THE URBAN DIMENSION OF ARCHITECTURE:
REM KOOLHAAS, ALDO VAN EYCK AND VITTORIO GREGOTTI,
IN LIGHT OF THE CITY

by
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ABSTRACT

The city is central to many discourses on architecture and to the making
of architecture in general. This thesis explores the interrelation between
architecture and the city in Europe. Through analysis of recent projects I
examine and evaluate the role of the city in the making of architecture.

The city is a collective artifact. In the city, the architect is confronted with
present-day social, economic and cultural realities, with patterns of
social and productive organization of the past and with the institution of
architecture and the history of that institution. The commitment of the
architect to the city, makes him an active participant in "the world". In the
city the architect constructs a reality in confrontation with reality at large.
The city constitutes a medium, a middle ground between the architect
and reality.

Through the analysis of works by Koolhaas, Van Eyck and Gregotti some
of the issues described above are illuminated. For each of these
architects I analyze an urban project and an architectural project. In the
first analysis I evaluate the contribution of the architect to the continuous
remaking of the city. In the second analysis I examine the relation of the
architectural project with the city and the definition of "architecture" in
relation to the city.

Thesis supervisor: Julian Beinart
Title: Professor of Architecture

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INTRODUCTION

The title of this thesis, "the Urban Dimension of Architecture", implies that I will be looking at the city from the perspective of architecture. My intention is to examine architecture within the framework of the city as a whole. I am interested in the contribution of architecture to the continuous reconstruction of the city, and the constant redefinition of architecture through that process.

With this seemingly general statement some important decisions have already been made. Opposed to this dialectical notion,we find architecture and urbanism defined as two strictly separate disciplines. On one side we find an architecture defined in its own terms, on the other, an architecture transparent to planning.

In the first of these two conceptions architecture remains within the limits of its own discipline. Urban problems are solved theoretically and within the architectural field. In the second conception, architecture is transparent to conditions beyond itself. Planning procedures and processes, in line with market forces determine the form of the city. Planning uses architecture merely as a means to provide visual impressions and to communicate the basics of the plan.

Permanence and monumentality in the first approach stand against pure program in the second. I contend that these are false alternatives. I am interested here in an architecture that aims at solving problems that arise as a result of a continuous engagement with the city. The engagement of architecture with the city makes architecture part of a larger condition. In the city the architect is confronted with the social, economic and cultural realities of planning today, with patterns of social and productive organization of the past and with the institution of architecture and the history of that institution.

One could argue that the dialectic engagement of architecture with the city is crucial to architecture if it wants to remain an active participant in the making of the world. In the absence of this dialogue architecture runs the risk of becoming rhetorical and purely aesthetical. If architecture wants to contribute to the solution of the problems posed by the city it needs to transform the techniques of its discipline. In its confrontation with the city, architecture renews itself.

KOOLHAAS, VAN EYCK AND GREGOTTI

For Koolhaas, Van Eyck and Gregotti problems concerning the city constitute design material for the architectural project. Each of these architects relates to a very different discourse. It is not my intention to place these architects in relation to their intellectual environments. Rather, I hope to illuminate the problem I described above. The vector guiding this research is an interest in my own architectural work in the problem of building in the city. In the thesis I will develop an argument which I will continuously refine in relation to the analysis. My intention is to uncover some of the layers of the interrelation between architecture and the city by establishing a comparative framework between the architects mentioned above.

In the next chapters, I will examine the work of Koolhaas, Van Eyck and Gregotti. After briefly touching upon the discourses to which they relate and react, I will analyze an urban project in which the problems posed by the city are directly faced. My analysis will focus on the general organization of the project. How does it structure the environment? What are the logistics that operate in structuring and ordering the program? In a second section I will dwell on the interrelation of architecture and the urban context at the level of the architectural project. I will analyze a

building within an urban setting. How does the building address the city? Which continuities and discontinuities are established with the city?
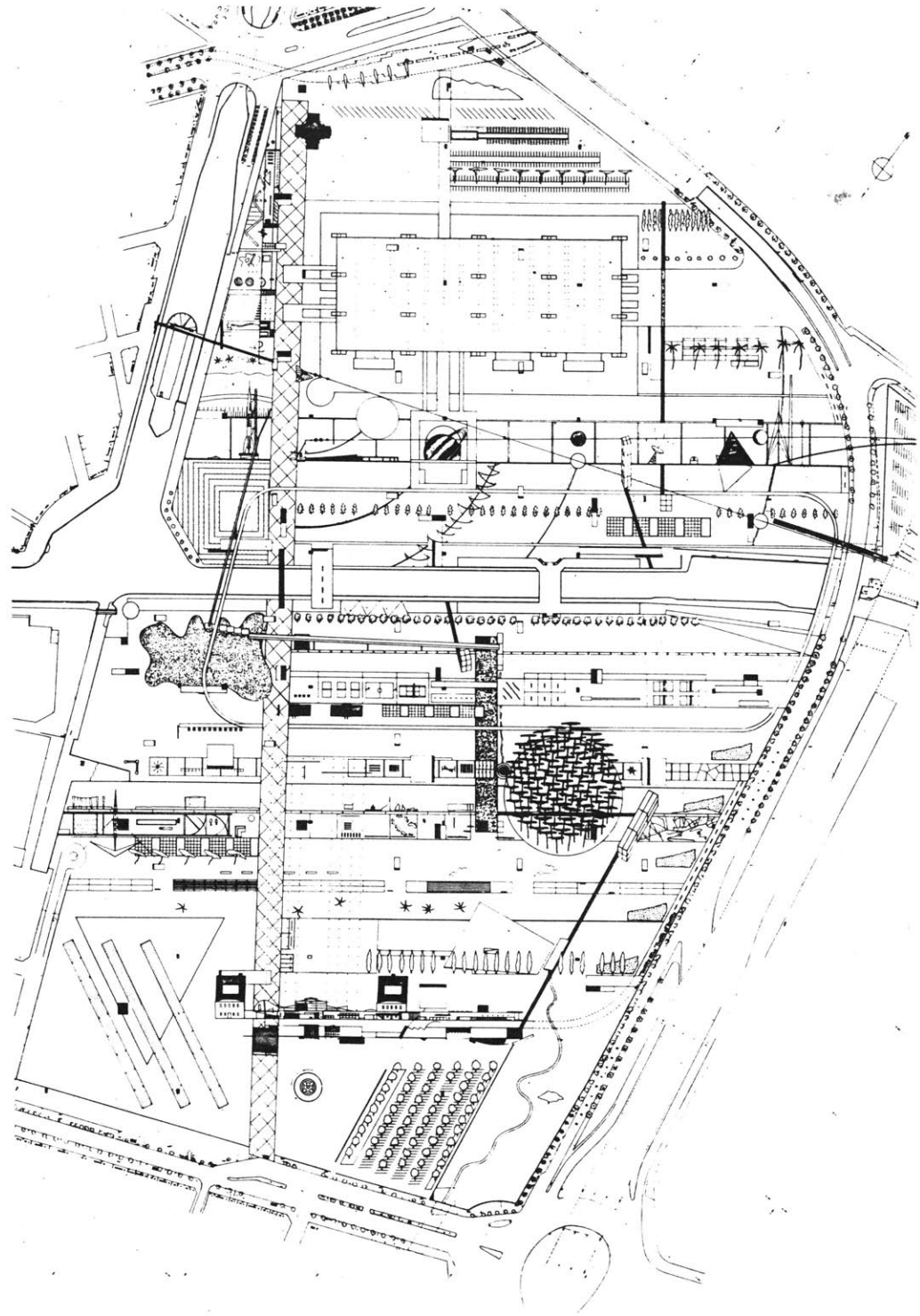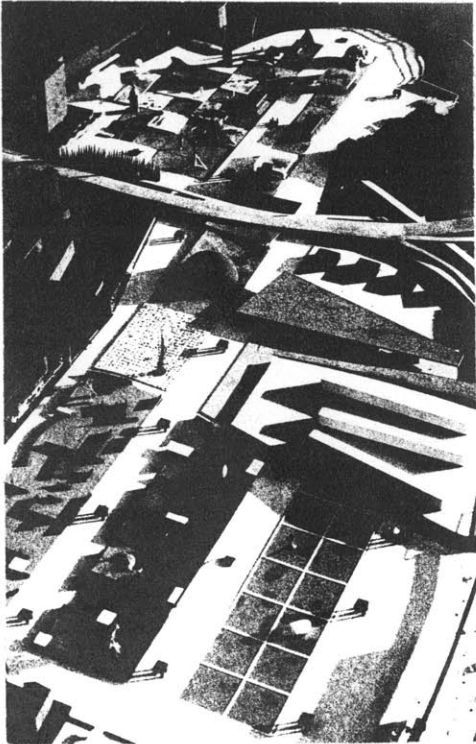
REM KOOLHAAS

1.1. THE CITY

"In Europe the insistence - during the seventies - on the importance of the historical center and the urban fabric and the blanket critique of the whole post-war period led to the decline and eventual disappearance of an entire profession, that of planning: that critical form of imagination which pretends - in spite of the obvious difficulties - to look forward, anticipate and organize needs before they become desperate. In this vacuum it was exciting to rediscover planning through projects such as Park de la Villette (1982), World Exposition (1983), Melun Senart (1987),in which questions beyond the strict domain of architecture could be initiated and developed."(1)

Rem Koolhaas makes a plea for the rediscovery of the profession of architect-planner. He calls on architects not to limit themselves merely to the architectural project and face the larger realities of the contemporary city. Koolhaas argues for the restoration of the authority of the architectural profession. He remarks that architects have lost confidence in themselves and in their means. Polemically he states:"The world longs for the architect-thinker....The world is ready for the visionary architect."(2)

In the last few years, Koolhaas and his group OMA (the Office for Metropolitan Architecture) developed

a series of schemes for large urban projects in which they were directly confronted with problems of planning and the city. Through this analysis, I hope to achieve an understanding of the decision framework that underpins these urban projects.

On first sight, architecture - as it is conventionally defined - appears to be absent in the general organization of these projects. Koolhaas' urban schemes are constellations of fragments. On one level, the architect creates autonomous and exceptional architectural objects. On another level, he develops systems and networks in which architecture seems to have no role. I contend that this is just a first hand observation. Koolhaas does not strictly separate the two respective disciplines. In the next section, I will inquire into and analyze Koolhaas' planning operations. Afterwards, I will examine his architectural procedures.

PLANNING

Recurrent in OMA's urban proposals is the division of the program into separate activities and the use of the grid. The following examples illustrate these organizational concepts.

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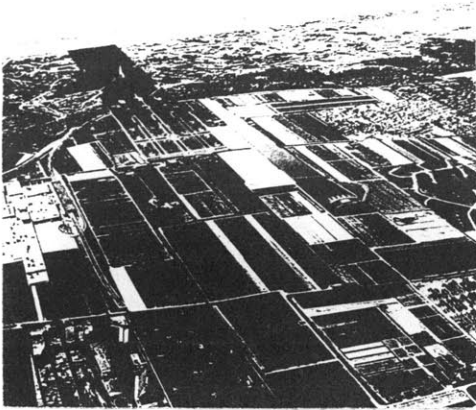
Holland 2050

Recently, a number of Dutch design professionals were commissioned to project their visions for the distant future of the Randstad - the central part of the Netherlands. In Koolhaas' scheme the polder grid dominates the landscape. It becomes the ordering device for a new series of peripheral developments.

Paris World Exposition

Koolhaas divides the terrain of the exhibition into equal parcels, one for each country. "Every country could do what it wanted - for example, nothing. Poor countries could build a stand, and rich countries a flashy jewel."(3)
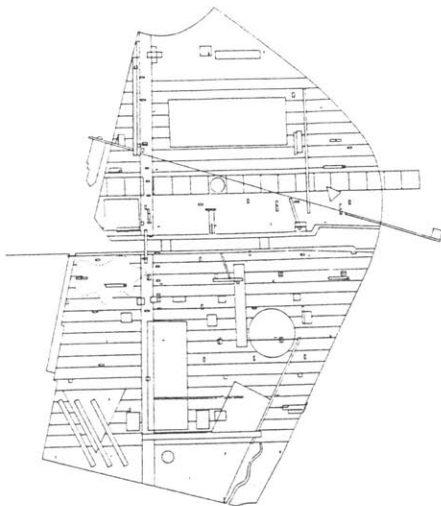
La Villette

OMA's project for the La Villette competition is conceived as a process rather than a definitive design. Koolhaas proposes a series of operations to distribute the extensive and diverse activities on the site. The band grid is the major ordering device.

Koolhaas' diagrammatic analysis of the program, and schematic analysis of the site bear resemblance to the analytical methods of modernism. The deductive rationale of modern city-planning is most clearly applied in the paradigm of the functional city. CIAM divided city planning into categories which could be isolated
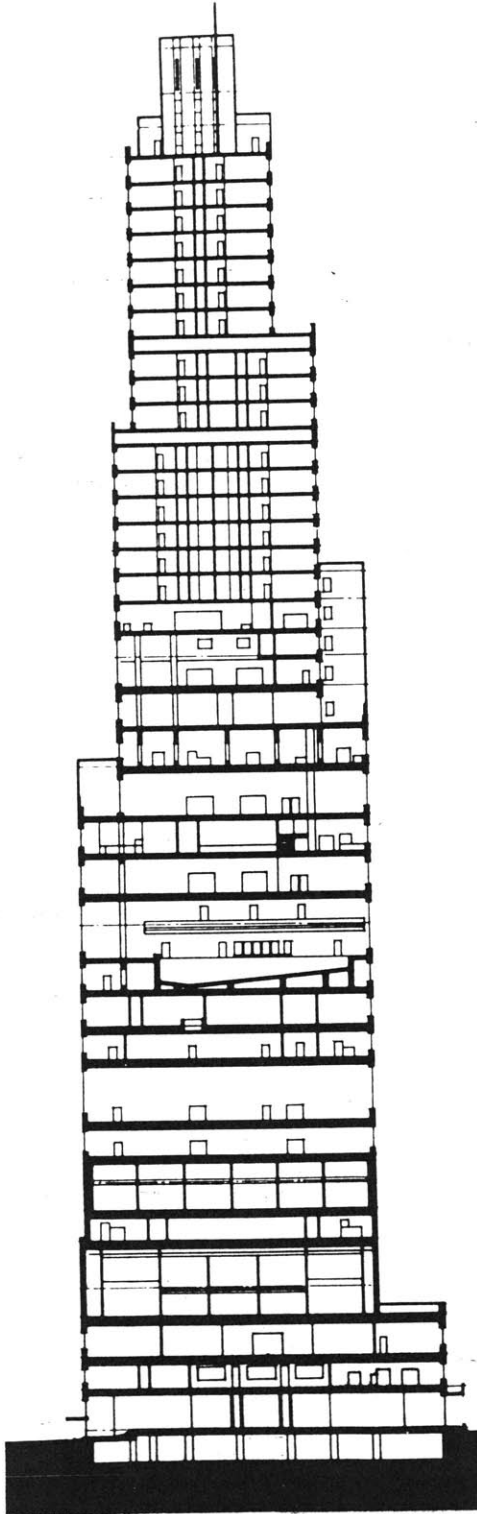
and elaborated upon individually: living, working, leisure and transportation. In these scientific methodologies, thorough analysis is the mandatory precedent for design. The objective research programmes of CIAM focussed on common problems, abstracted from particular situations.

Koolhaas has other intentions. The incongruity and diversity of urban programmes and activities justify the use of the grid. Koolhaas does not aim to derive common denominators from complex programs. He does not establish objective or scientific methods to tackle diverse realities. Rather, the division procedure is a device that allows conflicting realities to coexist. "By means of reconstruction and deconstruction the city becomes an archipel of architectural islands, a post-architectural landscape. The metropolis can attain a coherence - not a homogeneous composition - in the best conditions a system of fragments - of multiple realities - of which historical structures can be part."(4)

More than relying on the methodologies and ideologies of modern city planning, Koolhaas' procedures are based on readings of present-day realities, for example New York. Koolhaas writes a retroactive manifest for the city in his book "Delirious New York". The "Archipel theory" constitutes his interpretation of the city. "Each block

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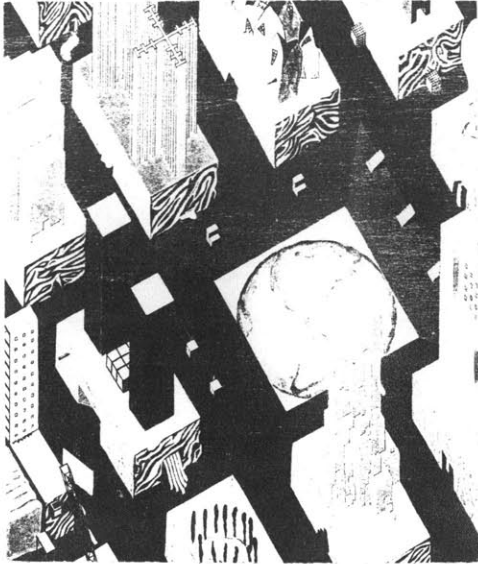
block is an island, a mini state with its own reality, its own laws, and purposes. The city is not based on coherence, each piece has its own formal and ideological identity."(5) In a fictive project named "the city of the captive globe", Koolhaas enigmatically re-creates New York. "The city is an arena of competing ideologies, in which all conceptions of harmony and composition are considered a thing of the past - and where the whole is an entity exactly to the extent that each part is different from every other."(6)

In short, common to all these urban projects is the separation of programmatic components. The process of division and separation is not based on objective criteria. Koolhaas never explicitly states his methods and procedures. Every task offers the opportunity to test new design concepts and strategies. Architecture is not absent from Koolhaas planning schemes. The procedures through which he retrieves models and concepts from an existing reservoir of ideas and realities is typically architectural. Koolhaas does not abandon the drawing board.

