

The Timeless Way of Educating Architects: A New Master in “Building Beauty” in Naples, Italy

Paper by:

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Presentation by:

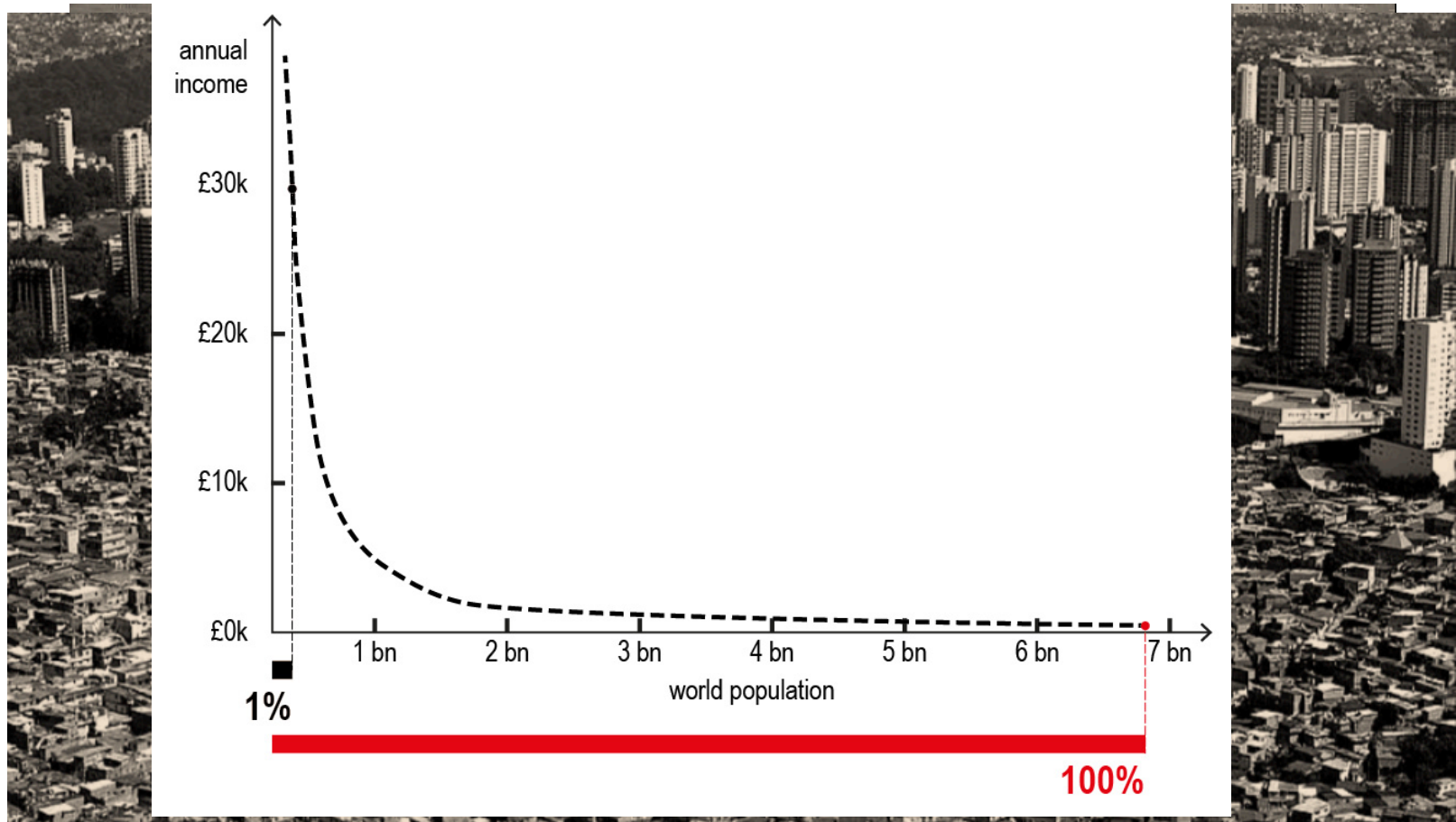
Sergio Porta



We have a problem



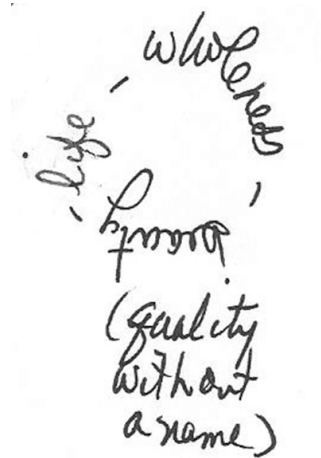
Zaha Hadid Architects:
Extension of Former Fire Brigade Barracks, Antwerp, Belgium, 2016



