

In This Issue [1/2019]

EDITORIAL

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An open issue, by definition, does not have a mandate to explore a particular theme. This is generally true and also our journal followed such a pattern in the past. Most contributions in this issue, though, seemed to have privileged a category and a theme: reflective practice and a re-assessment of the Modern. And the two are in reciprocal influence as a modern practice is expected to be reflective, while a reflective practice is inevitably modern if, indeed, wants to address the important questions of our modern culture. This happened partially unintentionally, as the contributions are largely the results of peer-reviewed accepted manuscripts proposed to us by the authors, but partially intentionally, with our pre- and post-peer-review editorial screening, and the few solicited contributions and reviews of books and exhibitions, thanks our steering editorial policy.

It is interesting to note such a growing concern, as it may signal a renewed interest in the ideas and the values proposed and challenged by modern architecture throughout the arc of its long experience.

Whether a thoughtful intervention of preservation of a BBPR's seminal work of Modernism (Belgiojoso), or an intelligent and esthetically savvy exploration into the possibilities of sustainable design (Mehrotra), or a compositionally sophisticated modern re-elaboration of the theme of the villa (Malfona), or the re-appraisal of a high point of modern urbanism such as the QT8 in Milan (Kousidi), or the reviews of a book on Italian modernist Gino Valle (Frampton), a show on Corbu and Ando in Chicago (Mumford), a book on Steven Holl's meditation lake retreat (Platt), the last Venice Architecture Biennale on the modern promise for freer access to better public spaces (Brisotto, Murphy & Battaglin Ramos), the mode of modern reflective practice clearly permeates most of the issue.

Additionally, also the other contributions, perhaps from a more distant range, revolve around fundamental questions of the modern experience: how is the “line” (Voordouw), as a basic compositional element of design (e.g. think of Van de Velde’s “line-force”), going to change through digital technology? how can new virtual technology (Lipschitz) change the modes of shaping landscapes, especially in farmland environments? how can we contribute, in architecture and other design fields, to solve broader social problems such as gentrification processes (Zhao), affordable housing (Van Rooyen & Bianchi), homelessness (Luoni), and informal settlements (Chagas Cavalvanti & Li Piani)? What new strategies (Kelbaugh) can still be attempted to ameliorate the “suburban question”?

Concludes the issue my *in memoriam* homage to a giant of modern architecture, Robert Venturi, who, fittingly so, refused to be considered a “post-modernist,” but rather a “modern mannerist.”

This issue of *The Plan Journal* is perhaps an indication that the “project of modern architecture,” meant as the on-going perfecting of a design method and the testing of its application to socially and culturally relevant questions, is still well underway. It is therefore still upon us, and future generations, to continue develop it and enrich it with new meanings, explorations, and realizations for the growth of our collective culture and the improvement of our physical environment and people’s life.