

EPHEMERAL ARCHITECTURE

Pavilion architecture as a tool to bridge academic research and professional practice

Salvator-John Liotta

ULB Faculté d'Architecture La Cambre-Horta (Belgium)

Fabienne Louyot

ENSA Paris-Belleville (France)

Laps Architecture

This text focuses on a specific component of our architectural work: ephemeral architecture built in the form of temporary pavilions. From the earliest days of our practice, we have put much thought into deciding which aesthetic, epistemological, programmatic and material approach to adopt as a driver for developing our practice.

The fact that both of partners are practitioners who are also involved in academic teaching and research has created favourable conditions for maintaining a research-based approach in our professional practice. As part of our broader strategy to keep our practice connected to research, we started designing and building temporary constructions and exhibition spaces as a research tool.

Established in 2009, LAPS Architecture is a Paris-based office that focuses on both practice and research. LAPS Architecture believes in contributing to creating a high quality architecture for a better society. To date, it has built residential, cultural and educational projects in France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Morocco, and Japan.

As our practice grew older, we came to realize that our creations started to become more conventional. The most common reason for this is the idea of “playing it safe” so as not to scare a client or a jury, or in response to building codes.

To avoid creating conformist designs and being sub-

ject to the norms, the will of clients, or even worse, the dictatorship of a budget, we integrated a recurrent practice of producing ephemeral architecture in the form of pavilions into our strategy, allowing us to experiment freely.

The word ephemeral comes from ancient Greek *ephēmeros*, which means “of, for, or during the day, living or lasting but for a day, short-lived, temporary” and it refers to temporal dimension.

The word pavilion comes from the Latin word for butterfly, *papilio*. Roman soldiers used the word to describe their tents, which were shaped like a butterfly’s wings. Thus, the origin of this word is morphological, originating from the description of a shape; at the same time, it is also evocative of the ephemerality of its use: easy to deploy and transport from place to place, moving lightly, like butterflies do.

Today's pavilions have not retained the original function of the ancient roman soldiers 'shelter with its butterfly wing shape, but are characterized by their ephemeral functions. Over time, the word pavilion has become associated with exhibition spaces that welcome visitors and with places of experimentation. A small pavilion, as a tool to test new solutions, serves to rethink and trace the limits and perspectives of architecture. Because pavilions are quicker to construct and are not subject to building regulations, building permits or other types of construction constraints, they have proven to be an invaluable tool to advance our understanding of architecture and to test ideas that are not appropriate for normed construction. The design and construction of pavilions also present a certain set of constraints, however, which are different from those encountered in more durable construction.

Experimental use of pavilions

Giuseppe Pagano, director of Casabella magazine from 1931 to 1943, was among the first to understand the theoretical and experimental importance of temporary architecture for advancing architectural practice. In 1939, he wrote that “the construction of a pavilion is an exercise of extreme synthesis, which by exacerbating the use of traditional elements of architecture has, however, the remarkable capacity to communicate in an instantaneous way, thus placing itself within the reach of all and leaving a strong imprint in the memory of the visitor. The pavilions are often projects of high quality and futuristic notions, with spatial dilations and contractions, which pave the way for the further development of architecture in the strict sense of the term” (Casavecchia, 2005).

For Pagano, pavilion architecture was a vessel for the ephemeral, a playground for the staging of architecture and its most advanced experimental industrial and artistic production. With this in mind, we have been using the design of pavilions as a cognitive tool to advance experimental visions, test ideas and develop new knowledge since the founding of our practice, aiming to bring design and the act of building closer together. Doing research using design as a mode of investigation leads to unique and singular achievements. The design and construction of a pavilion thus becomes a strategic means of experimentation in architecture (Geissbühler, 2014): it requires little investment while at the same time constituting a valuable tool for advancing applied research by testing new solutions in terms of materials, shapes, performance or assembly techniques.

The history of pavilions is long and multifarious. Several architects have tested different conceptual and practical dimensions of this approach to architecture. Jean Prouvé's Aluminium Pavilion, for instance, introduced the notion of reusability and rebuildability. His application of these two concepts was ahead of the times, because it addressed scarcity of resources and the necessity of reusing structural elements for different purposes. Commissioned by Aluminium Français for the centenary of the production of aluminium, this building was designed by Jean Prouvé in Paris in 1954, to house an aluminium manufacturing plant. In 1956, it was transferred to Lille, where it served as an exhibition hall until 1986, when it was repainted and subsequently reclad.

