

# Armed Architectures/Weapons of Architecture

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"I am very curious about the notion of a subversive architect, one who uses architectural design to play with the system, to circumvent certain political constraints, or to help recalibrate in some way the urban environment that currently operates at a level of injustice [...] I am interested in how architects could use their skills and the value of the project as a political art, as a space for urban negotiation with power" [Lambert 2012, p. 48] [1].

The need to 'connect' appears, today, stronger the more pervasively the tendency to 'separate' and build barriers manifests itself. And it is exactly those physical and/or virtual barriers, in a broad sense, which are the places where the conflict between peoples and cultures are

manifested, the background of a narrative horizon that will be tentatively explored, renouncing first of all the consideration of architecture as a neutral protagonist of this story, but declaring, instead, right from the start, the impossibility of its 'innocence'.

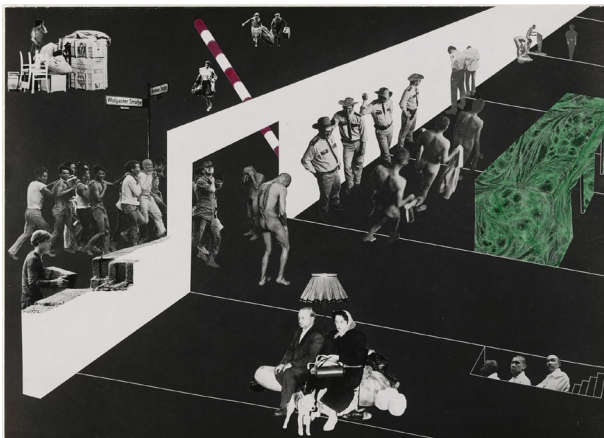
The following reflections develop, therefore, testing the tools of representation and design of architecture, as areas of possible critical interpretation of the living space. A space in continuous evolution, understood as a space of relations and connections, of interferences and conflicts, which opens a critical horizon in which representation cannot be limited to an exclusively descriptive role of the real, but it can and must instead assume that of a

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Fig. 1. Gordon Matta-Klark, *Conical Intersect. Paris 1975*. In the context of the Paris Biennale of that year, Gordon Matta-Klark, an artist of imaginative and revolutionary power, conceived one of his most famous building cuts: a disembowelment-joining of two adjoining twin 18th-century buildings that were being demolished to make way for the then nascent Centre Pompidou. Thanks to the conical section of the cuts, at a glance the viewer could see the vision of "historical" Paris and the new, modern metropolis.



Fig. 2. Rem Koolhaas, Madelon Vriesendorp, Elia Zenghelis, Zoe Zenghelis, *Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture*. 1972 |The Museum of Modern Art, Architecture and Design Collection | © 2007 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / BEELDRECHT, Hoofddorp, NL.



powerful narrator of its complexity and therefore as an activator of imagination and critical thinking, working in perfect harmony with the logic of the 'project' of which it is revealed to be an integral part.

The metaphor around which the reflections will develop is that of the wall, intended as a protection, but also as a barrier, a border, a barricade, a line of demarcation, a limit, as an impenetrable element and yet as an element whose evocative force is all enclosed in its permeability and, therefore, in the possibility of crossing it. A possible interpretation will be given of the 'walls' that scatter the contemporary scene and the reasons why we erect them, certainly a partial and not exhaustive one, but however useful to catch a glimpse of the ways in which the architectural narrative often intervenes in the dynamics put in place, to build or break them down, with the power of its creative gesture. And not without responsibility!

### The temptation of the wall

Until a few months ago, before we were overwhelmed by the pandemic outbreak, the political scene was occupied by the great problem of immigration, the need to regulate its flows and rethink the complex theme of integration with foreigners. The 'wall', with all its symbolic significance, appeared as an effective response to the intruder's looming threat. Without doubt a sovereignist response, in which, however, as Massimo Recalcati so well emphasizes, the militarization of borders, the closing of borders, the radicalization of securitarian drives, not only reflect a political temptation, but a deep and rooted inclination of the human being who has always drawn boundaries and rejected the risk of the open, just as much as he was seduced by the idea of freedom, the adventure of contamination, the desire to explore, by wandering, sometimes seen as an aesthetic practice [2].

It must be said, however, that in recent history humanity seems to have experienced new forms of barbarization of social life, in which "the neoliberal degradation of hypermodern individualism and the transfiguration of the border in the wall, fortress bastion are two faces of the same medal that define the incivility of our time" [Recalcati 2020, p. 17]. The loss of the symbolic dimension of the border as a place of transit and its metamorphosis into a barrier are the most obvious consequences. "These are the two ways that characterize the fracture

of the 'anthropological proportion' between the urgent necessity of the border and the equally urgent necessity of its transcendence" [Recalcati 2020, p. 26].