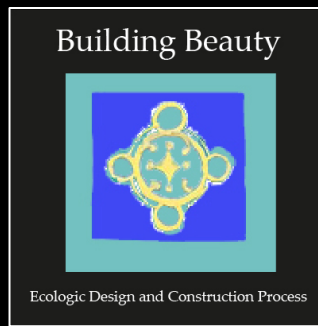
Architectural pedagogy has become stale. Schools spin old wheels as if something is happening but so little is going on. Students wait for a sense of activist engagement with a rapidly evolving world but graduate before it happens. The fact that they wait for instruction is already the problem. Teachers likewise worry too much about their place in the institutional hierarchies. Curricular structures have hardly changed in recent decades, despite the major transformations that have taken place with the growth of globalisation, new technologies, and information culture. As schools appear to increasingly favour professionalisation, they seem to drown in self-imposed bureaucratic oversight, suffocating any possibility for the emergence of experimental practices and failures. There are a few attempts to wake things up here and there but it's all so timid in the end. There is no real innovation.

Colomina et al, *Radical Pedagogies in Architectural Education*, The Architectural Review, 28 September 2012, <https://www.architectural-review.com/today/radical-pedagogies-in-architectural-education/8636066.article>

Building Beauty Ecologic Design and Building Process



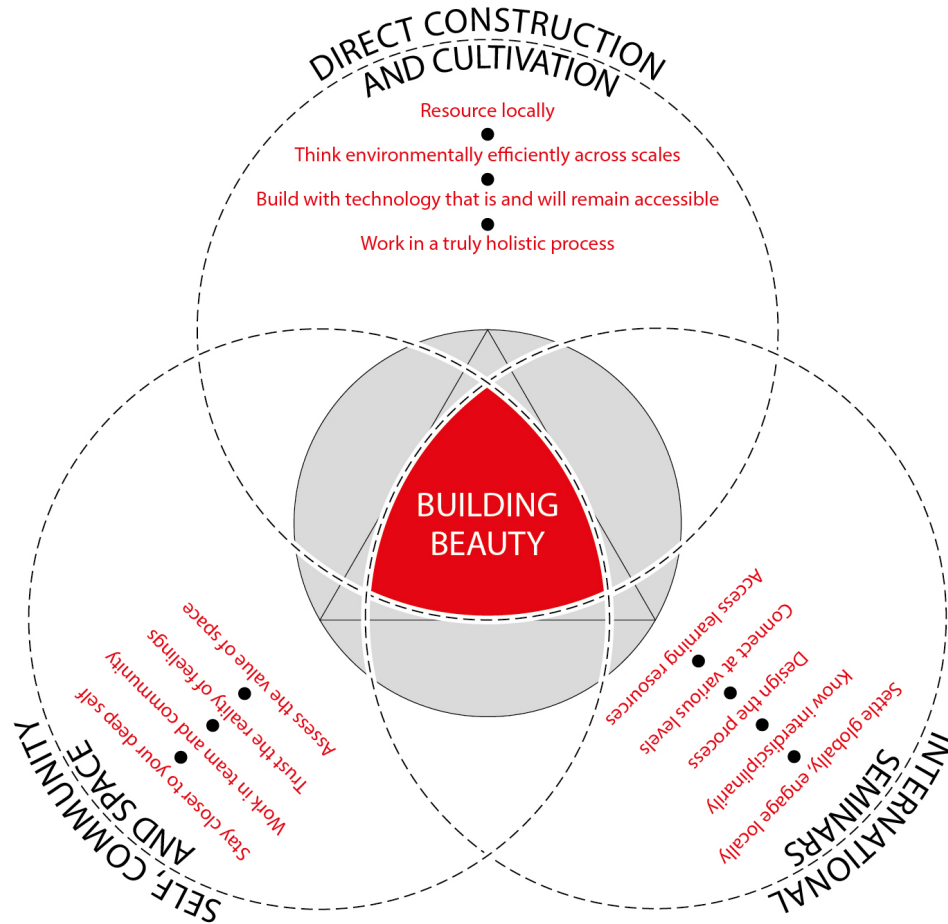
Maggie Moore-Alexander
Chris' Wholeness — Beauty — Life circle



- **Title:** Building Beauty: Ecologic Design and Building Process
- **Qualification:** 1st Level Master, equivalent to Certificate/Specialist courses in UK/US
- **Entry Level:** Students holding a Bachelor Degree or equivalent experience (any discipline)
- **Duration:** One academic year (from mid October to mid May)
- **Credits:** 60 ECTS, equivalent to 120 UK/USA credits
- **Accreditation:** Acknowledged by the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR): credits are recognized in EU member States and accountable accordingly in all foreign Countries.
- **Tuition Fees:**
 - **Eu students:** €14,000
 - **Extra Eu Students:** €18,300
- **Number of students:** (full course): 15
- **Attendance:** full time, residential
- **Services:** Accommodation in University Residence, special course rate: €250-300/month
- **Scholarships Program:** under preparation. Objective: 5 full scholarship (fees+accommodation)

