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**MATTER**

## Editorial

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**What is the position of matter in contemporary architecture?** Does it have a morphogenetic power, revived and revisited, with the now ubiquitous involvement of digital technologies in contemporary design and fabrication? Is there an omnipresent shift from mute material to mutant matter? Is there increasing awareness, exchanging knowledge, thinking differently, on matter through transdisciplinary research? Is the role of matter in contemporary design processes reconsidered as a whole?

**Should we not be concerned about the lost link between materiality with aesthetics, thinking, ethics and politics?** Should we not register that this loss has triggered a renowned interest in materiality that spans from philosophy to architectural experimentation; from neomaterialism and eliminative materialism to material systems and the perception of the material as a morphogenetic agent in architectural design?

**Why is contemporary contemplation focusing on reconnecting making alongside sensing and thinking with their material base in a post-human society?** How can materiality and materialism be reconfigured in the rich and multifaceted context of contemporary computational architecture, and in the systemic context of pervasive computer simulations? How can this context nourish integration, build bridges, break barriers, alleviate fragmentation and clustering and above all nourish, foster, promote and advance relevant innovation, while paying attention to the most important social challenges we are facing regarding the deep impact of technological changes?

Contemporary architecture is appreciated as a creative process, which no longer imposes form to material as subordinate to architect's ideas but is conceived as part of a dynamical process in which non-hierarchical assemblages of natural agents interact sympathetically for form to emerge. The qualities of this emerged architectural forms are no longer judged upon their scenographic appearance as a meaningful performance but upon their performativity, at times as structural efficiency (in)formatted through a bottom up process of material formation.

Architectural creations increasingly disentangle from their consideration as tangible, finished, offered to the senses, as objects. On the contrary they tend to be conceived as part of a bigger whole, a broader assemblage of other entities, an alterity. Have we definitely moved from form-finding to form making, from archetypes to prototypes, from the identical and repetitive to the non-standard and variable, from the top down to the bottom up, from form to formation, from meaning to performativity, from symbols to material expression, from the architect author to the architect interactor? Should we not move even further, away from a possibly naïve perception of architectural creation as an emergence of a morphogenetic process and shift into a critical, (non necessarily human), alien dynamic decision-making processes and orientation selections?

The shift from sameness to similarity and from the identical to the variable, the glorification of differentiation as a core value of our times, has been reflected in building architecture in the capacities of mass customisation which enhances individualism and the individual in the

way it has been perceived by contemporary philosophers not as a rational being to decide, but as an affective individual in a broader system that in a process of deciding is led to other decisions; a stance that negates Albertian distinctions among designers and makers and ultimately folds them into one being, doing both in real time. The trajectory of the Materiality of Architecture can be followed on the schema: from the craftsman of the one off, to the mass produced, to the mass customized, to mass sourcing, accessible to all. The process of instantiation, that is the conversion of the digital script into a physical object, may then be severed in space and time from the making and the makers of the original file. The author of all has not died, but has become the author of the archetype, alongside other authors that take over in the journeys of time. As a consequence, the author of the original script may not be the only author of the end product, and may not determine all the final features to it, as there is no one end product in the first place. Hence the architect is no longer a sole decision maker, but part of an assemblage in an ongoing and endless process of imperceptible decisions that lead to new ones. To customise is not only a physical necessity, but also an ideological one; to be different and to assert for difference. Of course there are polemics as to the cost of customization especially in times of crises, but how can we work on the ethos of being diverse, variable and differentiated without being taxed?

This issue of e-archidoct comprises the views of five researchers, in a perpetual reinstating of the position of matter and materiality in contemporary architecture, who suggest that we have to be continuous and sympathetic interactors where beauty is the precondition of the building and not the other way around.

Ioannis Paterakis traces the common ground and mutual infiltrations between Information Technology and Architectural Design. He attempts a consideration of systems analysis and design as a fundamental Architecture discipline by suggesting another perception of consistency founded on the notion of Texture.

David Abondano addresses the conceptions of 'materiality' and 'nature' in digital architecture, through a dialectical discourse with modern architecture aiming to trace misconceptions and discern dilemmas that result from the shift in architecture caused by the effervescent technological progress.

Dimitris Gourdoukis examines whether digital fabrication protocols, in a protocol-mediated fashion, can oppose Alberti's concept of the architect and offer a possibility to place importance on concepts like craftsmanship that root in pre-modern practices.

Anders Kruse Aagaard, similarly, uses digital fabrication tools to discuss the emerging exchange between digital architectural drawing and the process of materialization. The essay suggests an approach where an overlapping of virtuality and the tangible material output from digital fabrication machines could connect the reality of materials to an exploring process.

Finally, Stig Anton Nielsen examines how the idea of the algorithm could provide an alternative to making predictions in unstructured environments. The essay focuses on possible applications for this new tool, debates the paradox of prediction and proposes improvements to the computational system.