

Final installation of the NATURE cycle

NATURE 04 | UNSTUDIO

MATERIA IN MOVIMENTO_MOTION MATTERS

6 December 2013 – 13 April 2014

www.fondazionemaxxi.it

Rome 5 December 2013. Since 2011, with the series of exhibitions *Nature* curated by Pippo Ciorra, MAXXI has been experimenting with a different way of talking about architecture, the most significant architects and the responses to the issues characterising our age.

Following projects by Francesco Venezia, West8 and Alberto Campo Baeza that transformed the museum spaces while giving voice to themes distinguishing contemporary architectural research, it is the turn of the Dutch **UNStudio**, one of the most interesting architectural groups on the international scene.

From **6 December 2013 to 13 April 2014** the studio will be presenting ***Nature 04 | UNStudio Materia in Movimento_Motion Matters*** curated by Alessandro d'Onofrio, a site-specific installation that, as has been their practice for many years, is to be understood as a test bench for a series of issues close to their research.

As **Ben van Berkel**, co-founder of UNStudio says: "When we talk about *motion* in architecture, we're not just referring to the buildings and their potential effects, but also to the transformation or the brusque changes in direction of the practice of architecture in general: we are referring to the mobile forces that generate change and within which the future of architecture may be found. The *motion* therefore incorporates the past, present and possible future of our profession."

"The exhibition reflects MAXXI Architettura's determination to reflect on and present contemporary architecture, examining the architects' visions - says **Margherita Guccione** *Director MAXXI Architettura*. - With the project/installation at MAXXI, fourth chapter of the NATURE project, UNStudio succeeds in creating and activating new relations between the work and its public while accentuating the perceptive and participatory methods typical of their research."

The installation at MAXXI, ***Materia in Movimento_Motion Matters***, is neither a simple display case nor an object to be observed passively, but rather something that interacts with the visitor, requiring active participation to create a spatial and dynamic experience.

It has, in fact, been conceived as a magic box capable of deceiving visitors' perceptions through clever use of distorted perspective and a carefully planned exhibition route. The protagonists of this vision are **10 projects** representing milestones in UNStudio's career and the best of their **25 years of architectural production**.

Five thematic lines link the selected projects, highlighting the architectural principles underlying UNStudio's work: **Managing the Void | Twist | The Monolithic | Material Dualism | Duration**.

PROJECTS ON DISPLAY: the **Burnham Pavilion** (Millennium Park, Chicago, United States), the **Centre for Virtual Engineering - ZVE** (Fraunhofer Institute, Stuttgart, Germany), the **Theatre Agora** (Lelystad, the Netherlands), **Galleria Centercity** (Cheonan, South Korea), the canopies at **Arnhem Central** (Arnhem, the Netherlands), the **MUMUTH Music Theatre** (Graz, Austria), **Holiday Home** (ICA, Philadelphia, United States), the **Education Executive Agency & Tax Offices** (Groningen, the Netherlands), the **Haus am Weinberg** (Stuttgart, Germany), and the **Mercedes-Benz Museum** (Stuttgart, Germany).

On **Friday 6 December at 17.30** (MAXXI Auditorium – ADMITTANCE FREE while places available) **Ben Van Berkel** will be holding a **lecture**.

Introduced by **Margherita Guccione**, Director of MAXXI Architettura, the architect will be discussing 25 years of work and the methodology that leads UNStudio to interact extensively with the territory and its clients. Also

participating in the event will be **Alessandro D'Onofrio** curator of the MAXXI exhibition who will be presenting the Dutch studio and **Pippo Ciorra**, Senior Curator of MAXXI Architettura and curator of the cycle of exhibitions *Nature* who will be closing the event.

The press pack and images of the exhibition may be downloaded from the reserved area of the Fondazione MAXXI site at http://www.fondazionemaxxi.it/?page_id=5176 inserting the password **areariservatamaxxi**

MAXXI - National Museum of XXI Century Arts

www.fondazionemaxxi.it - info: 06.399.67.350; info@fondazionemaxxi.it

opening hours: 11.00 – 19.00 (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Sunday)