ARCHITECTURE

In this section I will elaborate on Koolhaas' architectural procedures. Here I would like to concentrate on the distribution of architectural elements within the paradigms and models

described above. Koolhaas' projects are not just assemblages of activities. He establishes precise relationships and connections between the programmatic components. I will use Koolhaas' entry for the La Villette competition as a case-study.
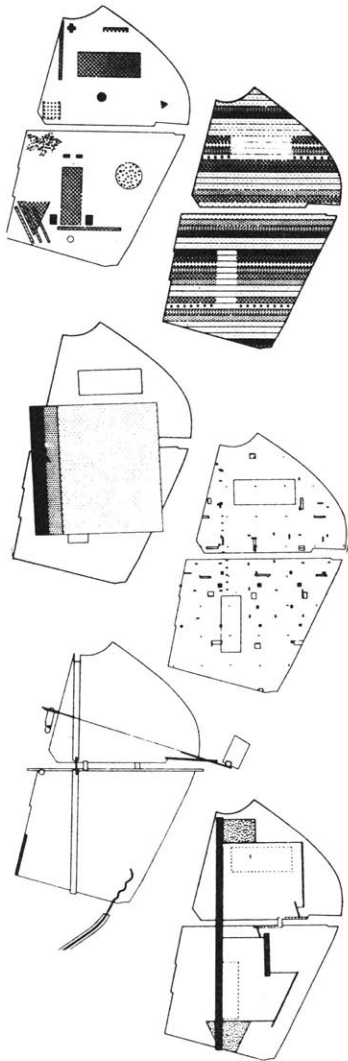
According to Koolhaas the diversity and instability of the program for the park made it impossible to propose a "physical" design. Instead he prescribed a series of rules for a process that might eventually lead to a design. The major programmatic components are distributed in horizontal bands on the site. On this band-grid Koolhaas projects three other layers, each with a distinctive logic.
1. Recurrent facilities - kiosks, playgrounds, barbecue spots - are distributed mathematically according to different point grids.
2. A few large architectural elements are added in counterbalance to the large elements present on the site: the round forest, the ziggurat.
3. The different activities are connected by a system of circulation. The boulevard connects the main entrances. The Promenade is a casual path along which concentrations of activities are assembled.

OMA created a possible design to illustrate these procedures. This design-proposal will be the basis of my analysis. I will unravel the framework in which the design decisions are made.

Different objects trouves' are placed in a band grid. There are no substantial relations between the these elements. Koolhaas plunges into the non-designed world of appearances. On the site we find among others, the Ariane rocket, Saturnus and an antenna forest. These elements are not distributed randomly. They are carefully placed in a dynamic relation to one another.

Koolhaas' procedures are not based on synchronisms of interrelated orders of form, but on pictorial and "realistic" associations. Different elements are combined in an almost cinematographic way. Koolhaas' fictional and narrative definition of architecture recalls the urban science-fiction of Archigram. Architects such as Peter Cook and Ron Herron gave free reign to the imagination and created purely fictional worlds. In comparison, OMA's work is more directed towards the collage of fragments of "real life" experiences. Koolhaas displaces these fragments and projects them into new surroundings. Surrealists and Dadaists constructed their worlds in a similar manner. Just as in the techniques of collage and photomontage Koolhaas extracts new and specific meanings from the confrontation of autonomous fragments. In comparison to these artist's work, Koolhaas architectural work has an extra dimension. The architect has a more direct access to "reality" through the mediation of the program. The architectural plan constitutes the ground on
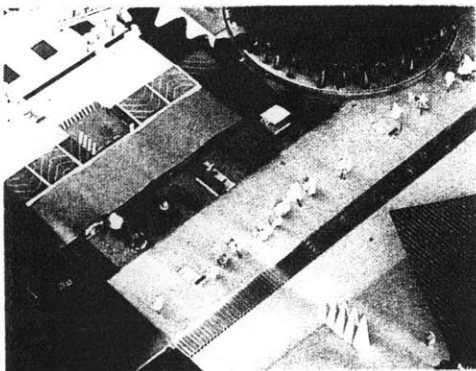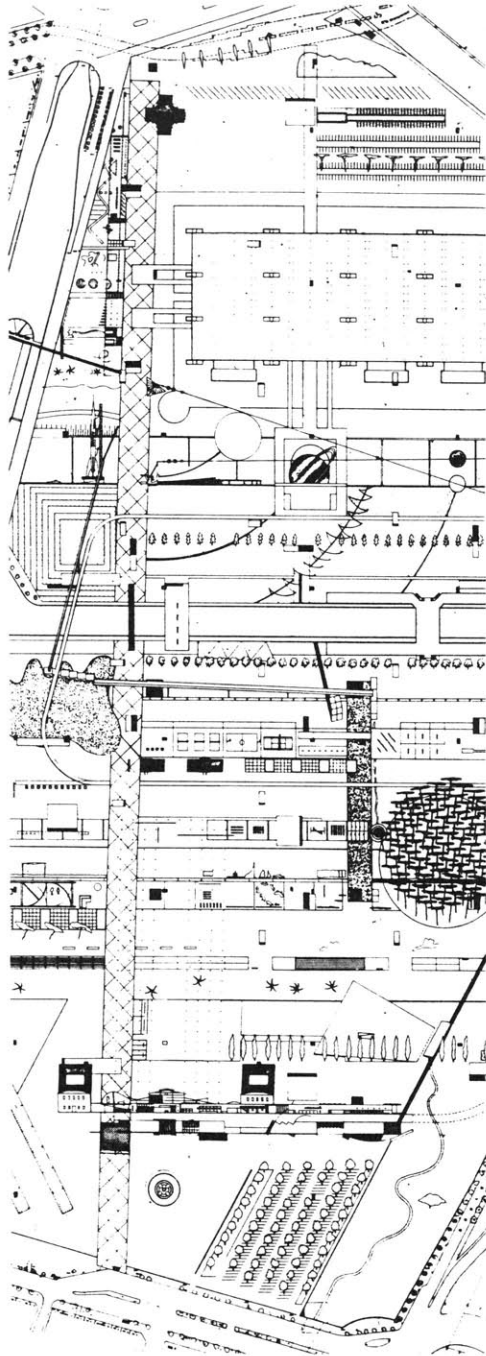
which the program, and by extension reality, can be re-organized. In Delirious New York Koolhaas quotes the New York architect Raymond Hood to make this point, "The plan is of primary importance, because on the floor are performed all the activities of the human occupants."(7) According to Koolhaas this statement suggests a functional architecture preoccupied with the lay out of human activities on the ground "in unprecedented juxtapositions and catalytic combination."(8)

Koolhaas transforms the program into a surrealist narrative with the specific aim to engender conflicts between activities and to defamiliarize the audience's reading of architecture.

Koolhaas creates myths about the metropolis and the metropolitan condition. His projects refer to the uncertainties of the metropolitan existence. "Through the associative power of psychoanalytical methods, OMA creates an allegorical architectural ensemble as a new continuum, which represents the urban phenomena, with all its neuroses, aspirations and phobias, its expectations and acts of aggression in terms of a detailed architectural fiction."(9)

1.2. THE PROJECT IN RELATION TO THE CITY

After spending nine years in the United States, Koolhaas returned to Europe. At that time his book, Delirious New York, and his projects for New York, had received broad attention in Europe. Koolhaas entered the architectural scene by polemically contrasting his intentions and principles to the established positions.

His first European project, the Parliament in The Hague, is accompanied by a text in which he makes up testaments to "Rationalism" (Rossi and Krier), "Contextualism" (Rowe and Sterling) and "Humanism" (Van Eyck and Herzberger). He states, "The reason I came back was to show that there is another potential now for the European city."(10) Koolhaas' main agenda was the insertion of modern architecture into the historical city. "Aspects of modernism can be made to co-exist with the historical core. Only a new urbanism that abandons pretensions of harmony and overall coherence, can turn the tensions and contradictions that tear the historical city apart -into a new quality. My projects celebrate the end of sentimentality."(11)

Just as the texts, OMA's first buildings in Europe were polemical statements. Projects such as the entries for the IBA competition in Berlin reflect disciplinary discourses and arguments rather than

aiming to solve particular problems in the best possible ways. These projects were, rightly so, not built. As a result, Koolhaas became a well respected "paper" architect. Over the last few years, his eagerness to build made him more attentive towards the pragmatic and constructive aspects of architecture and the particular conditions that surround the design task.

CITY HALL THE HAGUE

In 1986 OMA was commissioned to participate in a competition for a new City Hall in The Hague. The jury selected Koolhaas as the winner of the competition. Yet, the City Council asked Meier to develop his project for construction.

Koolhaas engages the conditions that surround the City Hall project in the design process. He retrieves design materials from "The Hague", the pragmatics of the construction and the program. In the next sections I will elaborate on these factors in more detail.

THE HAGUE

The Hague is both a residential city and the administrative capital of the Netherlands. The conflicts resulting from this double status are visually evident in the city. Motorway connections,

large parking garages and huge office towers confront residential neighborhoods.

The competition for the City Hall embodies this problem very directly. The brief required the architects to incorporate accommodations for both the city administration and two state departments in the design. The brief also explicitly referred to the City Hall as a link between the newer administrative city and The Hague's historical center. The project is situated in a location where the two conditions confront each other. The site is bordered by row houses, an old chapel, a backyard, a razed terrain that bears witness to the operations of the 1960's, high rise buildings such as the Department of Justice and Interior Affairs,

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the Royal Library, parking garages and large apartment blocks.
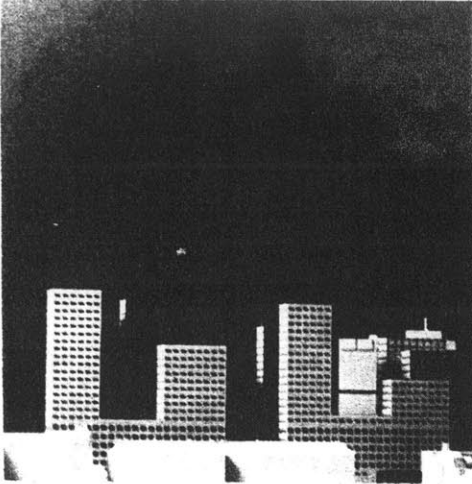
Koolhaas' building confronts, rather than mediates, the two realities. His City Hall is a highly individual building and does not belong to either one. Koolhaas does not attempt to reconcile or solve the conflicts between these two structures, nor does he negate them. His project relates demonstratively to both contexts: The north facade, towards the old city, is clad with stone, the south facade has a stainless steel frame in a larger grid.
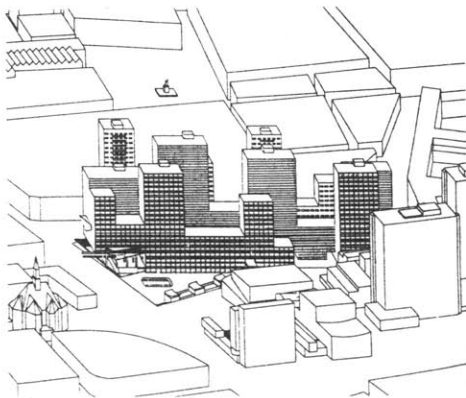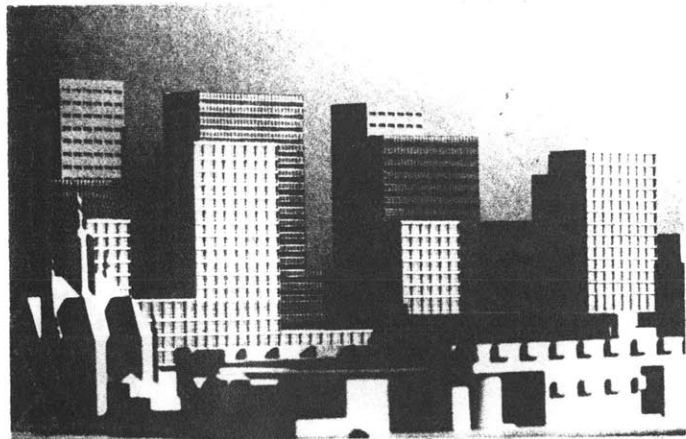

The division of the built volume into individualized planes represses the reading of the building as a volume in relation to the surrounding physical space. Koolhaas created a "cardboard" building that competes with the city on the level of images and signs. He opposes the concept of the massive and monumental building that relates structurally to the city.

PRAGMATISM

The City Hall is a large slab of curtain wall offices appearing as a composite of three vertical layers each with an asymmetrical and irregular outline. Koolhaas justifies the use of the slabs: "The project can go up in a mere twenty four months and will be incredibly cheap."(12) It is hard to believe that costs were the main motivation for selecting the slab. The expression of cheapness that goes along with this type of building is an important factor in Koolhaas' decision. The building reflects the conditions of its own materialization through the association of metaphors.

THE INSTITUTION

Koolhaas' City Hall is a large office complex, which describes the realities of governmenental institutions. Embodied in the City Hall's skyline is the image of finance and bureaucracy.
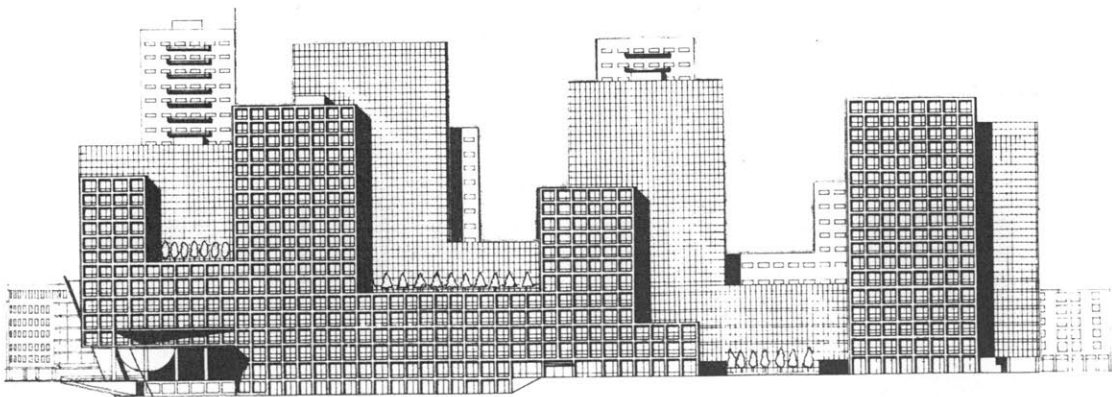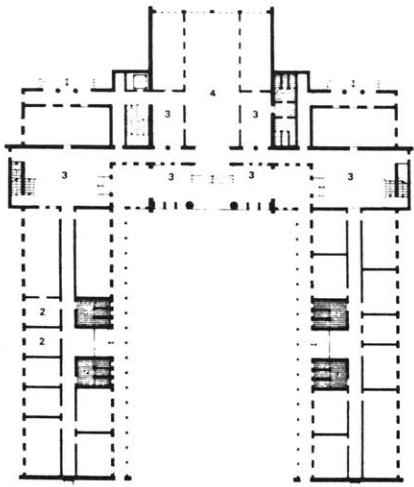
The recently completed Town Hall of Aldo Rossi for a North Italian Town manifests itself in the public realm through permanence and monumentality. For Koolhaas the realities of the governmental institution today have nothing in common with the tradition to which Rossi's building refers.

