

Editorial

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“Tout est forme, et la vie même est une forme.”

Honoré de Balzac.

By teaching a child how to put little wooden shapes into correspondingly shaped holes, one could consider form as something that is absolutely defined. However the transitive of this title in itself suggests the malleability of form, of which the phenomenon of the city offers one of the best examples.

The city is shape. The city is shaping shapes. But the city is also about rules and the defining of rules. Enough has been written on the topic of the city and our ambition here lies not in reassessing this topic in a completely new way. On the contrary, we consider one book to still be relevant as one of the best commentaries on the city and its cosmos. Exactly 50 years ago Aldo Rossi wrote his seminal work *The Architecture of the City* and suggested in the most dedicated, vague and yet convincing manner the ways in which the city is defined by shape. With his legendary ambiguity, Rossi believed in the permanence of form but also in its obsolescence.

We choose to dedicate this issue of CARTHÀ to the city, and to its architecture. Paying tribute to Rossi, we have borrowed the original structure from *The Architecture of the City* as a canvas, with the ambition of attempting to delineate their possible contemporary interpre-

tation. Each author was attributed one of the 33 subtitles of the original book, and was given *carte blanche* to define the extent to which his or her contribution would directly relate to Rossi and to the topic assigned. The resulting contributions range from essays and critiques to project descriptions and images. The initial motivation was that the result would be as eclectic and fragmented as its source, while also emphasising the contemporaneity and universality of Rossi's thoughts. Above all, this issue of CARTHÀ has the aspiration to represent a collective work, one that honours the collective form of form: the city.