Borders, buffer zones, control systems, protected zones... the space around us is rippled everywhere by borders. Our everyday life is marked by an alternation of badges, passwords, entry and identification codes. Borders are the other side of globalization, they proliferate in order to define and defend privileges and customs, they serve to control portions of space or territory, they help us to negotiate and filter exchanges of cultures and languages. The temptation of the wall is always lurking and with it the rooted idea, to quote Sigmund Freud, the 'outside' coincides with the hostile. A latent temptation, dramatically rekindled by the recent experience of the pandemic and by the so-called 'terrorist' nature of the virus that upsets any established distinction between friend and enemy, between known and unknown between familiar and stranger and that in the obligation of social distance has unexpectedly rehabilitated the idea of the strengthening of the closure and the tightening of the borders. There has been no lack of those who, like Giorgio Agamben, stressing that every social phenomenon can have political implications, looked with suspicion at the introduction in the political lexicon of the West of the term 'social distance' and did not fail to point out that it is a sort of euphemism compared to the crudeness of the term 'confinement' which probably reflects much better the present condition [Agamben 2021, p. 43].

There is no doubt that the experience we are living is significantly modifying the fundamental arrangements of our living together and is forcing us to rethink the very idea of border, the meaning of which, in the articulation of interpersonal relationships, changes perhaps irreversibly, assimilating an idea of 'barrier' in which the new concepts of mask (a further layer between us and the surrounding world) and screen (a surface that allows us to stay in contact, but separate) enter [Casetti 2020]. Protective filters that are re-mediating our spatial coordinates, concepts that if, on the one hand, push us to reflect on new forms of proximity and experience an unprecedented concept of distance, on the other they feed and nourish on the delirium of 'contamination' which risks degenerating into a new form of ideological fundamentalism and reinforces the idea borders, limits, frontiers. Borders and frontiers are once again proliferating in our world. In their pervasiveness, the vast process of cultural and social fragmen-

tation that crosses the contemporary world, is deepened. "There are borders that, like funnels, convey to a point –along a coast or a frontier– disorderly displacement of objects and individuals, as in the case of boats that transport immigrants from one part to the other of the Mediterranean. Others that look like impenetrable pipes, like the fast-flowing roads that cross Israel and Palestine. Borders that arise from the pockets between two territories in conflict, such as the desert strip that cuts Nicosia in half, but also the borders that –like sponges– attract populations and investments, creating new communities. And boundaries that like a ghost limb continue to work even when they no longer exist. And above all, everywhere in the world, there are fences: made from barbed wire and concrete" [3].

Boundaries are sensors of the dynamics of the contemporary world, and as dynamic devices they vibrate energy and resistances which –for better or for worse– move the present history.

The term 'device' is not chosen by chance here, but it perfectly reflects the meaning Michael Foucault gave, intending as device "an absolutely heterogeneous set involving speeches, institutions, architectural structures, regulatory

Fig. 3. Rem Koolhaas, *Exodus or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture*, London, 1972. Rem Exhausted Fugitives Led to Reception Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture, 1972.

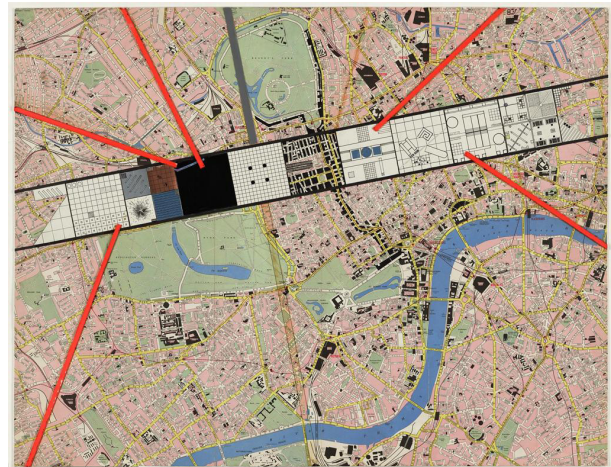


Fig. 4. Rem Koolhaas, and Elia Zenghelis, with Madelon Vriesendorp, and Zoe Zenghelis *Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture*. Project for the competition *The City as Significant Environment*, 1972.



decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical propositions, moral and philanthropic [...] the device is the network that is established between these elements<sup>2</sup> [4]. In short, by device we can intend –by extension of Foucault’s thought– a set of actions that at a certain historical moment has had, as its essential function, to respond to an urgency. A device therefore has an eminently strategic function. But if it is true, as it is true, that “terminology is the poetic moment of thought” [Agamben 2006, p. 5], the interpretation of the term ‘device’ opens to an additional use of the term in our discourse. Declined, in fact, in the specific field of the architecture of power and in particular in the field of architecture used for border control, the concept of device ends up being perfectly fitting to describe the extended idea of the ‘wall’, intended in its “dominant strategic function [...] of manipulating force relations, and rational and concerted intervention in these forces relations” [Foucault 1977, pp. 299, 300]. But it is also true that the device, always inscribed in a game of power, is infused with a “set of strategies of power relations that condition certain types of knowledge and are conditioned by it”. And it is in this sense that the project of architecture, as a device of knowledge that is that of spatial thought, and the complexity of the relationships that are triggered in it, enters into our thought!