Jean Prouvé's Aluminium Pavilion was then disassembled and stored until it was bought by the Société Immobilière du Palais des Congrès (SIPAC) and reassembled in the Paris Nord-Villepinte exhibition centre to host exhibitions and activities related to major events. Far ahead of current topics in architectural debate, the Aluminium Pavilion illustrated the potential for a second life and proved that architecture can be built for reusability and rebuildability while conforming to legal norms for construction. This approach questions not only practical issues relating to materials, assembly and industrialization, but also the notions of time (the durability of architecture), space (its adjustability), context and functional program. The approach of Jean Prouvé justifies our own approach to building pavilions for the purpose of experiments that translate theoretical concepts into physical realities.

It is precisely in this way that we have chosen, since the creation of our office, to design and build pavilions. They have increasingly become a tool for us to bring design closer to the act of building, a way to shorten the distance between conceiving an idea and building its physicality. This offers us the opportunity to experiment with new "conception-visions", to test out proposals which would be impossible to put in practice because they are too risky for a more permanent project, to put forward ideas and to produce new knowledge on the making of our architecture. Today, the design and construction of pavilions forms part of a global (academic and professional) approach to applied research in architecture. Thus, constructing an exhibition pavilion is in no way comparable to constructing a building intended to last. This activity is

fundamentally different from our regular work as architects. Envisioning, designing and implementing a pavilion allows for more freedom; the constraints are fewer and less severe on several levels. The construction of an exhibition pavilion is mainly a question of focusing on its materiality and tactile qualities, as well as its plasticity and ergonomics. Fed also by our experiences in the design of ephemeral architecture, our design brings into play new relationships and interactions between its constituents: programs, materialities, components and structure.

One of the most interesting recent examples of a team that experiments with the construction of pavilions is the French *Encore Heureux*. An architect collective founded in 2001, *Encore Heureux* claims to be a generalist practice, constructing buildings, installations, playgrounds and exhibitions. Their experiments explore the notion of temporary appropriation and use of existing materials to produce their architecture. The idea is to explore the potentialities of existing materials for producing something that will eventually have a third life. Materials in this sense have a past that the architects acknowledge (by recognising it), a present that the architects design (by reusing materials), and a future that they leave open to possible reuse. Their ideas of reusability, rediscovery and adaptation are similar to the approach we use in our general practice, which is not limited to the classic notion of construction with architecture in need of a building permit, but is informed through a mix of applied research and installations aimed at experimenting with different uses and appropriations, different types of assembly, materials and temporalities.

EPHEMERAL ARCHITECTURE



The images on these two pages concern some of the projects developed in academic setting by the associates of LAPS Architecture as organizers and instructors. The main idea involved in building a pavillon is to shorten the distance between conception and construction and offer students a knowledge which is based on a more organic integration between architecture, materials and structure. These researches help to integrate research into practice.



The external surface of the pavilion is a smooth continuous curve while its internal surface is irregular due to the different depths of the triangular units. These units posed a challenge in terms of connections to each other due to their wide range of angles; finger joints resolved the issue by increasing the contact surface area.

EPHEMERAL ARCHITECTURE



Conceived during a workshop held in 2013 in the Archaeological Park of Agrigento, this pavilion explored the design and construction of lightweight, temporary structures to shelter archaeological excavation works otherwise exposed to the weather. The traditional bracketing system was reinterpreted in the design, yet, it keeps an essentiality both structurally and aesthetically, and present an intrinsic elasticity, which lessens the impact of lateral forces by acting as a shock absorber.



These two images show some of the small pavilions built during Pop Up School workshop held in 2015 at Farm Cultural Park. The main topic involved experimentations of different pop up educational structures for children made by upcycling plastic containers used for cheese.



It is with this same philosophy that we intend the design and construction of small architectures: it is of major importance in our working process; it is a tool that serves to inform our reflections and building choices used for other, larger-scale projects and it allows us to accumulate knowledge for future intellectual speculations and for anticipating and avoiding some issues we may face in more permanent construction projects.

When we started our practice, we began applying this idea of using temporary architecture as a research tool, and over the last ten years, in addition to small pavilions, our office has designed several medium- and large-scale ephemeral constructions, including a pavilion for the Milan World Expo (2015), the installation/scenography for the “What is co-dividuality?” exhibition realised at the Farm Cultural Park (2017), the pavilion/installation designed for the exhibition “999 Questions on Contemporary Living” at the Triennale Museum in Milan (2018) and the “Human Nature” pavilion (2020), designed for the Italian Architecture Festival in Favara.

