

Winner in the End-of-Degree Project Category

Rampant Architecture. The Village and House

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REPORT – Rampant Architecture. The Village and House

The idea behind the end-of-degree project is inspired by the film *Contempt* (*Le Mépris*, 1963) by Jean-Luc Godard, in which Brigitte Bardot visits Casa Malaparte. The supposition was that Brigitte would be seduced by good architecture and by life in the Bay of Naples, commissioning us with a house on one of the islands there on a par with the one designed by Curzio Malaparte.

The starting point was a study of the location to define the aim of the project. The first step was to focus on the sub-text, deciding what we wanted to express. In this case, the sea was analysed as a nexus for all the islands and the bay. A drawing of the Bay of Naples was made, entitled “thresholds of the sea”, since it alludes to those meeting points between the sea and land.

At this point, once the context is clear, the aim of the project must be identified. It was decided—in a decision midway between logic and dreams—that Brigitte Bardot would live in a town, trying to draw as close a parallel as possible to the primitive essence that has attracted “emulators of Ulysses” to these islands for centuries.

On the south coast of the island of Ischia, one of the bay’s most unique points of contact between sea and land can be found. It is a mountainous formation of volcanic origin, connected to the island by a thin strip of sand that ends in a series of houses, perched on a hillside, which make up the small fishing village of Sant’Angelo.

Where Pablo Neruda wrote:

*Because I walk through the streets
and, alone, I don't exist,
life flows
like all rivers,*

*everyone talks to me, they
want to tell me things, they*

speak to me of their relatives

their miseries

and their joys,

they all pass by and all of them

tell me something.

With these words, the aim of the project grows in intensity. Brigitte Bardot goes to live in a village, going there to become part of a community.

Due to its topographic circumstances, Sant'Angelo's potential for growth is limited. The hillside is covered in typical Mediterranean houses, with flat rooftops. Given the opportunity for growth that the flat rooftops offer, a new urban fabric on top of the existing one was proposed. The plan of the flat rooftops became a blank sheet where a line could be traced that connects the whole village from above, descending at certain points to link in with the village below.

The architecture of these aerial streets is limited to just what is strictly necessary to cross from one flat rooftop to another; that is, a tapestry of ceramic tiles on the ground marking the streets, and walled staircases that run down to the lower streets and allow you to pass from one flat rooftop to another.

Hence, Brigitte Bardot's house is an example of how to intervene in this new village at rooftop level. At roof level, on the flat rooftop, the house has walls but no ceiling. Instead of seeing the horizon, you just see the sky. The different levels, floors and openings define the open-air rooms. From the rooftop, the house below can be reached. This takes the form of a succession of interlinked spaces set around the staircase. It is a house where "everything is in its place", with living spaces infused with the colours of the tiles, textiles and furniture.

The house can be visited in multiple different ways. One space leads to another, with colour as a guide: beginning with the kitchen table in a room with a window of yellow tiles; passing through another room with a fireplace, illuminated by a coloured floor; continuing on to a bed in the wall, a door linking up with street level, and a ceiling-less library, illuminated by the stairwell that crosses the whole house, ventilating it, channelling networks, and containing the stairs that run up once again to the flat rooftop.

Emphasis is placed on materials able to define the spaces within the blank rooms of the pre-existing architecture. Glazed handmade tiles with different patterns are used for each living space, depending on the sensation they must arouse, trying to put life before language. To design the tiles, studies by Gio Ponti on the subject were used as a reference, and the tiles and their colours are used to distinguish private areas of the house from public ones.