### Walls/Side-effects

“What does it mean that architecture is a political weapon? To answer this question, we need to see how architecture, at first, is a weapon (that is, how architecture has a propensity for violence) and then, how this propensity is necessarily exploited by one or several political agendas.” [Lambert 2012, p. 59]

In his *Weaponized architecture* Léopold Lambert denounces the impossibility of the innocence of architecture with respect to the strategies of power [Lambert 2012]. He does it with an intense and provocative writing that certainly can be imagined as a political act, going so far as to suggest a project as an act of “architectural disobedience” intended as a possible path of resistance against an establishment that uses architecture as a weapon, with all the political implications that this entails. Interviewed by Lambert, Bryan Finoki, an American inde-



pendent intellectual attentive to contemporary geopolitical systems, declares himself “interested in how architects can perhaps use their skills and the value of architecture as a political art, as an urban negotiating space with institutional power; to make spatial changes on their own, to force new balances of power; to establish, in effect, dialogues with power through the medium of the project that can challenge the institution in some way” [Lambert 2012, p. 55].

Starting from these considerations, the notes that follow and the cases described wish to provide an opportunity to reflect on the way often used by architectural narrative—in its dimension as a powerful communicative act linked to design thinking—to shown itself to be an effective conceptual device capable of going beyond the force of provocation, simple rational thinking and denounce the condition of an often sore humanity, hypothesizing solutions and visions of possible worlds.

Testing the tools of the architectural gesture and its graphic narration as areas of possible critical interpretation of the living space means opening a horizon of reflection that sees the project—and its synthesis in images—as a critical instrument of interpretation, of discretization, of arbitrary—but conscious—reduction of contemporary complexity, in the elements of a visual synthesis that is in itself a design act, the result of which is first of all to decode the syntax of the elements of what exists. And it means to do this by proposing a new syntax, which is able to take into account the reasons and tensions of an urban space intended as a ‘living space’ in which it is possible to try and project new attributions of meaning. A work of ‘unveiling’ reality which interprets the truest meaning of the act of ‘representing’. In this sense, the theme of the ‘wall’ has always been a fertile ground for reflection, experimentation and amplification of the processes of signification. The power of the gesture that breaks down the function of separation between internal/external, inside/outside, private/public, has suggested design actions, be they metaphorical or real, of enormous political and social significance.

Just think of Gordon Matta-Clark’s ‘building cut’. Actions in which the anarchist and provocative American architect cut the walls of entire buildings, deconstructed houses and factories, realizing his personal visual and visionary utopia, revolutionizing the world of architecture without erecting even a wall. His an-architecture was a work of vivisection, which worked by cutting walls and at the same

Fig. 5. Léopold Lambert, Representation of the distribution of Palestinian territories occupied by Israel. In *Weaponized Architecture. The Impossible of Innocence*, 2012.

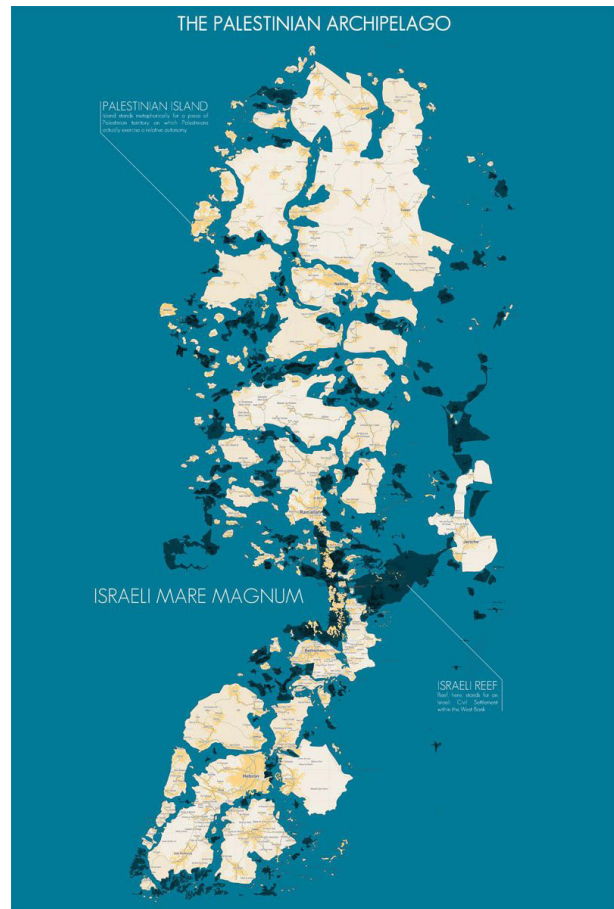
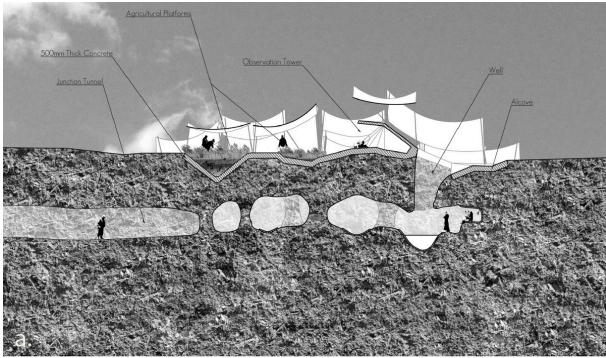


Fig. 6. Léopold Lambert, A 'disobedient architecture' for two Palestinian populations. In *Weaponized Architecture. The Impossible of Innocence*, 2012.



time opening deep lacerations in consciences. And in this way he suggested hypotheses of alternative reading of the city and of dwelling, denounced the failure of the architecture of the seventies, questioning the very meaning of dwelling and in particular the idea of 'private' (fig. 1). Those were years of mobilization and militancy and often the project was made 'manifest', as exasperation of selected aspects of reality, brought to extreme consequences in prefigurations of possible worlds, desirable or terrible, present *in nuce* in the world we inhabit.