CONTEXTUALISM

Koolhaas' projects get their power through a dialogue with their context. His projects acquire meaning through juxtaposition of fundamentally heterogeneous building types, shapes, textures or materials. Elements are placed in intense relationships with their contexts. Context and project mutually reinforce each other. His drawings illustrate this procedure. Koolhaas perceptually contrast the project and the existing. He forces the observer to experience the existing structures in

Façade est
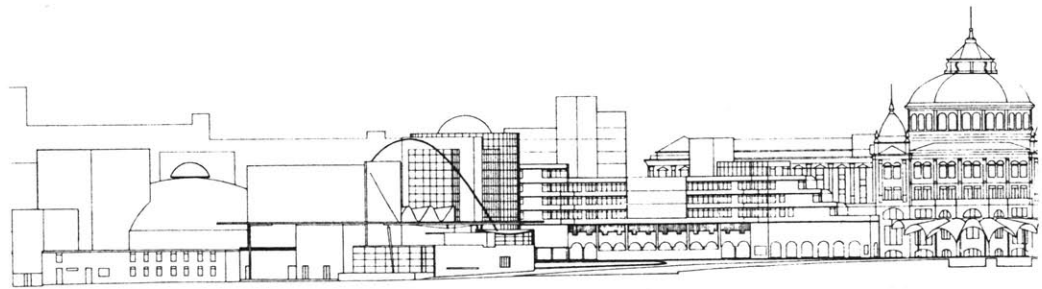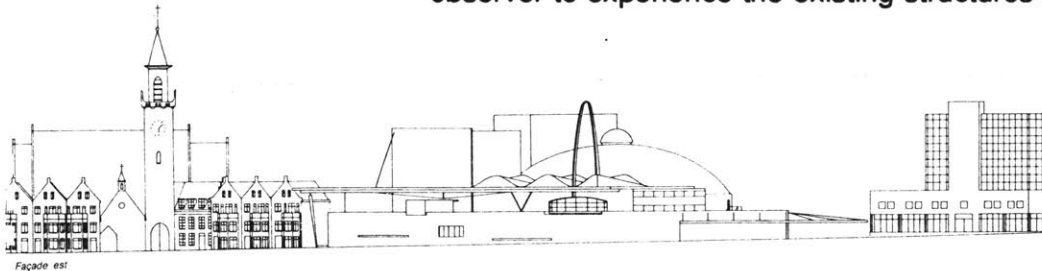
light of the new building; as metaphoric, metaphysical images that refer to worlds latent in the mind. Through contrasts and distortions, Koolhaas challenges the observer's expectations and makes him see the old in new ways. "Titles such as 'The City of the Captive globe' or 'Dream of Liberty' or, 'Welfare Palace Hotel' optimistically convey a sensitive, almost painful reception of the richness of historical forms."(13)

1.3. CONCLUSION

Koolhaas does not aim to establish "structural totalities" at the level of the city. Instead he decomposes the city into separate entities and recomposes them through architectural operations. He singles out elements which he encounters in the reality of the project and classifies them in a concept. The urban context, the requirements of the program and the budget constitute factual information, but they first have to be placed in a conceptual relationship to each other before the architect is able to design with them. Koolhaas re-activates data after a process of interpretation by ordering them into narratives which aim to shock common perception.

Koolhaas' effort is not to single out the ills of contemporary cities, nor to propose solutions for their cure. His aim is not to make long term decision about the city and the environment. Instead OMA's projects reflect the status-quo of cities and society. Koolhaas' plea for the rediscovery of the profession of the architect planner is a disciplinary polemic. Koolhaas uses traditional means and media of architecture throughout the design process. He develops a new representational tactic rather than a new paradigm which is structurally determined by conditions of the city.

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(11) Rem Koolhaas, "Maaskantprijs... , op. cit.

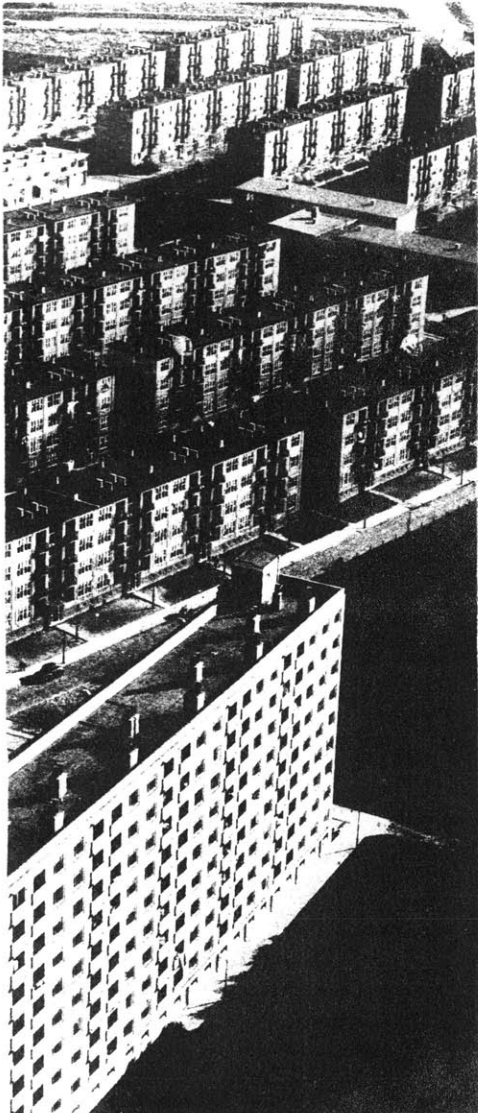(12) Janet Abrams, op. cit.

(13) Volker Fischer, op. cit.
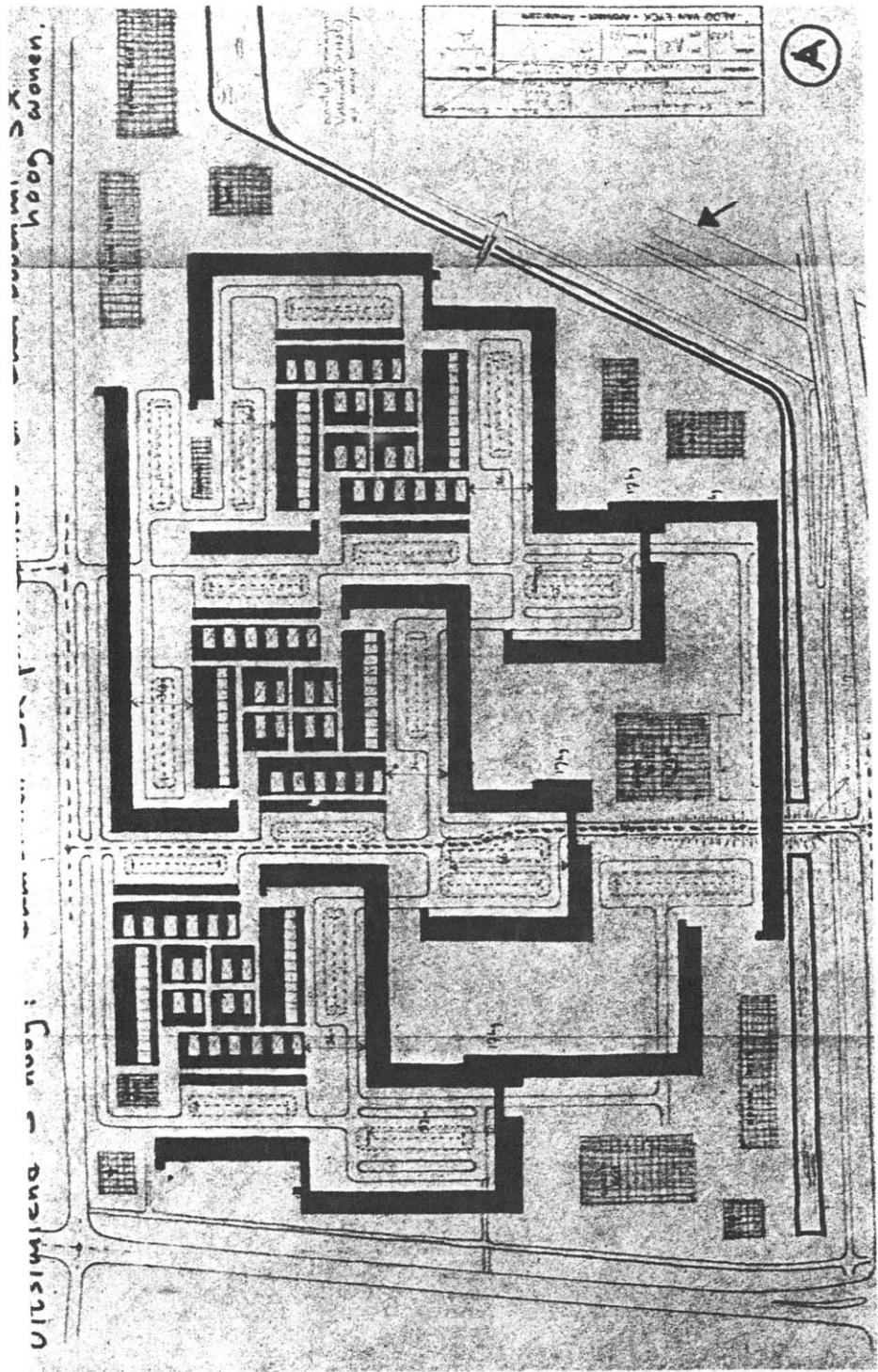
ALDO VAN EYCK

2.1. THE CITY

"The architect-urbanist is one of the few people who, so far, has not been totally isolated and sterilized by specialization - it is in the nature of his work that he cannot be. There are two developments possible, that we shall cease to exist and fall back into the undefined chaos of contemporary life, or that we shall rediscover and transform the particular techniques which identify us as differentiated and therefore active individuals within the community. We are primarily concerned with problems of form and we need, immediately, to develop techniques which enable us to transform our experience as social beings into the plastic expression of architect-urbanists."(1)

At the end of the '50's Van Eyck, Bakema, The Smithsons and others - who would later form Team X - developed alternatives to the planning conceptions of the functional city. These architects rejected the analytical-scientific approach to the city implied in the Athens Charter and propagated a new way of thinking, a new consciousness. CIAM divided town planning into categories which could be isolated and elaborated upon individually. Their quantative approach provided optimal models which could be multiplied, irrespective of particular situations. For the Team X architects this approach proved to be incorrect and reductive: man was lost! They replaced the rational analytical methods

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INVOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION		
VERY LITTLE IN COMMON	house	NEIGHBOURS
ONE CONFIDANT	street	NODDING ACQUAINTANCE
WORK ASSOCIATES	district	RECOGNITION
VERY MANY LIKE MINDS	city	NATIONALITY
VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION		

implicit in the CIAM doctrines with a new synthetic, imaginative thinking.

More than rejecting the ideas of the modern architects, they repudiated the dull and monotonous housing-projects that were built after the war and the bureaucratic procedures that produced them. The separation of the functions was applied after the war in a very literal way. The scheme of the functional city proved to be an easy model for the administration for purely technical interventions in the city. The splitting up of the functions of the city was accompanied by a similar split in the architectural profession with the town planner breaking away from the architect. The Team X architects reacted against the subjugation of architecture to different specialized disciplines. For them the architect needed to regain a central role in the total process of design and transformation of the environment.

Team X proposed a more richly nuanced approach which could deal with the environment in its total complexity. For Team X the human environment constitutes a complex set of relationships established in space and time. They replaced the functional organization of CIAM (working, living, leisure and circulation) by one based on human association: house - street - district - city. Each of these levels of association needs to express a recognizable identity. The different members of

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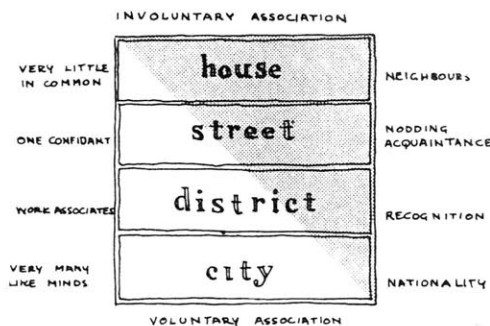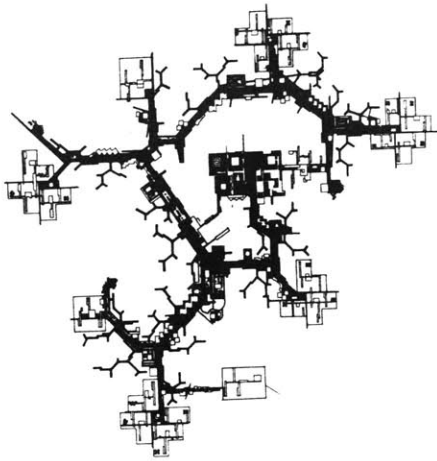
Team X each developed their own spatial interpretation of the patterns of association. Some of the best known examples include the urban patterns of the Smithsons, the "democratic metaphors" of Bakema, and the flexible structures of Candelis, Josic and Woods.

THE CITY AS A COUTERFORM FOR SOCIETY
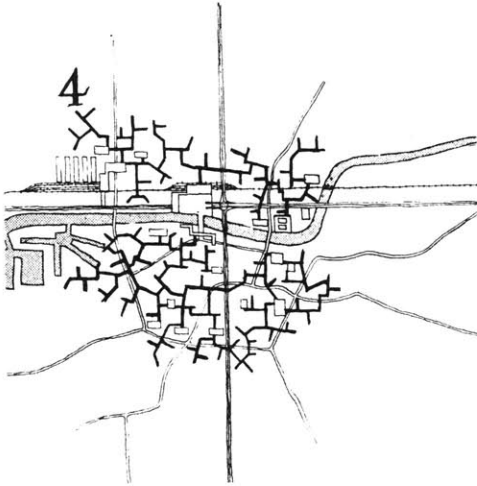
In this section I will analyze some of the townplans which Van Eyck developed during the '50's and '60's. Van Eyck creates both architecture and the city from amalgamations of local decisions. The relationship between the human being and the artifact is essential to Van Eyck. "Space has no room, time not a moment for man. He is excluded. In order to include him - help his homecoming - he must be gathered in their meaning. Whatever space and time mean, place and occasion mean more. For space in the image of man is occasion. Today space and what it should coincide with in order to become 'place' - man at home with himself - are lost. Both search for the same place, but cannot find it. Provide that place."(2)

Place-making is only one side of the dialectic between architecture and the city. It does not provide an explanation for the role of architecture in the construction of the city as an entity. In this section, I will analyze the structure that underlies Van Eyck's urban projects. The organizational

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concept of these projects can best be understood in light of the two dominant paradigms against which he reacts.

The classical model

In traditional monumentality and composition, "place" is separated from the world to affirm existing power relations. In opposition to the classical cannon Van Eyck visualizes an non-hierarchical concept of the built environment and of society.

The modern paradigm

In modern conceptions, very often identity is lost in multiplication of the same elements in endless series. In opposition to the neutrality of form in modern serial techniques, Van Eyck proposes the differentiation of place.
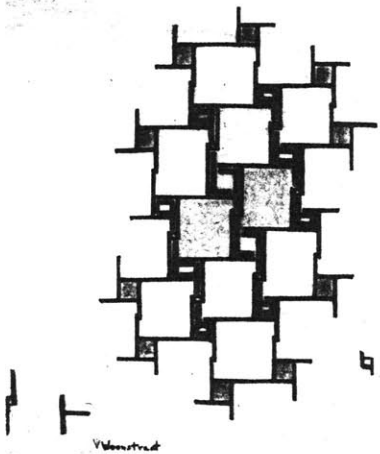
Van Eyck's urban projects are polycentric; he creates a network of distinct places. In his work, he establishes a relationship between the smallest part of a building and the whole city. Both are part of the same order; part and whole are simultaneously expressed. Van Eyck formalized this procedure in the "configurative process". The configurative process splits the built environment into levels; starting from a piece of furniture up to the city. Every level receives an own identity expressed in its configuration. Every level constitutes a clearly perceivable whole. The levels

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are not independent, but are interwoven and affirm each other. The identity of parts is not lost in multiplication as in modern serial techniques, but is strengthened in the total figure.
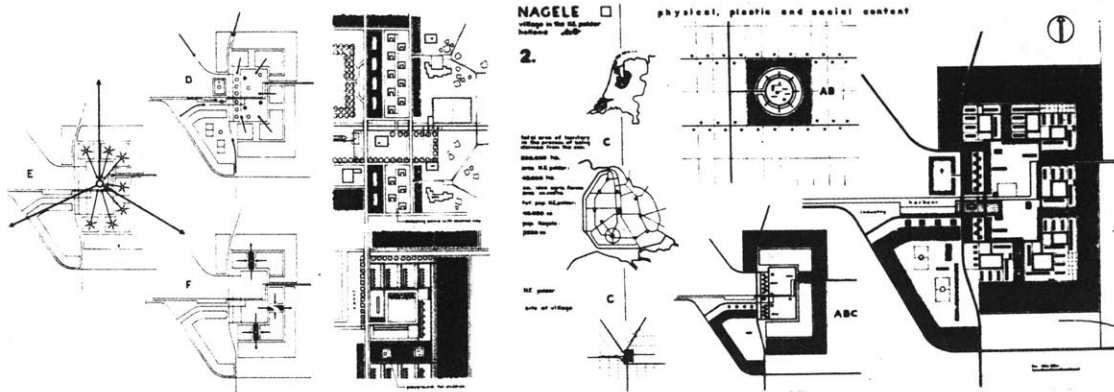
The townplan for Nagele - a new village in the polders - illustrates the configurative process. The center of the village is a large green, a void, in which the communal activities such as schools and churches are grouped. In contrast to prevailing village forms, the center and the housing neighborhoods are developed simultaneously. The entire village is the expression of unity. The three levels: house, neighborhood and village are not connected in a hierarchical chain, but are interwoven.

