

Editorial

CARTHA

The inevitability of the triangle

When dissecting the building process, we found that we could pindown three main intervenients; client, architect and user.

_The client is the source of the process. It is the will and the birth of the whole discussion. Without client, there would be no project, no building.

_The architect is the means to an end. It is the negotiator between the client's wishes, the user's needs and his own views.

_The user is the end, the one that gives meaning to the built environment, that projects itself onto it, appropriates and lives in it, with it.¹

These three entities are always present even if they are absent. This is possible due to the collective and societal nature of Man, which allows individuals to assimilate an empirical knowledge about the built environment and to take an active role in its construction. The built environment, and its language, are the result of the constant, either conscious or unconscious, dialogue between this trinity.

If we were to understand the role of the client as a specific entity that starts the project, follows it through to its conclusion and ends up profiting from

its use, we could argue that, for example, in the "Torre de David" project², the figure of the original client was replaced by an informally organized group of people that started taking over an unoccupied structure. For them, the project started as soon as they moved in and had to transform the raw structure into livable quarters.

We could use the same example to discuss the absence of the role of the architect. Even though there was no architect involved in the planning and execution processes of the "finished" structure, the concept of what architecture is, is extremely present. The materials used, the disposition of the rooms, the placing of the household amenities, these are all decisions that are deeply influenced by the perception these people have of their built environment that is, in turn, influenced by architects.

In this same situation, the final user was not the originally intended. As the original project came to an halt, a new potential user started started to appear, a user that would be detached from the one idealized by the client and the architect but still a very valid one. The people that took the Torre over gave purpose to this otherwise dead skeleton, they won it over and brought it to life by projecting onto it their needs and wants.

This realization of the inevitability of the triangle is both comforting and disturbing for architects for even though it is known that architects will always be

¹ as brilliantly explored by the work of Onnis Luque "USF DF", featured in this issue

² see "Back in the Caves" by Albert Palazon in this issue

indirectly present, it is also known that they do not have to be present, *per se*. This reinforces the strength and responsibility of architecture as a social event but questions the role of the architect as a *persona*.

In our present situation, these figures have become decomposed to the point that, for instance, an investor from Suriname that is unknowingly backing a real-estate developer in Zurich, via his stock-market portfolio, might end up being the end-user of the luxury housing complex this developer builds in Italy. The Triangle can be multiplied but, at the end, it is just a matter of proximity, it can always be brought down to the three original vertices.

With this issue, Santísima Trinidad, we aim to take a picture of the current conception of the client-architect-user relation, the influence it has on our reality and how it is influenced by it in return.³ As one might see when reading it, the presence of the three entities is mostly volatile; sometimes the three vertices have been exploded into multiple dots becoming blurry, sometimes one of the vertices is engulfed by the other two⁴, other times all of the vertices becomes a sole point.⁵ But again, it is a matter of proximity, the triangle is always there.

³ see "Gears of Utopia" by Tanguy Auffret-Postel in this issue

⁴ see "Ghata – A Cover against Herculean Odds" by Rabih Shibli in this issue

⁵ see "A Portrait of Stone" by Bonell and Dòriga in this issue