

## Toward the performative approach in spatial design .

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### **Abstract:**

Cedric Price with his Fun Palace was trying to promote the flexible participatory improvisatory social interactive architecture, but also temporality and the anti-building architecture, designing playthings that should not last longer than we need it. And for a proposal for the south-bank center 1984 London, he proposed a raft of balloons forming a canopy of balloons whose height vary in order to accommodate temporary exhibitions underneath . He described the site as London last lung on which further permanent building should be avoided. It is like saying that determinacy, permanency and construction are the death of a space. This could be seen as a reaction to the late modernism that revealed the poverty of pure functionalism, by producing rigid forms not responding to the context.

The term "performative architecture" started to be introduced to describe architectures belonging to dynamic environments, indicating a shift in architectural theory, from what the building is to what it does. The performative character is related to scripted and unscripted aspects, predicted and non-predicted events. The unpredictability refers to how architecture is able to be productive far from the planned program. A play between intentionality and non-intentionality. "The performative space" described by Sophie Wolfrum and Valentina Signore is designed to be flexible, open for transformations . Opposing to the idea of definitive perfect form of the modernity, where it was about certainty, where the form and the program should be defined from the beginning. In this pure rationality the user is a passive controlled subject. The performative project accepts uncertainty, incompleteness, and openness to events and users , urban and interior improvisation, responding to contemporary complex changing context. G.Brooker suggested that one of the main reasons of the failure of the mass housing built sixties is due the limitation of the freedom of the users to adjust the space.

The concept of space has changed. Less objective, not typological, multidisciplinary, never finished reversible (P. Salvadeo) . Beside the required qualities such sustainable and recover-able, architecture should move away from discreetness and objectness (Michael Hensel) . So that architecture is allowed to participate in a wide range of interlinked environmental and ecological processes, away from

conceiving architecture as an object distinguishing between the outside and the inside .

Regarding architectural intervention in existing situations, sometimes when the existing is too rigid, only light creative and less architectural solutions, installation-like intervention are more effective. A kind of performative, curatorial gesture to spatial intervention.

The question is how to materialize these concepts, or teach the performative aspect of design. As an aspect to take in consideration, accepting the fact that when designing not everything is defined, not all the corners of the space have yet a function, and so not everything should be designed. The non-designed as part of the design.

The students at the Middlesex university, were introduced to the concept of “volubilis” , where, for an adaptive-reuse project ,the students were required to follow the model of the incomplete, imperfect and elastic space capable of withstanding continuous innovation and adaptation....They were asked to design a three-phase project lasting 10 years ....each stage ...the interventions made can be partly temporal but not entirely reversible ..... Some traces should remain in place to inform the next, in a continuous cycle of growth and change ...

Within the same concepts, a recent project by the Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena , and for a low-cost social housing , there wasn't enough money to build everyone a good house so it was decided to build everyone half a good house, and let them finish the rest themselves. Elemental studio created basic concrete frames, with kitchens, bathrooms and roofs, allowing families to fill in the gaps, and stamp their own identity on their homes in the process. The project engaged residents in the design of their own homes. . This kind of housing gives economic opportunity to the less privileged, and reduces energy consumption and provides welcoming public space, and focuses on people's imagination with architecture.

Lots of examples could inspire us how do we educate toward a more performative approach in the spatial design disciplines, and translate these concepts, not just in the design process or the realization of the final product but also the in-between .