The City as a Game - Architecture as Play [abstract]

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Looking at the birth of the architect's involvement in the surgery of cities, we have to understand, not only how the notion of humanity got lost as new ideals were introduced, but maybe to think, that there was never a powerful concept available on the art of inhabitation. Thus, the proliferation of engineering, Taylorist and Fordist principles have suddenly amplified the influence of the architect, shifting the scale and thus loosing the grain, but also maybe the idea of the white canvas: the cubist flat space, in which in a utopian sense, all can unfold. In that sense the Ville Contemporaine from the year 1922 suggests that rules are not written, but are also not within the consciousness of the architect.

Involvement in the shaping of cities carry a utopian thought that has come to a full scale articulation in the radical [paper] architectures of the mid twentieth century. The initial project then has been blurred by a reversal of argumentation, in which the organic refiguration of the metropolis has been recruited as a repository for architectonic concepts. The complex non-causality diagnosed in the metropolis, centered on the discussion of public space, and has unalterably aroused the programmatic mission of architecture vesting the object of architecture as a site for political and social utopia.

The stringent, prescriptive and rigid forms of the prewar Amsterdam Extension Plan, AUP gave birth to the interstitial. Where the utopia of rectilinear repetition could not be maintained, was broken by the topographies of reality, after the war, after the rain, places dedicated to a new logic have emerged. This is the ground, on which the playgrounds of Aldo van Eyck have been planted first. Architecture without walls, more infrastructure than building, it forms, next to other examples a typology of architecture that has been born out of an overexposure to the logic of the City. Which kind of concessions were made, were made possible and were mediated through van Eyck's playgrounds?

Architectures of transparency, porosity emphasize connectivity and discard shelter as the driving force of architecture. The proposed paper engages in the disentanglement of the confluence between two irreconcilable states, to reveal the conceptual ramification on form and program of the architectural project. In camouflaging in a field condition, architecture is revealed to be driven by a disbelief in containment. The archetype of the wall is finally eroded by transparencies and porosities.