

A meditation on violence

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Eva Sauer

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Architektonische Räume spiegeln die Eigenschaften der Menschen wider, die sie bewohnen.

In diesem Buch nehme ich Sie mit auf eine Reise quer durch Europa, von Nordirland durch Frankreich, Deutschland, Polen, bis in den Süden Italiens. Ich zeige Szenen und Situationen, die von der Kehrseite schöner Reise-Impressionen erzählen: von Eingesperrt-Sein, Trostlosigkeit und Überwachung.

Am Anfang stehen die „Peace Lines“ in Belfast, riesige Mauern, die zu keinem anderen Zweck gebaut wurden, als die in getrennten Bereichen der Stadt lebenden Katholiken und Protestanten davon abzuhalten, aufeinander zu schießen. Die Reise führt weiter entlang an Neubauruinen - halbfertige Gebäudeskelette, die nicht mehr zu Ende gebaut werden und in den Augen der Leute zu gigantischen Mahnmalen für Korruption geworden sind. Wir passieren mit Mauern und Stacheldraht abgezäunte Militärgelände; versteckte, von Gras überwucherte Mülldeponien; Bunker aus dem zweiten Weltkrieg, ein unfertiges Grab für Costanzo („Ganascia“) Ciano, einen Minister des faschistischen Regimes. Am vorläufigen Ende der Reise stehen ehemalige Schießpulverfabriken aus dem ersten Weltkrieg, die in Wäldern versteckt gebaut wurden, um für den Feind unsichtbar zu bleiben. Nun verrotten sie, von dichter Vegetation überwuchert.

Wie in vielen Darstellungen des dystopischen Kinos wirkt die alles überwuchernde Natur erlösend.

Wenn man jedoch genau hinschaut, kann man beobachten, wie auch die Pflanzen sich in einem langsamen Ringen gegenseitig ersticken, um zum Licht zu gelangen. Die scheinbar friedliche Rückkehr zur Natur ist nichts als ein Kampf ums Überleben und den Fortbestand. Diesen Kampf führen wir Menschen auf einer anderen Ebene fort; doch im Gegensatz zu anderen Tieren und Pflanzen, hinterlassen wir Spuren: endlose Ruinen.

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Architectural spaces reflect the characteristics of the people who inhabit them.

In this journey through Europe, from Northern Ireland through Germany, France and Poland down to the south of Italy, we contemplate scenarios and situations that show the downside of beautiful travel impressions: monitoring, confinement and desolation. Beginning with the “peace lines” of Belfast, which are, despite the name, huge walls that were built to prevent Catholic and Protestant communities, living in separated areas of the town, from shooting each other.

We travel through unfinished building shells, that in the public eye became memorials for corruption; we pass through military territories confined by walls and barbed wire, hidden trash dumps – overgrown by grass, Second World War bunkers, an unfinished grave for Costanzo “Ganascia” Ciano, a minister of the fascist regime.

It ends in gunpowder factories from the First World War, built hidden in forests to remain invisible to the enemy. Now they rot, overgrown by the vegetation.

As in the images of dystopian cinema, the rampant nature is redemptive. However, if you look closely, you may see how the plants twist, one into the other, in a slow, choking fight to reach the light.

The apparently peaceful return to nature is nothing but a fight for survival and continuity. Mankind pursues this struggle on a different level; but unlike other animals and plants, we leave traces: endless ruins.

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Peter T. Lang is professor in Architectural Theory and History at the Royal Institute of Art, in the Department of Architecture, Stockholm (Kungl. Konsthögskolans-KKH), where he conducts post-graduate research courses in architecture, design and multimedia communications. Lang holds a Bachelor in Architecture from Syracuse University and earned a PhD in Italian history and urbanism at New York University in 2000. He is a Fulbright recipient in Italian studies. Lang works on the history and theory of post-war Italian architecture and design, with a focus on sixties Italian experimental design, media and environments. He has been a member of the Rome based urban arts research group Stalker since 1997.

Alessandro Gallicchio is a Professor and Curator. He holds an International Ph.D. in Contemporary Art History at the Universities of Florence, Paris-Sorbonne and Bonn. His research has focused on nationalist influences in Parisian art criticism in the period between the two World Wars. His main research interests focus on cosmopolitanism and chauvinism, on the representations of the power in the Mediterranean area and on Reductive Art. He has participated in various conferences and published some results of his research in national and international Journals (Florence, Warsaw, Bonn, Tokyo and Paris). He has organized exhibitions in independent spaces in Tuscany and in Paris.

Pietro Gaglianò has proceeded from his degree in architecture to study the relationship between the aesthetics of power and individual freedoms, regarding the urban and social contexts as the location of contemporary languages (with a particular focus on the theoretical systems of performance art). He curates projects in Italy and abroad and experiments with hybrid structures, which weave pedagogical experiences into traditional exhibition formats.

Gian Piero Frassinelli – Born in 1939, graduated in architecture in Florence in 1968; in the same year he joined the Superstudio group that participated in the movement called “Radical Architecture”, which dissolves in 1986. In Superstudio and later, he deals with the analysis of the “architecture system” with the tools of anthropology.

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Without you this book would not be created:
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