Recently in Domus: Urban exploration and usufruct, a striking Chinese dragon in Mérida, Open Source Architecture (OSArc)

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What urban explorers assert though action, in the words of Ninjalicious, “revives an old and long-out-of-favour legal concept called usufruct, which basically means that someone has the right to use and enjoy the property of another, provided it is not changed or damaged in any way.”

Where late modernity has buried these systems in an attempt to present a frictionless interface that is to remain unseen, unquestioned and taken for granted, urban explorers, as active participatory citizens, are asserting the right to know how these things work, where they exist and what they connect to.

More on how an unlikely mix of media attention and marketing exploitation threatens to polarize an otherwise apolitical practice (urban exploration) in an op-ed by Bradley L. Garrett over at at DOMUS.
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Pedro Gadanho architect and writer, reviewed a playground project by Spanish practice Selgascano. Gadanho compares the project to Rafael Moneo’s Museum of Roman Art which opened in the same town 25 years earlier. The comparison is clarifying. He notes that the museum “was made for tourists and visitors, offering ruins to interpretation in an adequately contextual environment; the Factoría Joven caters for local, disenchanted populations in the semi-industrial periferia, in an effort to prevent the city’s desertification. Rafael Moneo aspired to perpetuity, and dialogued with ancient, enduring construction techniques; José Selgas and Lucía Cano are interested in ordinariness, and engage with a built landscape that is determined by low-budget, off-the-shelf materials and practices like graffiti, skating, cycling or wall climbing.”

Carlo Ratti, Paola Antonelli, Adam Bly, Lucas Dietrich, Joseph Grima, Dan Hill, John Habraken, Alex Haw, John Maeda, Nicholas Negroponte, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Carlo Ratti, Casey Reas, Marco Santambrogio, Mark Shepard, Chiara Somajni and Bruce Sterling contributed to -a 21st-century manifesto of sorts-on the theme of open source architecture.

Domus also published multiple essays on the various spatio-political occupation and encampment movements that made the news this year. First Andrés Jaque on the indignados protests in Spain, then Joshua Simon on the tent republics of Tel Aviv and then greater Israel and finally Chris
Cobb on Occupy Wall Street. All authors explore the protocols, strategies and meanings of these various efforts in relation towards the idea of reclaiming public space as the key trajectory of contemporary, urban(ism).

Finally, the above image comes from a “re-print” of an old essay Kenzo Tange for Tokyo, an first hand account written by the Japanese architect, soon after he finished the stadiums for the 1964 Olympic Games. Originally published in Domus 424-March 1965.

In it Tange described the relationship between the two stadia “But the true definition of their relationship with the context came about when we resolved the architecture of the ‘street’ with which would connect them. This is the long building having the function of a ‘street’ running, between the two stadiums. It is a long ‘corridor’ which collects all stadium-related services and offices and that has a restaurant and a training pool at the two ends.”

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