The plan for Buikslotermeer in Amsterdam is developed through similar operations. The sketches illustrate the intention of the architect to develop an order out of the smallest unit. Single family houses are combined in small identifiable

groups. In a later stage of the design process, Van Eyck introduces large housing-slabs which identify the neighborhoods. The towers articulate the quarter.
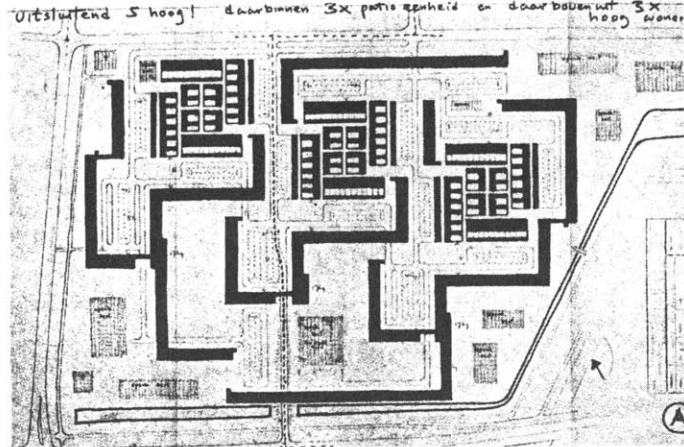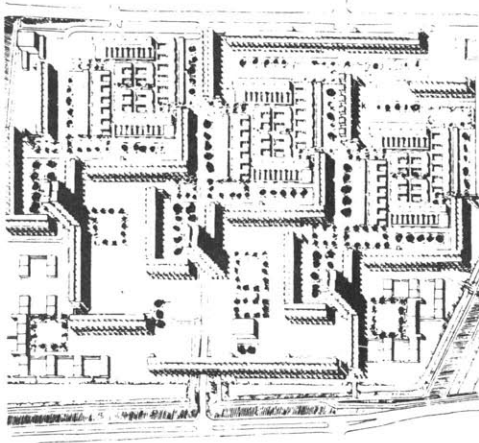
Aldo Van Eyck tells a story of non-coincidences, of relationships which cannot be described by unitary gestures, but instead define specific areas of conflict; polarities. He defines differences and the relational structure in which these differences are relativized. Van Eyck establishes reciprocal relationships between opposites. "Life flourishes only to the degree to which the two contradictory principles governing human nature can be brought into a state of harmony: the individual and the collective....The individual and the collective are ambivalent and together form a twin phenomena."(3) The twin phenomena constitute Van Eyck's interpretation of the theory of relativity. Van Eyck splits the environment into opposites: large house - small city, individual - collective, large - small, etc.. The oppositions between these

twin phenomena are not resolved, rather they
reinforce each other reciprocally in their respective
nature.
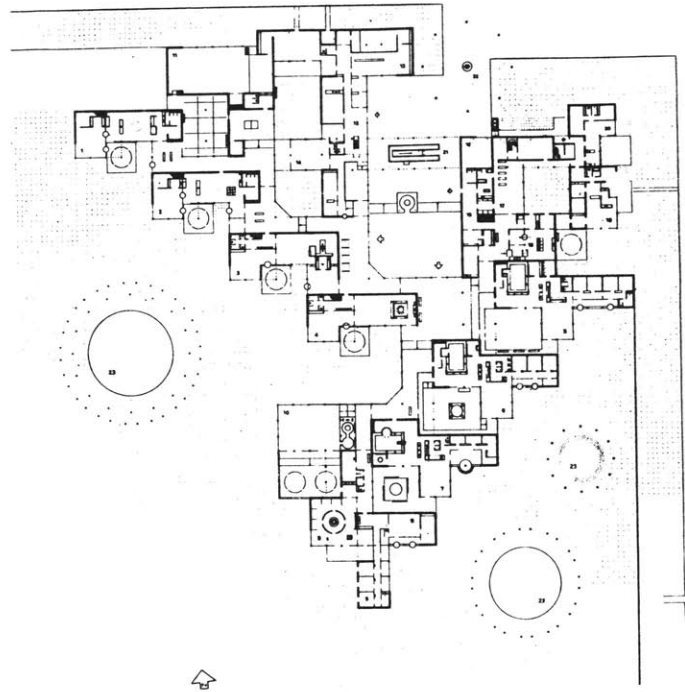
In short, Van Eyck creates structures that allow for
multivalent readings. The architect establishes free
interactions between the individual and society
through the built work. Through his intervention in
the city, Van Eyck merges the worlds of social and
architectural imagination. Aldo Van Eyck creates a
non-hierarchical reality, but nevertheless
structures that reality on different levels.

2.2. THE BUILDING IN RELATION TO THE CITY

Around the middle of the '70's the emphasis in town planning shifted from large infrastructures and large programs to urban renewal. Van Eyck's work reflects this shift. He abandons the great mapping exercises and the infrastructural plans of the '50's and '60's, and acts instead on intermediate area's. The city is built up from a proliferation of local adjustments which are capable of giving a new sense to the whole.

Umberto Eco compares the technique of local adjustments with acupuncture: "I think the operations of the architect may have something in common with 'acupuncture'. In acupuncture the doctor inserts a needle on one side of the body to correct a disorder on the other side of the body. Architects that work locally in the city should know that every local alteration will influence the general reaction of the body."(4)

The richness of the organically grown historical city which Eco describes, lies in the heterogeneity of its constituent parts; each part is a recognizable entity with its own identity. In the previous section we learned that the creation of complex patterns was always a concern for Van Eyck. However, the dimension of time - evident in the historic city - was absent from the planned schemes of the '50's and '60's. Gradually Van Eyck's conviction grew that

the city is not, and need not be, a geometrically sound and isotropic entity, but rather an artifact assembled bit by bit. Van Eyck uses the metaphor of the labyrinth and the kaleidoscope to depict how the city should be. His skepticism about the ability of modern city planning to realize such metaphors autonomously led him to withdraw from further involvement in the development of macrostructures.

HUBERTUS ASSOCIATION AMSTERDAM

In this section I will analyze Van Eyck's building for the Hubertus Association. This Association is located in the center of Amsterdam. In 1971 Aldo Van Eyck was commissioned to convert the 19th century houses - which Hubertus occupied up to then - into one new "house"- a house that represented the goals and ideals of this social institution. The Hubertus Association offers assistance to single parents who are in need of temporary accommodation and counseling. It provides temporary accommodation to a group of approximately fifteen parents and seventy-five children who are assisted in solving their specific problems by a qualified staff.

INTERNAL ORGANIZATION

In this section I will analyze the internal organization of the building Later, I will the continuities and the discontinuities established with the context.
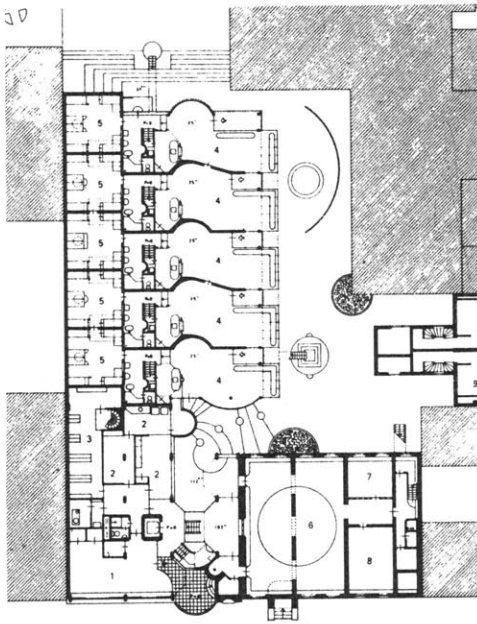
Van Eyck does not accommodate the institution in one single, large building. Rather, he creates three formally distinct but structurally related buildings. Each of these buildings is organized according to its function. The building in the garden accommodates the quarters of the children and is developed as a series of row houses with direct access to the exterior. In the transparent building, communal facilities are arranged in a free plan. The renovated houses that face the street contain the rooms and working spaces of the parents. The three buildings are not united in a single geometry. Rather, the total building is a kaleidoscope, a complex cohesive pattern of a variety of elements.

Van Eyck articulates the building in a systematic arrangement of small units. Spaces are differentiated to create highly individual places attuned to each member of the House. At the same time, the transparency of the building and the reciprocal penetration of levels contributes to the realization of the institute as a community. Within the building, places of encounter and private places are balanced. A hierarchical chain of

treshholds, ranging from inviting entrances up to large window sills and benches define territories.

In the previous section, I referred to the concept of relativity and the reciprocity between the individual and the collective to explain Van Eyck's urban proposals. These concepts apply here too. The individual and the collective are treated as twin-phenomena and are simultaneously realized in the building through spatial differentiation and careful organization of public and private spaces.

Bright colors are a particular characteristic of the Hubertus House and constitute another layer of articulation. Color serves to distinguish between places and to contrast them with one another.
In the next sections I will unravel the relation of the building with the context.

INSTITUTION

The Hubertus House does not appear as a modern version of the conventional institutional building, but as a small settlement. It is an anti-monumental building, a miniature city. Van Eyck does not resort to 19th century institutional typologies. The ordering systems of these buildings were often conceived as a system of control which, for reasons of hygiene, morality and productivity, placed individuals in an isolating and centrally controlled order. The organization of such a
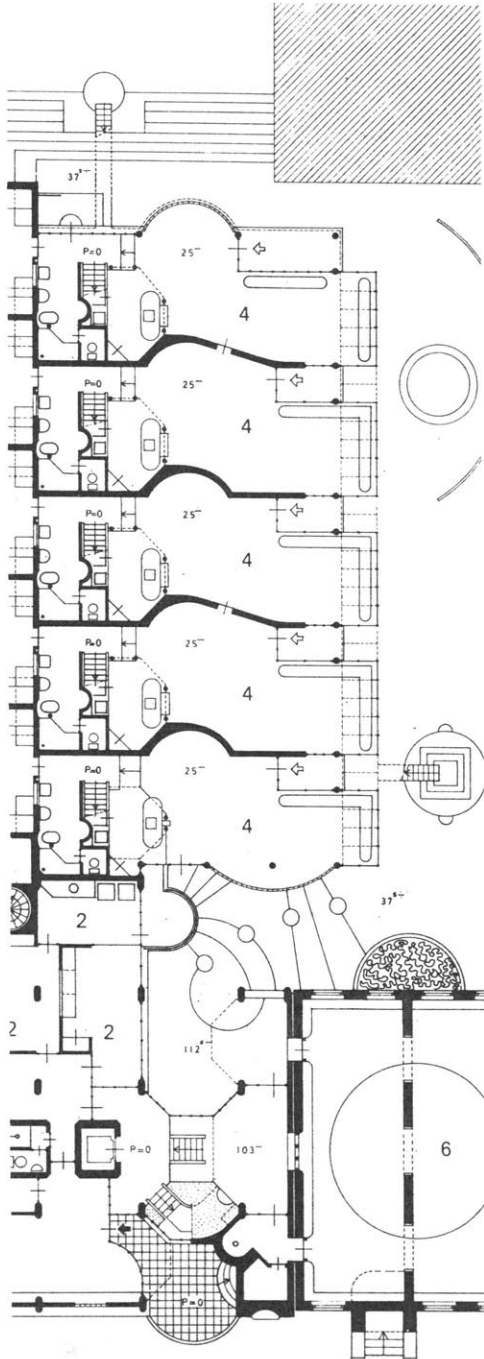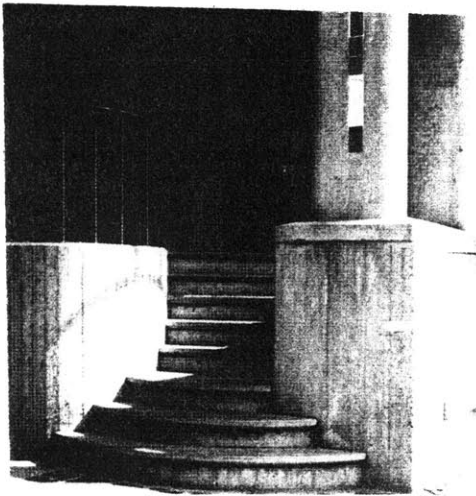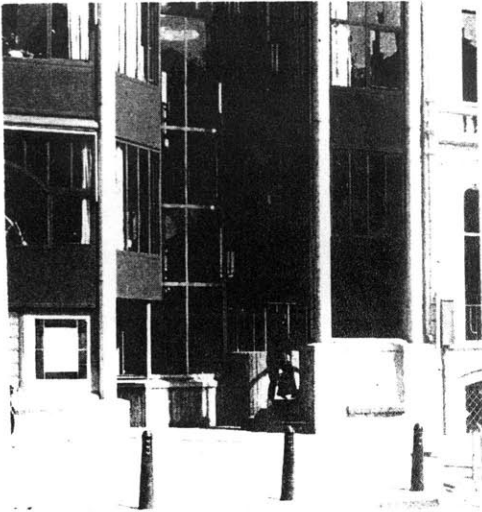
building would certainly clash with the intentions of Hubertus. The Hubertus association was very clear about the kind of house it wanted. The relation of the institution to the city for example was clearly described in the program: "The building has to be open and hospitable, easily accessible. But at the same time the people who come here have to feel very secure in their relation to the society they happen to be finding very difficult. That is precisely why they withdraw from society for a while."(5) The building establishes a suggestive link with the city. The transitional elements between inside and outside - facade, windows and entrances - function as qualifiers, and define the relationship to the city. The facade is transparent, but rests on a solid base. Although the steps and circle in the pavement are inviting, the platform and entrance door, located inside the house indicate that this is not a public institution open to everyone. In this way, transparency and seclusion are realized simultaneously.

CONTEXT
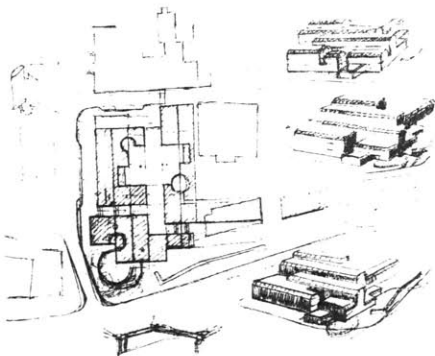
The project for the City Hall in Deventer clearly illustrates Van Eyck's integrational strategies. Van Eyck adapts the configurative geometry, developed in the '60's, to the urban tissue. The articulation of the building into a number of smaller elements is in accordance with the urban
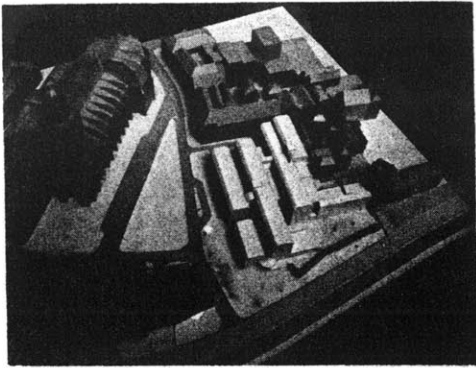
surroundings. The building does not negate the existing city, but acts as its complement.
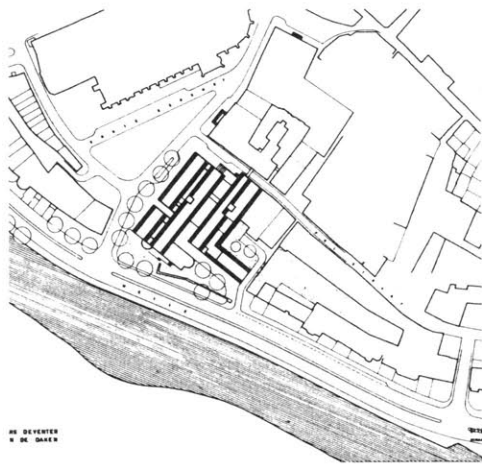
Aldo Van Eyck developed this concept further in the building for the Hubertus Association. The Town Hall of Deventer is generated as one geometrical system, in which part and whole are developed in the same structural order. In comparison, the Hubertus Association constitutes three formally distinct buildings. "The house that constitutes part of a historically grown, kaleidoscopic city must, if it is to identify with the latter, be planned and constructed along analogous lines."(6) Van Eyck's sketches illustrate that the design was not based on a preconceived geometric plan, but was conceived in the same way as the city. "They show that the building did not simply emerge like Athena from the head of Zeus, but from a complex design process: a quasi-historical process covering different stages and alternatives, which in Van Eyck's opinion often reveal what you do not want, but whose signals remain visible, rather like archaeological traces, in the final result."(7)
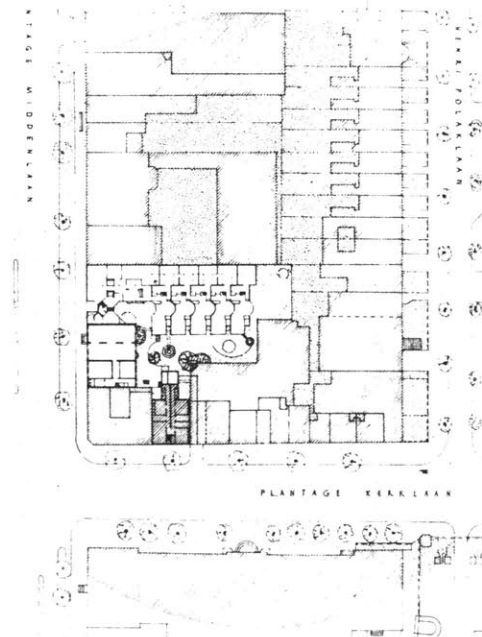
The new building conforms to the structure of the block in which it is situated. It seeks a connection with the spatial pattern of the existing city. However, it does not do so by extrapolating what is already there. It does not repeat the forms and materials, or typologies of the adjacent houses.