Cloister: inner corridor





The three circles of Building Beauty



	MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
CONSTRUCTION										
CULTIVATION										
SEMINARS										
SELF, COMMUNITY & SPACE										
RESEARCH										

Building Beauty: the model week of studies

TEACHING STAFF... so far



Maggie Moore-Alexander



Sergio Porta



Antonio Caperna



Camillo Boano



Bin Jiang



Nabeel Hamdi



Susan Ingham



Chris Andrews



Vito Latora



Silvana Ceresa



Stefano Candellieri



Besim Hakim



Alessandro Giuliani



Tonino Aspergo



Sandra Pierpaoli



Paolo Robazza



Joanna Alimanestianu



Karl Kropf



Michael Mehaffy



Mariapia Vidoli



Dan Klyn



Yodan Rofé



Michael Batty



Alastair Parvin



Peter Russell



Ombretta Romice



Giovanni Coppola



Ciro Pizzo



Roberto Montanari



Enzo Zecchi

Founding Principles

- 1. Beauty.** There exists in the natural, cultural and physical world, a class of phenomena that are beautiful, the beauty of which has essentially to do with our everyday material and spiritual life. *We want to understand what characterizes such phenomena, how they occur and change, and how, as makers, we can help in the process.*
- 2. Cosmology.** The context in which we approach problems to develop solutions acknowledges and embraces the complexity, uncertainty and change that are ever more prevalent in our world. *We explore a non-conventional agenda in education and research for making, which poses beauty and its generative process centre stage.*
- 3. Day-to-day, minute functionalism.** We acknowledge that life takes place by continuously adapting the surrounding environment in an uninterrupted everyday process of adapting by making. *We intend making as an adaptive process of change that predominantly occurs in the dimension of the ordinary.*
- 4. Objective nature of beauty.** Beautiful ordinary spaces have a quality whose value, once explored at the appropriate level, belongs to all human beings, and is good for everyone. Because that quality exists, makers can, at each step in the process of change, add to and expand—rather than detract from and reduce—the original quality. *We define and measure the objective quality of space that emerges at the level where human beings share a common canon of values.*
- 5. Holistic nature of space.** Space is essentially grounded on our individual and collective self, where functionality, ornament and beauty are just different names for the same thing. *We explore our individual and collective self in space as a fundamental way to understanding how to make things.*
- 6. Quality of space comes prior to function.** Beauty emerges, in the physical world, as an inner order that is spatial. Good functionality, and the sense of belonging and wellness are by-products of that. *We focus on the order of space that recurs in phenomena of beauty: what it is made of, and how we can help it to emerge and expand over time.*
- 7. Testing the quality.** The quality of space can be tested through understanding the authentic feelings that connect us to the place and others in a profound way. *We pursue the ability to recognize, trust and develop our own feelings as a reliable ground for testing the quality of space.*

- 8. Making with exquisite care.** The quality of spaces does not come by design: it can only emerge during the process of making. We experience beauty in space when we see that everything around has arisen by careful choice and restless consideration of both the place and our own self. *We are interested in the process of fine-tuning that creates a place: in a short-term “project” scenario, and in the longer-term, and truly “evolutionary.”*
- 9. The “unfolding” nature of beauty generation.** Essentially a process of adaptive transformation, making beauty happens in steps whereby each step expands the pre-existent beauty and, in itself, is complete and makes full sense. *We test and explore the unfolding nature of beauty generation both in the process of making and in that of teaching how to make.*
- 10. The healing nature of making.** Reunifying what was previously separated is central to the process—in space, in communities, and in ourselves as makers and citizens. Conventional separations (between actors, places and times of decision) are overcome and reunified at each step in a fully integrated healed/whole. *We explore how to reunify self, community, design and construction at each step of the process of making.*
- 11. The reality of the land and that in ourselves.** Making has to do with understanding the order of the space (existent in the land) and that of what we want to make (existent in ourselves), and then with reunifying the two in a coherent whole. *We investigate all means to make such two orders explicit, and then reinforce each other.*
- 12. Mocking up.** In a conventional building process, the means of most separations is the drawing. People make decisions, separately, by looking at drawings. We use drawings as an integral part of making: a physical, on-site, trial-and-error process based on the use of full-scale physical mock-ups. *We practice full-scale mocking-up as the core system of decision-making in the building process.*
- 13. Construction.** Direct hands-on construction is essential to making. That is where and when everything happens; the building yard and the actual act of construction are the place and moment where the healing reunification occurs. *We practice direct construction as the all-encompassing environment of making.*

www.buildingbeauty.net

What it would be like to live in a mental world where one's reasons for making something functionally, and one's reasons for making something a certain shape, or in a certain ornamental way are coming from precisely the same place in you.
Precisely the same place.

Christopher Alexander, 1982

Building Beauty

Ecologic Design and Construction Process

First Level Master in Architecture

Naples, Italy | October 2017 – May 2018

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