Pavilion design serves as a kind of bridge between research/academic activities and architectural practice. Regardless of the scale – small, medium or large – the exhibition pavilions we have built present a “real scale”, built experiments entirely devoted to advance our research in architectural professional and academic settings.

As architects, building a pavilion is a different experience from erecting a building intended to last.

Indeed, this construction process reveals a whole new dimension that no longer relates solely to the architectural program and its functions (Doyle & Senske, 2016) but rather focuses on the way spaces are built and on creation intended as a process in relation to design. In this way, the project can foster the birth of a real material experience that is no longer merely virtual or theoretical (Paranandi, 2013).

Our projects The following selection of four projects illustrates different experimental approaches to ephemeral architecture. Each of these projects involves a different material and a different program.

Island, Sea and Food Cluster Pavilion, Expo 2015 Milan

The central idea of the Islands, Sea, and Food Cluster presented at the 2015 Milan World Expo, entitled “Rhythm of Discovery”, was to retranscribe the anthropic and natural experience of the exoticism of the islands located between the tropics of Capricorn and Cancer, by proposing a multi-sensorial experience: tactile, auditory and olfactory. The pavilion was located near the main arena of Expo 2015 and was characterised by its two narrow, long volumes, organised to create a large, open central area, which functioned

as an exhibition space and meeting point. The two volumes were wrapped in a white, flexible pvc skin, its geometric shape reminiscent of fractal clouds or ship sails. The walls on which these clouds rested were treated as infographic surfaces on which multilingual content was scattered, providing a narrative describing the islands represented inside the pavilion.

In this central space, the visitor experience was amplified. Our idea was based on the fact that in a World Expo, visitors have a limited amount of time and are generally not attracted to pavilions that are not in a central area or don't belong to the most prominent countries. International exhibitions are often characterised by the presence of national pavilions, but at the Milan exhibition, the idea of the cluster was presented for the first time: several nations exhibiting together in a pavilion characterised by a common theme. The clusters of the 2015 World Expo were designed as collective pavilions that grouped several countries around transversal themes such as fishing and islands, agriculture in arid environments, the Mediterranean diet, and coffee and herbal tea culture.

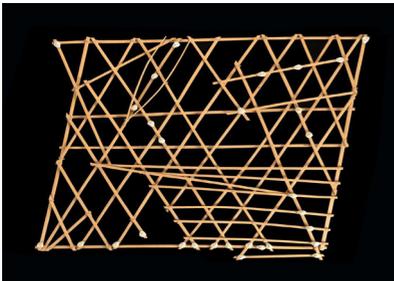
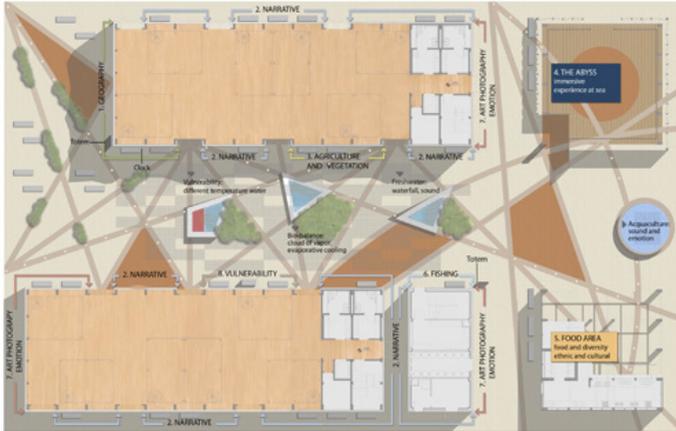
For the Islands pavilion, these considerations led us to design a place of easy access where visitors could sit and relax in the middle of greenery, offering a strong and multiplied experience. For this purpose, the central area included a thick patch of dense bamboo planted on the ground as well as a hanging bamboo forest consisting of 7.000 reeds. The ground bamboo and the hanging bamboo reeds reflected each other in a subtle play of resonance between nature and artifice, with a hanging forest hovering over the heads of the visitors, producing a soft

and familiar sound atmosphere. The reeds subtly swayed and clashed, reproducing an ancestral low-frequency sound that alternated with the tinkling of pre-recorded wave sounds. A pathway led visitors into exhibition spaces dedicated to each island, where the ceilings were carved with large chimneys that functioned as wind towers, promoting natural ventilation and bringing natural light to the exhibition space. The two volumes were made of glued laminated wood, forming 12-metre-high modular portals. The Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) structure of this ephemeral building was designed to be easily dismantled after the Expo and reused elsewhere.