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Rather, it seeks a connection with its surroundings by making use of a highly modern vocabulary. Van Eyck confronts nineteenth-century eclecticism with "functionalism". However, it is not the contrast with the surrounding he is after. For Van Eyck, the existing city is more than decoration or background for his building.
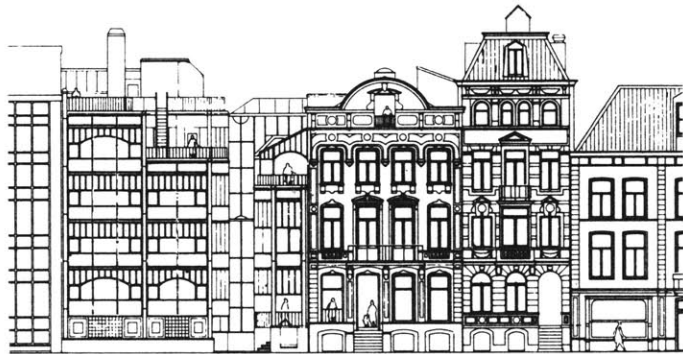
Van Eyck's oeuvre is characterized by a particular relationship with history. In the last meeting of CIAM which was held in Otterlo Van Eyck presented a collage which illustrated the "incorporation of the past into the present".
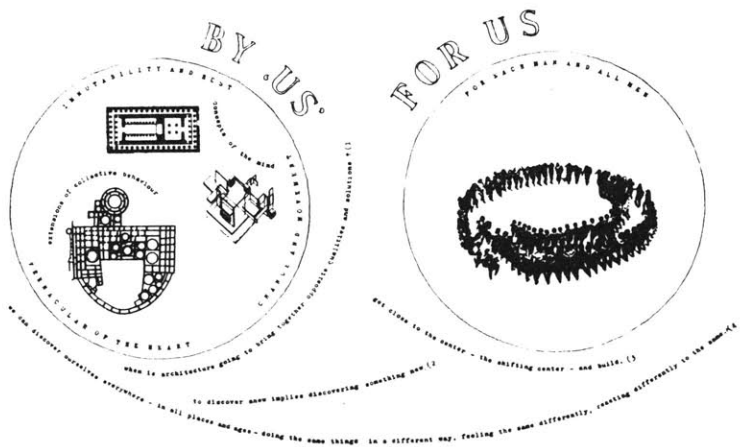
In one circle he displayed The Doric temple, a drawing by Theo van Doesburg, and an Indian village. They represent respectively the single and

self-sufficient building, the architecture of relativism, and the architecture of collectivity. In the Orphanage - which was under construction at that time - Van Eyck combined these three orders. The way in which he combines these orders is not eclectic, but syncretic. The orders don't neutralize each other, but reciprocally reenforce each other in their intrinsic nature. One of the facades of the Orphanage demonstrates the cohabitation of the classical and the modern order.
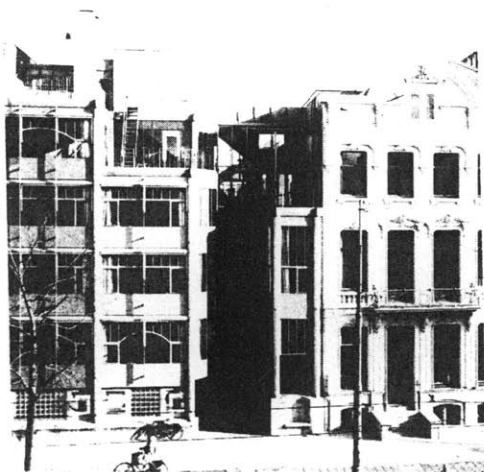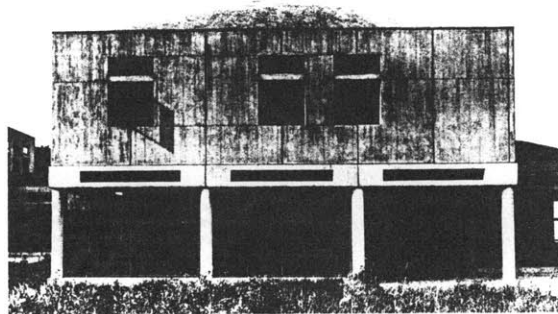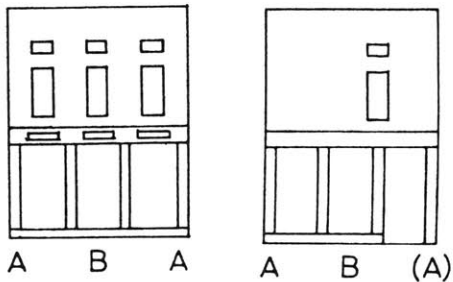
Old and new are treated in similar ways in the Hubertus House. Van Eyck reconciles these two opposites as twin phenomena and establishes a reciprocal relationship between them. Both the shifted center between the old and the new buildings and the entrance reenforce the association between old and new. The center is the pivot of a dynamic interaction, of the expression of a relationship between two incongruent and supposedly irreconcilable form languages. Old and new are again reinforced as twin phenomena in the entrance. In order to enter the interior of the

new building one needs to make a little detour through the old building.

In short, Van Eyck creates a complement to the city. The building is structurally incorporated into the city and contributes to it. At the same time, Van Eyck consciously departs from the existing and proposes an alternative. Aldo Van Eyck makes a building which is first of all itself. He provides an imaginative solution for the problem of the social institution. Building and city are interrelated in a complex structure of associations and oppositions.

2.3. CONCLUSION

Aldo Van Eyck places the human being at the center of the design process. Van He establishes open interaction between the individual and the building and between the individual and society. Through the built work he creates an imaginative vision for society. This vision is not confined to the limits of the building, but necessarily incorporates the city. Social imagination pervades his whole work.

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(4)   Umberto Eco, "Adjustment and Conjecture in Architecture" in
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(5)   Addie van Roijen-Wortmann, quoted by Francis Strauven in "The
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       Herzberger, Addie van Roijen-Wortman, Francis Strauven, <u>Aldo
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(6)   Ibid., p 111.

(7)   Ibid., p 111.
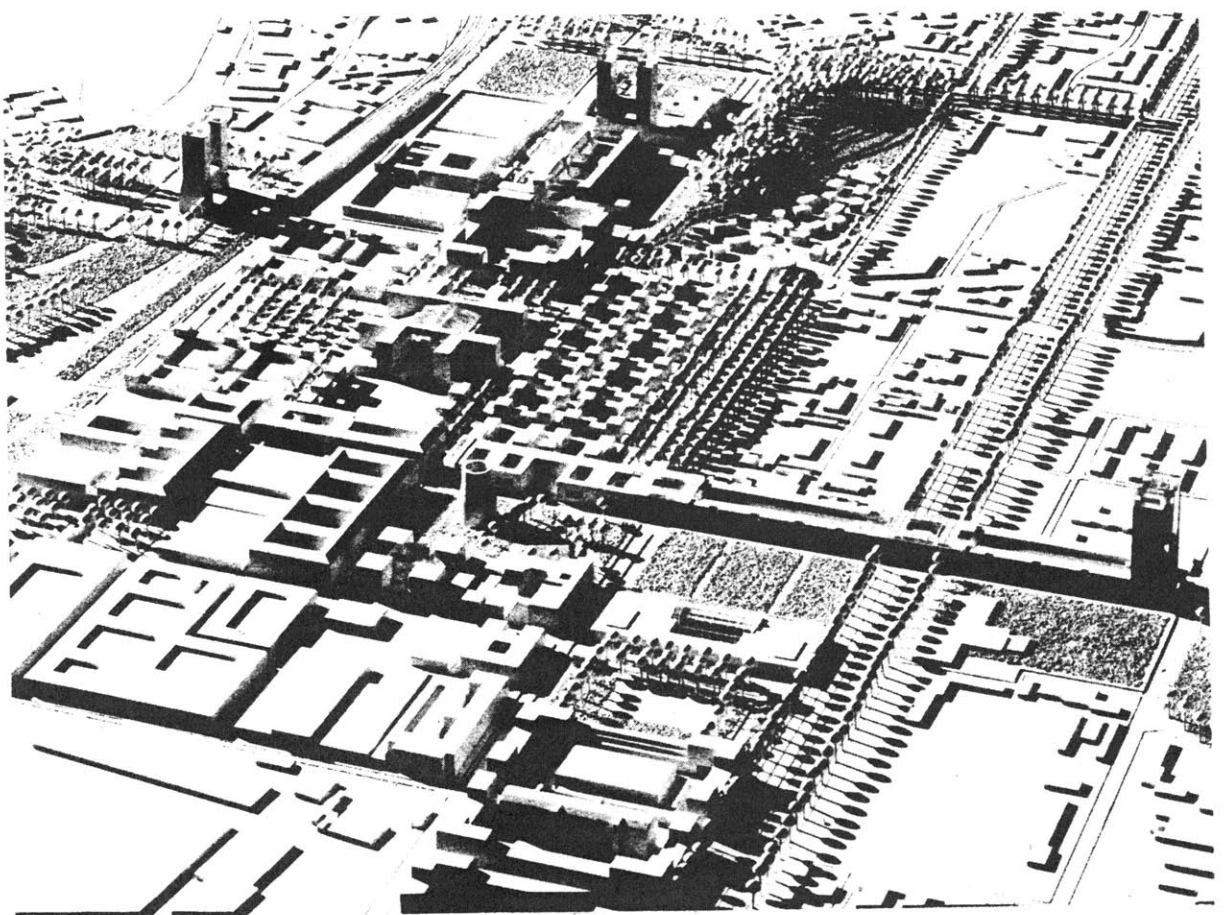
VITTORIO GREGOTTI

3.1. THE CITY

"After about twenty years of efforts directed to strengthen the two respective autonomies, to define exactly the respective responsibilities and the attempted prevarications of one discipline over the other, architecture and town planning sense now the need to find a new ground of conversation.... From architecture's standpoint twenty years of debate on the notions of 'town' and of 'territory' have not yet provided the architect either with a sense of consciousness or with an articulated method with which to tackle the different hierarchies contained in any project. This sense of consciousness and this method remained rooted in the model of the historic city or in the functional model of the zoning and of the quarter, intended as urban and territorial operator."(1)

Vittorio Gregotti belongs to a group of Italian architects and planners who propagate a new connection between planning and architecture. Their objective is to connect planning as an administrative and socio-economic enterprise with the tactile and visual dimension of architecture. In the next sections I will elaborate on the concepts of "plan" and "project" which Gregotti proposes.

PLANNING

The forms of planning advanced by Gregotti and his group are based on the concept of "place" rather than on "abstract" scientific or academic planning models. They considered the city in terms of its actual physical value.

For Gregotti, society has changed so profoundly that all comprehensive plans based on holistic visions of society and economy suffer rejection. In the next paragraph I will briefly touch upon some of the major changes in social and economic structures that led Gregotti and his group to propose a new form of planning.

Unpredictability is a general condition in society today. At present, there does not seem to be any clear overall vision coming from any direction or from any field of human activity. The temporal and spatial spheres inside which productive, managerial and financial programs are defined, and inside which social policies are drawn, are considerably reduced. A new world economy has replaced the national and regional markets. Production processes within this world economy are characterized by extreme flexibility and mobility. In the mechanical model of the industrial economy, the production cycle was relatively stable. In comparison, new production processes do not seem to represent themselves inside

specific physical models or schemes. In addition, the position of the authorities today is characterized by a changed relationship towards the "market". Economic growth is considered to enhance the standard of living in general. Rather than establishing durable redistributive policies authorities generate a series of short term ad-hoc decisions and compete inside the market with its short term programs.

The end of urban growth and the progressive dispersion of the environment are major spatial consequences of the changed structural conditions in economy and society described above. The deconcentration and diffusion of industry, the spread of tertiary activities, the emergence of internal peripheries and an urbanized landscape, all indicate an altered relationship between city and countryside and between center and periphery. The traditional dependency of cities in hierarchical regional structures is replaced by complex global networks.

As a result of rapid technological developments a large number of industrial and infrastructural complexes were abandoned. Cities find themselves with large open spaces located within dense fabrics. Well known examples of such "voids" include the Docklands in London, the la Villette and Citroen sites in Paris and the Bicocca area in Milan. These voids offer the opportunity to

develop strategies with impact on a large area. In this respect they are not disimilar to the dismantled fortifications of the 19th century.

For Gregotti, the sum of all these trends makes it necessary to revise present-day planning procedures and methodologies. Current planning models inherited from the modern functional city are not the best instruments to direct change. The plan as a scenario for society and the plan as spatial construction do not correspond anymore in a linear fashion. The models in which the complexity of reality is dealt with through socio-scientific knowledge and technical expertise have lost their validity. Program, analysis, research and design cannot be projected in one model.
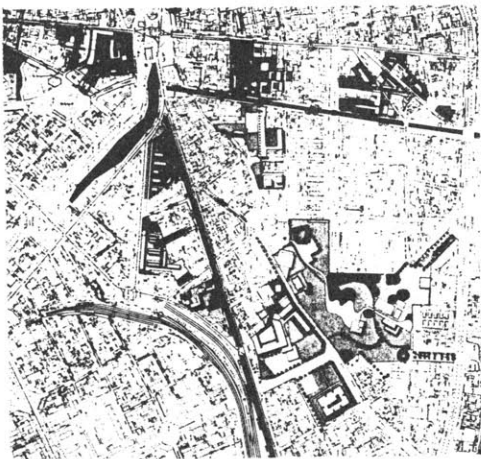
Gregotti asserts that the city needs to be altered in its parts, with clear attention to what exists. Terms as "modification" and "transformation" - used by Gregotti - indicate that the methodological key for the organization of the intervention lies in the architecture of existing environments. Gregotti propagates a realism bound up with the spatial, physical and geographical essence of the existing city.

ARCHITECTURE

The comprehensive plans, to which Gregotti reacts, established a deductive link between

architecture. In comparison, Gregotti and his group propagate an open relationship between planning and architecture. For them, both disciplines need to retain their respective operational methodologies but they should be confronted in a dialectic relationship. The architect actively takes part in planning. The plan is a form of critical speculation in which the architect-planner is a front runner rather than the last actor in the process. After programming the basic hierarchies, planning asks architecture to reconsider and explore the existing. The analytical and communicative skills of architectural design are used to assess the potential for large scale morphological and functional transformations. Architecture explores the potentials, the limitations and the restrictions of the site. Spatial structures and infrastructures constitute the material for a systematic and imaginative exploration of the ground. In opposition to the homogeneous, universal and isotrope plans of the functional city, Gregotti proposes a form of planning in which different places are thematised.

THE BICOCCA COMPETITION

In 1985 an international competition was held on the abandoned Bicocca site of the Pirelli factories in Milan. The brief of the competition asked for a "technological pole" on the site of this disused industrial complex in the northern sector of the city.