Surprisingly, something of that provocative gesture, albeit with a completely different meaning, has recently returned in the *La Ferita* opened on the facade of Palazzo Strozzi, site specific work with which JR, the French 'urban artist-ta' – as he likes to define himself – wanted in some way to reinterpret the building, symbol of the Italian Renaissance, slicing the fifth wall, opening a wound on it, revealing the precious interior space and thus directing the attention of the community, to reflect on the inaccessibility of places of culture at the time of the pandemic and on the interrupted relationship with art that has characterized this long year of social distancing. A theme which has been particularly felt in these months in which the border, as said before, has become a metaphor of our existential condition, assuming new and unusual meanings.

In the same years in which Gordon Matta-Clark was opening holes in the walls with artistic gesture, another architect debuted on the international scene with a project in which the representation of the wall proved to be an unexpected protagonist. It was Rem Koolhaas who, in 1972, with his *Exodus or the voluntary prisoners of architecture* (figs. 2-4) offered the world his powerful idea of the role of architecture in the visionary interpretation of reality and in the prefiguration of possible worlds. As is often the case in Koolhaas' work, the project is intended as a story to be told, as the result of programming, as a possible scenario, much more than as an architectural object itself [5]. With a clear reference to Cold War Berlin, the project called for the construction of an ideal city structure in the heart of London. The suggestion proposed was to create a void within the city, enclosed by two walls, archetypal structures of architecture, which Koolhaas himself ironically defines "beautiful" in his relation to the project. An idea of a wall in which the element is interpreted, not as a simple supporting structure but as a symbol able to express at the highest level the meaning of separation while staging its negation. The gap between

the two walls is in fact transformed into a new ideal city that reuses the element of the wall for its symbolic and psychological character. The wall thus becomes a positive force, able not only to overlap the existing urban structure, but also to impose a new model of metropolis able to generate in turn a new lifestyle, marked by moments of almost mystical retreat and participation in social activities. So, in the metaphor of the project and its narration, the inhabitants end up gradually choosing to leave the city to move into that 'strip' thus becoming 'volunteer

prisoners of architecture'. "Suddenly, —as one can read in the project report— a strip of intense metropolitan desirability runs through central London. This strip is like an airstrip for the new architecture of collective monuments. Two walls enclose and protect this area to maintain its integrity and to prevent any contamination of its surface by the cancerous organism that threatens to swallow it. Soon, the first prisoners beg to be admitted. Their number quickly swells into an unstoppable stream. We witness the exodus of London" [MOMA 1999 p. 294]. The

Fig. 7. Summary history of the genesis and communication of the idea of the US-Mexico wall from the first declarations until the publication of the call in February 2017.

13 NOVEMBRE 2016

**CBS INTERVIEW  
UNA RECINZIONE  
DIVERSA DAL MURO  
VA BENE**

TRUMP TOWER  
MANHATTAN (NY)

Trump, dopo la sua vittoria al Collegio Elettorale, appare in un'intervista su 60 Minutes (CBS NEWS) e il suo impenetrabile continuo muro diventa una "recinzione".

**"For certain areas I would, but certain areas, a wall is more appropriate. I'm very good at this, it's called construction."**

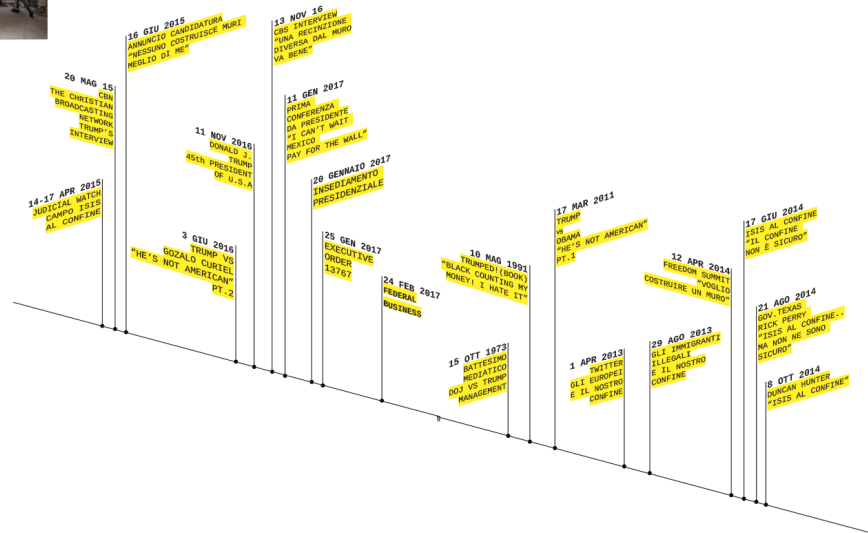




Fig. 8. Census of active, realized or planned physical control and separation devices in the world geopolitical system as of 2017.