11.00 – 22.00 (Saturday) closed Mondays, 1 May and 25 December

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VISUAL NATURES

Francesco Venezia | Campo Baeza | WEST8 | UNStudio

Pippo Ciorra, *Senior Curator MAXXI Architettura*

The most conspicuous element in the NATURE exhibition project is the attempt to build up a sort of transition from major curatorial exhibitions towards a more fluid and articulated display activity, and, in particular, towards a project based on a sequence of small monographic shows set up in the course of time. We thus thought the best way to welcome to the museum the works of these interesting individual architects was the one closest to the museum's core business, that is to say, the relationship between architectural culture, nature and artifice. In order to deal with it, we once again return to the museum's initial research theme, i.e. how the concept of SPACE evolves and how it is modified today. Common to artists and architects, the subject has hitherto been analyzed from the different points of view, namely, the relationship between architecture and landscape, technological innovation, creative nostalgia and representation, hybrid condition, memory and materiality. In the NATURE series, all this is consolidated within an exhibition that is diluted in time instead of in space, aligning the work of four particularly significant architects in successive episodes. We thus designated an appropriate space, the architecture museum's Galleria 2, and a two-month period, variously related to the other exhibitions in the museum, and envisioned monographic installations dedicated to one or more projects and designed by the authors themselves. Choosing the first four studios was rather hard, but we eventually solved it undoubtedly. We started from Francesco Venezia, an Italian architect who has always been committed to analyzing that subtle and at the same time sharply defined line that separates the predetermined context of nature from the one designed by human beings. The same materials – stone, light, water, darkness, bare and essential surfaces – but assembled according to a rationale of contrast and vital conflict with the ground, which has led to some of the most successful projects in Italian architecture over the past decade.

This was followed by the Dutch firm West8, and again involved an element of continuity with SPACE, and the chance to expand the project they presented for the opening show, focusing on the theme of the complex but not necessarily pessimistic relationship between human beings and today's many potential expressions of the concept of nature.

Alberto Campo Baeza. Albero della creazione, an exhibition curated and designed by Manuel Blanco, thoroughly analyzed the relationship with nature of one of Spain's most radical contemporary architects, the creator of a significant group of works that have become a point of reference, all over the world, for the specific use of natural light and landscape.

Lastly, UNStudio from Amsterdam, Ben van Berkel and Caroline Bos, the excellent exponents of a trend that seeks to translate into architectural terms the mechanisms of the construction of form that design nature, and compare them with the possibilities offered by the new technologies and the weakening of the boundaries that separate architecture from art and science. Among other things, UNStudio's installation project is the first to focus strongly on the theme of the visual perception and distortion of space, two issues that are very close to the heart of contemporary artistic culture.

The four authors were not invited to select the materials for 'pocket exhibitions'; what the museum has asked them and the curators to do is to plan the installation of the room assigned and to include fragments of their work in the exhibition, so as to give shape to their idea of possible Natures.

The fact that the shows succeeded one other also created the conditions for a twofold and undoubtedly fruitful expressive dialogue. On the one hand, between the four architects – Manuel Blanco for Campo Baeza – and the 'non-neutral' space designed by Zaha Hadid for the MAXXI. On the other, between the four authors, organized sequentially in terms of the same spatial condition. In the end, their works resemble the chapters in the same story, or rather, the multiple image of the contemporary project.

NATURE 04 | UNSTUDIO **MATERIA IN MOVIMENTO | MOTION MATTERS**

Alessandro D'Onofrio, *curator of the exhibition*

On view for the fourth appointment in the Nature cycle is a site-specific installation designed by the Dutch architectural firm UNStudio, which represents their research into a new way of displaying architecture, featuring the presentation of 10 projects selected among their many and well-known designs.

For some time now UNStudio has focused on how to exhibit architecture and on how to cast new light on the traditional concept of the architectural exhibition, which normally consists of drawings and models. Interaction with the visitor and the involvement of the public in a dynamic and stimulating encounter are the key elements in UNStudio's exhibition projects. Blow-up images of their projects are broken down and arranged throughout the museum space, offering a three-dimensional perspectival vision that will allow visitors to have a twofold experience: all along the exhibition route they will find distorted and deceptive views of the projects and of the museum space itself, and at certain specific points along the way they will be able to reconstruct the image completely, according to a typically method of representation (perspectival anamorphosis) which was started in Rome during the Baroque period.

The MAXXI exhibition explores the ways in which motion, space and perspective bestow space with a shape, and the way visitors physically experiment with the effects of these three specific architectural parameters. The 10 projects selected for the exhibition are combined on the basis of the 5 different compositional principles chosen which are the grounding of UNStudio work.

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MANAGING THE VOID

1. Mercedes-Benz Museum, Stuttgart, Germany

The Mercedes-Benz Museum is a landmark building which celebrates the enduring passion of Stuttgart's most famous inventor and manufacturer. The architecture combines an elegant appearance with a unique internal structure organized around a central atrium. The dominant atrium creates a void that serves as the nucleus of the visitor experience. The spiraling trajectories intersect with each other at several key points to create a visit which showcases the legend of the renowned automobile. The void becomes the heart of the building around which people can freely move through, to dream, learn, look and let themselves be oriented by fascinations, light and space.

2. Galleria Cheonan, Cheonan, South Korea

The interior of the Galleria Centercity, a high-end shopping centre in Cheonan, South Korea, was imagined as a setting to inspire and entertain its visitors. Upon entering the building, the public is immediately drawn into a void which is carved out of an accumulation of rounded plateaus on large columns. The repetition of curves, gives a distinctive character to the space. The result can be seen as a kind of spatial waterfall which propels a fluent stream of people throughout the building. The play and positioning of vertical circulation also stimulates customers to prolong their stay and explore the space.

