

Santo Giunta  
In the places of “Fragmenta”



Author: *Michele Sbacchi*  
Title: *Costruzioni semplici. Nove case nella campagna siciliana*  
Language: *italian*  
Publisher: *Bramea editore*  
Characteristics: *17 x 24cm, 160 pages, paperback, colours*  
ISBN: *978-88-94239-80-5*  
Year: *2017*



Author: *Vincenzo Latina*  
Title: *Sulla roccia verso il cielo. Le tautologie imperfette*  
Language: *italian*  
Publisher: *Bramea editore*  
Characteristics: *17 x 24cm, 160 pages, paperback, colours*  
ISBN: *978-88-942398-1-2*  
Year: *2018*



Author: *Yiorgos Hadjichristou*  
Curatore: *Michele Sbacchi*  
Title: *Il confine poroso. Riverberi nelle Terre Dormienti di Cipro*  
Language: *italian*  
Publisher: *Bramea editore*  
Characteristics: *17 x 24cm, 160 pages, paperback, colours*  
ISBN: *978-88-942398-3-6*  
Year: *2020*

Paying a close reading of the editing (drawings, photos, captions) that regulates the books of the series “Fragmenta” means to follow a path towards curiosity. Reading the texts – and the digressions that catch the reader in their complementarity – is, all the more so, also a path towards curiosity. The new publishing endeavour by Bramea Editore mirrors the will of facing the realm of built architecture with books that span an international point of view.

The themes addressed by “Fragmenta” – as declared by the publisher Giacinto Cerviere – fall in the cultural realm of “acting architects”<sup>1</sup> This specific attitude constitutes a clear identity of the Book Series.

The small publishing company takes the appealing name of a very rare butterfly, Bramea. This butterfly has a special story: it survived the last glaciation and, consequently, since 25 millions of years it has inhabited the area of Vulture in Southern Italy, where Bramea is located. The name of the butterfly is Bramea Europea and it has been discovered in the Sixties, in the protected area of Lago piccolo di Monticchio.

To pay homage to this singular leaving organism betrays a deeply sym-

bolic meaning: a sort of cultural resistance springing from the South. As Cerviere writes, «like many Bramee butterflies the publisher will welcome in his “habitat” all the authors that want to share their cultural path».

In the wake of this desirable suggestion we can better look at the design issues portrayed in “Fragmenta” books. The texts contained in the books open up a scenery where the projects are located and where the “militant architect” is the protagonist.

This is the cultural realm in which “Fragmenta” acts. It does so offering to the reader three possible paths for on-going stories.

The first is about the *Costruzioni semplici*. Nove case nella campagna siciliana, by Michele Sbacchi. A book about “small” houses that insert themselves in the countryside rooting on the ground from which they take their lifeblood. These are indeed design actions by a topographer-architect who – as writes Vincenzo Latina in the introductory essay: «The complex simplicity in the rereading of the land inserts the buildings on the soil. Similarly to the way by which vines are planted and vineyards are constructed. His houses are similar to small agrarian estates which lay peacefully on the small asperities of the soil. They are “housing tools” in which the final simplicity is the outcome of a complex thought.» (Latina 2017, p. 10)

In this book Sbacchi describes, within the complexity of the existing situations, some detached houses, or country houses built «in the same rather restricted area: the countryside in the Belice Valley, on the South coast of Sicily.» (Sbacchi 2017, p. 17)

The story is treated with writing ability. The author takes the occasion to dwell upon the relationship between architecture and agriculture. It is also linked to the establishment of a way of life that Sbacchi defines as architect as well as scholar. This is definitely the case for Marklund Oldenburg house that finds its final location in the upper part of the plot in between to pieces of vineyard. The system road/parking/house/swimming pool adheres to the topography following it. Every room of the ground floor happens to be at the different levels of the outdoor space (a sort of “rustic raumplan”). The long facade faces the view and the pool and acting as its continuation is placed aside the house. The making of architecture elaborates a way of living, between indoor and outdoor, forth and back, using simple yet clever forms.

