

# CECI N'EST PAS UN VOYAGE

## THE JOURNEY AS RESEARCH LAB IN ARCHITECTURE

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*“Peut-être toute réflexion sur le voyage passe-t-elle par quatre remarques, dont on trouve l’une chez Fitzgerald, la seconde chez Toynbee, la troisième chez Beckett, et la dernière chez Proust. La première constate que le voyage, même dans les Iles ou dans les espaces, ne fait jamais une vraie ‘rupture’, tant qu’on emporte sa Bible avec soi, ses souvenirs d’enfance et son discours ordinaire. La seconde est que le voyage poursuit un idéal nomade, mais comme voeu dérisoire, parce que le nomade au contraire est celui qui ne bouge pas, qui ne veut pas partir et s’accroche à sa terre déshéritée, région centrale (...). C’est que, suivant la troisième remarque, la plus profonde ou celle de Beckett, ‘nous ne voyageons pas pour le plaisir de voyager, que je sache, nous sommes cons, mais pas à ce point’... Alors, quelle raison en dernière instance, sauf celle de vérifier, d’aller vérifier quelque chose, quelque chose d’inexprimable qui vient de l’âme, d’un rêve ou d’un cauchemar, ne serait-ce que de savoir si les Chinois sont aussi jaunes qu’on le dit, ou si telle couleur improbable, un rayon vert, telle atmosphère bleuâtre et pourprée, existe bien quelque part, là-bas. Le vrai rêveur, disait Proust, c’est celui qui va vérifier quelque chose...”*

Gilles Deleuze, «Optimisme, pessimisme et voyage. Lettre à Serge Daney», in Serge Daney, Ciné journal. Volume I / 1981-1982, Cahiers du cinéma, Paris, 1998, pp. 22-23.

### Preamble

The present essay presents the journey as a research method in architecture based on the creation of a laboratory that culminates in the production of a “Map of Intensity,” which differs from the representations that usually result from architectural journeys, such as drawings or photographs. These are, however, necessarily intricate in the production of the former and intrinsically bonded to the object of the present research: the study of *Intensive Architecture*<sup>1</sup> as an aesthetic category of architecture.

We should begin by asking first: what is a journey? Deleuze, in a letter to Serge Daney, trying to justify the latter’s option to become a journalist and move around the world, mentions that there are four main reasons for travelling - which not innocently come from literature examples (Fitzgerald, Toynbee, Beckett and Proust) and not philosophical ones (he could recall Montaigne among others). However,

we should previously take into consideration what a journey is for Deleuze himself. Deleuze didn’t like to travel. From what we know, he travelled several times when invited to give a lecture and there are some records of a journey that he made with his family to Greece in 1970. Deleuze preferred what he called “intensive journeys,” which correspond to his idea of what a nomad is as well. For Deleuze, nomads care endlessly about the land in its earthy condition, a land pointed by haecceities, singularities, winds, vegetation and sand, that he or she is forced to move (because the nomad wouldn’t impose an order or construct a State upon the land) and making of his or her short time in the land the utmost intensive inhabiting. The nomad populates the land following its singularities, listening to the winds, looking at the stars, following the course of the water, however from a different perspective. The nomad understands the nature and the land from the matter they are composed, from inside, on a micro scale. An intensive journey is, therefore, a journey in place, a journey without physical locomotion, that gives nonetheless rise to several movements (often imperceptible or invisible) produced by intensities in one’s body. These are movements and journeys that, as Deleuze says to Claire Parnet, music or literature create and

<sup>1</sup> “Intensive Architecture” is an expression used by the author to define a certain type of architecture that is populated by intensities. The author has been developing its definition in her Post-Doctoral Studies, although the term reports to previous research, during the author’s PhD, about Architecture’s Body without Organs. See: Susana Ventura, *O corpo sem órgãos da arquitetura*, PhD Thesis, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, 2012. Available for download at <http://run.unl.pt/handle/10362/10104> (in Portuguese).

