

To the Dean of the Architekturfakultät Universität Innsbruck

External Examiner

Dr. Antonino Di Raimo

I am very glad to have been invited as an external examiner for the Master-Diploma thesis presentation at the University of Innsbruck in the Architecture school. Following my pleasant experience, I would like to present my report and offer my comments on the two days of intense reviews, discussions and debates that took place with the young architects and colleagues during the Diploma defenses.

The Architecture School is set in an exceptional location inside a large campus, surrounded by mountains and other different Faculties, vibrant and pleasing throughout the day. I had the opportunity to visit the different Departments at the Architecture School and the studios organized there. I would like to mention the excellent level of the research quality, specifically the thorough coverage of various aspects of architectural knowledge. It is an open school, inclusive and diverse, where every student can easily find her/his own area of research and specialization. In Innsbruck, there is a biodiversity environment in research and teachings combined with the rare ability of including all aspects within the higher level of architecture.

The Thesis Defense Session is normally arranged in a big hall where every graduating student can present his/her work by designing and building a small exhibition spot which significantly enriches the presentation of the work done. Thus, the Diploma is not only defended in front of the Commission but also to a wider audience which is invited to ask questions or make comments at the end of the discussion. The Dean of the school also remarked that even after the thesis defense is completed, all the Diploma works continue to be exposed for a few weeks in order to allow a broader meeting with a more general and less specialized audience. The latter is equally important to the discussion, any discussion, on architecture.

Regarding the works presented, I would firstly like to emphasize the high quality and variety in terms of the proposed themes, methodological development and, in some cases, philosophical approaches. I think that in 2017, this is a good sign for architecture and future architects.

During the first day a limited number of works was presented among which I would especially emphasize the work of Gitterle Philipp (Advisor: Sidoroff) and Kreitmair Katharina (Advisor: Andexlinger). Although different, especially regarding their outcomes both in the approach and in the contexts considered, they were based on a sort of common ground in terms of their similar design strategies, especially the aspect regarding the activities program based in both cases on the bottom-up observations of the social phenomena happening in the examined contexts.

However, the examining committee noticed some incoherencies in the first project, at the level of the final architectural solutions, most probably due to a lack of time in the final elaboration. In the second project many of us observed a good elaboration at the level of providing tools and urban policies regarding the recovery of abandoned urban areas. Yet, the specification of only one architectural solution (an installation rather than a permanent building), was regarded as a flaw.

During the second day's session, I found particularly convincing the works of Koblatzki Yvonne (Advisor: Sidoroff) and Baumgartner Laurenz (Advisor: Trummer). The first one was a set of architectural actions emerging from an in-depth analysis of social problems concerning children living on the streets and familiar disintegration among emigrants communities. The project attempted at developing an architectural idea in a neighborhood village which would be capable of catalyzing the

children's family reunification which would otherwise disintegrate. The project was based on a modular components strategy, well researched and detailed in terms of its spatial and technological components which could lead to the aggregation of the units into a small organic village. One flaw observed in this work was a final lack of a convincing architecture image that would be capable of facing the initial design problem, namely the recovering of the children as the origin of this particular architectural action. The good solution in this case could have been used in many other contexts losing track therefore its initial focus.

The second project worked on a computational basis, starting with the simulation of the liquids' behavior as a way of generating the architectural shape. This work was characterized by an excellent methodology, representation and consistency in terms of the questions arising from the simulation process. While the model and the diagrammatic process were highly regarded from the committee, the final architecture project (a digital art school) lacked a convincing integration (or, rather, had no integration) within the context and also needed a proper management in the way that the non-standard and beautiful geometry emerging from the simulation became architectural.

On the second day, I would also like to emphasize the presence of a theoretical Diploma developed by Czejka Erik (Advisor: Lootsma) which analyzed the issue of advertising in contemporary architecture, specifically in terms of ornament. This work which certainly had the merit of asking a fundamental question belonging as much to Modern as to Contemporary Architectural culture, could have been, especially in the last part, further developed, something which we hope happens in the future.

The second day was also intensive in terms of debate. Some of the presented works created a rather animated discussion among the commission members. I deeply enjoyed this lively discussion, especially in two cases in which the specific focus of architecture seemed to disappear in favor of other disciplines. Such was the case of a technological system aimed at combining energetic behavior with the computational geometry of an architectural component. In another case, the historical and archival research did not reach any level of architectural transformation and / or urban proposals. Personally, I found myself in agreement with the other commissions members in judging these works valuable but far from showing a full architectural maturity as they were very developed in terms of technical engineering as in the first case or in terms of historical documentary as showed in the second.

At the end of the two days and after several discussions, we commonly decided not to present the Dean-Prize this time as the works fell short of reaching a full '1'. I believe that although some works very nearly approached a full '1', they lacked a coherent development with the initial assumption.

I agreed with the committee's decision, mainly because it aimed at preserving a high level in the diplomas' standard but also because it emphasized the fact that the dean's prize is exceptional in its character and should be awarded only to those projects that fully reach and eventually surpass a full '1'.

One recommendation that I deem potentially valuable to the advisors is the close following of the diploma works' final stage which is always the most sensitive as the project, there, reaches its conclusion. In several works it was precisely the final touch which prevented otherwise exceptional works from reaching a full '1'.

All of that said, I want to remark that the quality of the works was great and I was impressed by the high intellectual level in all the discussions held, the friendly atmosphere, and a profound respect within the common passion for architecture.

In conclusion, I want to extend my gratitude to the Dean of the school and colleagues for the invitation and, in particular, to the academic staff of architekturtheorie.eu.

Dr Antonino Di Raimo

Dean - Faculty of Architecture, Design and Engineering

IF - Innovation Factory Coordinator

Lecturer:

Architecture Design and IT

Architecture Theory and Criticism

Universiteti POLIS

Shkolla Ndërkombëtare e Arkitekturës dhe Politikave të Zhvillimit Urban

International School of Architecture and Urban Development Policies

Adresa: Rr. Bylis 12, Autostrada Tiranë-Durrës, Km 5, Kashar

Kodi Postar 1051, Kutia Postare 2995, Tirana, Albania.

Mob. AL +355 (0) 69 40 61 953

Mob. IT +3393332706419

email: antonino_diraimo@universitetipolis.edu.al