project consists of 18 magnificent drawings, kept today at the MOMA in New York, realized in watercolors and collages to which Koolhaas entrusted the disturbing and desecrating message of his walled city, whose main idea is to use the 'intense and destructive force' of architecture, metaphorically represented by that idea of the wall that was and always is 'instrument and source of desperation'. And certainly a source and instrument of despair are the walls built along the physical, material and/or immaterial 'boundaries' that dot our world, a hot topic where conflict becomes real and where it seems more urgent to use design thinking and its representation as a powerful detonator of political and social denunciation through that refined intellectual work, all played out on the border between action and provocation, between design and communication, which inspires many architects, intellectuals and collectives of militant designers. Among others, the same Léopold Lambert with whom we started and his *Weaponized architecture*. Lambert's architectural narrative focuses on exemplary cases of barriers, borders, walls, designed or even planned that dot what he himself defines and draws as the archipelago of the Palestinian territories in the Magnum Sea of Israel (fig. 5). The metaphor is as powerful as the words of the Palestinian architect Nurhan Abujidi in his *Urbicide in Palestine. Spaces of Oppression and Resilience* describe the state of occupation and siege experienced by Palestinians residing in the West Bank and Gaza as a condition of physical constraint within 'lines' [Abujidi 2019]. And it is precisely the power of the line understood as a sign and therefore design of architecture that is the starting point of Lambert's research, the inspiration from which his idea of a "durable architecture" was born, better than an architectural disobedience that takes shape in a project of great sensitivity than with different and interesting references to underground architecture, abandoned structures near Ramallah and the textile language of the architecture of the Bedouin culture, proposes the project of a *Qasr*, a temporary residence, intended as a place of possible negotiation between two peoples very different from each other, the Bedouins and Palestinian farmers, who share only the daily suffering caused by Israeli colonization. The building is imagined as a large underground structure, hidden from the early stages of its construction by a system of tents and veils that camouflage its presence and that can be used by Palestinians as an agricultural platform and temporary dwelling, but of which the Bedouins can appropriate as caravanserais for their animals and for themselves during



the stops of their continuous wandering between the islands of the Palestinian archipelago (fig. 6). What is striking about the Lambert project, and that emerges clearly from his reflections, as of the graphic novel *Lost in the Line* that closes his writing, is the ideal of a subversive architect, who uses the architectural project, even just imagined and designed, to play with the system, to circumvent certain political constraints, or to try to somehow recalibrate the urban environment that so often lives in a dimension of illogical injustice.

Others set themselves the same goal through an architectural narrative to which they entrust the task of denouncing the state of fact. Proof of this is the intense activity of

the collective Multiplicity, a research agency for the territory that with its dense series of projects, installations, workshops has placed itself as a watchful sentinel of some of the most dramatic criticalities of the contemporary geopolitical context. Just think of the intense Solid See project conducted on the current geopolitical order of the Mediterranean Sea and the drama of migratory flows, but above all the *Border Device(s)* project, an investigation that reveals how, looking parallel to the global flows (of people, goods and ideas) and territorial restrictions, it is possible to reveal how individual and collective identities are defined, in all of their complexity, exactly in the act of crossing borders.

Fig. 9. Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman, Border fence. Living at the border\_ MOMA Small Scale, Big Change: New Architectures of Social Engagement San Diego-Tijuana border illustration, 2001.

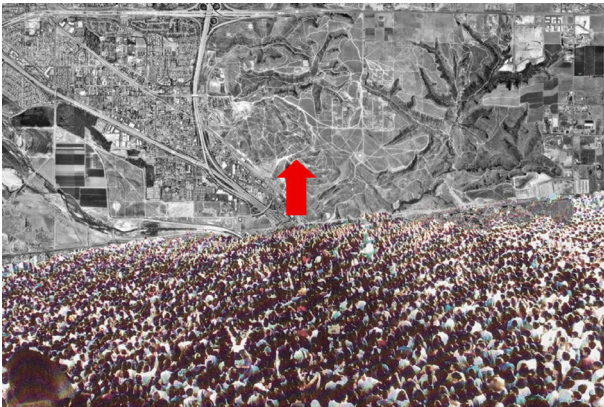
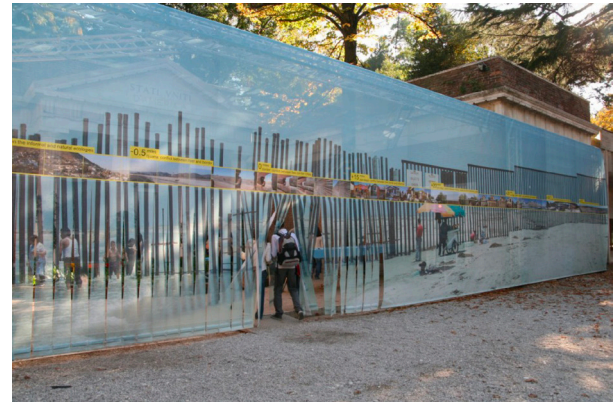


Fig. 10. Estudio Teddy Cruz+Forman, Border fence. Living at the border\_ Venice Biennale, United States Pavilion 2008. Photographic reproduction of the US-Mexico border (photo by Lisbet Arboe).