allow to discover.<sup>2</sup> We should step away from misunderstandings, because an intensive journey is not a metaphor for what such forms of art (like music, literature and others) do to our bodies. Instead, an intensive journey may also coincide with a physical one, since what is in question is the production and movement of intensities, as defined by Deleuze. What is then an intensity? According to Deleuze, an intensity is the degree to which a sensation passes through, thus changing its nature. Whenever a sensation reaches the maximum degree of intensity, it passes a threshold, changes and becomes another sensation. Deleuze gives a very simple example from physics, for which Intensity = 0—it is the point where liquid water turns solid, for instance. When thinking about sensations that are created by forms of art, he thinks about certain paintings by Francis Bacon when a certain color provokes a physical reaction, such as an impulsive vomit, when it reaches its maximum intensity. But we may also recall in architecture how Adolf Loos carefully establishes, in the construction site (and only there, where he could be *face to face* with matter), the very limit of the wood panels in the walls, because if it were a little higher, it would express another sensation and become a different space (and for Adolf Loos it was, in most cases, a sense of comfort, like the one he had beautifully mastered in his wife Lina's bedroom) or, if a little lower, another sensation would be.

### Part I: The architectural journey

There isn't a proper definition for "architectural journey," although it is known that the journey plays a decisive role in understanding architecture, whose tradition dates long before photography or filming, today's most used modes of representation in architectural journeys, which are, as recalled by Walter Benjamin, deeply connected with the modern advent of tourism (especially photography).<sup>3</sup> It's true that photographs and films help to keep a record of the journey and, in architectural research, they are of extreme importance to establish relations between the journey and the work of a particular architect, as proven by historical examples such as Le Corbusier's

journey to the East<sup>4</sup> or Sigurd Lewerentz's journey to Italy,<sup>5</sup> remembering the relations established by Beatriz Colomina<sup>6</sup> between Le Corbusier's photographs and drawings of that journey and his ideas and oeuvre, defending that his ideas appeared before the photographs and these before the drawings. The photographs are duplicated in the drawings and both are produced deliberately to emphasise the architect's ideas about architecture. Luis Mansilla<sup>7</sup> takes the same example of the photographs of Lewerentz's journey to Italy to establish a comparison between those recorded fragments of pavements, bases of columns or details depicting (what Mansilla understands as) surfaces and textures seen always in close range with Lewerentz's own works, especially with the latter ones, the Churches of St. Mark and St. Peter. In these works, there isn't any unity of composition or form which, according to Mansilla as well, the drawings testify: a single general drawing of the entire work was not produced, but only partial drawings with every single detail represented, every single brick. And Lewerentz, just like Loos, would go to the construction site and verify each brick's position.<sup>8</sup> If we now take into consideration these examples of how critics understand the relation between an architect's journey and his or her body of work (through the records of the journey), we may call into question the intentions that the architect had when he

<sup>4</sup> In May 1911, Charles-Édouard Jeanneret (Le Corbusier, 1887-1965) left from Dresden and went on a Journey through Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe. This journey, specially the visits to the Parthenon and Mount Athos, triggered many of his thoughts about architecture.

<sup>5</sup> Sigurd Lewerentz (1885-1975), a Swedish Architect went to Italy to see mainly ancient and classical architecture. The details of this journey are scarce, however a collection of photographs taken by Lewerentz during this journey became a powerful insight to his built work.

<sup>6</sup> See: Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Luis Mansilla (1959-2012) was a Spanish architect, partner of Mansilla + Tuñón and Professor at the ETSAM, one of the major architecture schools in Spain. He wrote several essays, including one about the relation between Lewerentz' photographs of his journey to Italy and his built work, and in 1993 found Circo.

<sup>8</sup> "General elevations are not to be found among the designs of the later churches; there are only drawings of the sundry parts of the building, a corner, a chimney; defining with absolute precision all the bricks thereof, one by one. Paradoxically, the general plan of the facade has virtually no importance; but each and every brick has its intention, and on site, Lewerentz himself was to explain tirelessly how each one was to be placed", Mansilla, "Beyond the Wall of Hadrian's Villa Parrhasius' Veil: Lewerentz' Journey to Italy," p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> See: Pierre-André Boutang (réalisation), Gilles Deleuze, Claire Parnet, *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze (lettre V, de Voyage)*. Paris: Éditions Montparnasse, DVD, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> See: Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. London: Penguin, 2008.

