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OPEN CITIES

CITIZENS

DESIGNERS

ARCHITECTURE



We should ask ourselves why New York, London, Berlin have always been HUBS, easily sharable spaces where we feel suitable. It is easy to belong to at least one of the layers of these cities.

Megalopolis and Cosmopolis have a specific yet neutral identity, strangely linked to the possibility of belonging.

Maybe we should give up a determined and deep bond, an inherited belonging, and build relations and bonds with the place we choose as ours.

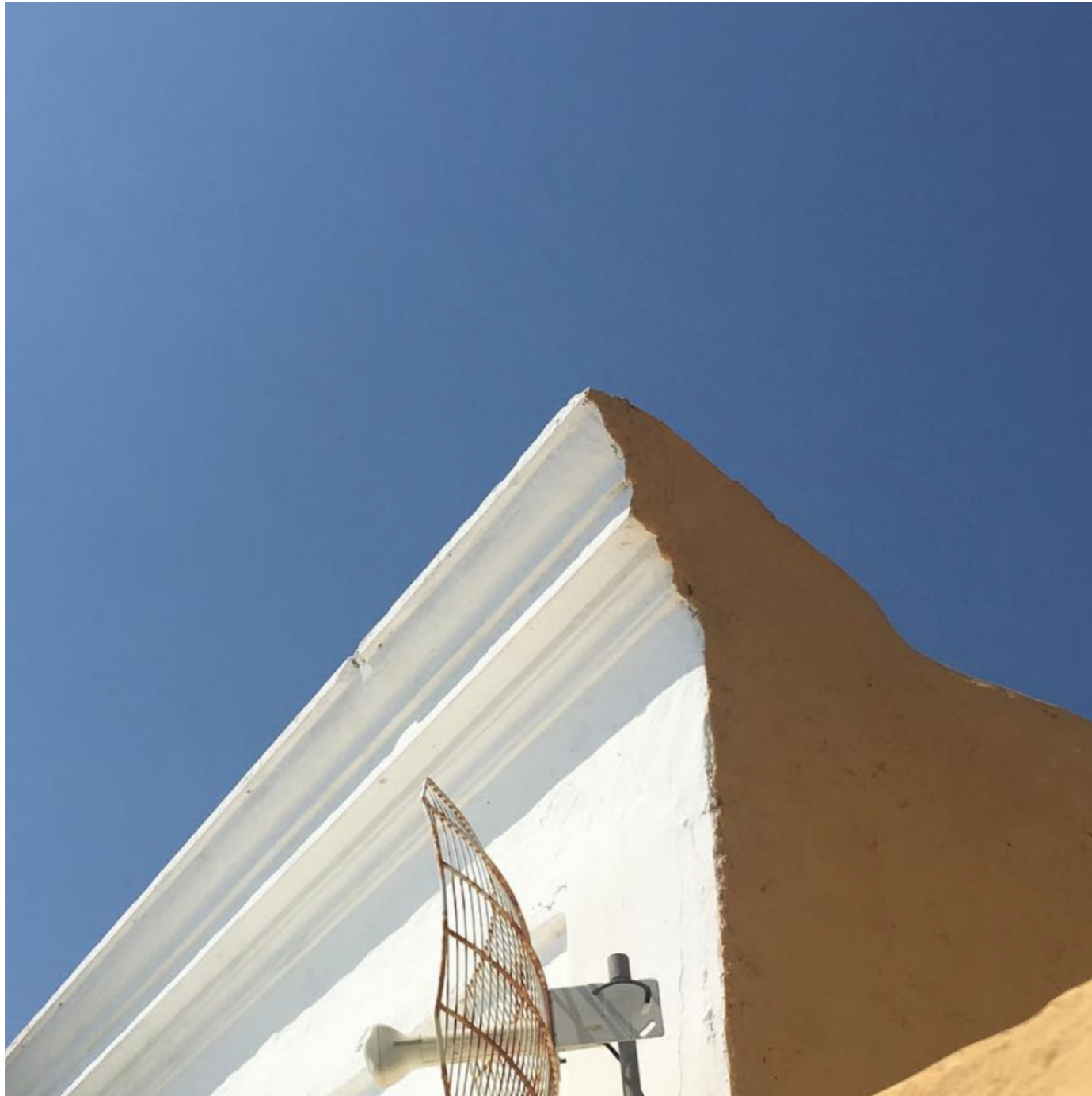
Who is the truer citizen: the busy and involved outsider or the indifferent local?

