

How can we rethink urbanism from memory? Can we still continue talking about memory in architecture based on the artifact? Is memory a physical or mental reality? Is it material or immaterial? In architecture, when we speak about memory, we essentially speak of materialized memory. In general terms, for architects, memory is a synonym for palpable and tangible reality. This fact considers neutral and transparent the cognitive processes that are inherent to it. Can we really continue to theorize about memory within the city ignoring the role of these cognitive processes? More than a material manifestation, is not memory essentially a process of production of reality? Have we not just recently acquired that consciousness, when we confronted ourselves with the horizon of reality's dematerialization and with the specter of the subject's "dememorizing"?

These are the structural issues raised.

When thinking about memory, amnesia and urbanism today, we cannot simply look at the urban reality, existing or emerging, without questioning the inherent cognitive methods and try new memorial practices. That is what this exercise tentatively proposes. Firstly, by choosing Venice as the field of action, a paradigmatic urban context of materialized memory, we focus on a sensitive point, revealing the ambivalences of the idea of memory. Secondly, to develop a hypothetical but plausible scenario on Venice Disappearance, we tried to activate the inherent cognitive processes in the operation of memory, combining reality and speculation, representation and imagination, truth and invention. Thirdly, to develop autonomous and independent texts by several intervenients, with intentional differentiated experiences, we propound the practice of dissemination as a programmed possibility of radical activation of memory, methodologically internalizing practices of forgetfulness. The significant aperture allowed by the wording, with its rhizomatic vanishing lines, disables the need for a conclusion...

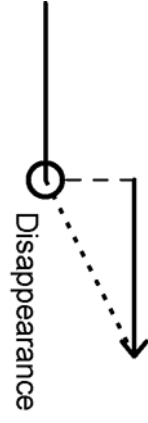
VENICE: REVISITING DISAPPEARANCE

VISION BY Luís Santiago Baptista

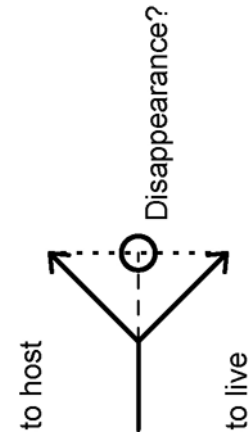
MOURNING BY Pedro Januário Gomes and Pedro Viana

GHOST BY Nuno Messias

SILENCE BY Pedro Ferreira



[1] The deluge is fulfilled by the non-stop actions of subsidence and sea level rising. The city's only option is to depart to the coastline. From this disappearance there is residual trauma. Generally, museums and memorials rise to light upon what is no longer present and accessible.



[2] Tides are artificially recreated. Tourism is transferred to an appendix platform. Venice controls its visits and is returned to the Venetians. This careful unfolding, in hosting and living, does not keep away an eventual catastrophe. It's a firm expression of this possibility.

VISION How can we define visionary architecture today? In general, visionary has often been associated with utopia. If utopia relates us to the ideal domain, etymologically the word means what has no specific place, visionary refers to the capacity of seizing the unknown future through the faculty of vision. Historically, both utopian and visionary characteristics enabled us to think and see prospectively what is not yet reality. But can this relation between utopia and the visionary still be maintained? Looking back to the modern utopias of the twenties – Tony Garnier’s Cité Industrielle, Le Corbusier’s Ville Contemporaine and Ville Radieuse, Ivan Leonidov’s Magnitogorsk, Frank Lloyd Wright’s Broadacre City - or the late modern visions of the sixties and seventies – Yona Friedman’s Mobile City, Constant’s New Babylon, Archigram’s Plug-in City and Instant City, Superstudio’s Supersurface, Archizoom’s No-Stop City - we are led to the conclusion that something is now different. And it is this «something» that qualifies the work presented here. Indeed, the growing visionary production of the present operates on another level on a quite different manner. It seems that today in much of the young architects’ work the line between reality and speculation is somehow blurring. If modern architects, boldly immersed in the wave of progress, have filled this gap with an enormous amount of voluntary ingenuity, the visionary architects of the second half of the century, experiencing the impossibility of an optimistic position facing the horrors of history, bridge that gap with corrosive irony and negativity. Between the incapacity of the first and the impossibility of the second, the visionary experience can only happen by an increasing distance from reality. Visionary here can only mean detachment. And it is this notion that is structurally changing in the recent practice of architecture by the new generations. Intervening in the Venice Laguna does not mean to give up reality. The project can materialise itself as a constructive proposal. In this sense, to be visionary here is to expand the possibilities of reality, to explore the potential of things. So, no matter how strange and improbable the project appears to be, it is carried out within the sphere of pragmatics. We do not need to abandon reality in order to think and develop our own (visionary) ideas. We work them out as if tomorrow the project could start to be naturally built. And this attitude towards the project opens the possibility of exploring, in a positive way, all the visionary material dispersed through history. It activates memory in an operative, not nostalgic, way. In fact, all the visionary experience of the past can be appropriated and reworked within this new framework. And this revaluation of the utopian ideas and projects of the history of the discipline occurs through the neutralization of the ingenuity and negativity long associated with them. The permanent revolution of technology and the latent schizophrenia of society call for that neutralization...