## Living on the edge

"The symbolic function of the border is not only to delimit our identity (collective or individual), but also to ensure exchange, transition, communication with the foreigner. Each border, in fact, defines an identity only by relating it to a difference. In the virtue of the 'porosity' is the fundamental attribute of the border".  
[Recalcati 2020, p. 28]

"*En una línea el mundo se une. Con una línea el mundo se separa. Dibujare es hermoso y tremendo*" [6]. Short and intense, this poem by the Basque sculptor Eduardo Chillida expresses with icastic effectiveness the tremendous power of design and its materialization of what we call architecture. A simple line has, in fact, the ability to divide an environment into two impermeable environments, as we are reminded by the obvious geopolitical examples of the border walls that dot our world and regarding which we have talked so far. One of the others has, for some years, taken on a special symbolic value: that which, in the intentions of the President of the United States of the time, Donald Trump, was to be erected along the border between the United States and Mexico.

Exactly on that wall a few years ago a brilliant and visionary student – one of those in whose intense gaze you sometimes find the sense and the reasons why you took this trip – suggested a really singular theme for his thesis on architecture: he wanted to participate in the *Solicitud Number 2017-JC-RT-001*, with which on February 24, 2017 the Office U.S. Customs and Border protection of the Department of Homeland Security requested: "Design and build of several prototype wall structure in the vicinarity of the United States border with Mexico" [7]. In short, Carmine, that's my student's name, asked me seriously to participate in the Trump administration's electronic request to propose ideas and prototypes for the design and construction of various protective structures near the Mexican border. The contract, conducted in two phases, required to present, in the first phase, a 'conceptual' document by 10 March 2017. A little over two weeks for a project that was supposed to occupy a portion of territory of about 3000 kilometers. It took me a moment to understand the extent of the provocation and I accepted the challenge. I first asked Carmine to construct a detailed documentation on the narrative with which the idea of the wall had been formalized in the mind of Trump

(and in that of a large part of that of his supporters!) and was then conveyed to the American public opinion (fig. 7). The result was a document of extraordinary interest in which the representation of the idea of the wall of Trump and its media translation were the background to a much more articulated narrative on the theme of 'physical control devices' and 'active separation devices' that were present worldwide well beyond the single episode in question.

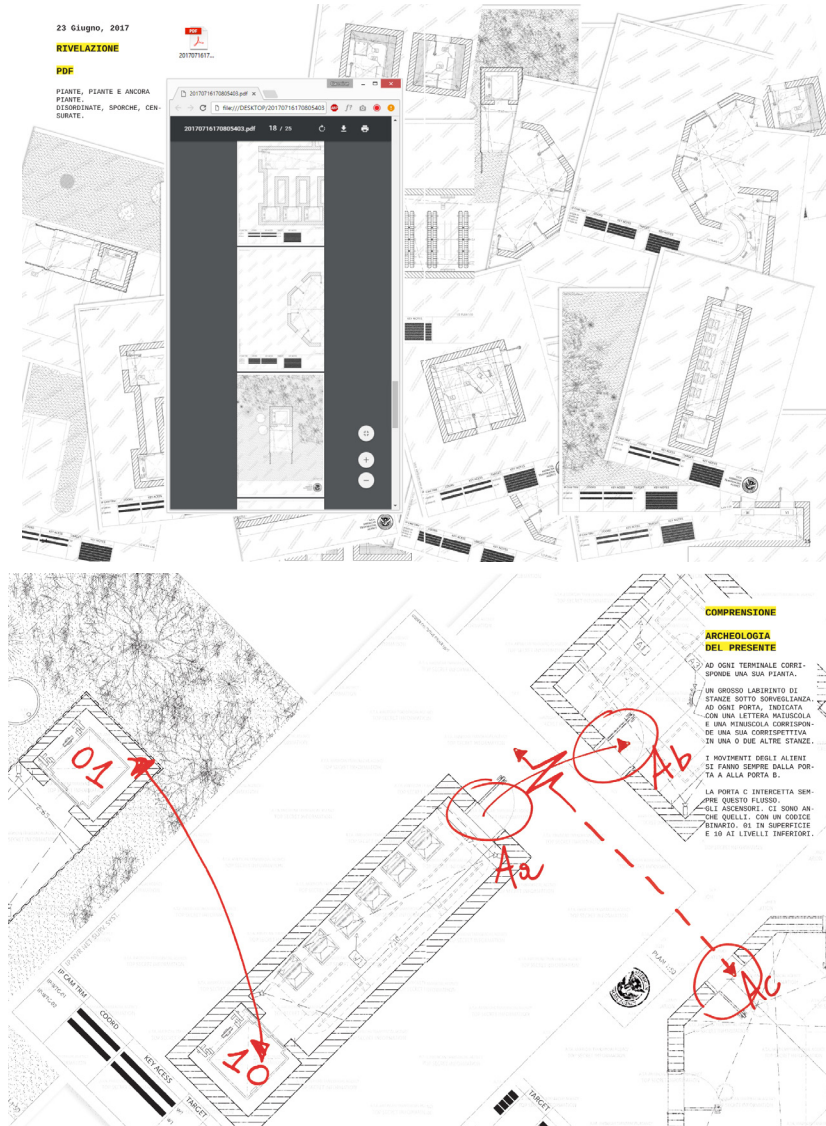
The census of the borders controlled by more or less active devices had given surprising results. The list of those borders realized or even just programmed was incredibly long and the synoptic representation of their precise location on the globe, disturbing (fig. 8). It was no longer a question of reasoning on 'a wall', but of understanding separation devices as an inescapable conceptual category in order to understand the contemporary world. The opinion movement around Trump's project has been intense for years. Just think of the precious work *Leaving on the Edge* (fig. 9) with which Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman have denounced and intensely fought since the early 2000s against the idea still dominant in political discourse, so the border between the United States and Mexico is a place of criminalisation [8]. With actions from below, Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman managed to transform that boundary into a place of widespread creativity, through projects with high emotional potential all played on the thread of media provocation and metaphorical force of images.