The second path is the book by Vincenzo Latina, *Sulla roccia verso il cielo. Le tautologie imperfette*, with an introductory essay by Marco Biraghi entitled: “Le tautologie imperfette”. This book deals with the effort to make an architecture that is aware of its geographical location and its historical condition.

Vincenzo Latina «belongs to the rescripted group of architects – according to Biraghi – that conceives its profession as the exercise of a wider vision both in space and time; a vision able to encompass reasons not strictly related to the limited realm of the object to be designed. Yet these, apparently external reasons, end up to partake in the project as concrete forms and not only as general principles.» (Biraghi 2018, p. 12)

The book is intertwined to a deep speculation on the concept of space in architecture. They are «imperfect tautologies – writes Biraghi – able to join image and meaning yet putting a distance between them.»

The book, divided in 6 chapters, portrays topics which are similar and correspondent. The first 3 chapters deal with housing projects. They become

the occasion to carry on a research about specific architectural themes such as the digging, the placement on the rocks and the transfer of material, image and sense. The fourth chapter “Construction and subtraction in architecture” is a critical essay focused on the architectural connections with the underground world. The fifth chapter “On the rock towards the sky”, is a detailed description of some features of the latomie of the Neapolis in Syracuse. And how they bring about emotions in the mixture of archaeology, rock, quarry and light. The last chapter focus on two teaching experiences focused on the multi-award winning Entrance Pavilion for the Artemision in Syracuse.

The third reading path is the one by Yiorgos Hadjichristou with: *Il confine poroso. Riverberi nelle Terre Dormienti di Cipro*. Edited by Michele Sbacchi the volume begins with an introduction by Alessandro Rocca whose meaningful title “Beyond the local project” clearly delineates Hadjichristou’s architecture. Rocca synthesized it as a «flexible system which empirically, case by case, re-established its own rules.» (Rocca 2020, p. 16) In the work of Yiorgos Hadjichristou, an architect from the Dead Zone of Nicosia in Cyprus concepts like limit and porosity hold a pivotal role. In his buildings, spaces develop their qualities in the industrial details and in the use of poor materials. It is a realm in which quality springs off the reduced spaces of an internal patio or a domestic garden, where indoor and outdoor spaces are interchangeable.

This «enviable balance between the imagination of the project and the reality of construction» – in the words of Alessandro Rocca (2020, p. 16) – generates a microcosm of synergies between public and private moments. This happens, for instance, in the housing complex in Yeri where the excavated box hosts light, air and multiple views in all the rooms. The project is also a research on new housing typologies, a primary need for Cyprus.

The book series “Fragmenta” offers a peculiar cultural view, showing not only well known authors. It focuses on architectural space and the connections between way of life and built space. These are rather debated and contradictory themes nowadays. Fragmenta ambitiously wants to contribute addressing continuity and innovation as cornerstones of the project (Burkhardt 1997, pp. 2-3).

From a graphic point of view the book covers designed by Cerviere himself are sober and remind of Malevič’s compositions. For each book a different colour is chosen and it regulates the all book. One round black and white photo stands alone in the cover.

The spirit of “Fragmenta” has a connection to what Biraghi writes about architects as intellectuals «after having observed the actions as intellectuals of the architects of the past, nowadays we have to ask ourselves what is the sense of contemporary architects as critics of the reality and proposer of alternative possibilities.» (Biraghi 2019, p. 15) We find this observation very useful to single out in the three volumes peculiar design issues as civil actions in the improvement of built spaces.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Giacinto Cerviere, leaves and works in Rionero nel Vulture (PZ). Qualified as Professore di seconda fascia in Architectural Design. He has taught in Naples and Salerno University. He is a partner in the office Vortex\_A. He focus his research urban

themes and visionary potentiality of abandoned areas. Director of the architectural review *Camera Cronica* by Libria, he has funded the independent publishing company Bramea.

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