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The project which Gregotti proposed has a strong presence. Within his project he establishes several hierarchies. We can distinguish between the
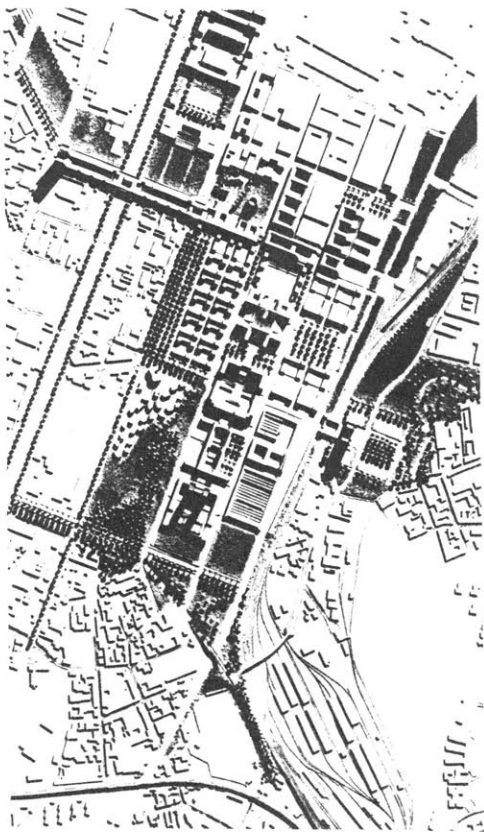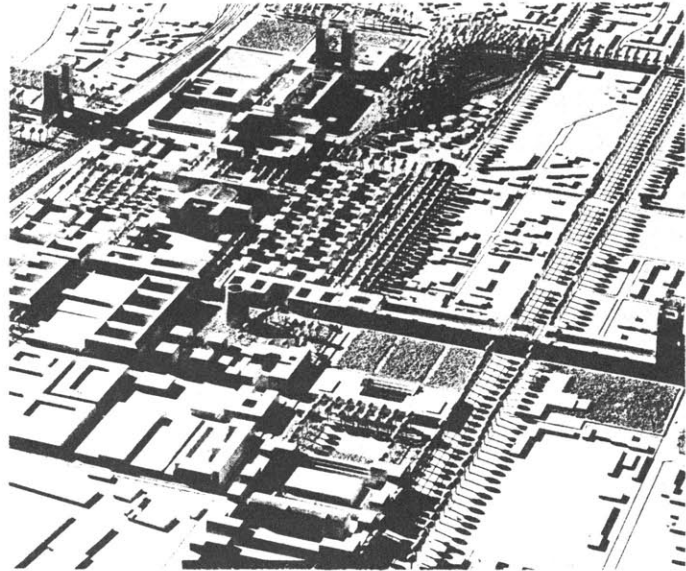
monumental buildings in the middle and the texture of buildings around. A central spine constitutes the principal structure of the project and is connected with the city through two secondary axes. The central spine contains the important institutional buildings. These buildings are monumental on the outside in spite of their flexible and homogeneous interiors. The monumentalism of the outside is a necessary condition to establish the hierarchies mentioned earlier. As a result of the definition of these hierarchies the project establishes relationships with various levels of the context. The projects is continuous with the surrounding fabric but at the same time establishes relationships with the city at large.
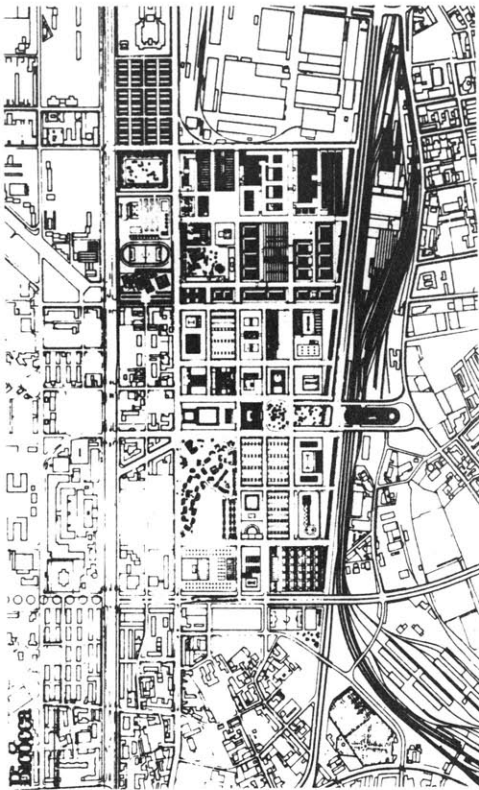
A comparison with Moneo's competition entry can clarify Gregotti's contextual procedures. The urban plan which Moneo's proposes is based on the structure of the surrounding districts. His project emerges out of the surrounding city. Moneo does not aim to change or transform the city on a larger level. Gregotti is more selective, he establishes a solid link with the environment at large. Gregotti states:"The shift of scale of operations is tied to the urge to find a system of foundation for the specifically architectural scale of the project; rather than being related to the actual physical dimensions. It is directly linked to the conditions in which the project must be made operative."(2) The scale question is not only identified with the planned area's perimeter or with its metric dimension, but also refers to the type of relationship the project will be capable to establish with the various levels of the context. When operating on the dimensional level of the city, the architect is confronted with a whole range of particular problems that operate on that level. In the next paragraphs I will inquire into the specificity of "urban" design.

Bicocca as a functional entity
Gregotti situates the Bicocca area within the total urban system of Milan. He assesses the economic and social role of this specific part of the city in relation to the urban system as a whole. His project fits in the master plan of Milan in which new

developments are projected for the northern sector and the hinterland. In Gregotti's scheme, Bicocca becomes a central point and distribution center for a large peripheral area. The presence of a railway station and of some important roads make Bicocca an important element in relation to the growth poles proposed in the masterplan.
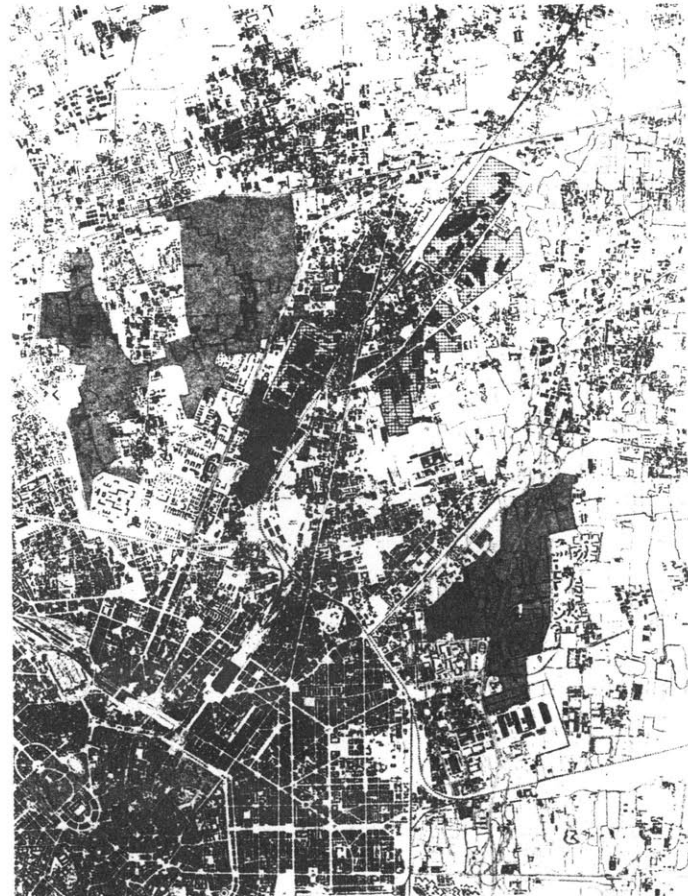
Bicocca imbedded in large urban structures

The creation of the pole is a welcome occasion to make large interventions and discuss issues of great town planning impact. In his scheme, Gregotti eliminates the existing terminal station of

Milan and creates a new passing station and a sequence of parks along the disused railyards. The public domain of the pole is imbedded in this park system. Gregotti affirms the importance of Bicocca once more by giving it an important place within the park system.

Bicocca as a geographical entity

In his project, Gregotti establishes a solid relationship with the environment at large. Earlier, I stated that the definition of the hierarchies established within the project makes it possible for the pole to push itself physically and visibly into the city. The central spine and the two secondary axes become a reference for new developments in the neighboring area's. In general, the pole becomes a geographical landmark within the large continuum of the periphery.

Gregotti reads the city - in its totality - through its historical stratifications, and establishes continuities and discontinuities on that level. The architectural language of his building is grounded on a structural knowledge of the context at large. He builds up a system of correspondences with the larger geographical context.

In short, Gregotti operates on the specific level of the city. Gregotti distinguishes the decisions that underpin the design of the urban projects from purely architectural operations. Urban design is

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more than the creation of architecture transformed to a larger dimension. I referred to the functional role of the project in relation to city, the large decision about the city, and the geographical relationship to the peripheral landscape as urban design operations. The architect engages in the creation of the city through tools and media particular to architecture. He has a complementary role in relation to the urban planner. The architect, in comparison to the town planner has immediate access to the physical specificities of the environment.
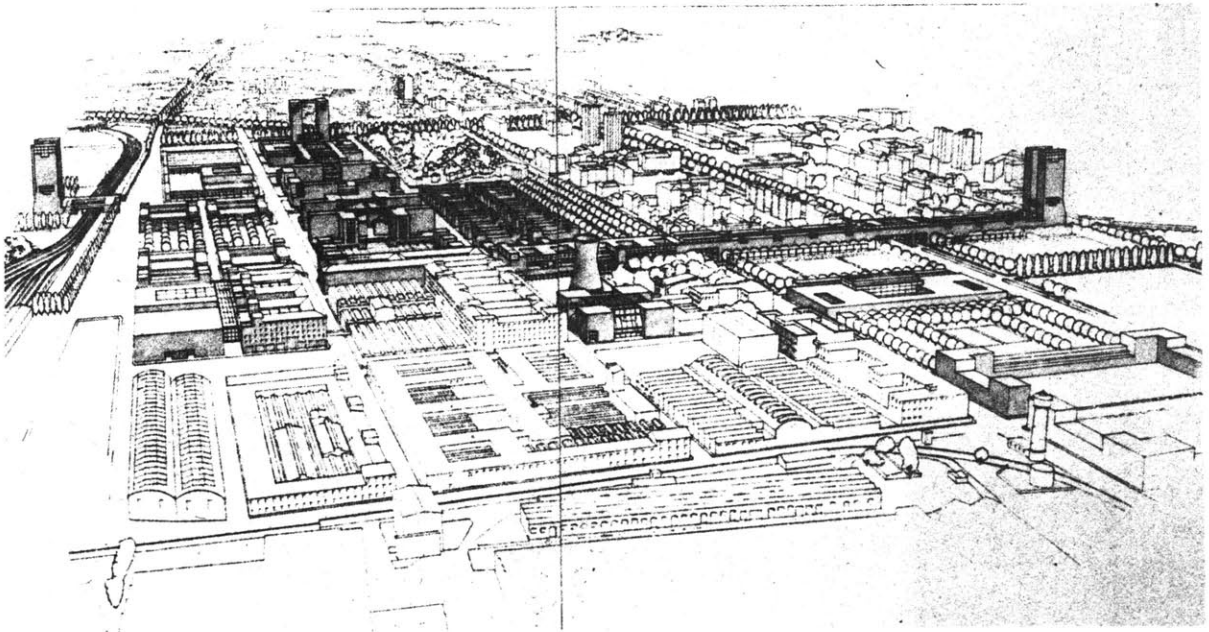
3.2. THE BUILDING IN RELATION TO THE CITY

Vittorio Gregotti's recently built housing block in Berlin forms part of the scheme which he submitted to the I.B.A. competition. Here I will analyze the competition entry. The implied critique to I.B.A.'s guidelines contained in the competition entry is absent from the built project.

Gregotti entered the competition for the reconstruction of Tiergartenviertel. This area was completely devastated during the final days of the war. The few 19th century houses that still stand today are a reminder of the once homogeneous 19th century fabric. It was I.B.A.'s intention to recreate the previous streetscape and consequently establish the 19th century lot structure as the main organizational system for new interventions in the district. Vittorio Gregotti's ambition to modify the city at large conflicts with I.B.A.'s intentions: "The idea of recomposing the urban unity through reconstruction of the street fronts of lots irregardless of their dimensions, history, and subdivision strikes us as a rule that cannot legitimately be extended indiscriminately."(3) I.B.A.'s decision to perpetuate the lot structure in a linear fashion reduces architecture to the design of facades and deprives the architect of the ability to operate on the level of the urban structure.

In his competition entry, however, Gregotti carries out a series of operations on the level of the city as well as on the level of the architectural project. Within his scheme he establishes different levels of articulation.
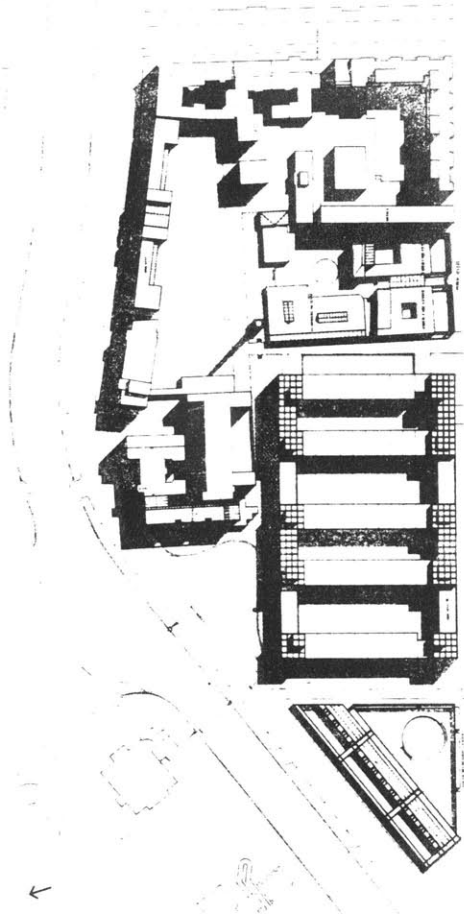
At the level of the city Gregotti simultaneously organizes buildings and spaces. Both buildings and spaces are formally and spatially defined. Gregotti brings a number of buildings in a "difficult" relation to each other. In the design process, he first separates the buildings and then reconnects them. The total scheme is not one unitary system in which different elements are assembled within one structural order. Rather, each building constitutes a recomposed architectural whole, a "forced" totality. Together the buildings are organized in a relation of tension and reciprocal necessity. "Our concern in the 1980 competition was to maintain an ambiguous relationship, one of uncompleted tension, of broken memory, with the idea of urban unity."(4)
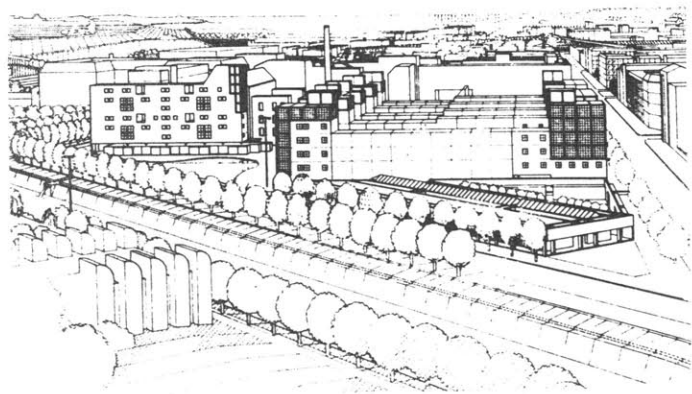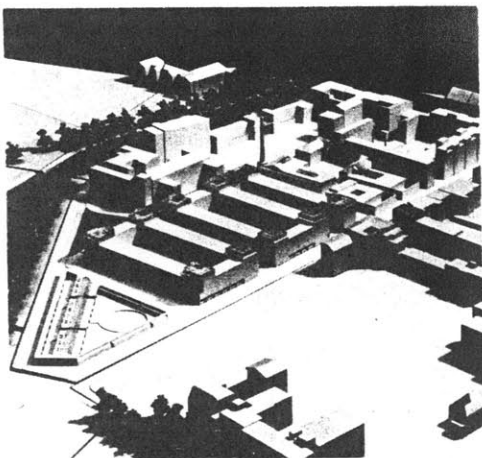
In the next section I will briefly describe each of the buildings and analyze their "characteristics." The housing block along the Lutzowstrasse catches immediate attention. In this block, Gregotti consolidates five planned - but not yet built - slabs of townhouses in one megablock. Elements of a giant order - corner towers, large archways and solid masses - are combined in a monumental composition. Gregotti organizes these elements in a relationship of tension. The towers articulate the block into separate elements; the grilled frames reconnect the pieces.
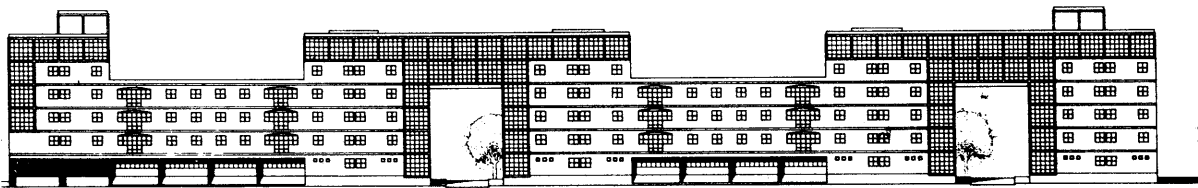
A prow-like building defines the end of a group of buildings along the Landwehrkanal. By functioning as a head it reconsolidates the existing buildings. The high end of the building points towards the other buildings within the scheme. The gravity point of the building lies outside itself. Architectural elements such as the windows are composed in dynamic relationships and reinforce the tension mentioned earlier.
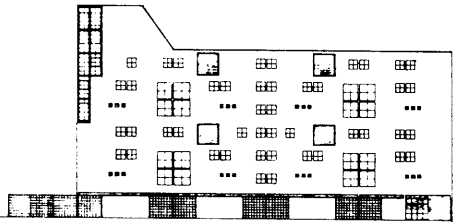
A third building accommodates youth facilities. This building has no affinities with its large neighbor. However, it finds its symmetrical counterpart in the nursery on the other side of the housing block.