or she decided to go on a journey, even if this is generally assumed—from classical tradition—as a move towards inspiration, a perpetual desire to discover things for themselves as the empirical experience reigns over representations: that desire of verifying as Deleuze remembers after Proust—if the Chinese are as yellow as they are said to be or if the sky in the East is brighter than in the West. Returning to Le Corbusier's journey to the East, we might consider that his journey had this verification as a goal, which, if we re-read the idea from Proust himself, has in its origins a dream. The dream of Le Corbusier going to the East, even if he was going to verify his ideas (Colomina insists that his ideas are prior to the journey), even if he carefully planned his ascent to the Acropolis or his arrival in Istanbul through the ocean to find what he knew already from pictures, he needed to be affected and shaken, which is easy to understand from most of his notes and letters (and less so from his photographs or drawings).<sup>9</sup> This aspect is of extreme importance, as Anthony Vidler advocates, for instance, that Le Corbusier's journey to the Acropolis only ended in 1946, when he wrote the text "The Ineffable Space" that is mainly about the sensations that the Acropolis compose, which are in turn due to its architect's composition and mastery (and what Le Corbusier wrote in *Vers une Architecture* in 1923 was just the presage of what he would conclude in 1946).<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps, there is a certain feeling of a journey being a mythical experience. Others would probably speak of romanticism here, but it's certain that a journey being a displacement from one's home, brings, in itself, an already imbued will to pursue and understand the Difference and the Other. However, we should consider Deleuze's question after Fitzgerald, i.e. that the rupture, which we desire for the journey to operate in ourselves and in the way we perceive the world, is only possible if we don't take our 'bibles' with us, which means that we have to go on a journey without the knowledge that positions us in the world, in order to experience the difference and the other in themselves (without the need of comparison or establishing relations between terms). We find this idea

<sup>9</sup> "To see the Acropolis is a dream that one caresses without even dreaming of realising it," Le Corbusier, *Le voyage d'Orient*, Paris: Les Editions Forces Vives, 1966, p. 158.

<sup>10</sup> "With the concept of 'l'espace indicible' Le Corbusier completes his acropolitan trajectory, finally assimilating the unassimilable to his architecture," Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*, p. 53.

in architectural journeys as well, and despite a first need to withdraw from architecture, in most of the cases, we end up speaking of the relation between the journey and the architects' ideas and body of work, allowing to return to that precise encounter with the other.

*Das Andere* (the Other) resulted in part from Adolf Loos' journey to America where he stayed from 1893 to 1896. It's largely agreed among historians and critics that the following texts, written by Loos when he returned to Austria, were influenced by his experiences in America, especially those on daily objects and common life (and Loos made on these several references to America). We may call into question Loos' goal when travelling to America,<sup>11</sup> however if we take *Das Andere's* subtitle "a periodical dedicated to the introduction of western culture to Austria" ("*Ein Blatt zur Einfuehrung Abendlaendischer Kultur in Oesterreich*"<sup>12</sup>), we cannot deny that this journey did actually operate a rupture between Loos and his contemporary Austria (even if we cannot affirm that this journey operated a *real* rupture in Loos, because there were several issues regarding capitalism and its effects on labor classes or even the expression of some architecture that Loos found in America from which he remained alienated or opted to ignore), at the same time, it played a clear influence, at several levels, on his ideas about culture and how culture

<sup>11</sup> Panayotis Tournikiotis is more reluctant when writing about Loos' journey to America, not only about the reasons behind this choice, but also about America's influence on Loos' body of work: "Loos was one of the first European architects to undertake a trip to the new world after finishing his studies, rather than the traditional grand tour of Italy and Greece. [...] This trip played a very important role in Loos's life; his American experience helped to define his criticism of concurrent European culture, politics, and architecture. It is otherwise difficult to explain his choice to travel to the United States. Doubtless, Loos felt suffocated in the confined and conservative atmosphere of the declining Austro-Hungarian empire, and he thought that in America he would discover realism and freedom, a land where everything was possible. This former student of the Arts and Crafts who had wanted to become a mechanic was probably seduced by the American myth of practicality and hard work. For Loos, this combination symbolised the *esprit* necessary to human progress. It is equally difficult, however, to determine precisely the American influence in his work," Panayotis Tournikiotis, *Adolf Loos*, p. 10. Other critics, such as Gravagnuolo or Roland L. Schachel, speak clearly about the relation between this journey and Loos' thought and oeuvre, even admitting that "Loos' journey to America is, in one way, a journey into the Classical; more so than a journey to Rome or Athens," Benedetto Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos*, p. 48.

