

MIGRATION AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST

CAUMME III

Contemporary Architecture and Urbanism
in the Mediterranean and the Middle East

PAUMME I

Projects of Architecture and Urbanism
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LIKE A SLEEPING-BAG ON THE SOFA FOR AN UNEXPECTED GUEST

FRANCESCO COLLOTTI, CLAUDIA MOREA

DIDA Dipartimento di Architettura, Università degli Studi di Firenze, Italia

francesco.collotti@unifi.it

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CAUMME III

A few months ago Triennale di Milano devoted an entire section to the cotemporary living of people fleeing war and hunger.

In Venice *reporting from the front* has been the common focus of the just closed Biennale exposition.

Stranded on the north side of the African continent, between the desert and the Mediterranean.

Refugee camps become a permanent emergency.

Temporary tents provided by NGOs and charity organisations become the footprint of new towns.

Complete with squares for people to get together, collective spaces and small courts around which rise clusters of tents.

Working for saving archaeological heritage not far from Irbid, we met the orange tents of the refugee camps at the border between Jordan and Syria.

Probably this is how ancient military fields and outposts rose centuries ago; an orderly principle, a check board.

The sea connected us, though today it's not as simple.

The sea was the bridge of civilisation, joining the cultures of bread, aubergines, grape and olives, and now has become the battlefield of shipwrecks, the backdrop of many rescues.

On this side of the sea, the most fortunate and prosper, an unprecedented migration of entire peoples.

From the east to the west, from the south to the north: there is no other choice but giving refuge. Regulated by laws, of course, but still refuge.

The controversial relationship between natural and built environments is the starting point for the hypothesis of taking care of places and people, transforming apparent adversities into opportunities.

Regeneration of abandoned, unused and wasted spaces:

- 1) starting from people (malaise, unease);
- 2) involving the community through a sense of inter-generation responsibility that gives meaning to environmental sustainability as a fundamental feature of survival;
- 3) speculating with other ways of dwelling, building, living.

If the consumption of a body or of the organ suffering an illness is reflected in a lack of energy, the interventions proposed here point to an idea of recovery not only through building, but based on a wider programme which spans from the particular to the general, from the technical to the political.

The state of malaise and unease inhabits places on the margins of established cities, whose bodies respond with difficulty to the true needs of those who live in them: *urban acupuncture*, through certain specifically targeted interventions, may constitute a *remedy* capable of taking advantage of the flux of energy derived from the community, beginning from the grassroots, with small-scale proposals with the potential of gradually reactivating the whole city.

From the awareness that *movement*, under various forms, is one of the phenomena that dominates our age, from migration to the new work-related nomadism, an investigation is proposed here, using the appropriate tools, into those places and situations that – although often hidden – exist and present temporary ways of living and dwelling which are varied and different to the stacity which characterises so many cities.

T3 [MIGRATION AND HOUSING ENVIRONMENTS]

The case studies presented are old shells of abandoned factories, unused buildings and unfinished public structures: the hypothesis at the basis of a series of pilot projects is that of inserting relief housing into forgotten places, thus activating a process of regeneration through the radiation of new energy in situations which are lacking in it.

Ikea-like homes, years ago we defined a project, envisaging a reinforced concrete core made of staircases, horizontal distribution and bathrooms connecting/hanging on to the rooms depending on personal needs and on personal possibilities.

We developed this first concept working on many frames/envelopes of abandoned factories to promote the idea of sustainability, in order to re-use, into a second or third life, investments made a long time before.

The research unit on social housing and temporary living established a few years ago at the Florence University has selected some case studies, which include this work CELLS by Claudia Morea which we report below.

