

THEORY

**// ASSIGNMENT 1 SEMESTER
2013 - 2014**

**// INSIDE MASTER IN INTERIOR
ARCHITECTURE**

// KABK

tutor ANNE HOOGEWONING
student ELIDE MOZZORECCHI

UNUSUAL SPACES AND THE INVISIBLE TRACE OF ARCHITECTURE

The age of doubts

"Shopping is arguably the last remaining form of public activity" (1) Rem Koolhaas says.

We are living in the age of doubts; people have two different attitudes at the same time: they are confused by the wide range of items but at the same time they are independent, disenchanted, competent, exigent, selective. Material goods are not so important anymore, they are turning into services and experiences. (2) That is why the project of the retail spaces becomes fundamental. The shop itself must be magnetic, memorable, but above all must communicate an identity through the space itself. The activity of shopping on its own is not important anymore. Shops has to be a fictional universe which is able to be remembered by clients.

Temporary stores

The experience is always linked to space and time. These two components are also really useful to analyze retail spaces. Temporary stores take place in the group of retail spaces designed to live for a certain amount of time.

Temporary stores, also called Pop-Up Store for their characteristic of appearing and disappearing, are a recent phenomenon. The first experiment was made in New York city by Russel Miller with the name of Vacant Shop, but this typology really became famous thanks to the japanese brand Comme de Garçons, of which creative mind Rei Kawabuko decided to open the first Guerrilla Store (3) (the name she gave to that initiative) in 2004 in Berlin (pic. 1 and pic.2)

Pop up stores appear and disappear, exactly as products do.

They are not eternal.

They are ephemeral.

They are multisensorial.



pic. 2 Comme de Garçons propaganda manifesto



pic. 1 Comme de Garçons Guerrilla Store in Chausseestrasse 124, Berlin

1_ Chuihua Judy Chung, Jeffrey Inaba, Rem Koolhaas, Sze Tsung Leong, Harvard University - *The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping* - Taschen - 2001

2_ Giulia Gerosa - *Il progetto dell'identità di marca nel punto vendita (The project of stores' brand identity)* - Franco Angeli - 2008

3_ <http://www.federica.unina.it>

They are itinerant.
They are new.
They are experiments.
They are making consumers the protagonists.
They are unique and subjective
They are a surprise.

The Pop-Up store typology doesn't relate to particular levels or quality of brands. It's a strategy used by all kind of target of shops. Expensive brands like Prada or Comme de Garcons as well as cheap brands like H&M already experimented this kind of shop.

One of the most interesting aspect is the relationship between space and products. Pop-Up Stores seem to perfectly embody, in a bigger scale, the layout of some objects and the temporality of products, the seasonal disappearing of goods from shops. I will call those kind of spaces "space-objects".

Architecture is not the the protagonist of urban space anymore, because there is a big density all around it, instead of the emptiness of the past: that emptiness in which historical architecture took place. Nowadays everything is a message, a sign, information, movements, flows. Architecture cannot be the main element of the city anymore, and this is one of the reason which the tradition cannot renovate itself for. (4)

Interiors are covering a bigger role and they represent the revolutionary and experimental content of architecture.

Examples of space-objects can be Ape Malandra (Milano) (pic.3) and the COS pop-up store (fuorisalone Milan Design Week 2013) (pic.4).

The first one is a typical italian Ape-car (the three wheels car) that goes around Milan and to some other famous cities. The shop owners sell expensive clothes for children and nobody knows where the car will stop day by day. The car itself is a product, but it's adapted to be a space to sell products.

The COS pop-up store is designed as a sort of closed box which can be opened and all the components are a special support for clothes and accessories. It's a spatial explosion which can be traced back to a basic solid introvert cube.

A part from this particular declination of pop-up shops, temporary stores can also find their



pic. 3 Ape Malandra, Milan



pic. 4 COS Pop Up Store, Milan Design Week 2013

4_ Andrea Branzi - *L'architettura inutile è un valore (Unuseful architecture is a value)* - Interview www.wisesociety.it - 2011

place inside existing buildings. Usually the name of the shop doesn't change, the original architecture is maintained and the furniture is cheap and second-hand.

Temporary shops represent a smart solution to the crisis: crisis of money, because they allow people to start a business in a cheap and easy way, to experiment some new ideas (5); crisis of space, because they occupy vacant spaces around the cities for a short time, so they solve in part, and temporary, the problem of empty space.

But above all they change the activity of the shopping street, attract different kind of people in different kind of places, they contribute to the revaluation of a specific area. Because pop-up stores are more an event than a simple space. A lot of social and cultural activities are often combined to the mere shopping activity. More and more often peripheral areas are chosen for the opening of a pop-up store. The underground, darker and more alternative atmosphere is preferred to the shiny and popular city center shopping street, also by famous brand as Comme de Garçons.

Shopping has become an activity that fills the space, something that goes around the city or around the cities and disappears, leaving an invisible trace behind. The architecture plays the role of spectacular theater of a comedy that apparently is appreciated by clients. This peculiarity makes the public curious and encourages it to travel, to search and research the place and products which represent its personality.