Co-dividual Architecture Capsule Workshop - What is Co-Dividuality?

In 2017, we presented an exhibition/event entitled “Japanese Architecture and the Shared House of Farm Cultural Park” at the art gallery of Farm Cultural Park in Favara, Sicily. The exhibition offered a panorama of shared house typologies and examined the broad theme of the redefinition of public and private space in Japan, transforming the Farm Cultural Park art gallery into a place of experimentation and rumination on the uncertain boundaries between private and public space through 1:1 architectural experiments. Through a selection of projects conceived by the most important names in Japanese architecture, the exhibition questioned the concept of co-dividual architecture – an architecture that proposes a new response to the question of the commons in the era of post-individualism, social networks and the sharing economy.

EPHEMERAL ARCHITECTURE



Sea and island temporary pavilion for Milan EXPO 2015. The hanging structure is realised in bamboo and the structure is built in CLT posts, beams and panels. The pavilion was deconstructed and used afterwards for another project.

EPHEMERAL ARCHITECTURE



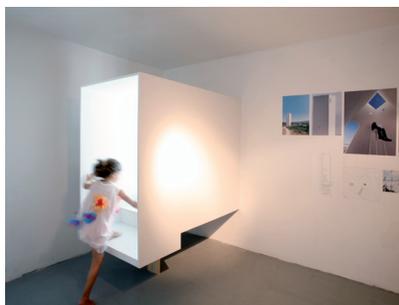
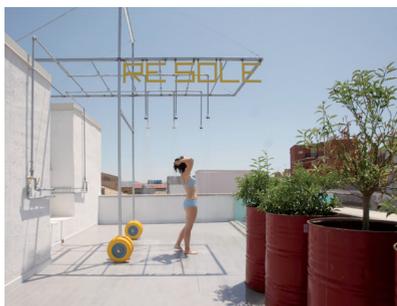
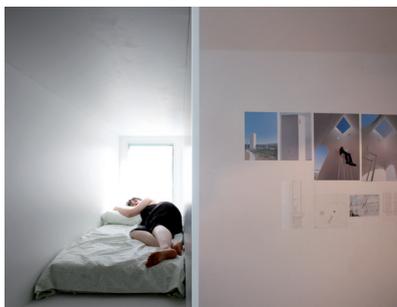
The overall concept alternated between green spaces, fountains (used for aquaculture) and paths, and was inspired by a network of traces from old nautical charts of Polynesia and the Marshall Islands. The CLT structure of this ephemeral building was designed to be easily dismantled after the Expo and reused elsewhere.



The exhibition was conceived as a promenade, but also as an experimental lodging place within the gallery, so that visitors and guests could cross paths in the exhibition in a new way. The design of the pavilions within the gallery created a strong impact in the exhibition space, as many of the architectural projects on display were presented in 1:1 scale, with images of the projects printed in large format so that visitors could be immersed in an intense spatial experience. Thanks to the real dimensions of the models, the spectators visiting the exhibition were able to appreciate the spatial qualities of the projects and to experience the different spaces. In addition to the exhibition, visitors could also physically participate in the notion of co-dividuality, by living in the art gallery and staying overnight in bed capsules designed specifically for this experience. The art gallery also provided a kitchen, and a community shower was installed on the terrace.

The capsules were designed during an international design workshop organised and led by Laps Architecture, Politecnico of Milano, Kengo Kuma Lab of the University of Tokyo and the faculty of Architecture La Cambre Horta. This workshop took place prior to the exhibition and lasted a week. It allowed a participatory reflection on how to use the pavilion not only as a space for representation, but also for meetings and encounters. The capsules were scattered inside the art gallery among the artworks on display, allowing visitors to sleep in a unique environment. In this way, unexpected encounters took place between the visitors and the ephemeral residents in the art gallery, encouraging reflection on new ways of living together. The result was that the audience in the art gallery was made up of both visitors

