

Habitacao como formadora de ciudad

"New housing for the old city in the Mediterranean area".

Patrizia Montini

I'd like to focus the attention of this speech on the design testing conducted by Atelier Magistrale IUAV in order to introduce a wider consideration on the concept of the dwelling. It's marked by a closed attention on the topos that highlights the relationships and the scale ratio established with the urban context. A specification is needed. It is not by chance that the Atelier chose as place for the project Ispica, one of the cities of Sicily. It is a consequence of the close and constant relationship with the administration, which characterize this experience. The dialogue between the students and the mayor and his administration, through them with the citizens, enlightened ancient traditions, precise requests and drivers of change, which elaboration brought to interesting development in the projects. The architectonic solutions are not just the application of notions and abilities acquired, but they are prompt answers to the needs of a specific territory.

With Atelier Magistrale in Sostenibilità, we made a study on the city of Ispica to start the consideration on the architecture of dwelling considering the different traditions and socio-economic realities. This was made to help the rediscovery of the variety of ways and cultures that mark the contemporary human lifestyle and the several types that the living space takes regarding the nature of the places. The Mediterranean area originated a common language between the countries on the

shores, thanks to the dormant match between the dwelling and the building culture. It just seems like the ideal topos to try to turn down some issues about the transformation of the city, opening to new, less homologated, and less standardized horizons. The creation of an environment friendly building with new integrated systems drives to embrace many solutions, industrial projects, and preexistent technologies that goes beyond the limits of their origin, being carried in completely different geographical and cultural contexts.

Too often, the word “sustainable” enter in the project like a series of knowledges to use renewable energy sources (energy saving, recycling rainwater, use of renewable materials) introduced as value added, but can't change the way of thinking about architecture.

We tried to combine the new way of dwelling with the belonging of a certain geographical and cultural area in which it's crucial the climate response and the use of the local resources that requires to test different solutions, even if far away of the more radical examples of sustainability of the economical most developed countries. Looking for a balance between tradition and modernity in the development of a reasoned habitat there isn't any nostalgic imitation.

As Fathy said, a civilization is measured by the contribution of a certain population, not for what it borrows from other cultures, but in the way, it deflects and interprets some things compared to its traditions. In successfully moments without critics by High-Tech, talking about raw earth buildings can be against the trend, even if we take account of the late success of Fathy that built houses and villages In America where trends are made. It's not conceivable a

transposition made by us, even if we live in a country where the earth architecture, the value and the meaning of research are relevant.

If someone is not familiar with architecture, Fathy may seem outdated, but talking about Le Corbusier and Corbu may not.

In the Second World War, Le Corbusier designed Le Maisons Murodins conceived in pisé, linking techniques, timing and ways of dwelling. I consider Fathy because he has an aspiration to anonymous art, in order to build something already existing in the landscape.

The specific climate points towards the solution of the problems, such as the warming, that don't exist in other European areas. The lower available resources lead to deflect the sustainability subject in low technologies, leading us on the search of less astounding solution, but cheaper and with low environmental impact. Furthermore, the approach of the bioclimatic architecture has rekindled the interest on those architectures that could develop an architectural culture that recognize the importance of respecting natural balances, distorted by the industrialized world that is ruled by an absolute trust on the technological progress.

The experience is concluded. It has been an important moment of discussion about the changes to introduce in order to improve the living in the today world in a collective process open to the community.

The town of Ispica lies on a tableland made of limestone that rises on the plain in the Sicilian south-east corner. Although this town is only a few kilometers from

the coast as the crow flies, it's impossible to see the Mediterranean Sea. In fact, a new and foolish construction has made a short-sighted view of the sea from this area.

In Ispica we find a different Mediterranean Sea, not the coastal one populated by fishermen, but a place deeply Mediterranean, clearly urban, and mainly rural. Its image is inseparable from the stone. First it has been taken away from the fields to define the property or to protect locust beans and olive trees. Then it has been removed and carved to build churches and palaces first in High Baroque style and then in Echi Liberty style. Those mark the corner of the road board drawn after the tragic earthquake destruction in 1693.

