certain way, light is for a building just as air that permeates the body. I could name architecture habitable light.

What does exactly mean "to design a space"?

It means to give shape to an idea. What's in your mind is often confused. A careful and ponderous draft is necessary to let it shape perfectly.

At the end of this process, I always find myself surprised as the result couldn't be otherwise: as if the work was still existing somewhere and I just had to bring it to life.

What kind of relations do you think exist between the function a building or a space is designed for and its future purpose, its everlasting permanence in the Earth?

How much do you look at its immediate dimension and how much at its eternal essence?

Function is nothing but a pretext. Architecture - in the full meaning of this word - is unconstrained by contingent matters and fully able to convey values transcending the time and the day-to-day. Architecture is not fashion.

Architecture is art: to be an architect means to be an artist.

Unfortunately, there's a serious misunderstanding about architecture: nowadays one only needs some skills qualifications to obtain the title of architect. In our collective imagination, it raises expectations and so, therefore, we think any architect should be an artist. I think this kind of bureaucratic title is totally nonsense.

Such a student of philosophy won't necessarily become a philosopher, a student of architecture won't become an architect. His work will rather display his title's value, not just his academic skills, nor a legal qualification. Anyway, even if rarely, I firmly think architecture is art.

You have often talked about music: another essential impression I receive in looking at your buildings, is that of a space designed in a symphonic way, rhythmically, with beats, pauses, various tones... As if a sort of rhythm defined the space.

Each building I've designed is an attempt to translate music into space. When I listen to Miles Davis' "Bitches Brew" I often see some shapes in the darkness and I say to myself: "That is architecture!".

I'm thinking of the harmonic change in Pink Floyd's "Shine on you crazy diamond", clavichord's evocations of Keith Jarrett's works, the planned patency of Kraftwerk, the restless and surreal scenarios in David Bowie's "Low", the futurist mania in Beards' "Tomorrow never knows", the hybrid structures of Costandos Vekos' "Trama", the futurist fantasy in Gensini's "Selling England by the Pound", the windy and mellow atmospheres of Jan Garbarek's "Dirt", the gloomy sci-fi of Portishhead, the ghastly and dinamic minimalism of Fauchon's "Les Apero".

The cafe vain Bistrot featured Ulla von Brandenburg's latest 16 mm film installation, Singspiel. She dealt with the topic of the city not designed according to a usage feasibility, but to an architectural abstract aesthetic instead: unhabitable spaces may cause lack of communication among the human beings living in there.

For this purpose, she addresses Le Corbusier's "Ville Savoye".

So, do you think it is more important to define your architectural research on the container or rather on the content?

Some time ago I was at a dinner in a sophisticated restaurant in Istanbul, built inside an old Byzantine cistern. I was fascinated by that space and I realized a building is great when its spaces are eloquent innumably that can resist the changes of their principal purpose.

In your opinion, does architecture have any social vallance or power?

Can we see architecture have a social misleading?

Architecture is a paradox. In the past, architecture was the art of power, but, with the passing, all the blood shed to realize those great structures seems to have been washed away. I think this essential and constitutional essence of architecture, equally constituted by violence and beauty, makes itself the most emblematic among the other arts to represent the very human nature.

In my opinion, I don't think beauty makes people good-natured and, by the way, I think art shouldn't have any didactic purpose.

Paul Valéry, in a letter to a friend who was writing a study about where historical and cultural strata are instead enormous and magnificent.

How present and past comment writer?

Contamination, meant as a state of fact, is not the same as differences, acquisition and synthesis, the ultimate purpose of my research.

Living in Palermo, I've got an understanding of the sense of history, but especially in Palermo I could breathe those possible futures which never materialized on the contrary latent in stones, in the ground and in people's bodies.

How much does consciousness and knowledge of the past have in your creative process?

Much clout. Re-elaboration of the past is the raw material of my research.

How much does consciousness and knowledge of the past have in your creative process?

Much clout. Re-Elaboration of the past is the raw material of my research.