EPHEMERAL ARCHITECTURE



and guests staying overnight. Residents were asked to send in ideas and plans for open activities (for example cooking workshops, guided tours, seminars on different topics) with the aim of encouraging encounters. The temporary residents “paid” for their stay by acquiring the role of accelerator of social exchange. Being able to wake up in an art gallery as if it were a shared house, to cook with strangers and to experiment with various activities gave the exhibition/event the opportunity to activate experimental participatory practices and to propose new forms of transversal communities. The design of this installation/exhibition pavilion required the creation of new spaces. These spaces generated new experiences and interaction between individuals, rethinking programmatic expectations and pushing the boundaries between private space and public space. This project allowed programmatic freedom and its ephemeral nature opened up room for experimentation.

This project references the work of Thomas Hirschhorn, an artist whose work frequently addresses the political and cultural imbalances of the contemporary world by integrating instability and precariousness at the heart of his approach. In 2004, he gave life to the “Musée Précaire Albinet”, a project carried out at the invitation of the Laboratoires d’Aubervilliers, which installed an ephemeral museum near a disadvantaged housing estate in the northern suburbs of Paris, where neighbours were invited to participate in the construction of the museum and related activities. Similar to Hirschhorn’s work, our idea of rerouting the usual activities expected from spectators is a way to turn people into more than passive actors.

This action produces different results: spectators are no longer there “just for seeing”, but also for “doing something”; their engagement affects the design of the exhibition space, which is conceived not only for consumers but also for use through different degrees of interaction.

999 Temporary Pavilion, Milan 2018

The exhibition “999 Questions on Contemporary Living”, curated by Stefano Mirti, was held at the Milan Triennale in 2018 and was hailed by the press as one of the most innovative events at the Triennale in recent decades. Stefano Mirti came up with the idea to invite 100 co-curators who, in turn, invited others. The exhibition was essentially a collection of a thousand ideas about contemporary life. When Stefano Mirti asked us to join him, we inquired about the space available for our pavilion at the Triennale. When we learned that we were limited to five square metres, we proposed an additional exhibition space outside the Triennale premises. This off-site space was intended as a location to host guests and to experiment with the notion of post-individual architecture. We installed cameras linking the two spaces so that visitors to the Triennale could make contact with visitors at the off-site space. The combination of these two spaces thus produced a dynamic tension that made it possible to question spatial and relational issues through the link created between these two sites, one calling the other and vice versa. The small installation/pavilion within the Triennale space consisted of a podium made up of three steps, each 45 cm high, whose archetypal silhouette echoed that of a small house.

The concept is atypical in the sense that rather than exhibiting something (as one would expect at an exhibition), the design team decided to propose a pavilion designed to accommodate the visitors themselves, so that they could make it their own and sit, read, discuss or lie down in it. The pavilion is complemented by lecterns with books on them, offering visitors the opportunity to sit in a space where they can read each other stories. Video projections complete the installation. After three months at the Triennale Museum, the installation was transferred to the Politecnico di Milano (Polo Territoriale di Lecco), where it is now used by students as a relaxation space. This prototype of a shared-house minimum space explores new ways of using the public space of an exhibition in an informal way. The pavilion resulted in the design of a platform that welcomes visitors to sit or lie down while at the same time capturing the attention of passing visitors.

The Triennale's off-site pavilion was designed as a shared space, located at Via Ventura 3. The design was the result of research into new ways of living, working and meeting, characterising a type of space that we call co-dividual. It hosted different functions: two private spaces for sleeping (Japanese-inspired capsules that can be booked on sites like Airbnb), semi-private spaces where people could work in a calm environment, and open and semi-public spaces where people could gather for different kinds of creative production and playful activities, ranging from cooking together to coworking. The communal spaces were open to the people living in the neighbourhood, who could use the coworking space, the communal kitchen, and a meeting room to organise exhibitions and activities open to associative life.

These semi-public spaces facilitated activities related to being together and made it possible to experiment with new ergonomics and uses of public space within private space.

Through its duality, the project redefined the idea of the archetypal pavilion. By linking two distant spaces, we have shown that it is possible to connect two physical entities in different locations. At the main site, the significance of the exhibition has been inverted by welcoming visitors not to see an exhibition, but to experience a new way of making connections. In the Triennale's off-site space, we reversed this idea by opening the pavilion to local residents and strangers, and in doing so, we transformed an exhibition space into an opportunity to meet other people and establish a sense of community. In this sense, we proposed the idea of a 1:1 co-living space as an act of sharing through the use of a new typology, creating new types of links – not only material but also social. The message inherent in the creation of this project is that if the twentieth century celebrated individualism, we believe that the twenty-first century will be one that embraces sharing, or rather rediscovering community ties, building spaces designed to be together and places where new possibilities for encounters can be woven.