Men's primordial nomadic instinct in time represents the urge to change.

Attractive distant horizons draw people towards a hypothetical change. These horizons make people move in their minds and speculate, or even trigger true motion in physical space.

These movements typically end up in the cities, which are accelerators of the processes of change. Today we see cities as a place for connected and nomadic individuals and groups: the citizenry.





CITIZENS

The city has always been an infrastructure for social movement.

Social movements are nomadic events, working class yearns for middle class and runaways abandon local hierarchies longing for freedom. **Once uprooted and nomadic in a new ever-changing context we all have the same necessities.**

This new mass identity determines the power of negotiating with reality in order to redefine social conventions and information sharing in an open democratic need.



This is how we put a new public interest at the center, and with that the need for a profound change in citizens' education, as citizens are the city.

Citizens' involvement plays an active role in change. After 1945 T.H. Marshall introduced the idea of the **“competent citizen”** who needs to be educated to fully participate in the life of society.

There is a fundamental contrast between social capital and economical capital. The more it is encouraged, the more social capital gives back results.



Becoming involved individuals forces us to a personal and social evolution that can be triggered by schools, thinkers, professors, researchers, national or international organizations focused on innovation in the public sector, which have to start and support change in different areas. Re-think priorities, behaviors, administrative and bureaucratic dynamics in order to materialize change.

Become true citizens, entering the city's organogram and civic system in order to grow community relationship in a specific place with specific issues.

We have to become activists, activist citizens.

DESIGNERS

Scientist Herb Simon argues that **everyone is a designer when he modifies an existing situation to make it more favorable**. Human doing is designing. Today obsession for objects is replaced by a deeper interest in events, young and older people promote low energy and consumption activities aimed at taking care of each other, working, travelling, studying, eating and sharing equipment. This natural predisposition to design is further stimulated.





Almost everyone is at the same time a resource user and supplier. By using without owning we build sustainability in **a world made of fewer things and more people.**

We need to create structures able to bring people in control of situations instead of replacing them with machines.

Complex system don't necessarily require thought and action on a large scale. Small changes can trigger a virtuous chain reaction. Small design steps with large consequences.

Although Values and Manifestos are important guides to design decisions, a project defined only by limitations and restrictions will not be successful.

Asking people to be good rarely works.

Most alternative visions highlight the need for new responsibilities, without mentioning new opportunities.

I believe that a culture based on connections among people has to be entertaining and stimulating as well as responsible. An esthetic of fluxes between things and people must push us toward positive relations that trigger change. Our creativity must build alternatives.



ARCHITECTURE

Architecture is about building relations, and defining today's creativity is one of the main issues. Abandoning existing paradigms and understanding spatial negotiation can determine spatial accessibility for people.

Cities, as linguistically defined and with identifiable borders, **are places to inhabit and, more and more often, a place of passage, a transversal and variegated reality.**



The city's geography has changed drastically. The perception of space has new boundaries, swinging between symbolism and signal, geography and landscape.

We need a city with the features of the historic city and with vertical hierarchy, where public parts and functions are easily recognizable. A city with good hardware.

At the same time we need to operate in a city built from the bottom, with open settings and adaptable to cultural changes.



