

And yet, paradoxically, it is here, in the territories of Central Africa as in the forests of South America or in the frozen expanses of the north that the extreme conditions also bring the germs of new possibilities. Italo Calvino was thinking of our suburbs when at the end of *The invisible cities* he invited us to "Seek in hell what hell is not", and today the places where most of the world's inhabitants live are far more terrible than hell. But I believe that Calvino's invitation is still valid: applying our knowledge to the essential, seeking an idea of beauty that comes from the transformation of what exists and not from phantasmagorical caricatures of the future, is still a desirable program today.

Shifting the gaze from the magazines of the West to the real conditions of the southern hemisphere means reflecting on those reasons I mentioned at the beginning: on what is actually necessary and above all on how the profession of the architect can once again be recognized as necessary. Measuring oneself on topics such as those proposed by the workshop of which this publication contains the results means, even just for the space of an experiment, knowing a new client, verifying how much one's projects can be shared and be understandable to those who will use them. It means returning to reflect on an idea of utility that is based not only on the solution of technical problems, on feasibility or on costs, but also on the possibility of giving our projects a meaning that goes beyond their strictest function. This means, for example, giving an acceptable form to the resilience that every building must take on, contributing, through architecture, to improving places that have lost all

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