A powerful work of representation that finds its strongest expression in 2008 at the 11th Venice Architecture Biennale, with the beautiful installation *Border Fence*. A provocative life-size photographic reproduction of the border fence between the USA and Mexico concealed the United States Pavilion of America at the Gardens and forced, with a strong metaphorical connotation, anyone who wanted to access the pavilion itself, at the physical act of the crossing, breaking the surface, and defeating the sense of impassable limit (fig. 10).

In the power of the images made by Teddy Cruz in the widespread use of collage and in the precise will to use the subversive force of representation, understood as provocation, there is the distinct echo of that intense season of the designed architecture that has been a source of inspiration for the approach that Carmine wanted to give to his project entitled *American Transracial Agency. Architecture of conflict* [9].

Fig. 11. American Transracial Agency. Architecture of conflict Collateral effects. Thesis in Architecture, by Carmine Errico a.y. 2016/2017, Department of Architecture and Industrial Design. The digital invasion of information about the American Transracial Agency.

Fig. 12. American Transracial Agency. Architecture of conflict Side effects. Thesis in Architecture, by Carmine Errico a.y. 2016/2017 Department of Architecture and Industrial Design. An excerpt of the spatial sequence through which the process of 'racial mutation' takes place.

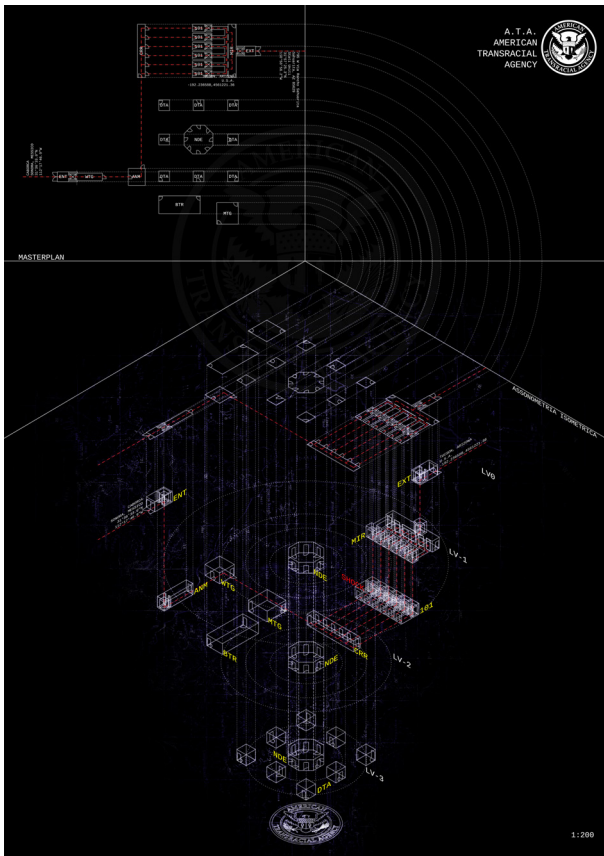




With an analogous attitude to understand the concept of wall –and its representation– not only as a barrier; but as a real spatial device and therefore this is a complex place where things happen, the project of the American Transracial Agency moves within a totally imaginary and surreal dimension proposing to create a ‘space’ intended as a sequence of places/happenings and therefore this process is first conceptual and then physical. A space made up of relational devices that in the thickness of the conceptual

wall are able –through a subtle game of the absurd– to neutralize the causes of the effect of separation and exclusion that it generates and underlies. In fact, all of the ‘side effects’ of the presence of the wall are enclosed in the project of a complex underground architecture located near the border between the USA and Mexico and it consists of access areas, waiting areas, control spaces, rooms with neuronal activators, elevators, entry routes and exit areas beyond the wall. Elements of a path capable of modifying, at the request of the interested party, in real time –and in both directions!–, the ‘race’ (provocative extension of the concept of nationality) of the person in transit and thus render ineffective the barrier created by the wall. All of this is described through a concise narrative, a sort of graphic novel that provides, through drawings of architecture in all likelihood, a punctual description of the places and actions. The process starts from the sudden appearance on the narrator’s PC, of the documents of the ‘archivo’ 404: a rain of documents, maps, itineraries, conceptual maps, aerial photos... , documents that should have remained secret and that instead because of a ‘bug’ in the internet spread virally, reveal the process in progress and make it clear to the world (fig. 11).