In metropolitan areas today, thousands of people share spaces in housing that was not originally designed for living together, for practical reasons such as saving on rent or common expenses. We believe that the experience of living together can be richer and more intense. Therefore, there is value in experimenting with a new housing type: the co-individual house. The bonds that are created when sharing

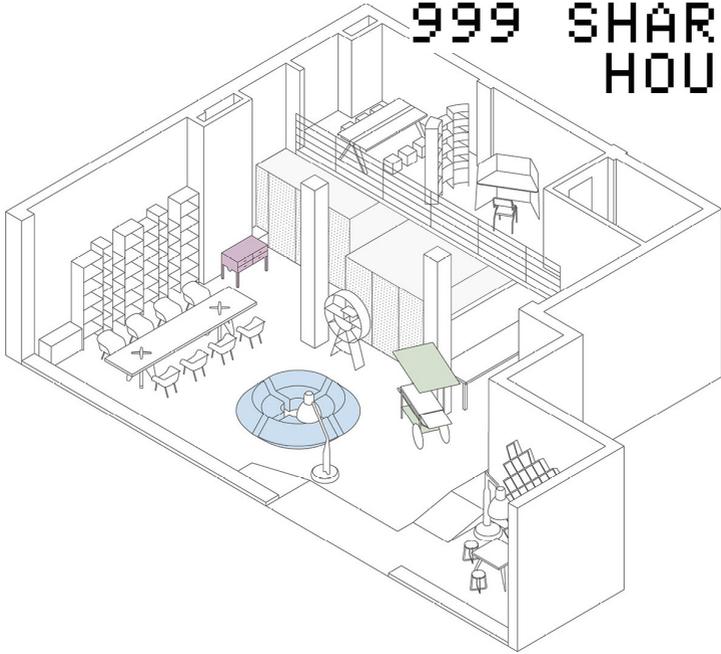
EPHEMERAL ARCHITECTURE



999 Questions on Contemporary Living installation in Milan Triennale main site (above) and in the off-site space of Via Ventura in Lambrate (on next page) periphery of Milan. In the main site, the significance of the exhibition has been inverted by welcoming visitors not to see an exhibition, but to experience a new way of getting together.



999 SHARED HOUSE



In the Triennale's off-space, we reversed this idea by opening the pavilion to local residents and strangers and, in doing so, we transformed an exhibition space into an opportunity to meet other people and establish a sense of community.



a flat with people outside the family nucleus are proving to be a way to forge lasting and meaningful connections. In general, shared flats are not designed for the users who occupy them, but rather for single-nucleus families, with a living room, kitchen and bedrooms. Thus, only 15–30% of the space is dedicated to shared activities.

The shared-house project intended to revise the proportion of private spaces in favour of common spaces. This opens up the domestic space to other people. In addition to experimenting with new practices of being together, it became possible to experience sharing between strangers, to facilitate unexpected encounters and fortuitous situations, to feed the collective subconscious and to pay tribute to the exceptional banality of idleness and everyday life.

In the case of the exhibition “999 Questions on Contemporary Living” the research problem is reflected in the proposal to question ways of inhabiting a place while putting oneself on display. Today, through social networks, people tend to share a large part of their personal lives in the digital space. What we proposed was to put forward this notion of virtual space in real space. The shared house in Via Ventura reflected this: it was a space of exposure of the everyday, in the sense that everyone who stayed there decided to expose themselves to others and be available to share this experience. A form of giving a new sense to life in real space with a critical reflection on new behaviours developed through the use of social media.

Both local residents and guests of the “999 Questions on

Contemporary Living” exhibition could benefit from these exhibition spaces. The rooms could be booked on Airbnb: by booking in this shared house, guests knew that they would be accommodated in a place open to the neighbourhood. The idea of creating this innovative typology is rooted in the criticism of the hotel model: places that consume space and energy while offering nothing in return to the city. Through this reflection, we imagined different degrees of porosity: spaces with different degrees of space accessibility such as individual, semi-individual and group type.