<sup>12</sup> See: Adolf Loos, *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*. California: Ariadne Press, 1997.

affects architecture (which inevitably should express how people live in modern times), and, at last, on his own architecture.<sup>13</sup> For the Italian architecture historian Benedetto Gravagnuolo, for instance, one of the roots of the *Raumplan* is, precisely, in the American house:

“What is the basis of this way [Raumplan] of thinking about space, consistently and obstinately practiced by Loos right up to one of his last works? Any attempt to answer this question must start from an analysis of the forms through which this idea of architecture begins to manifest itself. It is undeniable that his interior design of 1899 conspicuously displays all the morphological characteristics taken from the American pioneer’s house (beams left visible on the ceiling, the conception of the living room as a fluid and unitary space onto which various smaller rooms open, the arrangement of intimate alcoves around the fire-place, the use of wood as the main material, the introduction of lively colors...) which will become some of the invariants in Loosian interior design.”<sup>14</sup>

In his first journey to the Sahara, in 1952, Aldo Van Eyck wanted to “simply experience the Sahara and not to explore architecture.”<sup>15</sup> He would then return to the sub-Saharan Dogon region in 1960, where he largely documented the Dogon society, trying to grasp their specific way of inhabiting, their villages and the characteristic mud buildings, expressions of primitivism which interested him especially as opposed to functionalist architecture. According to Karin Jaschke “what was more important to Van Eyck than the buildings themselves, though, was their apparent embeddedness in the cultural and

social fabric of Dogon society.”<sup>16</sup> But, then, the author speculates about the interrelations between the Van Eycks and the Dogons, quoting Hannie Eyck, that she and her husband made “a conscious effort not to interfere with local people’s business and considering themselves passive observers rather than active participants in village life,”<sup>17</sup> and, still, Van Eyck photographed the community, documenting not only buildings, but also rituals. “It appears that the good intentions in part lost out against the practicalities of photographing and the attraction of motifs that presented themselves. Pictures of people were taken despite the fact that many locals, especially women, for religious and other reasons, resented being photographed [...] and funeral celebrations were documented despite their ritual nature.”<sup>18</sup> This journey was not to experience the desert, as Eyck’s first journeys to the Sahara, but to research and study Dogon architecture, since the relation between landscape and villages, the relation between the inhabiting space and the living community and its rituals, demanding the need for a closer look and an intimate interaction, which, in the end, didn’t happen. We still may consider the relations between the study of non-Western cultures in Eyck’s ideas on space (and more in his built work), but somehow Eyck didn’t become Other and stood there, just like Loos looking at America through the eyes of a European, looking at the Dogon rituals through a Western lens.<sup>19</sup>

Jean-Philippe Vassal’s experience in the desert is, in this sense, quite different. He had worked and interacted with several communities in the Sahara (though certainly different from the Dogons), but the full engagement happened when he, himself, became a nomad in the sense of a *devenir autre* (becoming Other). Vassal took six months to choose the place for his tent in the desert near Niamey, in one of the few dunes near the Niger River, one kilometer from the village of Saadia. The architect seized the desert just as a nomadic space, placing himself at the precise

<sup>13</sup> See: Benedetto Gravagnuolo chapter “America”, *Adolf Loos*, pp. 42-51.

<sup>14</sup> Benedetto Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos*, p. 49. It is important here to refer that for Münz, who knew personally Loos, the origin of the *Raumplan* is in the Roman Villa. He also makes mention to that interior design of 1899 as the first manifestation of the *Raumplan*, but for him: “Thus we have already the elements of the ‘plan of volumes’ [Raumplan] principle in this architectural fantasy [it was an exercise of a patio villa proposed by Loos to the students under his supervision], which seems to be trying out the plan of an ancient Roman villa for modern purposes. The centre is in the form of an atrium or patio, but already there appears a desirable flexibility in the external walls where the interior calls for it,” Gustav Künstler and Ludwig Münz, *Adolf Loos: Pioneer of modern architecture*, p. 141.

<sup>15</sup> Aldo Van Eyck *apud* Karin Jaschke, “Aldo Van Eyck and the Dogon Image.” In Buckley, Craig; Rhee, Pollyanna (eds.); *Architects’ Journeys: Building, Traveling, Thinking*, p. 74.