Fig. 13. American Transracial Agency. Architecture of conflict. Collateral effects. Exploded view of the hypogeal structure and identification of the spatial articulation.



The more the narration pushes on the limit of the absurd and of the science fiction, the more the representation of the places is probable and precise (fig. 12). The more absurd the state of conflict created by the wall, the more effective and definitive the surreal solution proposed and described with the force of design provocation. A provocation that finds resonance in the representative choices in which the description of the project assumes the power evoking a declaration of intent, thanks to the communicative capacity of the image and its staging in the visual presentation of the project that through the representation becomes a story (fig. 13).

“Almost at the beginning of each project there is [...] a definition in words –a text– a concept, an ambition, or a theme that is put into words, and only when it is put into words can one begin to proceed, to think about architecture; Words trigger the project. All our projects, or our best projects, are first defined in literary terms, which then suggest an entire architectural program [...] architecture is an intellectual discipline, Writing is the privileged communication of our intellectual disciplines”.

[Koolhaas 1978, p. 42]

## Notes

[1] The passage is taken from an interview made in 2010 by Leopold Lambert to Brayan Finoki, an independent American writer; attentive observer of the militarized spaces and their geopolitical consequences in 2010 by Leopold Lambert and available on page <<https://thefunambulist.net/architecture/interview-bryan-finoki-for-weaponized-architecture>> (accessed 2021, May 28). The interview was then published Lambert 2012, pp. 48-61.

[2] The way in which wandering has represented a primary act of transformation of the environment and has proved to be an aesthetic instrument of knowledge and significance of space is investigated in the beautiful book: Careri 2006. In this regard, see also Solnit 2002, where the Author addresses the issue of leaving the enclosed space and therefore overcoming barriers and limits by investigating the relationship between the history of walking and the history of thought.

[3] The excerpt is taken from the presentation text of the exhibition *Border Device(s)/Dispositivi di confin*, –a project elaborated by Multiplicity– set up in 2004 at the conclusion of a multi-year research on the 'policies and mythologies of borders', by the Fondazione Collegio San Carlo di Modena. The sensitive work of Multiplicity, a research agency on the territory coordinated by Stefano Boeri, collected the results of a long research path on the fragmentation of contemporary space.

[4] The concept of device is one of the most powerful contemporary concepts, brought on the philosophical scene in the mid-seventies of the past century by Michel Foucault. It is a decisive technical term in the strategy of his thought, of which Foucault does not give a precise definition, but nevertheless, as Agamben points out, he approaches in an interview in 1977, from which the quotes are taken. The interview was then published in the collection of writings *Dits et écrits* for the types of Gallimard. Two contemporary authors very significant for contemporaneity, Gilles Deleuze and Giorgio Agamben, have both dedicated to the theme two short essays, –both entitled *Che cosa è un Dispositivo?*– offering ideas for updating a concept that finds enormous scope for application in the horizon of contemporary culture and its media devices.

[5] The iconoclastic dimension of Koolhaas manifested itself from the beginning. His final design at the Architectural Association School of Archi

ecture in London was a series of 18 drawings, watercolors and collages called *Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture*, which echoed the inspiration of James Ballard's tales and his surrealist novels. In this project, Koolhaas and his collaborators (Madelon Vriesendorp, Elia Zenghelis, Zoe Zenghelis), mocked the modernist utopias of their predecessors, sarcastically describing the Berlin Wall as a "design masterpiece" and suggesting a walled city inside London as a way to create a new urban culture, which would have led the inhabitants to leave the rest of the city in ruin. About the project see: Koolhaas, Zenghelis 1972, pp. 42-45.

[6] Eduardo Chillida, a Basque sculptor with intense spatial poetics, wrote these five verses in 1983 in one of the numerous sketches in which he depicted the closed palm of a hand, with which he investigated the concept of delimiting a portion of space and its relationship with the rest of the way.

[7] This is the notice published on 24 February 2017 by which the U.S. Customs and Border protection office of the Department of Homeland Department of Homeland Security, followed up on the intentions of the United States government presided over by Donald Trump to build a wall on the border between USA-MEXICO <<https://www.cbp.gov/frontline/border-wall-prototype-designs>> (accessed 2021, June 23).

[8] Teddy Cruz, urban architect and lecturer in Public Culture and Urbanism at the Visual Arts Department of the University of California, San Diego, is internationally known for his urban and architectural research on the border between Tijuana and San Diego. Area where his work is aimed at interpreting the neighborhoods of border immigrants, as places of cultural production, from which to rethink urban policy, affordable housing and civic infrastructure. His investigation of this 'geography of conflict' inspired a design practice and a project production pedagogy rich in suggestions. On his work and on that of Estudio Teddy Cruz + Forman see among others, Misra 2007.

[9] The thesis in Architecture with the title *American Transracial Agency. Architecture of conflict. Effetti collaterali*, was discussed by Carmine Errico, with praise and dignity of the press in July 2017 at the Department of Architecture and Industrial Design of the University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli (supervisor prof. A. Cirafici, co-rapporteur prof. F. Ippolito).

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