MOURNING From all the reported imagery, literature and other permanent documentation, as from all the memories recorded into every one mind, that are collectively approaching what Venice is and what it represents – its absolute and peculiar scenery – we have come to a point where the idea of Venice disappearing becomes a present and irrefutable hypothesis. If this is a scenario that haunts the very existence of the place as it is known and cherished, it can also be told that the Venice being swept by water imaginary has been a strong magnet for visitors, and, therefore, that Venice being swept by visitors has been having the opposite effect on Venetian population, forcing them to leave their homes.

Venice shared its childhood with the Laguna. They both conform a landscape much characterized by this bond, as conditional parts of the same body. However, the lagoon is slowly suffering from Venice’s presence (affected by disruptive phenomenon such as subsidence and pollution). The instant this range of territorial events is objectively considered and schematically confronted, visiting Venice might just turn out to be a perverse romantic walk during a disastrous acqua alta.

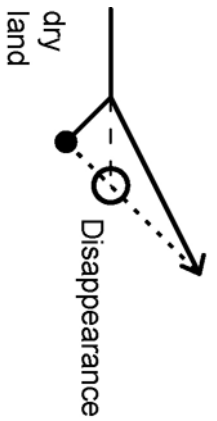
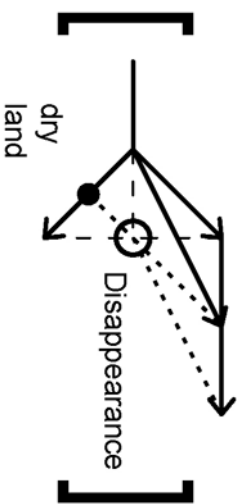
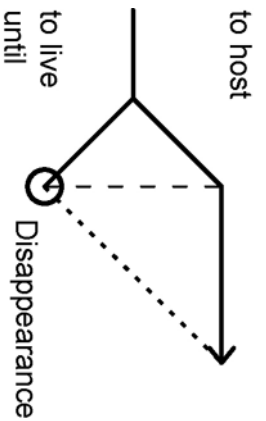
Let us pay a visit to a city that is facing eminent loss. If immediate interpretation is avoided: loss of apparent harmony, heritage issues, personal lament or expectation, etc.; Venice evo-



[4] Imagine three instances abridged to a fourth instance: Tides are artificially recreated; Tourists and Venetians are transferred to a platform covering the Laguna, where Venice can be any city beyond boundaries. Venice and the Laguna remain as artifact, a territorial time-capsule with conditional assessment or open possibility for oblivion.

79

78



[3] The water is radically removed, bringing to light a dry land set. And for the first time, Venice can be any city beyond its boundaries, with nothing else to take care of.

How can we rethink urbanism from memory? Can we still continue talking about memory in architecture based on the artifact? Is memory a physical or mental reality? Is it material or immaterial? In architecture, when we speak about memory, we essentially speak of materialized memory. In general terms, for architects, memory is a synonym for palpable and tangible reality. This fact considers neutral and transparent the cognitive processes that are inherent to it. Can we really continue to theorize about memory within the city ignoring the role of these cognitive processes? More than a material manifestation, is not memory essentially a process of production of reality? Have we not just recently acquired that consciousness, when we confronted ourselves with the horizon of reality's dematerialization and with the specter of the subject's "dememorizing"?

These are the structural issues raised.

When thinking about memory, amnesia and urbanism today, we cannot simply look at the urban reality, existing or emerging, without questioning the inherent cognitive methods and try new memorial practices. That is what this exercise tentatively proposes. Firstly, by choosing Venice as the field of action, a paradigmatic urban context of materialized memory, we focus on a sensitive point, revealing the ambivalences of the idea of memory. Secondly, to develop a hypothetical but plausible scenario on Venice Disappearance, we tried to activate the inherent cognitive processes in the operation of memory, combining reality and speculation, representation and imagination, truth and invention. Thirdly, to develop autonomous and independent texts by several intervenients, with intentional differentiated experiences, we propound the practice of dissemination as a programmed possibility of radical activation of memory, methodologically internalizing practices of forgetfulness. The significant aperture allowed by the wording, with its rhizomatic vanishing lines, disables the need for a conclusion...

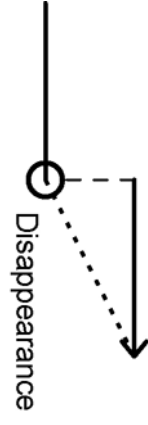
VENICE: REVISITING DISAPPEARANCE

VISION BY Luís Santiago Baptista

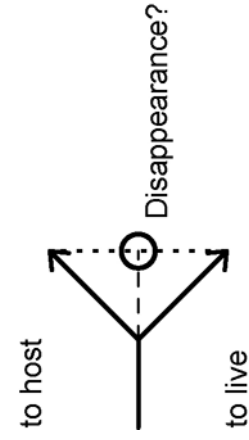
MOURNING BY Pedro Januário Gomes and Pedro Viana

GHOST BY Nuno Messias

SILENCE BY Pedro Ferreira



[1] The deluge is fulfilled by the non-stop actions of subsidence and sea level rising. The city's only option is to depart to the coastline. From this disappearance there is residual trauma. Generally, museums and memorials rise to light upon what is no longer present and accessible.



