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DOSSIER TRANSLATIONS

Image and matter

Guest editor: Umberto Bonomo

Introduction
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The reflexions of this issue of MATERIA ARQUITECTURA are structured around three questions: What is the relationship today between ¨matter¨ architecture and "image¨ architecture, whose digital-virtual dimension moves about by means of photo-realistic, utopic or fantastic renders? What is the role of architecture images and photographs in the construction of new social and cultural imageries?

"Architecture is always concrete matter", says Peter Zumthor in the article written by Claudio Magrini for this dossier. Nothing could be truer than that. However, for all those who wonder about the present status of architecture, a discipline we know and covet in magazines, web pages, photographs or blogs, the concrete dimension of architecture is blurred.

This is why, in the following pages,the debate between image and matter is openly set out. The first one refers to the symbolic dimension and the meaning of the works, while the second is more related to the technical and building questions of our discipline.

Architecture is constructed with matter and it is represented and disseminated by means of images.

The articles that follow are far from being able to answer the questions set out here; however, various points of view are proposed, showing the evident difficulty of our discipline field to understand and combine these concepts, dichotomic on the one hand, and dialectic on the other.

Image and matter, two concepts that should tend to a condition of balance, as Angelo Bucci says in the interview presented here, move in our environment in parallel fields, they hardly combine and meet. This question has divided the outlook of the architectural production into two sides: there are architects concerned with how their works look, how they will be photographed and how photogenic they are; while others are concerned with how they are built and with what materials, understanding that the aesthetic and formal result is only a product of such operations and decisions. Undoubtedly, Peter Zumthor himself, Solano Benítez and, for example, Francis Kéré, belong to this last category of architects.

In a culture that nourishes on knowledge by means of sentences of one hundred and forty characters, the impact and attraction of images acquires a worrying dimension. Avid, we consume them, exhaust them and deprive them of meaning. Alberto Ferlenga reminds us in his article, that the image manages to separate architectural products from their context, producing an identity crisis that deeply affects our discipline, but above all, our culture.

On the other hand, Hugo Mondragón invites us to understand architecture images and photographs taking into account that they, far from being innocent, are loaded with meaning; therefore, rather than forbidding them, we have to learn to read them critically.

Finally, it should be said that the debate presented here is not exhausted, it is part of our discipline. Going deep into it allows creating new discourses and conceptual proposals that contribute to modify the boundaries of our trade. ◼