

Riccardo Petrella
The eye of the architect.
A journey in the look of 33 architects during Covid-19 period

Editors: *Federico Bilò and Riccardo Palma*
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The book by Federico Bilò and Riccardo Palma offers the reader an interesting anthology of reflections, elaborated by various authors during the lockdown period which followed the Italian Government Decrees in response to the spreading emergency of Covid-19.

Following the authors' own admission, the same assumptions appear in line with the collective attitude and the situations we all lived during those days: the attempt to build and strengthen virtual relations with others, trying to accomplish a new routine of living; an initial «divertissement, which could generate, at best, a collection of interesting consideration arising from the condition of the domestic confinement»¹.

Subject of the volume is the living space of the person, both intended as physical and mental, observed and analysed through the eyes of 37 actors on 33 stages – human and urban *scaene* – that are shown and described as interior dioramas, outlooks towards the space outside, walks through one's own interior world or along imaginary horizons, correspondences between intimacy and community, crossings and collisions.

The several contributions organized by Bilò and Palma offer a deep and conscious interpretation of the space – and the meaning this have for us, the people – since all the authors are architects and interpret the space for living as the primitive matter to work with and the final result to achieve.

Each voice of the these scenes is given a defined space for words and graphics to describe their own view, a physical and sentimental monologue, being used as professionals and architects to work and talk about the Space. The research by Bilò and Palma follows the path of the artistic tradition of performing the space surrounding the artist, interpreted through his eyes and mind; none of the contributions lacks, in fact, of literature or artistic memories, as references chosen to set up its own frame of the reality outside.

The variation proposed by the curators relates with the impossibility of the subjects to exit from their own domestic landscape. This leads to introspective reflections on one's own private space, that goes far beyond the mere observation of what it is; but follows instead the imagination of the architect, who recognize the singularity of the individual space as part, or a synthesis, of the collective one, as L. Kahn clearly sentenced in 1972: «the architect can build a house and build the city in the same breath, if he

only thinks about it as a marvellous, expressive, inspired realm»² .

All the contributions are than private atlas, organized by the curators in chapters, which generate the plan of the house of the man; the corridor, the room, the studiolo, the garden, the yard and the window – eventual metaphor of the eye of the author looking outside.

The reflections emerging from this anthology focus the reader's attention on the elements of the house and, consequently, on the way we live our space and, moreover, the way we could imagine, design and act on it differently to live these same spaces at best.

¹ Bilò F., Palma R. (2020) - *Il cielo in trentatré stanze. Cronache di architetti #restatiacasa*, LetteraVentidue, Siracusa, p. 6

² Louis I. Kahn, lecture held on the occasion of the International Design Conference of Aspen (IDCA) in the 1972.