This is a time of precise development of cities, where **a dynamic expansion**, both economic and connective, **is shifting public expense toward media and specialization, turning citizens into consumers of space and things.**

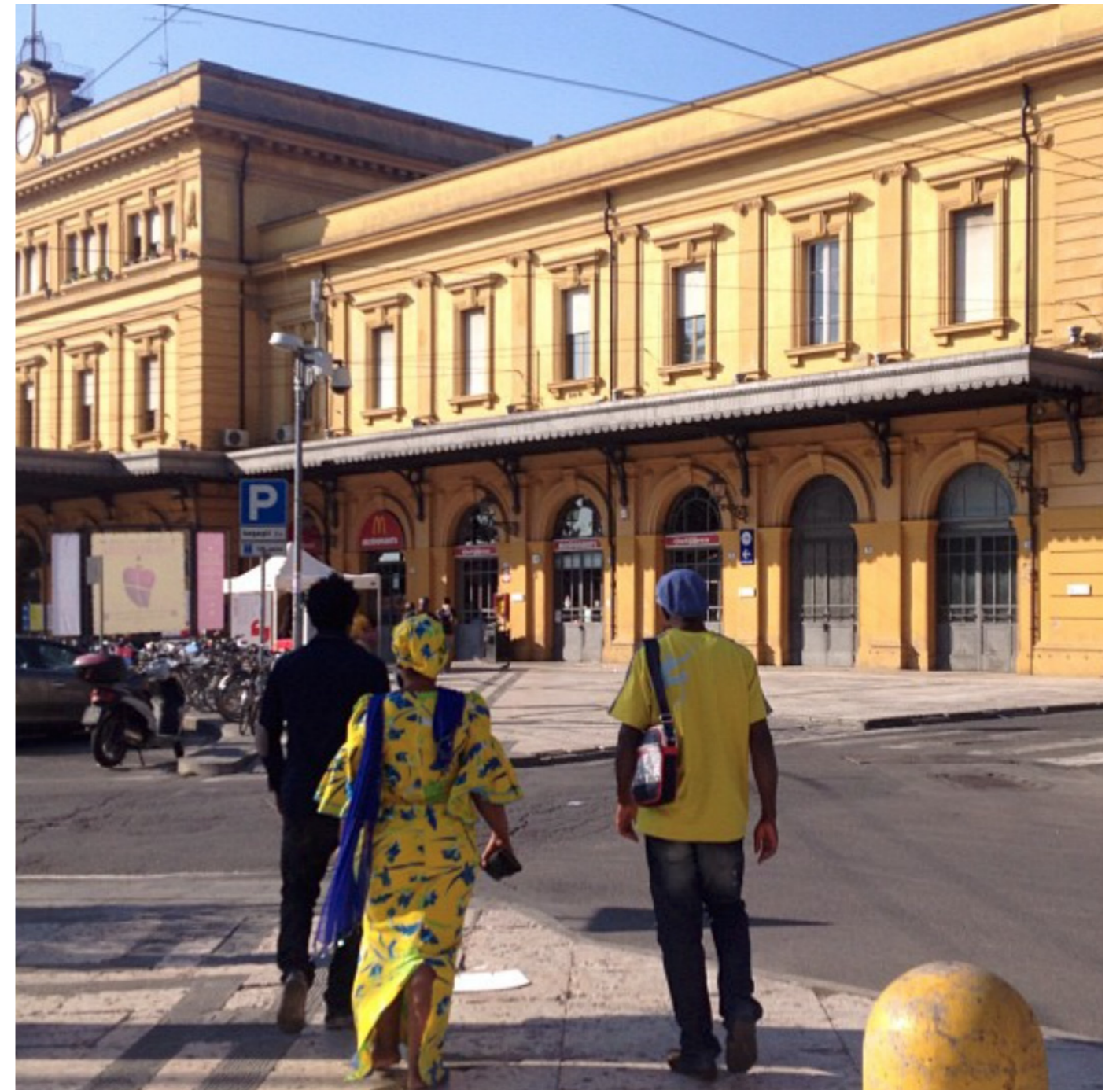
We can stress this relation between civic and civil, and between city and citizen.