Here Gregotti assembles existing buildings around an old pump station.

Gregotti inserts a diversity of open spaces in the existing hierarchy of the city. He defines these spaces in terms of use and social status. Examples include the square along the Landwehrkanal, the spaces around the pump station, the private spaces within the mega-block and the Lutzowstrasse. Gregotti recomposes the street as an urban entity, but, rather than literally reconstructing the street, he suggests it. The street facade is not continuous, the buildings are disconnected.

CONTEXTUALISM
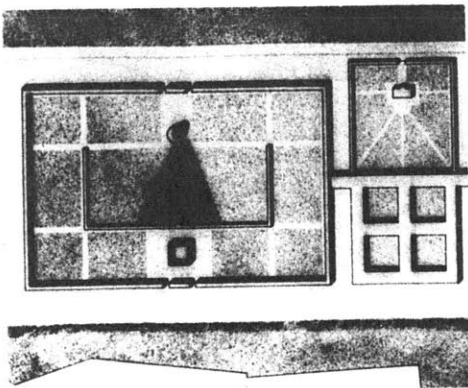
Gregotti rejects the conception of architecture as an isolated object and integrates it in an environmental system that is recognized and at the same time transformed by the architect's operation. In this respect he differs from Rossi. Rossi rejects the idea of context as a general determinant of design. He creates a dialogue with the city through the collective memory that is stored within the single building and its metaphysical presence. "It is not Rossi's aim to achieve continuity, but rather to fix a new autonomous nucleus carrying a relationship with the city not so much through instrumental connections, but rather through the persistence of some images which are intelligently

elaborated inside the typological sphere, in the abstract definition of traditional forms."(5)

In Gregotti's work the relationship with the context is defined by establishing differences, rather than through imitation, or assimilation of the order of the context. Gregotti's buildings are structures with complex internal articulations, and limited external articulations. The building is first of all itself and is carefully defined in relation to the existing. Gregotti establishes differences with the existing; he defines, measures and distances the new in relation to the existing. He does not propose the "impossible reconciliation between the new and the existing," but rather bases the meaning of the new buildings on the "quality of non-coincidence."

In short, implied in Gregotti's operations is a recognition of the physical structure of the city. He states: "The task of the architect is to preserve the morphological significance of the urban structure and network"(6)

For Gregotti, at the level of the city, conserving the morphological significance means identifying an organic section of the city and restructuring it, relating it to a new system of services and to the geographical and physical environment at large. At the level of the building the morphological significance is present as a mental factor, rather than as an actual determinant.
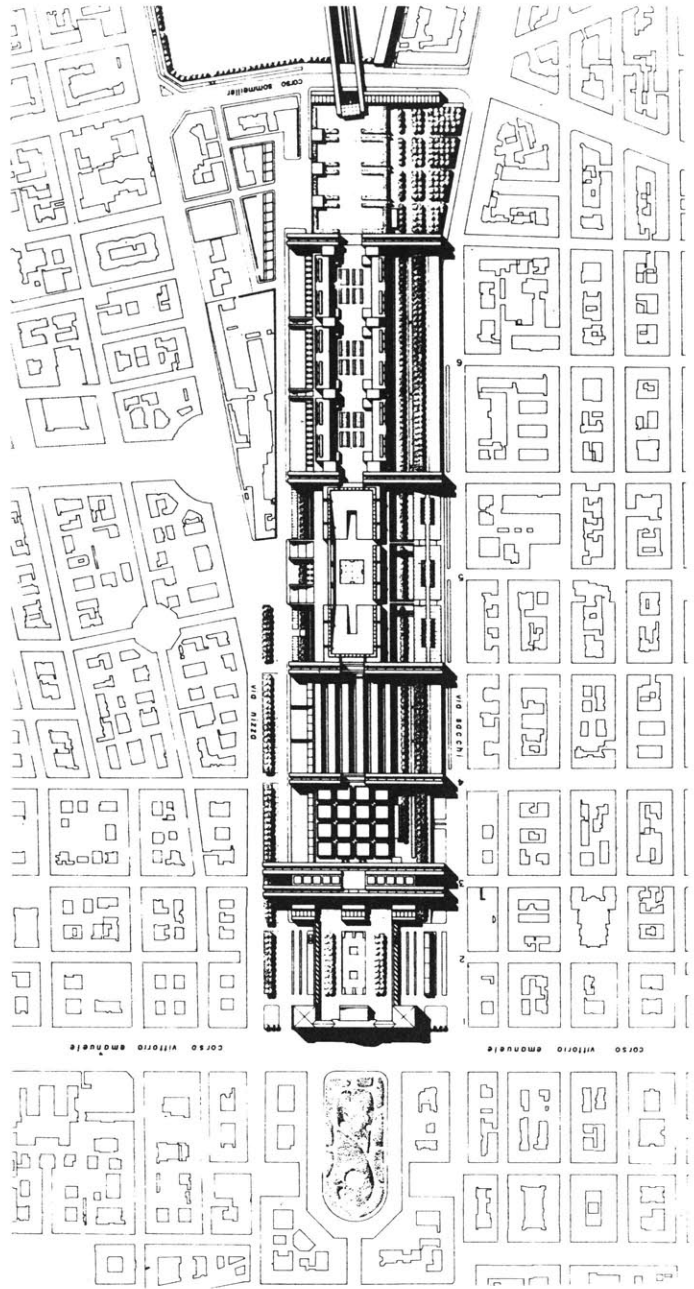
Gregotti generates the building through "rational"
architectural procedures and delineates
differences with its immediate surroundings.

3.3. CONCLUSION

For Gregotti, intervening in the city means operating in a larger spatial and temporal domain. The "urban project" is more than an enlarged architecture. In Gregotti's work a series of particular concerns arise at the dimensional level of the city. For Gregotti, intervening in the city also means confronting the history of architecture and the architectural discipline as it exists today. Gregotti's buildings convey permanence and reflect "the unchanging principals" that underlay the making of architecture.

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ARCHITECTURE
AND THE CITY

My intention in this thesis has been to explore the dialectic between the building and the city. In this chapter, I want to take the conclusions reached in the case studies one step further. Koolhaas, Van Eyck and Gregotti were chosen for this study because all three look for an understanding of architecture that goes beyond the limited outline of a given work's conditions. In the preceding analyses I described their work in relation to the larger condition of the city. Building and city do not exist independent of each other. Building and city are not complete in themselves, but dialectically redefine each other. In this chapter I will use the insights I have gained from the works of Koolhaas, Van Eyck and Gregotti to suggest generalizations that may be applicable to the problem I raised in the beginning of this thesis: the dialectic between architecture and the city and the engagement of architecture in a larger world.

In the following section I will inquire into architecture and its engagement in the city: the urban dimension of architecture. Afterwards, I will look at the city as a whole and the role of architecture in the construction of the city: the architectural dimension of urbanism.

THE URBAN DIMENSION OF ARCHITECTURE

In order to understand the engagement of architecture in the city, I will contrast this concept with the notion of the building as "object". According to this notion, the building is created as a singular entity that is compositionally unified and complete in itself. Architecture is then isolated in a purely abstract and idealized realm, freed from circumstance and distanced from "reality". The building is generated through a process of composition, according to internal rules. Architecture, in this conception, usually becomes a disengaged mode of practice.

In strong contrast to this conception, Koolhaas, Van Eyck and Gregotti consciously situate the building in its environment, as a first encounter with "reality". Their architecture is influenced by the conditions of the world around it: they locate each building in a specific temporal and spatial continuum. Koolhaas, Van Eyck and Gregotti conceive architecture as "construction of meaning". They reject an architecture that is merely based on "aesthetic contemplation". I will discuss each below; illustrating how his work carries on a dialogue with the city and the environment at large.

Symbols and signs retrieved from the metropolis and modern life constitute an important input in Koolhaas' designs. He incorporates visual
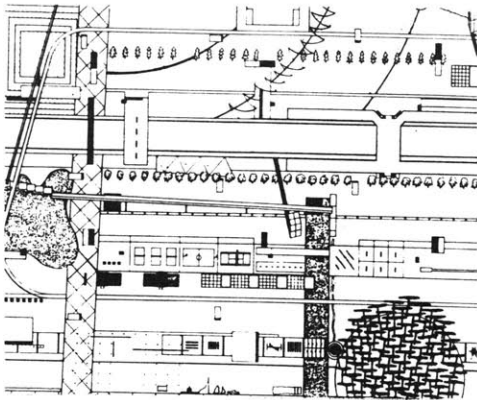
elements formed by mass culture into architecture. He does not demarcate the elements and the organizational rules of architectural composition, but on the contrary opens the confines of architecture and includes visual elements retrieved form the city. Through the combination of "non-architectural" information he creates a composite portrait of contemporary urban life.
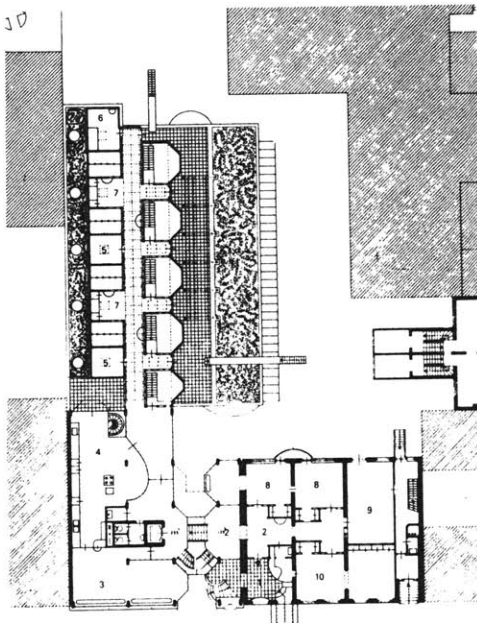
Unlike Koolhaas, who focuses on the visual symbols of the city, Van Eyck creates an architecture of social relationships. His slogan, "Architecture need to do no more than assist man's homecoming", indicates that the relationship between the human being and the artifact he inhabits is fundamental. Van Eyck generates a building in the course of a lengthy process that involves interaction with those who will dwell in his buildings. In his built works a complex pattern emerges in correspondence with the program. Van Eyck locates his complex relational structures, structures that provide for rich patterns of human relationships - within the social space of the city.

Gregotti creates the architectural work through a dynamic, formative process. For him the design process is an experiment within the frame of spatial and material opportunities of the city. It is not merely a process of composition in which the architect works with finite materials. He intervenes

in the stratifications of the city in which patterns of living and social organization are embedded.

These three architects reciprocally create a world between their world and the real world. They dialectically participate with the real world. In the design process their operations are limited as well as stimulated by the opportunities present for engagement. "The artifact is not merely a means of expression, but a 'winning of reality'. Reciprocity, however and the winning of reality already affirm that we are concerned with a process, something that unfolds in time, a situation where the maker's own thought is changed, perhaps even radically, by the reality he has won. The original maker/interpreter is no longer the same after the first encounter with the artifact."(1)

THE ARCHITECTURAL DIMENSION OF URBANISM

The concepts of contextualism and place-making are used to legitimize a wide range of interventions in urban environments today. Yet they are inadequate concepts if we want to address the problem of architecture in relation to the construction of the city as a whole. The analyses in the previous chapters demonstrated that Koolhaas, Van Eyck and Gregotti move beyond the limits of the architectural project. These architects not only make places, they also make the city. They

articulate contextual decisions in a larger continuum. Only when an architect has a larger vision of his or her work do individual buildings become incorporated in a higher level of organization that we could define as an urban order.

Koolhaas writes dynamic urban scenarios. Autonomous and exceptional elements are recomposed in networks and systems in which architecture, with its traditional walled construction, is totally absent. Koolhaas' urban schemes are constellations of strategies. The city is a map of political power into which various ironic commentaries, strategic interruptions, and disjunctures erupt.
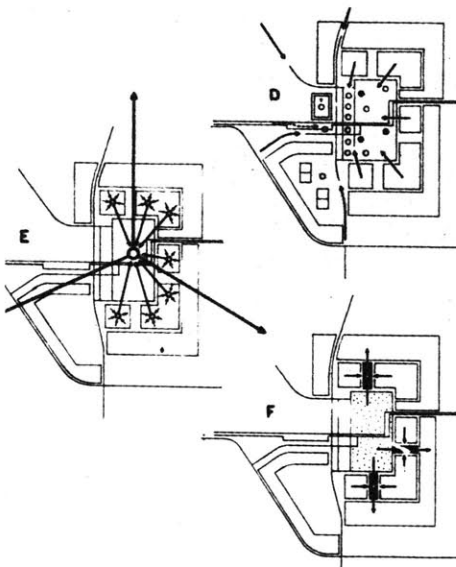
Van Eyck's primary aim is to create space as social space. He creates a symbiosis between the worlds of social and architectural imagination. In the townplan of Nagele he constructs a counterform for the social structure of the community. Later in his career, Van Eyck considers it impossible for the architect to shape large segments of the city. "If society has no form, can architects build the couterform?" The Hubertus House constitutes a complement and alternative to the reality of society today.

In his work Gregotti shows a concern with the visual aspects of the city and the environment on
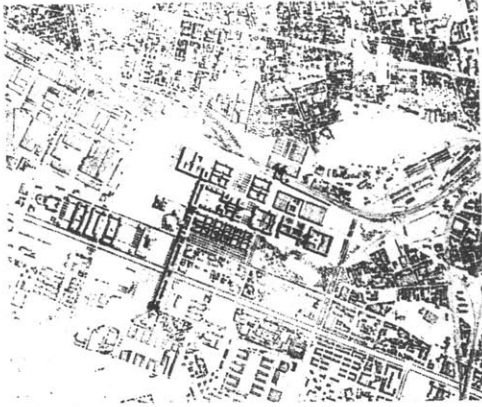
all scales. He bases his projects on the structural interpretation of the context at large. He frequently refers to geography, landscape and territorial planning. The architect intervenes in environmental aggregations at all dimensional levels. Distinct logical structures underlie the different levels. Each level is generated by different operational methods.

The visions of these architects are not translated into ideal models. Rather, they initiate paradigms for the transformation of the city. Ideal urban schemes such as Ledoux's salt works, Fourier's Phalangstere, Le Corbusier's plan Voisin, Niemeyer's Brasilia, Archigram's instant city and Leon Krier's quartier de la Villette are defined in the whole and its constituent parts. In these proposals architects project an ideal world in which the city is a clearly defined totality.

Koolhaas, Van Eyck and Gregotti accept the city as an existing - always incomplete - entity in which their intervention is an act of partial transformation. The qualities of existing environments are the basis for their plans. They regard the city as an open, indefinite structure in which part and whole continually postpone each other. Foucault, in a recent article in Lotus International, defines such a state as "heterotopia"(2). For Foucault heterotopia is a constant feature of all human groups.

Heterotopia is not homogeneous space, but a space that is saturated with qualities.

Within the present day conditions of society and its production processes, the architect's actions are partial transformations by necessity. In previous chapters, I compared the work of Van Eyck, Koolhaas and Gregotti to the functional planning of CIAM. In the modernist conceptions of the functional city, architecture coincided with the city. For the modern architects the city was an essential exponent for establishing new ways of living. Architecture was part of a functionally, hierarchically and spatially integrated city.

Today the field of action of architectural design within the existing planning structures becomes increasingly smaller. Over the last decades it has become clear that the city formed itself far beyond the scope of the architect. The present-day city is a heterogeneous field generated through processes and forces distinct from the operational logic of architecture. Town planning has become the field of traffic and social experts, local government officials and developers.

The production of space is determined by society. The production of space confirms to capitalistic modes of production. In the next section I will examine the way the three architects organize

space within, and in relation to, capitalistic modes of production.

Koolhaas does not oppose the capitalistic mode of production. He works within this "inevitable" condition. For him there are no reasons to be critical about these manifestations because they do have a historical necessity. There is no compulsion for architecture to exist in a discipline of its own or to be some kind of agent for change. Architecture is an index of the conditions in which we exist. Koolhaas constructs environments that upgrade the sensibilities in which we live.