<sup>16</sup> Karin Jaschke, “Aldo Van Eyck and the Dogon Image,” *Ibidem*, p. 81.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 89.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>19</sup> “Even before confronting the paradox of unilaterally defining a coherent position in an intercultural encounter, the conflicting demands of the Western tourist’s desire and broader ethical and cultural considerations were clearly not easily reconcilable for Van Eyck. It is telling, though, that at least in theory, Van Eyck chose to remain on the sidelines rather than engaging fully and seeking to experience Dogon culture as a participant rather than as a distant observer,” *Ibidem*, p. 90.

locations of its singularities: on one of the few desert dunes, at its top, at the intersection of cool breezes that cross the desert, following the direction of the river. The desert's singularities are preserved inside the small hut which spreads through the spaces that surround it, where, at night, one can see the lights of the city of Niamey, right in front of it, as guidelines in the middle of the desert. The dune, the breezes and the distant city lights are singularities that belong to the composition of the small hut up in the desert, in the absolute nomadic space. And Vassal's choice took six months to make, the time that was necessary to determine these elements. As we are told by the architect, three elements compose the building: A hut provides shelter, a wider surrounding fence controls the atmosphere, and a 'hangar' allows to bring people together and admire the scenery.<sup>20</sup> In its construction, the materials refer immediately to the nomadic tents built by the people of the desert: apparently ephemeral constructions with disparate materials, such as any *objet trouvé*, from branches of trees to corrugated sheets. And while the construction of the small hut took two days, it took the wind two years to destroy it. Vassal, the nomad, apprehended the know-how of the inhabitants of the desert: the way children turn any material into a toy with very few means, how they learn with joy although being sat on the earth floor, how they build a house with the same materials with which they cover their body or as they dance. Above all, as they dance. And the dances of the natives seem to evoke the ancestral gods and celebrate the earth and sky, in between large movements at the sunset as if a simple gesture could embrace the infinity, the horizon of the sky and the desert, far away, where everything comes together. An immense joy is felt in each danced gesture. There is a Vassal's *agencement*<sup>21</sup> that mixes the desert with the African child, with dancing, the stars and the sky. All these elements become part of a true nomadic architecture, without recourse to symbols, without comparisons or metaphors, only through the transformation of an intense matter (the dune, the wind, the body, the tissue that covers the body, the gesture danced...) into matters of expression. And in each of his works, along with those of Anne Lacaton, the hut becomes a powerful image, as both describe this in a poetic text: "*Des images d'Afrique, des souvenirs reviennent:*

20 See: Andreas and Ilka Ruby, *2G Book Lacaton & Vassal*. Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 2010, p. 24.

21 *Agencement (in French)*, here, refers to the deleuzian concept. For a synthesis of its complexity, see: François Zourabichvili, *Le vocabulaire de Deleuze*. Ellipses, 2003.

*désert, landes, océan, immenses territoires plats où construire est dérisoire, éphémère par la force des choses, et souvent nécessaire. Rencontres, poèmes, émotions. Objets insolites, draps de plastique tendus sur la terre des campagnes, jardins secrets, amitiés, connivences.*"<sup>22</sup> It is to this hut and to the desert that they always return to in their works.

## Part II: The journey as a research lab in architecture

Just like these examples, between the need of verifying a dream and a desire for rupture, our journey began with a need to research about architecture's body without organs after Deleuze,<sup>23</sup> that, among many other problems, relates to an architect's creation of a plane of immanence or, in other words, to an architect's creative process (or part of it, as we will explain afterwards). For this research project, it was imperative to situate ourselves the closest possible to the proper creative act, to be present at the very moment when it happens and unfolds. Just like Van Eyck who decided to be a distant observer of the Dogon culture, we proposed to play the role of a surveillance camera in the architecture studios whose creative process and work we had decided to study: Diller Scofidio + Renfro in New York, Lacaton & Vassal in Paris and Peter Zumthor in Haldenstein.<sup>24</sup> We stayed at their offices during a certain period of time (two months in each studio), accompanying several projects that were in process, which made us think of artistic residences and lead us to naming our approach "research residences." The research residence is a temporary laboratory that comprehends not only a residence in an architecture studio, which in its turn implies a long period of stay and recording in the form of personal notes, interviews, conversations, photographs and drawings, reading through architects' archives, but also an expedition journey to the works of architecture. The expedition, in its turn, implies understanding the work in its place, in the landscape, through all the subtle changes and perception of time, to know how the work is inhabited, to

22 Lacaton & Vassal, excerpt from the text "Il fera beau demain," from the catalog of the exhibition at the *Institut Français d'Architecture à Paris* (1998). Text consulted at Lacaton & Vassal's studio, in 2009.