Creative tension between the civic realm of State rules and the civil realm of inhabitants generates a better city.

Participating in the process induces belonging which induces identity.



Places and cities are sediments of society, people, processes. It always impresses me to see Leonardo's Last Supper or the Pantheon as a contemporary. Besides producing the city, we are city ourselves, the city that forms us. **Enculturation** is how people learn values and behaviors from their environment. Today we can witness this happening on a multi-dimensional level, where our place of belonging has expanded to the mobile world. Architecture is a relations device. I see Architecture as the construction of a system of refined relations, where we try to identify the hierarchies that keep the whole together.



The project is a symbiosis between interior parts, implicit constraints in the program and function of the exterior, the context, cultural and linguistic influences. This turns every project in an attempt to **unify reality.**

A project is more than this. It stimulates subsequent evolution, an active reading of the situation to spark future relations. **The project isn't the end point but an intermediate moment in a continuous process of selection, which merges the parts transforming reading into writing.**



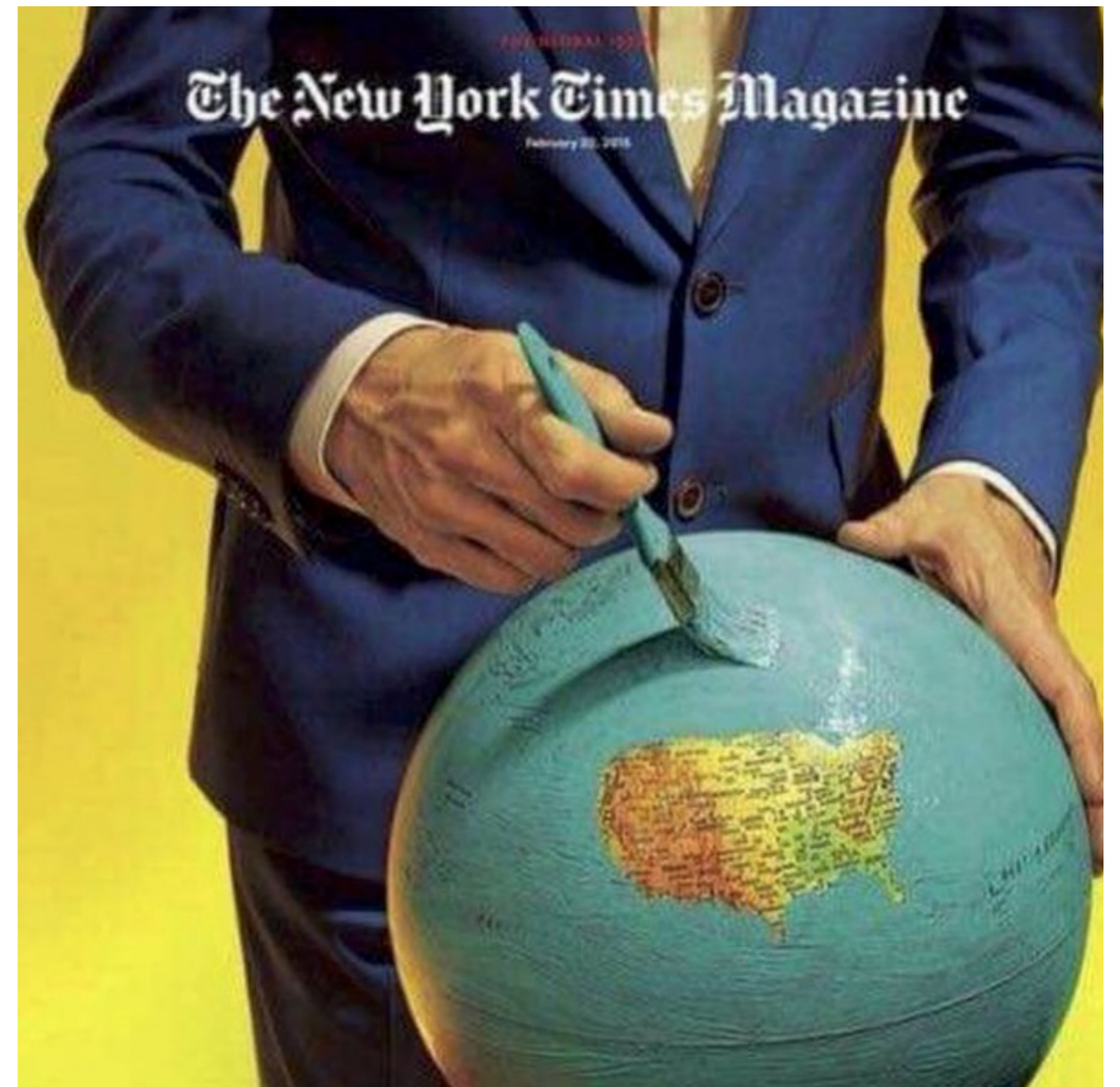
Physical boundaries

What instruments build these relations? We build boundaries, limits, and manage the level of permeability of these boundaries.

Cultural boundaries

Besides physical boundaries, we must consider the cultural ones, the digression over time into different social dynamics.

In making these boundary devices, the management of digressions in the place's memory and the belonging to linguistic worlds and historic continuity



generates a sliding in the figures of Architecture, forms chase each other and overlap in layers with different transparencies. Calibrating references and quotations produces a cultural drift that continuously moves the level of listening and perception from the physical to the mental space, recalling the talkative features of places.

Belonging and relation with boundary

Legibility and clarity generate the sense of belonging to a place and recognition. The more the dynamic of a place is clear, the more we own it. **The more a place is legible the more we make it ours and see potential in it.**



This happens in various forms: in the same way, both the parking lot that can become a market and the parade ground of a castle are readable and clear.

The beach

