

## **Grafting – The dialectic between architectural paradigms and urban accidents**

A master thesis is both the demonstration of the knowledge and skills learned during the student's educational path and a statement regarding the state of the discipline, its values, goals, points of views and instruments applied to a specific place and time.

Christopher Alexander once stated that a "project" or design is the part of the world we intend to change and the "context" the part of the world we decide to leave as it is, but which has direct or indirect relations with the first one. A context is not only a physical condition but also a cultural one, both with their own constraints and resources. These conditions relate the individual design act to the collective artifact of the city; they are somehow given, but even the strictest ones must be tackled with an act of "interpretation". Contrary to sheer "analysis" or sheer "invention", "interpretation" carefully observes existing data but chooses to arrange them and give them relevance according to an intellectual act, and therefore a free will floating on a shared culture.

While the final expected outcome of a thesis might be highly architectural in nature, the process is based on the integration of notions from different fields such as urban studies, sociology, building technology, architectural history and fragments of scientific and artistic practices.

A game has "rules", but also a goal. This goal is to arrive to a well-defined proposal able to embody in its physical reality a number of immaterial values and to generate rich resonances. In a thesis, a process of discovery and acknowledgement of one's own instruments should end up in a finished product featuring both consistency and "character", able to respond to the complex demands that a society asks to architectural and urban design.

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