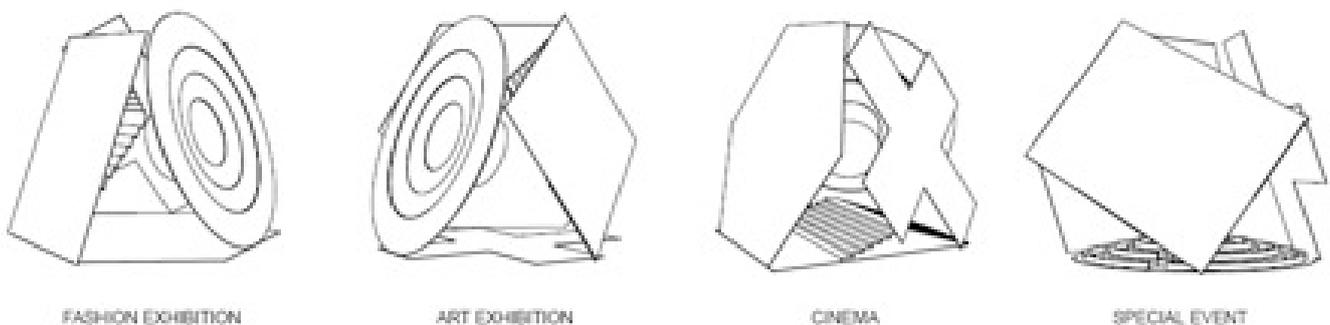
In the past, people travelled to see museums, monuments, cities. Now a lot of people travel to find the right shop.

Has shopping become the only entertainment?

Prada Transformer: the invisible trace of architecture

Launched in Seoul at the end of April 2009, the Prada Transformer designed by OMA/Rem Koolhaas showcased a serie of cross-cultural exhibitions, screenings and live events for five months.

The Transformer combined the four sides of a tetrahedron: hexagon, cross, rectangle and circle into one pavilion. The building, entirely covered with a smooth elastic membrane, was sober and white. It was flipped using cranes, completely reconfiguring the visitor's experience with each new programme. (pic. 5)



pic. 5 Configurations and activities of Prada Transformer

5_ <http://it.wikipedia.org>

Each side plan is precisely designed to organize a different event installation creating a building with four identities. Whenever one shape becomes the ground plan, the other three shapes become the walls and the ceiling defining the space, as well as referencing historic or anticipating future event configurations.

The Prada Transformer appeared and disappeared nearby the 16th-century Gyeonghui Palace and an old temple (*pic.6*). It dramatically juxtaposed Korean history, tradition and folklore with this 21st-century multi-dimensional event space.

It is designed to turn periodically, its position changes thanks to a massive crane (*pic.7*).

It is part of Prada's global commitment to the production of new realities in fashion, art, architecture and creative culture. (6)



pic. 6 Prada Transformer and Gyeonghui Palace



pic. 7 Rotation of Prada Transformer

Today architecture doesn't have to be eternal to leave a sign, a trace. The spot in which such an event took place will never be the same anymore, even if it will seem the same. Nothing changed physically, but the invisible trace of architecture will be felt like a sort of absence that is still present.

Isn't building a pop-up space of one of the most important and expensive fashion brands nearby an old palace and a temple and close to Buddha's birthday a clear sign of change of values?

Has shopping become a new religion?

Prada Transformer is not only about shopping.

Nowadays space has to be multifunctional, exactly like products. People have to be fascinated and entertained by a multisensory environment. Performances, services, possibilities become goods themselves, as well as they become space.

Jean Baudrillard, in *La société de consommation*, writes "Medieval society was balanced between God and the Devil. Ours is in balance between consumption and its denouncement" (7), but maybe there is also a space in between these two sides: the space in which consumption is implemented with culture.

World is changing and with it also approaches to fundamental aspects of human life: society, culture, shopping. In the liquid modernity all these aspects are mingled together (8).

Pop-up stores are representing a good trial not only for making shopping more interesting, but also not to only offer people shopping.

6_ <http://www.archimagazine.com>

7_ Jean Baudrillard - *La société de consommation* - Gallimard - 1986

8_ Zygmunt Bauman - *Modernità liquida (Liquid Modernity)* - Laterza - 2002

Bibliography

Chuihua Judy Chung, Jeffrey Inaba, Rem Koolhaas, Sze Tsung Leong, Harvard University - *The Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping* - Taschen - 2001

Giulia Gerosa - *Il progetto dell'identità di marca nel punto vendita (The project of stores' brand identity)* - Franco Angeli - 2008

Jean Baudrillard - *La société de consommation* - Gallimard - 1986

Zygmunt Bauman - *Modernità liquida (Liquid Modernity)* - Laterza - 2002

Websites

<http://www.federica.unina.it>

Andrea Branzi - *L'architettura inutile è un valore (Unuseful architecture is a value)* - Interview www.wisesociety.it - 2011

<http://it.wikipedia.org>

<http://www.archimagazine.com>