I usually make the example of the beach. This is a place of shared and negotiated space, order is not complex to understand for the crowd, **rules are clear, a horizon joins sea and sun**, a belonging to community and an individual and personal relationship with the sun.



Here the place is transformed and colonization in different forms draws small boundaries, areas without walls that regulate the relationship between people and the elements. **Friction zones, conflict zones, are condensed in the borders.** Where conflicts arise, negotiations are carried out: within a beach there is a neutral, specific reality, and negotiations that lead to the formation of space are manifested. A non-hierarchical space, apparently neutral, put into play by people's behavior, is interpreted and then returns to its neutrality once abandoned, ready to be reinvented.



Creativity

Place of conflict, trespassing strategies

In this field the creative component determines the possibility of change, creativity within a conflictual relationship triggers change and transformation of the conflict's habits.

By this logic, the relevance that boundaries acquire is a potentiality. **Tensions among things arise on the borders, and that's where we operate.**

Condensed logic triggers the request for a solution that can be solved through a proposal to overturn codes, a creative act that redirects behaviors.



The transformation of relationship among individuals, and between individuals and things generates unexpected and surprising bonds, which power the awareness of the relationship between individuals and things.

Encouraging the awareness of these dynamics generates a process of belonging, thus of identity.

Symbiosis is a relationship of dependence in function of an evolution of which we observe the procedures of negotiation and the strategies of trespassing.



The need for completeness decays, in polymorphic correlations and undetermined processes, there is an affirmation of heterogeneity and discontinuity, not necessarily transformed into forms of space but included in simple forms and predispositions of space.

The concept of border is no longer exclusion and opposition but openness to knowledge.

We have moved from an explosive to an implosive phase, from a mechanical era in which we operated through extensions of our body in a spatial sense to an era of extensions of the sensory and nervous system of men.



Backstage

The practice that derives from this is the establishment of devices, objects that make things happen, a backstage rather than a scene. In the backstage, reality and virtuality are still present with equal dignity, they have not fully become representation yet.