Nowadays, the old routes are outdated and Ispica spreads North, to the hilly inland, in danger of untying the firmness of its urban fabric. Southwards, it is forced by its orography to address petrified to the sea.

The design theme suggested in the lab is a new residential settlement. It wants to highlight not the isolated house, but the construction of a new part of the town. The conditions of the sustainable project in our cities are the density and the need to keep together the architectural side and the urban side.

The consideration is about the appropriate planimetric and altitude distribution of the buildings in relation to the new urban environment, the structure of the residential zone and of the public and ornamental areas, the recovered relation with the sea and the nature in the construction of a new area in the city. For that, the projects are designed on a set of internal yards, that work like fresh air supplies depending on the properly exposition and on the exploitation of the wind, or on a set of terracing, with their gardens, vegetables garden, and path made by shelters

and trellis in order to create shaded areas.

Particular attention has been given to the planning of the transition areas (public, semi-public and private) such as the openings in the yards, the patios, and the galleries. They are both spaces and sites of the growing town, areas of relationship, meeting, socialization, playground that together create empty spaces between the houses and refer to known shapes and language.

The Venetian Lab crossed its experience with the one made by “Laboratorio per la vivienda del XXI secolo, del UPC de Barcelona “Habitar el presente” ETSAB, UPC Barcelona” that wanted to make a clear view on the status of the contemporary housing in Spain. They had examined 600 architectures, and then they had chosen 40 built since 1900 in relation to 4 basic concepts: The relation with the city, the society, the technologies, and the devices. They had chosen the 1900 because it's when a new sensibility for the sustainability has been formed, referring to the Global Map of Rio de Janeiro made in 1992, when a new generation of proposals and experiments began, such as the Nemausus building made by J. N. in Nimes. They wanted to give an answer to the impossibility to access to a proper home where there's lack of social housing in countries like Spain, Italy, Greece, and Portugal. In order to teach how to conceive the house like a part of the city, a place where comfortably living, where there is our history and can help us to think about the future, and to answer to new questions such as the consequences connected to the mutation of the social fabric, the house in transit that reflects the breaking of the traditional family. We have also to add the different ways of life brought by immigration, the possibility to change the spaces in the house when the household expands or narrows, thinking about the

possibility to add or create living spaces different from the original ones.

Those criteria have been extended to the Venetian Lab for the urban project of new neighborhoods modified comparing them to the cultural and legislative environment. We used as an example the project of a new neighborhood in Ispica: it is city and it has to offer more useful range in relation to social differences and it has to get new positive technologies, the space-architectural definition, and the landscape.

In the meantime, some projects of the students of the Architecture Atelier.

These projects analyze the connection between the building and the city, but before we saw some tables pointing to the single dwelling, or the building to the distribution and comfort of its spaces, or how they can introduce natural energy resources such as solar power, wind, and air flowing.

In these projects the buildings define the new boundary of the neighborhood and the city with a new facade in which overlapping patios create spaces that allow to see the sea.

In these projects the buildings redesign a new urban geography, using height differences, the roofs form a new place of terraced landscape that come down slowly

Natural and passive Air-conditioning solution have been introduced on the opening spaces. They are able to modify the internal and external micro climate with the recovery and the review of the shapes and figures in vernacular Arabian architecture. The tatabush is a kind of gallery often found in the houses with patio, the mashubeia is a wall with wood perroquets that divide in two places of different

size, one of them leeward, that help the formation of fresh air currents. They also use shielding to control the solar radiation and the air flows in the staging points, In this projet is possible to change the spaces in the house when the household expands or narrows, thinking about the possibility to add or create living spaces different from the original ones.

They are not definitive answers, but ways of thinking that consider the collective memory and history, and the possibilities given by the present that lead to architectural solutions that are sustainable and environment-related. This is a good architectural good practice.