23 See footnote 1.

24 We've stayed at Diller Scofidio + Renfro since beginning of March 2008 until the beginning of May of 2008; at Lacaton & Vassal's studio since late April 2009 until late June 2009, and at Peter Zumthor's studio during January and February 2011 (although the journey began during December 2010 with a full 10 days to visit his works in Switzerland and Austria).

learn about the culture, people's habits or rituals: to become (*devenir*<sup>25</sup>) Le Corbusier in Greece, Loos in America, Lewerentz in Italy, Van Eyck and Vassal in the Sahara... With all the questions that the journeys of these architects arise (some of them mentioned before), especially because some remain answered and the journey still belongs to a deep desire of each one of us to face what is different and unknown, we cannot deny the power and the effect that these journeys had in each one of these architects, mainly because—and we've desired the same for our journeys—the empirical experience of the work of architecture is still the best *medium* to fully grasp it. Of course, the choice of architects and selected works is not innocent either. Their work possesses what we may call an "Athens' effect," referring to Le Corbusier's experience in the Acropolis. They trigger that need to verify if the space is silent or light, for instance.

After New York, our first research residence, we felt the need to get even closer to the architect and soon the surveillance camera could no longer be that imperceptible and indifferent observer recording each move of the architect's desire (according to Deleuze, the body without organs is the plane of immanence of desire). There were certainly things that we couldn't infer by just standing there and recording everything that happened. We were not interested in data collection, in descriptions of a "day at the office" or even how architects use different methods and tools to design, which is what Elke Krasny did at the end.<sup>26</sup> We were facing the precise interval that this author wasn't able to fill in, which belongs only to the flux of creation when the architect is driven by *unknown* forces (during the act of creation, there is an abandonment of consciousness as already stated not only by philosophers such as Deleuze, but also by artists or even neurologists as

well<sup>27</sup>) exactly when these are largely determined by the roles of sensibility and intuition (even Kant when thinking about the aesthetic problem admitted the primacy of sensibility over pure reason<sup>28</sup>). Of course, there are mechanisms or artifices (to use Deleuze's notion of artifice) that allow the architect to create his own plane of immanence, though we were interested in determining those particular moments when a sensation is created and thus crystallized in the work of architecture, eternally surviving in the work itself without the need to resort to symbols or metaphors.

At the end of these three long journeys, three years (including preparatory work) of research residences, of visiting several works of architecture by the architects, of talking with those who inhabited them, the question became more defined. If, at the beginning, we exclusively concentrated on understanding exactly what happens during the proper act of creation when sensations are created in the plane of immanence, we became more interested in how a certain sensation in architecture is composed through architecture's own means. How do we compose intimacy, for instance, in architecture?<sup>29</sup> How do we compose contemplation? Certainly, it recalls the same problem of the body without organs, but it's about another plane of immanence, not that of the architect—though he or she is always present there and disseminated—but the plane of immanence of the work of architecture itself, the sensations that the work concentrates in itself and how these sensations are created only through the composition of its elements and components (arranged, of course, by the architect). Of course, if a sensation is created in an architect's plane of immanence, this means that the

25 *Devenir* is, here, understood as a deleuzian notion. Unfortunately, the English translation "become" is insufficient.

26 Curiously, we just met Elke Krasny's book in Paris at Lacaton & Vassal's studio. Until that moment, we didn't have knowledge, in architecture, of any research method common to our "research residences". Usually, the researchers just go to the offices to look at their archives and perhaps have an interview or two with the architects in question, missing somehow the major part of all the battles fight daily, including those lost. It's also about a private and intimate side of an architecture studio which usually remains hidden from the public and from where, afterwards, many questions arise, when the architects die and a space for speculation is open. Elke Krasny, *The Force Is in the Mind*.

27 Deleuze mentions the case of Francis Bacon, for instance. In architecture, we may find an identical description in Peter Zumthor's words, and, in neurology, António Damásio describes what happens to consciousness during the processes of creation. See: Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: la logique de la sensation*. Paris: Éditions de la Différence, 2 vols, 1981. And António Damásio, *O sentimento de si: Corpo, Emoção e Consciência*. Lisboa: Temas e Debates, 2013.

28 See: Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*.

29 See: Susana Ventura, "The last exercise on the detached house: the space of intimacy in the absence of the body." In Costa, Campos Pedro (dir.); *Homeland - News From Portugal*. Venice: Portuguese Representation at the 14th Architecture Biennale of Venice, Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa, September 2014; Susana Ventura, "How do we think and create intimacy, in architecture?" In Costa, Pedro Campos (dir.); *Homeland - News From Portugal*. Venice: Portuguese Representation at the 14th Architecture Biennale of Venice, Trienal de Arquitectura de Lisboa, June 2014.

work should hold the sensation eternally—just like Adolf Loos had admitted for the work of art, making each man's heart beat until its death—impelling that need to verify. Moreover, this verification refers to a bodily apprehension of things, which escapes words or data, and summons the powers of sensitivity and intuition. Curiously, upon our first conversation, Peter Zumthor said that the most important thing would be to visit the built work. At the time, this was already unquestionable. The visit to the works was mandatory, but it turned out to be the cornerstone for all the research.