TWIST

3. Haus am Weinberg, Stuttgart, Germany

Haus am Weinberg, a private villa located on an ancient hillside vineyard in Stuttgart, has a distinctive volume that responds directly to its characteristic, sloping surrounding. The inner circulation, organisation of the views, and programme distribution of the house are determined by a single gesture, 'the twist'. The central twist element supports the main staircase as it guides and organizes the main flows throughout the residence. Through a series of dramatic and diagonal movements, each evolution in the twist leads to moments in which views to the outside become an integral experience of the interior.

4. Burnham Pavilion, Chicago, USA

Located in Chicago's celebrated Millennium Park, the Burnham Pavilion relates to diverse city-contexts, programmes, and scales. The sculptural and highly accessible pavilion functions as an urban activator. The elegant twist design, based on a spatial confrontation of the orthogonal and the diagonal, creates new perspectives for the public which encompass a 360° spectrum. The hierarchy of the horizontal or vertical plane is converted into an understanding of a space as continuous, transformative, and fluid. The ambivalence of directionality and the introduction of continuous flow in the structure allows for an opening-up of space and diversity in the vistas framing the park and the city.

THE MONOLITHIC

5. MUMUTH Music Theatre, Graz

The MUMUTH Music Theatre, part of the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, serves as a monument in the city in which music lives. UNStudio used the principle of the spiral as the organizing element of the building that becomes an important design prototype for the "blob-to-box" model. MUMUTH illustrates how a building can be structured to combine within one, rigorous gesture, a unit-based volume (the black box of the theatre) and a series of flowing, movement-based volumes (foyer and public circulation). This organising principle is made constructive; a free, fluent internal spatial arrangement is actualised, efficiently connecting spaces to each other.

6. Agora Theatre, Lelystad, The Netherlands

The theater in Lelystad, has been designed to function as a new cultural icon for the city centre. The complexity of a multifunctional theatre has given rise to a flexible, transparent, and intelligent design that stands out as a striking accent in the urban landscape. Its sculptural and multi-faceted, monolithic form gives the building a kaleidoscopic character that acts as a beacon for the 24-hour liveliness of the surrounding area.

In the daytime, the metamorphic dimensions of the theatre create a prominent silhouette, and at night, the volume illuminates with an enticing charm and magnetizing presence.

MATERIAL DUALITY

7. IBG, Groningen, The Netherlands

The Education Executive Agency & Tax Offices, a monumental complex of soft, undulating curves marks the skyline of Groningen. The asymmetric, aerodynamic construction is set amidst small, ancient woodland section of the city. The dual nature of the public building is represented not only in its inimitable setting, but by an architectural response based on flexibility and sustainability. Through materiality and form, such as a concrete core and a contrasting horizontal fin facade, the design accomplishes an important goal: giving an organic, friendlier and more future-oriented appearance to a commanding public institution.

8. Ardmore Residence, Singapore

The Ardmore Residence is located close to the Orchard Road luxury shopping district of Singapore City and the vast green areas of its immediate western and eastern surroundings. The primary concept for the design of this 36-storey residential tower is a multi-layered architectural response to the natural landscape inherent to the 'Garden City' of Singapore. This landscape concept is integrated into the design by means of four large details: the articulation of the façade, which through its detailing creates various organic textures and patterns; expansive views across the city made possible by large glazed areas, bay windows and double-height balconies

DURATION (TIME-BASED/RELATED)

Ponte Parodi, Genoa, Italy

9. The Ponte Parodi project establishes a new city attractor based on the proliferation of experience. A three-dimensional piazza located on the waterfront combines a variety of programs including a cruise terminal, wellness, cultural and leisure program, all of which bring liveliness to the old harbour. It is planned around people and their movements in order to create an active location. Profound research has been developed to find out where they come from, where they will go to - and when. In the Port area of Genoa, four user-groups can distinguished; cruise tourists, other tourists, residents and students or others connected with the University. The programs on the piazza are organized around their activities during an almost 24-hour day.

Holiday Home, Institute for Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, USA

10. The "Holiday Home" is an experiential installation which explores and quantifies areas in which the holiday home departs from modern design conventions. The orthogonal surfaces of the archetypal house are extruded and skewed, creating a sculptural armature where the dichotomies of home and holiday home are played out. The architectural shape emulates escapism; the expectation of a holiday as removed from the everyday experiential routine. The perception of time is intrinsically interwoven as light conditions subtly modulate. Sense of season and time of day become more abstract as you may find on holiday, where time has a different rhythm as it is unbound by the frameworks of contemporary patterns of living and dwelling.