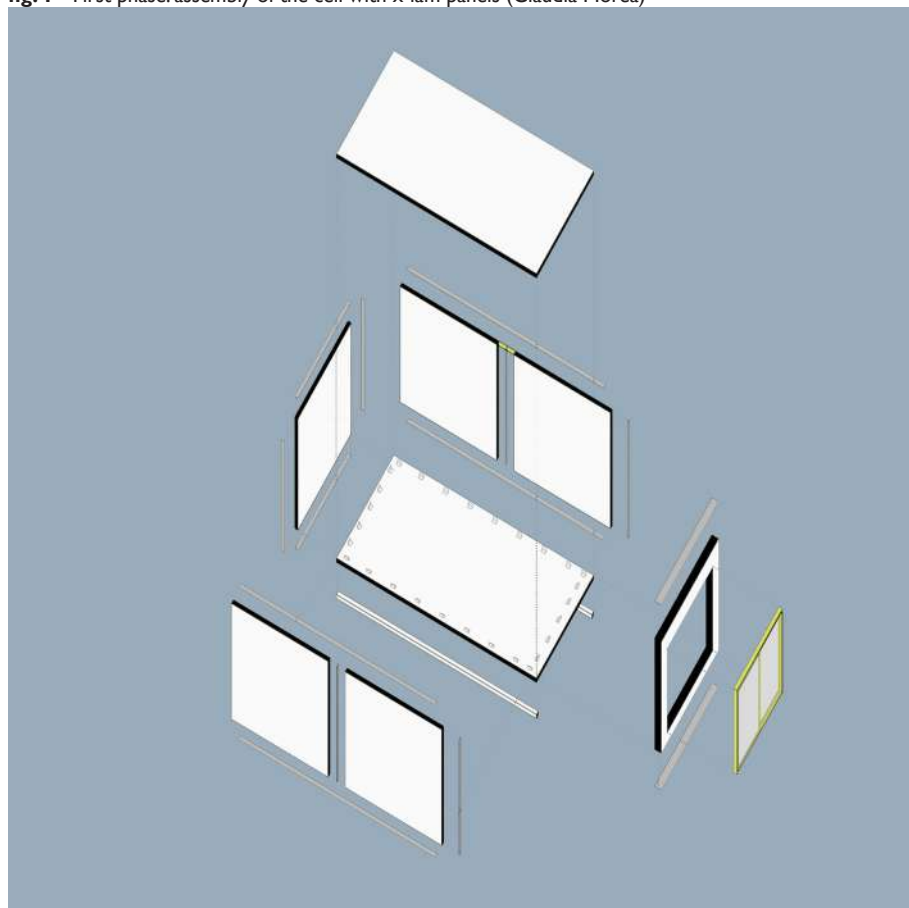
CELLS

Like a *sleeping-bag* spread out on the sofa for a guest, cells to be distributed around the city. Pret à porter housing to be inserted into those forgotten urban spaces, allowing them to come back to life, thus gradually reactivating cities, as hoped for by urban acupuncture.

Transport constraints imposed a modular project consisting on 6x3x3 metre cells to be aggregated to each other for composing various housing typologies that may adapt as best as possible both to the dwelling needs and to the spaces available. The dry X-lam construction system, associated to an insulation composite system which uses hemp mats and an external finishing in Kanésis bioplastic panels, guarantees optimal interior comfort and total environmental sustainability through all phases of production, use and dismantlement.

Prefabrication permits a bathroom unit to be inserted into the cells in the form of 3 equipped bioplastic module-rings, and the inclusion from the outset of a minimal MobAPP furniture-

fig. 1 - First phase: assembly of the cell with x-lam panels (Claudia Morea)



storage system which through guidelines guarantees the possibility of transformations and additional integrations.

The building-aggregations are covered by an independent shell which serves as a collector for solar energy and rain water, while creating loggias without the structures touching so as to avoid thermal bridges.

The pilot project – which envisages working in emergency conditions – uses the cells as temporary refuge dwellings and chooses using the shells of abandoned industrial structures or else public buildings which were never completed as supports for possible temporary settlements for nomads and immigrants.

fig. 2 - First phase: assembly of the cell with x-lam panels (Claudia Morea)



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fig. 3, fig. 4 - Hypotesys of urban acupuncture for the ex-Planetarium in Lucca (Claudia Morea).