Another journey was then planned: an expedition to intensive architecture.<sup>30</sup> Briefly, we define intensive architecture as an aesthetic category, borrowing from Deleuze his notions of body without organs, sensation and intensity. Thus, a work of architecture may be considered an example of intensive architecture if it composes and holds a block of sensations. Usually, a work of architecture responds to a program, holds several functions, defines space, determines life, has a construction system, an architectural language, etc., and, at the end, may compose a sensation or sensations (sensation = the being of the sensible, as defined by Aesthetics). Not every work of architecture achieves that, but we find several examples within the works of Adolf Loos, Sigurd Lewerentz and Peter Zumthor, for instance, wherein these three architects form a trinity within our research. At this moment, the journey turned into an expedition. It was more than just verifying the work in its site. It implied the reading of a vaster land which is not only the landscape where the work of architecture

stands, but also the land defined by all the remains and traces that are metamorphosed in the work - traces of other forms of art, pieces of music, poems, flowers and winds (just like in Vassal's little tent - the stars as light, the winds and sand that change the dune's nature, the dance of the African people), which demand a time of apprehension of the work, a preparation of our own body to stay aware, to open its pores, to prepare its nervous system, in order to capture every single dissonance or subtle difference to locate the works' points of maximum intensity.

In Vardø, for instance, with our eyes wide open, stripped of everything we already knew (and we knew quite a lot, since it was one of the works that we had followed at Zumthor's studio, during its final construction stage), we felt the need to go around the whole perimeter of the island, to know each one of its plants and flowers, to look at the sea, the patterns of the waves, to see how these hit the rocks, what kind of rocks and stones there were, what sounds footsteps make on hedgehog's homes, and their smell, the stench that only the Arctic sea brings. We felt like Goethe, who had sworn to himself "not to walk with many stones on his back" during his journey to Italy.<sup>31</sup> If we are made to forget our home (and our 'bibles'), we are in fact more aware and this attention is the one that gets us closer to things themselves, or rather closer to their physical matter, since we understand sensation in a deleuzian sense, whose apprehension does not depend on sentiment, nor pleasure, nor enjoyment, nor any subjective fruition, but in the ability that the experience (or the event) has to speak directly to our bodies, without confusing, however—and this is clearly a warning—sensation with senses. The sense organs are only receptacles of sensations, which allows us to comprehend the various levels of intensity through which a sensation passes. If we take the example of infinity, it is not a "visual sense of infinity," as if the infinite were given us only by vision. The sensation is always a compound of physical matters which engage the entire body, and especially our nervous system, which can react spontaneously and quickly, without any mediation, namely knowledge. In the case of the Vardø Memorial, these matters belong to the vast landscape of Vardø, since the structures of drying fish, the way the houses touch the earth or the absence of fences make the soil a continuous blanket of flowers, vegetation and rocks, the wind and the sound of the birds,

<sup>30</sup> Within the new research project of Post-Doctoral studies, the author has won the Fernando Távora's award 2014th edition, with the proposal "Expedition to an Intensive Architecture". In honour to the Portuguese Architect Fernando Távora, the prize is attributed by the Portuguese Architects Association and an invited jury (with members from the various fields of knowledge as well as a member of the Távora's family) each year to the best proposal of an architectural journey linked to a research project. The expedition took place during the months of June-August 2014 through Japan, Central and North Europe, to study the works by Kazuo Shinohara, Adolf Loos, Sigurd Lewerentz and Peter Zumthor. The result of the expedition was then presented during a lecture at October 6th (Le Corbusier's anniversary) with the title "Intimacy, Silence, Contemplation". For each one of these sensations, the author has presented a short film in a bergsonian sense - that our thinking is cinematographic - which were not more than the author's attempts to demonstrate the thought created - or that part that it may be visible - for the composition of each one of these sensations, according to the sequences that run through the successive intensity thresholds. The short films will be soon available online.

