

coda

when we sat down and confronted the impossibility of the tasks associated with launching our virgin voyage into the vast ocean of contemporary ideas, a sense of immense loneliness overcame us. the practice of architecture is a lonely one, so make no mistake. in this book we speak of encounters, advocates, collaborations, and zeitgeist as if the architect glides effortlessly on the surface of water, immune from the risks of being engulfed or at a complete loss of direction. such is not the case. as architects, we busy ourselves with contemplating the particularities of our times and devising formal strategies in response to them. we try to understand the numerous unique places our profession brings us and the people we meet. but stripped of the civic duties we (cl)aim to serve, the cultural eloquence we diligently cultivate, and the professional relevance we make every effort to articulate, what is it exactly to be an architect? what kind of human activities do we perform that qualifies us? this is the question we ask ourselves every day. this is the question that only one's self can answer.

to this day, we believe that architecture is one of the greatest forms of art. having evolved from the elemental human defiance against nature, the practice of architecture is to turn observations into actions, and then to turn actions into shared experiences and memories. through the rescribing of our relationship with what surrounds us, we both define and redefine ourselves. such is what a private residence is to its owner, as is a civic architecture to its society. because architecture defines the outlines and temperaments of our very existence, it is impossible to be pessimistic to be an architect even though it is constructive to be critical. and humility is an essential virtue. it humbles us when the great writer painstakingly describes the protagonist's environmental context and the filmmaker carefully curates the scenographies in which the story unfolds. even when dealing with

virtual realms, game designers inevitably turn to classic architectural models or archetypal spaces in order to constitute its metes and bounds. effectively, architecture is one of the most enduring tools to register where we come from and stir where we go from here. and that is why we find the greatest joy and satisfaction when we achieve beautiful form, or intentionally disrupt it in search of new aesthetics. if we lose our grip on architecture, we lose a fundamental part of our agency as human being.

therefore, architecture must continuously be qualified by its defiance, the context of which has grown more complex than ever before. for defiance has now come under ever more tightening grips of economic forces and erratic political climate. it needs to respond to the explosively expanding human experiences; our very relationship with nature is confusing at best. but if anyone sincerely believes that architecture is in crisis, then let the state of crisis be perpetual and productive. for it nurtures an acute awareness that differentiates us from the unconsciousness around. yes, it makes us aware of our existence in the endlessly shrinking elemental particles and chaotic confluence of influences. such endeavor requires sustained alertness. if our muscles relax, it is only so we can prepare for a better aim. if we look outside it's because it tells something about ourselves. we don't claim cosmic truth, nor do we admit ourselves to selfless pursuit of the universal good. architecture is a discipline of consciousness—consciousness that allows us to be critical when we observe, independent when we act, and empathetic when we share. such is the objective that needs constant solidifying.

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Jing Liu, Florian Idenburg, Ilias Papageorgiou