



IPPOLITO PESTELLINI LAPARELLI

Ippolito Pestellini Laparelli is a former student of Politecnico di Milano and a partner of OMA. We discussed about the role of individuals, who create the identity of this world known design office. Ippolito talked about his work on preservation, scenography, curatorship and one of the latest AMO research on the clubbing culture, which he investigates with the students of MIAW.

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Elizaveta Sudravskaya: You are a former student of Politecnico di Milano. Do you notice much changes here in school since your graduation?

Ippolito Pestellini Laparelli: I have never been in real contact with Politecnico after I left and this is my first time to be back here. I gave some talks in the studios and lead a lecture during the design week last year. There I met Gennaro Postiglione, who asked me to do one of the workshops this year. Politecnico is more international and diverse now. It is a very good component to have more foreigners and Asians who were not here at the time I was studying.

ES: How did your OMA story started?

IPL: During my studies I went on Erasmus in Netherlands at TU Delft. After my graduation, I did not have the intention to go back to Netherlands. I was sending portfolios to several offices both in Europe and Unites States. I applied also to OMA New York, which at that time was very small and now became a very good big component of the office. Instead, they had place in Rotterdam. I went there for six months and then stayed for eleven years.

ES: Is it more correct to consider you as a part of OMA or as an individual architect?

IPL: I am a Partner of OMA and I decided to commit to the office. The good thing about OMA is that it allows a high degree of plurality. Every single partner is really different from each other. We really have different voices and you can clearly see that from the projects we do. Some of them are more hard core and technical, some projects are more theoretical, more refined or more research oriented. That is the reflection on how the office operates and on the individuals that compose the office. I do not think there is another office with the similar level of diversity. I do not want to praise OMA, but sometimes people criticize us very openly. It is not easy to make a research project, a preservation, a book, a branding study and a product design under the same roof by the same people. We might not be the best architects, the best researches or the best product designers, but the situation of having everything combined into one single structure is quite unique. People in Italy identify OMA with Rem, but in reality it is a collective of people.

ES: OMA is noted for its non-stop experimentation. How do you apply this approach in field of preservation?

IPL: Preservation was an integral part of office production since 1970's. Dutch parliament extension is both an architectural and a preservation project. Preservation is not something that emerged suddenly in the most recent phase of the office or something in the opposite of modernity. It is the output of modernity. We produced a lot of research for Cronocaos, an exhibition on preservation, which was launched at 2010 Venice Biennale. There we tried to link the invention of modernity to the invention of preservation. We started to look back and preserve the past in these moments of rapid acceleration and development. Modernity invented the preservation.

There is a different kind of experimentation in preservation: very sophisticated research on the materials, on the programming and strategy, implementation of the elements you would never think about in the normal construction. You have so much restrictions in preservation that you have to come out with the inventions.

ES: Can you tell about your most important experience in the field of scenography and curatorship?

IPL: In the office I have been always working between OMA and AMO or between buildings and not buildings. In collaboration with Fondazione Prada, I curated some art exhibitions. I have curated Monditalia, which was the second part of 2014 Venice Biennale - a collaboration between architecture, theater, music, cinema and dance. For the next two years I would be a part of curatorial team Manifesta 12 in Palermo - a migrating European art biennial.

Then, with Prada we design approximately six stages for the fashion show per year and I have been doing it for ten years. A fashion show is not so different from a theatrical performance. From fashion we developed the interest in scenography and we designed a Greek theater in Siracusa in 2013. It was a Greek drama theater - maybe the most essential kind of theater that you can imagine.

ES: What is Manifesto of your MIAW section? How do you approach Scalo Farini?

IPL: We imagined an agency that creates a temporary event in Scalo Farini, focusing on urban and digital subcultures. Students are designing a large temporary event and not really a masterplan. In the city like Milan a lot have been built without necessity. We want to find a middle ground between developing an area in traditional way through masterplan and construction and founding a park on the other side. We study the model of contemporary and temporary event dedicated mostly to younger generations, an event that can generate a new form of urban economy and a lot of revenue. This revenue can keep the area free for all of the temporary activities. If you look at Sziget festival in Budapest or Coachella, they all are enterprises that generate a very high revenue every year through an even that disappear. The beautiful thing is that you can implement the level of design of the area, which is really light. More that occupation it is a form of colonization. We treat a site almost like a geography and not like a plot.

We are having a lot of fun and not taking it too seriously. We are experimenting with video and also trying to develop an extremely illustrative master plan. We make the real research, understanding who the target is and what kind of program we need for this target. We treat the student like a creative agency. Some of them are working on communication of events. They came up with the Instagram strategy and identity of the posters. I want to show that architecture does not exist in the vacuum. It is affected by music, porno, communication and scenography. It is very difficult for me to abstract architecture from all this components and here we are testing this creative mix.