[2] Tides are artificially recreated. Tourism is transferred to an appendix platform. Venice controls its visits and is returned to the Venetians. This careful unfolding, in hosting and living, does not keep away an eventual catastrophe. It's a firm expression of this possibility.

lutive scenarios might be touching the field of utopian speculation. It is by that way clarified that the product of utopia is reported through memorized moments of an imaginary visitor, a self-proclaimed visionary ghost, presenting space for void and newborn possibilities for the whole world.

Reporting is mourning.

Mourning is a sign of grief for someone's death, or, for this matter, something's. By pronouncing reporting is mourning, it is understood that reporting is the bare thought of something that is lost, a kind of reproduction of reality. In that sense, urbanism posture on Venice facing eminent loss is the bare act of not interrupting this mourning ritual. And so, by means of the testimonial report on this utopian realm in eminent loss, Venice and the Laguna develop in permanent urbanism. If the isolated action of urbanism could conjure a strategically aimed shot directed to a specific result, on the other hand in permanent would be referring to the assumption that that same action is never conclusive. The only actual conclusion could be that in permanent urbanism evokes an embarrassment: although urbanism never really accurately comes in contact with its proposed target, still it never ceases to reproduce as a constant exercise.

The multiple mourning Venice scenarios illustrate the recurrent question: what to do now. This urge for decision, for an ending – this call for sacrifice – forces urbanism to work a permanent calamity, constantly turning over to its starting viewpoint, the one where Venice is being swept. But this is also the point where a new order of sense becomes possible.

Between reporting and deciding, Venice evolves in permanent urbanism, the continuous performance of disaster.

GHOST Casanova's Ghost We can draw multiple lines from the character onto the city: a person-building a ruin:

topographer of both mourn and luxury: ghost

this particular one by the way that defines the limits of seduction: not less than the city propels the act of receiving to paroxysm: host taking risk like oneself exposed to a virus exhibiting the theatricality of disease: being embodied by its uniqueness: pledge: the guest

When water turns to fire

Water plays the role of frame and at the same time is a mechanism of mirroring: by this particular circumstance we can say that the foundation of Venice relies on short-circuit identity: produces strong images that fulfil its own mythology: it's a counterpoint that drives the imagery through a realm of disappearance

both Flood and Desert phantasmagoria resonate this crisis of permanence

what happens when water overwhelms the imprint of the city: when it dries: does the Laguna hydraulics simulate memory's process

I'll insert here an impression taken from Henri Bergson's: Matter and Memory He proposes a scheme: in order to explain how past memories are linked with present: consisting on an inverted cone SAB: the vertex S touches the plan P

SAB represents the accumulated memory: AB my memories settled on the past immobile: S the present image of my body: P my updated representation of the universe mobile

For what concerns us I'll attribute Venice to SAB and the Laguna to P: it is implicit the role of action to keep the bond between both instances: if the city paralyzes AB and S turn concomitant in the same point: an amnesiac point

Shipwrecked

The Oracle

In all four images the Tower captives our glance: creates a rupture and in a way opens a metaphorical plan: and old blind Tiresias announcing tragedy: a building-person

Is the final challenge of urbanism to build time rather than build space

SILENCE

74

75

To stand at one's door and call - just visiting, permanently just visiting, a gerund visit because it is always at that point, we could say stopped but in the act of visiting – unvoicing as in a suspension, exactly at the moment before devoicing the voice, the blown voice (at this point this would be the speech) – someone speaks not speaking – just before any sound could breach the silence. And silence could never be the absence of sound, it is to listen or to give ear – to offer silence, to guest a host – waiting. Silence would then be the open possibility or availability to hear, to receive. This single act (or could we say unact, because it is also the negation of action with the purpose of hearing and hosting the other) stands itself as the way between guest and host, and this is done by means of the voice, the blown voice, from one to the other, at a first instance from mouth to ear, or by other means whatever they are. Sometimes it moves as a litany – le souffleur – going one way only, breaching silence, death or just the invisible, nowhere reaching and someplace coming. Sometimes coming and going as an antiphony, alternate and responsively, over against voice. And it's because of the separation – or the sacred – the elemental condition of the two, because there are two and the need to reconnect and try to establish a relation or to relate them. And this being always an univocal condition: between two living beings, between a living and a dead, within the elemental condition of theatre (the place for viewing), within the seen and the scene, within the relation with the past – for instance the notion of history -, and always in relation with disappearance and inexistence. And inexistence could be the existence within one, and so the voice of the other inexistent within this one living (existing) – this could touch the notion of memory.

Univocity as allowance to die, or allowing silence to become the host – welcoming not welcoming. The open possibility for the silenced host to receive, silence as the vocation of a host. An inexistence vocation instead of the certainty of disappearance. ➡