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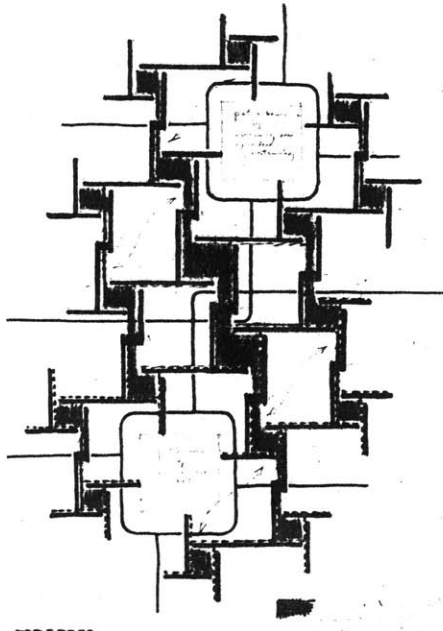
Van Eyck is very explicit about the kind society he envisages. In his designs he creates non-hierarchical worlds in which he establishes an individual place for each and everyone. Van Eyck equates totality with tragedy. He rejects all forms of authority. Van Eyck asserts that "order has no function, this side of evil, other than to make what is essentially chaotic work." Analogous to the avant garde artists of the first part of this century he creates an architecture that embraces the "relative condition", which we described in chapter two. Van Eyck's career is a constant battle against the taking over of the building process by processes of production. He opposes the expansion of building commissions and building production.

Gregotti bases his interventions on a structural knowledge of the site, on its "contextual specificity". In the previous chapter I asserted that he rejects the universal value of modern theories and the transferability of its models and methods. Each case offers a specific "truth" that has to be looked for. "If the truth to be exposed is that of the site, it means that the space is not infinitely subdividable in an economic and technical space. The differences are values, and design is a way of modifying the rules of our belonging, which first need to be recognized."(3) "What we architects have to do is reconstruct the possibility of proposing a hypothesis of value that is quite distinct from the market value."(4)

PLACE AND TIME

The concept of heterotopia includes the dimension of time. Van Eyck, Koolhaas and Gregotti's interventions are partial transformations. They inscribe their structures in the temporal continuum of the city. The city comprises a collection of artifacts with various temporal dimensions. In the city we are confronted with an array of durations, continuities, disjunctures, and innovations. Koolhaas, Van Eyck and Gregotti subscribe to different notions of time.

Koolhaas places value in the transitory, the elusive and the ephemeral. For Koolhaas change is an

end in itself. He conceives the city as a constantly self generating anarchic system of signs and symbols. Processes of change take place beyond the control of the architect. Architecture proves unable to direct change. In Koolhaas' schemes tomorrow is not present. For him there is no future, there is only now. Koolhaas considers it impossible to make long term decisions about our environment. "The built, is uncontrollable - subject to the maelstrom of political, financial and cultural forces - in perpetual transformation."(5)

Van Eyck often uses the metaphor of the labyrinth and the spiral to project the dimension of time, a process of transformation which includes depth and complexity. The labyrinth has no origin and no end. Van Eyck subscribes to growth in an organic way, in an evolutionary way. Architecture needs to provide the possibility for a continual changing reciprocity between tectonic structure and human action. Architecture is conditioning and being conditioned.

For Gregotti, on the other hand, the city is a collective artefact in which subsequent generations inscribe their "being on earth". The institutions of building and architecture provide for continuity. "While the overall conception of the social relations has probably to remain mobile and open, the permanence of architectural operations on the ground and in the environment should refer

to intentions and principles with a far more solid temporal duration."(6) The relative autonomy of the discipline provides for structure and duration and allows for change.

AESTHETIC MODERNITY VS SOCIAL MODERNIZATION

The city is by definition a collective artifact. Koolhaas, Gregotti and Van Eyck intervene within this collective territory. In contrast to the architect as the creator of an original and unified original language, these three architects register and repeat systems of signification whose provenance lies beyond their control as individuals.

Gregotti and Van Eyck aim to establish an "objective" ground integrated within the city. Structural knowledge of the context and the city constitute the basis for their operations. For Koolhaas elements retrieved from everyday life and models retrieved from present day realities such as New York constitute the "shared" substance.

On closer examination, Van Eyck and Gregotti aim to establish a "communicative rationality". They establish a horizon against which precise continuities and differences can be measured. Van Eyck and Gregotti's works are frequently compared to Structuralism in anthropology and linguistics.

The mainstream of thought in the 60's was deeply influenced by structuralism in the human sciences. Studies of language provided a system of analysis for every field of human activity. Structuralism made a distinction between language and speech. Language contains the metaphysical presence, the deep structure that underpins every human act. This deep structure encompasses universality and what is invariable in the world. The relationship between collective pattern - the city - and individual interpretations - the architect's intervention - can be likened to the relationship between language and speech. Local decisions become meaningful in the framework of a larger totality.

In comparison, Koolhaas is more rhetorical. For him "intersubjective communication" takes place at a different level. Koolhaas' operations are not generated through "objective" processes. The plans that underlie his large scale proposals do not establish objective grounds. His schemes are based on readings of present day non-architectural realities. Koolhaas looks to New York, Los Angeles and the new towns around Paris and creates myths about these realities. In his book, "Delirious New York" Koolhaas writes a non-objective history of Manhattan. His reading is only a partial reading which obliterates the reality of capitalistic development and the tragic social conflicts of metropolitan life. Furthermore, in his

and other paradigms do not determine the development of three dimensional structures. The ground is a neutral plane on which Koolhaas places a number of "objects trouves". These elements are complete in themselves. They belong to a repertoire of "common" elements which he projects into new surroundings. The identity of these elements does not coincide with their location, the surrounding space and the total space of the city. In Koolhaas conceptions the metropolis is an unlimited territory in which all spatial objectives become meaningless and are replaced by purely temporal ones.

In the discussion above, I stated that Van Eyck and Gregotti objectify their contributions. Gregotti aims to establish a horizon within the discipline. In his editorial in Casabella he often argues for the establishment of principles and objectives within the architectural discipline. "Rules are important: one must always try and build a common language and a way of transmitting a comprehensible discipline."(7) Gregotti argues for the "return" of the architect to his specific universe of competences. "It is our conviction that a disciplinary tool like ours does still constitute one of the concrete means of meditation with which to comprehend totality."(8)

For Van Eyck, the desire for communality is the common denominator of all building activity. This communality, which found an adequate response
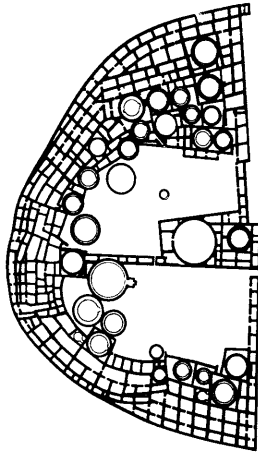
in all cultural traditions in the pre industrial forms of building through the close involvement of all inhabitants, has disappeared from modern planned and administered building production. "Van Eyck's study of primitive residential settlements - as morphological patterns or as an ecological space in which man, animals and plants spontaneously interact to constitute an authentic mode of lifetrends to reassert his discovery of a new and natural freedom."(9)

Koolhaas establishes a communicative horizon on a different level. He does not transform environments in correspondence to the permanent structures that underlie them. His pictorial and realistic preoccupations run contrary to the syntactic interests of Van Eyck and Gregotti. Koolhaas emphasizes the significative power of the elements themselves rather than the relational aspects of architecture. Koolhaas records and assembles information that comprises visual and linguistic codes already formed by mass culture, the specific conditions of the site, or other texts and objects. He combines those materials in a meta-discourse in which he depicts reality in a narrative. Koolhaas' world implies a perpetuation of continual new visual perceptions and stimulations. Koolhaas' city is a celebration of the new and the different - a cult of the new. His work reveals a pleasure for life and individualism. "Lively and varied coloration and stylistic variety of
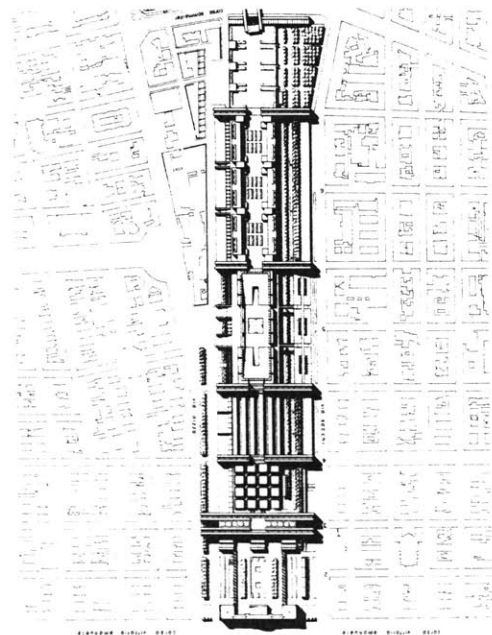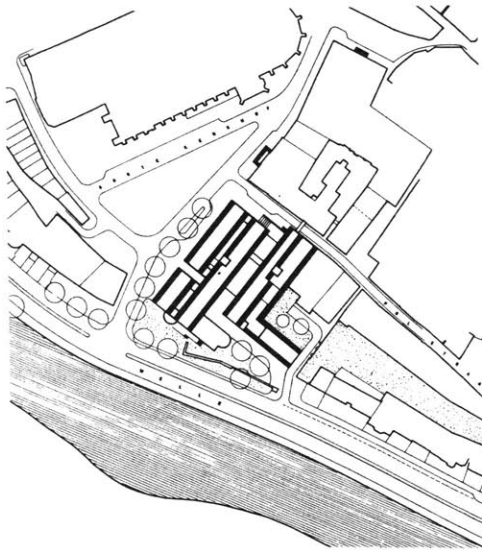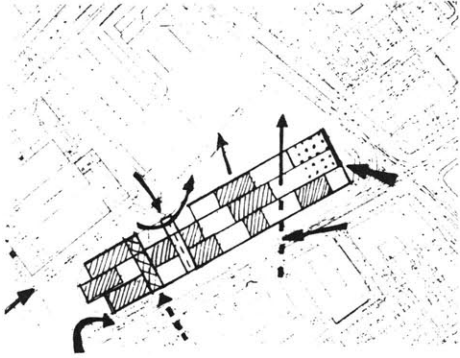
architectonic artifacts convey individualism and faith in the future, within a highly developed industrial society: a critique embodied in drawings, which does not claim to be absolute, but expresses a love beyond the physical actuality of the illustrated objects."(10) Koolhaas intervenes in the phenomenal world. We could place his architecture in the category of aesthetic modernity. Earlier I described Koolhaas design processes as associative and adjectival rather than structural. His critiques are often rhetorical and isolated. Frequently they take on the form of anecdotes, commentaries or jokes - such as the bowling hall in the City Hall of the Hague.

Gregotti and Van Eyck modify reality on deeper levels than Koolhaas. Their criticism is located within the framework of the architectural discipline and the city. It is a constructive act inscribed within structures of communication. Gregotti and Van Eyck's communicative action focus on the reproduction and transmission of values and norms as well as their precise transformation. Their work belongs to the field of modern architecture which Habermas - in his article Modernity, an Incomplete Project - defines as cultural modernity or societal modernization.(11) Gregotti and Van Eyck create buildings whose meaning is much larger than the author's message. Their work contributes to the expansion of knowledge and advance towards social and moral betterment.

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CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have attempted to examine the contribution of architecture to the continuous reconstruction of the city and the redefinition of architecture through that process. In the city the architectural project becomes part of a larger condition. The city is by definition the field in which the individual and the collective meet. In the city the architect is confronted with the social, economic and cultural realities of planning today, with patterns of social and productive organization of the past and with the institutions of architecture and building.

In previous chapters I stated that the architect's intervention is a partial transformation or modification of the city. In this section I will elaborate on that act of modification. Modification implies both continuity with and departure from the present realities. The architect constructs an "alternative" reality. In this section I will examine the relation between "the worlds" created by Koolhaas, Van Eyck and Gregotti and the real world, more particularly the realities of production within the European setting. Consequently, I will focus on the role of the architect within society and thus the status of the profession.

KOOLHAAS

"There is a range of new developments within our profession, completely outside our field of vision, which is incomparably much richer, more inspiring, more shocking and more relevant - since it draws on real forces - than what is happening in our official discipline."(1) Koolhaas asserts that it is impossible to avoid confrontation with the "real world". As stated earlier, he does not oppose development within the broad issues of capitalism, but rather presents it as an accomplished fact. He maintains that his pragmatic, descriptive and narrative design techniques are based on observation of phenomena of the contemporary world. Koolhaas incorporates images and forms that have been created

by the market in his designing. However, Koolhaas does not abandon architecture. For him the personal interpretation of these elements and their combination in narratives is a means to survive creatively amidst the forces of the market. Through the displacement and relocation of known elements O.M.A. wants to shock common perception. O.M.A.'s discourse is therefor disruptive and always in opposition to dominant perceptions. Its projects speak more about its own interests than about reality. The order and the organization of these projects is based on artistic attention. The projects are ultimately rhetorical. Koolhaas' polemic plea for the "architect-planner" is therefor misleading. The pretended dialogue with reality never materializes, since these projects are exclusively based on the design method of a single artist. Koolhaas is more deeply involved in aesthetic issues than in moral or ideological ones.

VAN EYCK

For Van Eyck, the modern world is only possible if it is continuously challenged, and if this critique is in itself a creative act. For Van Eyck the critical intellectual is a militant who is constantly struggling against the pressing powers of positivism and the industrial society. The anarchic ethos was strong in Holland in the '60's, and Van Eyck was seriously drawn to it. Nevertheless, he is critical of the passive negativity latent in anarchism. Van Eyck's goal is to critically restructure modern life. However, he does not see architecture as a tool for changing the socio-economic conditions of society. Architecture for him is first of all a liberating event. "In the process of social transformation, architecture can never be a determining factor, only a silent force. But this silent force it can certainly exert: through the structural and formal negation of the current irreversible hierarchy, and by inspiring the desire for reciprocity through its evocative power."(2) Van Eyck finds it increasingly difficult to

participate in the creation of the city within present-day society. If architecture wants to remain a liberating event, it needs to express its contributions in alternative spaces, rather than in the continuum of society; for within this continuum architecture would lose its critical capacity and imaginative power. "At the edge of public attention is always the artist, the essential ally of the child. His function is still too decorative. His task is to bring about an imaginative order, his place is in the center."(3)

GREGOTTI

Gregotti confronts reality through the filter of the architectural discipline. For Gregotti, architecture, like other disciplines, constitutes a body of knowledge that constantly renews itself in light of reality, but remains true to fundamental principals and methodologies. Architecture, as a domain of human experience, is a form of knowledge with cognitive potential. Through the tools and media of design, the architect engages in reality. For Gregotti, architectural composition is not merely an operation for its own sake, but above all a commitment to reality. Architecture is a syntactic tool through which the architect engages and understands reality. Gregotti, however, has doubts about the impact of the architect upon reality. His intention is not to reorganize modern life. Gregotti has repeatedly made a case for a strong discipline in his editorials for Casabella. He argues in favor of full control for the architect in the building processes. The architect, in his view, needs to retain the central role throughout the conception and construction of the building. He should not give up his tools when new conditions arise, but needs continuously to think through the processes of conception and construction.

ARCHITECTURE, REALITY AND THE CITY

I contend that the dialogue between architecture and the city is essential to architecture. Through this dialogue, the architect participates in the continuous remaking of the world. Architects intervene in the collective territory, that is the city, and contribute to the remaking of the world and the redefinition of their own field.

Throughout this thesis I have referred to the models of the functional city and CIAM. Through analytical procedures the modern architects, that made up CIAM, built up reality in rational ways. In their scientific approach, the world is seen as something which can be totally accounted for. The ambition of these architects was to coordinate the productive and social spheres of reality.

Today, the impossibility of a global urban model in which architecture and planning coincide need not be a reason for architecture to withdraw completely into its own field. I suggested in the previous chapter that Gregotti and Van Eyck have established new objective horizons. In opposition to the scientific objectivity of CIAM, Gregotti and Van Eyck provide systems of orders. Gregotti and Van Eyck diffuse their authorship and inscribe their actions within a common body, within a system of coordination. I have asserted that the city for them is an open and differential system rather than a closed and homogeneous model. The city and reality are always changing. By incorporating the city in the design process, the architect makes a commitment to reality. He participates in the making of the city and the world. Architecture is a form of knowledge that has developed its own techniques and methods of discovery and exploration. "Architectural design is not only a means to get to know reality, but above all, a way of being in the world and of acting in it through a possible, concrete meditation."(4) The architect's

continual dialogue with the physical presence of the city - its problems and its history - is crucial for him if he wants to remain an active participant in the making of the world. In the absence of this dialogue, architecture runs the risk of becoming rhetorical and purely aesthetic. "Architecture is able to provide spatial answers to new subjects and fields of social and productive activity, to various relationships between public and private, as well as to new meanings of ideas such as order, forecast, program and duration."(5) The city is an important mediator between architecture and reality.

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