All the furniture in the shared house was designed to be flexible. The people who decide to stay there are aware that they are not simply spending a night in a neutral or impersonal place, but rather experiencing a place where they will participate in a proposal for social dynamisation. The walls of the bed capsules were made of two layers of insulation and perforated sheet metal that filters the light. The fronts of the capsules turn them into giant lanterns, a way of revisiting an object as an element that structures the space. The pattern designed on the fronts of the capsules contributed to creating a subtle and pleasant atmosphere. The shared house was designed to be used for a limited period of one year, during which various parameters related to comfort, ergonomics and the general functioning of this co-living architecture were measured and analysed for the purpose of a kind of post-occupancy catalogue. Our conclusion is that people are ready to share spaces designed to facilitate the mix of public activities within a private space. In 2022, the shared house is still active proving that there is room for this kind of experimentations.



Human Nature Pavilion at Palazzo Micciché

For the Italian Festival of Architecture, held in September 2020, we were involved in the Human Nature Pavilion: a garden planted inside Palazzo Micciché, a 19th century aristocratic building in the historical centre of the town of Favara in Sicily, which was partially restored for the occasion. With a selection of over a hundred plants of twenty varieties including ivy, tropical palms, ferns and various other species, we imagined a secular sanctuary focused on the relationship between humanity and nature. Human Forest is an experimental pavilion, an artifice that draws attention to the civic role of new citizen-gardeners, who, by caring for their immediate environment, establish a new way of inhabiting the city and the planet. The idea was to invade the decrepit spaces of Palazzo Micciché and revitalise them with living things instead of solely through the traditional means of renovation. This installation is a kind of trees sanctuary. It is thus a space of decompression, an environment that invites visitors to be in tune with the world around them.

The project was realized thanks to the know-how of a multidisciplinary group of architects (LAPS architecture and Analogique), botanists (Radice Pura), psychologists and musicians. The space hosts audio-visual shows, conferences and concerts. Initially conceived as a temporary space, the pavilion unfolds within the rooms of the Palazzo Micciché. The palace, destined for ruin, was transformed by this pavilion, which remained there after the end of the festival, thus reversing the initial destiny of the building by offering it a new life.

The idea of designing a forest came from the observation that Favara, like many other urban environments, does not have many places where one can be intensely lost, surrounded or enveloped by plants. Human Forest, thanks to this path offered to visitors, is imagined as a sanctuary, exposing the relationship between humanity and plants (the ratio of buildings to nature is questioned here) and it offers the possibility of abandoning oneself to one's own mental and intimate space, facilitated by an artificial nature that has appropriated the exhibition space. The public is granted entry in a limited and controlled way, to allow for the experience of a moment of contemporary urban spirituality.

Conclusions

In his writings, Cyril Stanley Smith (1975) argued that aesthetic selection is central to genetic and cultural evolution. Without aesthetic curiosity, human beings might not have survived or might have remained in the Stone Age. The MIT professor emeritus of materials science and metallurgist opined that most human inventions originated from



decorative applications: the wheel, for example, first appeared in decorative jewellery and children's toys. Smith surmised that innovation and discoveries are not born out of the pressure of need, but out of an aesthetic curiosity that can take precedence over function, especially when it comes to the design of temporary architecture: a perfect ground for experimentation in architecture.

The knowledge accumulated through these activities is not productive in economic terms, but it is beneficial for advancing our research in architectural design. We have learnt that integrating reusable materials in the first design phase is





With a selection of over a hundred plants and twenty varieties including ivy, tropical palms, ferns and various species, this installation is a secular sanctuary of the relationship between man and nature. Human Forest draws attention to the civic role of new citizen- gardeners, who by caring for their immediate environment establish a new way of inhabiting the city and the planet.

key for implementing the design correctly in the following phases. In this sense, the pavilion for the 2015 Milan Expo is exemplary in including some of the constraints common to temporary events. Working with a pre-given structure limited us in the design, but it has an impact on implementing circular economy linked to construction. After this project, we acquired a kind of reflex for thinking of potential second lives for building as a first design option and we started designing and building the so-called *filère sèche*.