<sup>31</sup> See: Goethe, *Italian Journey: 1786-1788*. London: Penguin Classics, 1992.

the sound of beating wings, the graves of the dead and the permanent blue winter light, the hanging lamps or candles next to the windows... All of these different elements come together in a single building, which is not intended to represent any local architecture, but undoubtedly metamorphoses all these properties into expressive and aesthetic qualities. We find, for example, the same artifice of suspended lights against black background (and we identify, immediately, a composition with several elements: artificial light + the physical force of the suspension + a dark background colour) in the Vardø Memorial of Zumthor and in the churches of St. Mark and St. Peter of Lewerentz. In the three works, we may understand, from the analysis of the territory and the landscape, that it refers to a Nordic tradition, since we found this same artifice in local and popular architecture (and we may, subsequently, call upon knowledge and seek in history the origin of this tradition and seek in science the physical effects of light on this particular condition), and, in both works, create identical sensations (and that have nothing to do with any simulation or intensification of natural light): a sensation of lightness - the thousand points of light floating against the black background of the canvas or of the brick print to the interior an atmospheric quality, raising the "air," making matter seem then to levitate - and a sensation of silence—suitable, certainly, to prayer, to murmurs, which, in the Memorial, is further intensified by the rhythm of the steps while reading the foreign names on the walls. In Vardø, the sensation of lightness is also created by elevating the building from the ground, wherein the landscape flows freely beneath it, in between the structure of very thin wooden profiles, while in the Churches of Lewerentz, built in brick, it is in the way they touch the ground and the earth, as surrendering to it, extending it on matter, and, occasionally, is as if the ground escapes them, an idea emphasized by the openings low to the ground of St. Mark's Church.

After the expedition, it became clear that we could not use the traditional modes of representation, because what was (and still is) in question is the composition of a sensation that involves different elements. We made a first attempt with film.<sup>32</sup> During the expedition, we made several recordings of the work as well as of the landscape, of rituals, people... We also collected different kinds of maps (which are always an important code of a certain ter-

<sup>32</sup> The trailer, which include the beginning of the three short films, may be seen at: [www.expedicaooumaarquitecturaintensiva.com](http://www.expedicaooumaarquitecturaintensiva.com).

ritory), stones, flowers and leaves, shells, all the elements that belong to the composition of sensations in a work of architecture. We cannot imagine the Japanese intervals of multiple screens (glass, wood, rice paper) and the correspondent sensation of intimacy that these compose, without the garden, its trees and flowers. We made three films, one for each sensation that we had tried to grasp in several works: intimacy, silence, contemplation. The film creates a sequence close to our thought of how a sensation is composed, but will the film pass to the audience, for instance, the sensation that exists in space? Some films get there. That was exactly the reason Deleuze found to justify Daney's option to travel and write about cinema. And many examples exist: are we passionate about Malaparte's house or Godard's Malaparte (in each form of art, it is the problem of sensation)? Curiously, Zumthor says that he would like to build houses like Kaurismäki films, and he is speaking clearly of the sensation of warmth that these houses would compose.<sup>33</sup>

If the film seems to us to be one of the best medium to depict how a sensation is composed in space, in order to make the degrees through which a sensation passes coincide with the filmed sequence that we've established, we are now developing another mode of representation of what we call "Map of Intensity," exactly after Deleuze who had chosen an image of the Dogon Egg (as we may read in its subtitle: "The Dogon Egg and the Distribution of Intensities") to illustrate the chapter "How do you make yourself a body without organs?" in his work with Félix Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus*. The egg is one of the given examples by the authors for the body without organs—a body populated only by intensities, where there isn't yet any organization or organs.<sup>34</sup> Thus our "Map of Intensity" will try to depict in an exact way the points of maximum intensity, to establish the different relations between these within space, and, at the same time, to determine the trajectories and transformation of the different elements into matters of expression when they compose a sensation. And

<sup>33</sup> See: Peter Zumthor, "The Body of Architecture," *Thinking Architecture*.

<sup>34</sup> "We treat the BwO as the full egg before the extension of the organism and the organisation of the organs, before the formation of the strata; as the intense egg defined by axes and vectors, gradients and thresholds, by dynamic tendencies involving energy transformation and kinematic movements involving group displacement, by migrations: all independent of accessory forms because the organs appear and function here only as pure intensities", Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 170.





*Map of Intensities #1, Steilneset Memorial, Susana Ventura, 2015. Watercolor painting with black lead and tracing paper.*

these elements were impossible to determine without the expedition.

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