Another result of our experimentations concerns the concept of co-dividuality that has been built in the off-site pavilion of Milan Triennale. This experience led us to the publication of a book (*What is co-dividual Architecture?*, Jovis, 2020) and helped us to define a different proposal for shared life and co-living in our design. In particular, in 2022, our experience with spatial models of shared space, demonstrating the viability of co-dividual architecture, proved decisive in convincing a real estate company (after many attempts with several failures) to build a large scale innovative housing project. This project was shortlisted among twenty excellent projects by the French ministries of Housing and Research for its innovative answer to the problem of low-quality housing in France for people who are living alone (due to career paths, divorce, age or other reasons).

Our proposal received a seal of excellence because it addressed several problems associated with the nonlinear life paths of a significant portion of our society. This endorsement

reinforces our belief that while in the short term, this applied research is an investment of time, energy and cognitive load and we cannot be certain that it will achieve any results, it helps keep our research convergent to our practice. We develop our ideas based on information regarding specific topics which are not merely theoretical, but concrete.

In the present day, young people in many cities are faced with scarcity of resources and migrate from depressed areas that do not have adequate economic, material or intellectual resources. Nevertheless, the necessity of renovating abandoned cultural heritage sites raises serious questions about what to do with buildings that time turns into ruins.

These different projects taught us that once structural restoration is completed, the rest of the interventions can be achieved with limited budgets and by engaging local communities. All the projects realised at Farm Cultural Park, Human Forest in particular, are low cost, and they were the result of workshops with students or with local citizens. Bruno Munari's quote summarises what we have learned about urban regeneration: "for doing nice things we have at least two options: with a lot of money or with a lot of creativity." The latter is far more important than the former in contexts where funds are lacking.

The ephemerality of a pavilion allows us to approach architecture from a different angle, freed from some of its constraints, where experience becomes central as a new way of appreciating space in all the complexity of its components,

whether aesthetic, social or material. The pavilion is a tool for the architect that allows for an in-depth analysis of the practice by making a more comprehensive approach to the discipline possible. We feel that this tool keeps our practice open to research on programmatic and material aspects and helps us avoid conforming to time constraints and the burden of capitalistic and commercial architecture.

References

- Geissbühler, D. (2014). Research by Design, in Book of Abstracts of Fourth International Conference on Architectural Research by Design (ArbD'14), Lisbon, Portugal
Paranandi, M., (2013). Making Ripples Rethinking Pedagogy in the Digital Age, in International Journal of Architectural Computing, 4 (11), 415-436.
Smith, C. (1981) A Search For Structure, Selected Essays on Science, Art and History, MIT Press



Practices in Research #03 - Explorations & Cartographies - June 2022

online open access double-blind peer-reviewed journal for practice-based research in architecture.

edited by

Benoît Burquel (ULB); Benoît Vandenbulcke (ULiège); Harold Fallon (KU Leuven)

scientific committee for the conference

Annelies De Smet (KU Leuven), Wouter Van Acker (ULB), Sebastian Kofink (Buero Kofink Schels, Hochschule München), Simon Jüttner (Buero Kofink Schels, Hochschule München), Rolf Hughes (KU Leuven), Lisa De Visscher (A+ Architecture, ULiège), Ido Avissar (List, EAV&T Paris Est), Harold Fallon (AgwA, KU Leuven), Benoît Vandenbulcke (AgwA, ULiège), Benoît Burquel (AgwA, ULB)

scientific committee for the publication

Asli Çiçek (Asli Çiçek, U Hasselt), Caroline Voet (Voet Architectuur, KU Leuven), Karen Kesteloot (Studio Bont, KU Leuven), Bram Aerts (Trans architectuur, stedenbouw, KU Leuven), Claus Peder Pedersen (Arkitektskolen Aarhus), Arnaud Hendrickx (KU Leuven), Nel Janssens (KU Leuven), Johannes Kuehn (Bauhaus Weimar), Xavier Van Rooyen (U Liège), Eric Le Coguic (U Liège)

double-blind peer review process : www.architectureinpractice.eu/pirjournal

front and back cover images : © Maxim Lannaux and Corentin Lefebvre

thanks to Orfée Grandhomme & Ismaël Bennani

Practices in Research is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License and fulfils the DOAJ definition of open access. Practices in Research provides immediate Open Access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge. Copyright for articles published in this journal is retained by the authors without restriction. By appearing in this Open-Access journal, articles are free to use, with proper attribution, in educational and other non-commercial settings.

ISSN: 2736-3996

Practices in Research Journal
Rue des Palais 153 - 1030 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 244 44 36
info@architectureinpractice.eu
www.architectureinpractice.eu/pirjournal



In Practice

