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Video





Building typology, urban morphology and their relationships were at the center of architectural debate in the late 70s early 80s. It is a very important notion in architecture typology, even if it is not exactly clear what is the meaning of this word. In this period where the topic was discussed, we had some very important contribution: firstly by Aldo Rossi and his colleagues and collaborators. There is also a beautiful text by Rafael Moneo, dealing with the very notion of typology, and the most important definition, in my opinion was given by Castelmeier de Cansey in his dictionary of architecture. The problem is that, in the early 80s, following the studies about the urban morphology and building typology, at a certain point, some architects began to think that it was possible to produce architectural design starting from typological studies. It was quite a problem because, in a certain way, the result was considered schematic, may be mechanic, and clearly against the idea of artistic creativity. It is true that it is not possible to to produce an architectural design starting from a very straight typological interpretation. But we have to consider that the typology is a very important notion from many different points of view.

Notes

Summary



Om 12s



First of all, it is a tool which allows to understand the history of architecture because it is true that a specific culture expresses itself through a certain repetition of models. And when a model is repeated many times it becomes a type. So, for instance in archeology, it is very important because if archeologist can rebuild or can operate a reinstitution of an ancient building, it is thanks to typology that this operation which is actually very delicate is possible. Concerning our discipline, it's a little bit complicated; first of all, because of the ideological consideration of this notion. Once again I refer myself to the debates of the 70s 80s. And by the way, Aldo Rossi was the first one to pretend that it was not only possible but necessary to do to build strong links between typology and architectural design, and naturally this was a very difficult position. And that's a reason why I consider that today the discourse about the typology is a little bit influenced by ideological perspectives. Concerning the topic of our book which is the relationship between housing and cities, it is very clear that this relationship exists.

- Notes

Summary





I mean, the urban character is strongly linked with the type of buildings and the type of housing buildings that one can find in a given city. And I want to go deeper in this vision, because from one side we can better understand the character of a city, looking at its typologies, concerning housing or even public buildings, it doesn't matter. The second point is that, a good typological culture is a very useful tool when dealing with the design of a new housing building. At this point I have to introduce another notion which was very popular at the end of 19th century, which is distribution. Distribution is the way of arranging different parts of building in order to obtain a unity, well. It is very important when dealing with our topic because the architect who wants to design a housing building has to know some basic rules which belong, rules that belong to let's say a mechanic part of the architectural design. It is very important to underline the fact that in order to succeed in such an architectural design we have to know the basic rules. I give you an example, a very important choice to be operated at the very beginning of a housing project is about the depth of the building.

Notes

Summary

4m 29s





It is a very deep analysis of the relationship between architecture building and the form, the general form of what we call today territory. It was very important because it was for Aldo Rossi the demonstration of his theories about this a strong relationship between building typology and urban morphology. In this case we don't deal with urban morphology. It is something that we could call a territorial morphology. And the reading the book, looking at its illustration, we have a clear vision which is maybe, I repeat ideological, because in a certain way we can recognize that the production by Aldo Rossi in terms of design has been influenced by these studies. At this time, It was quite popular and many teachers in different universities used to do this kind of work with the student. I still consider that it is a very good point for the education and the formation of a future architect to get this opportunity of really going deeper in the knowledge and in the understanding of building, even if in some cases we deal with any elementary buildings. So it is an important contribution and I just want to quote to this one because is probably the most popular, but I insist on the fact that the 80s in many universities in Europe were largely devoted to this kind of culture and production of new knowledge about architecture.

- Notes

Summary





If we want to come back to the topic of our book, I consider that a good understanding of modern typology for instance is a very good starting point. What do you mean? I mean that when we look at some experiences in housing architecture in the first decades of the 20th century, let's say Frankfurt or Vienna or Berlin, we have the possibility of establish an ideal discussion between us and this specific building or that specific architect. And it is easier to deal with existing examples, and in a certain way, it is easier to deal with a good typological experience, instead of trying to produce new astonishing things, because finally housing is a very difficult theme. It is not spectacular. it is strongly linked with the well-being and comfort and so on. So it is a typical theme or task where the architect has to renounce to the presentation of his self consideration or creativity. I don't know what. I realize that such a concern is not so popular today because unfortunately this kind of studies practically don't exist anymore in architectural education. And it is a pity because by the way when students are requested to measure and to read through an existing building, it is a fantastic way for really understanding the very fundamental elements of architecture.

Notes

Summary

11m 26s





But in the case we are discussing about housing, it is important to underline that housing is not the place of invention. Invention considered like the production of unknown forms, incredible answers and so on. Please don't misunderstand me. I don't want to say that we have to repeat what a typological study offers to our observation. I just want to say that it is fundamental in this field of activity to declare our links with a specific culture. Beyond the need of a comfort and well-being, housing buildings have to be not too expensive. They have to contribute in a meaningful way to the construction of the character of the city where they are built. Beyond these items which is clearly fundamental, I think that it is very important to define and to declare the belonging to a specific vision. In these terms, I would say that typological relationships are in a way political. I mean, when an architect decided to deal with the experience of this so-called "Das neue Frankfurt", it is the experience of..... it is a huge experience of housing buildings in Frankfurt in the very first two decades of 20th century. It is impossible not to take into consideration the fact that beyond the results beyond the social impact, there is also a political vision.

Notes

Summary

13m 58s





There is a political vision concerning the desire of building a new society, a political vision concerning the fact that Herst Meier and his collaborators wanted to produce a break between the 19th century city and the new one. It's a way of giving the idea of modernity a deeper meaning and a wider impact. But today we can observe this kind of phenomena from a certain historical distance. So we can consider that not only Frankfurt and the examples of rationalist architecture are good examples. But also an experience which is completely different like the so-called "Red Vienna" is useful. It is important to underline this concern because for the architects belonging to Meier's generation, it was clear that the winning tendence was rationalism. There's a reason why when I was educated as an architect, there was an amount of publication and theoretical reflection about Berlin and Frankfurt in the world about what we call today modern architecture. And from a certain point of view, different experiences like Red Vienna or like the huge housing policy held in hamburger by Fritz Schumacher were used to be neglected or completely forgotten.

Notes

Summary

16m 38s





Today we understand that rationalism is only one possible component of this heroic experience which is modernity in architecture. And looking at Vienna, Hamburg, Berlin, Frankfurt just to put to the most important example, I can come back to the importance of typological aspect. Looking at this phenomena from a very architectural point of view it is easy to discover that beyond the stylistic or linguistic differences brought out in Berlin used to work ways with the same constraints as INAUDIBLE in Vienna. It was surprising to discover that all around Europe, the typical depth was about 10 metres. It is a personal obsession, this question about the depth of a building. But it is strictly connected to once again comfort, well-being, maybe today this way of dealing with housing problems is consider not excellent from an economical point of view, but I think that an architect has the right to maintain his point of view concerning the very delicate balance between economy, social issues and architectural results So finally I want to invite you to to study typology. Typology means study of types. What does it mean? First of all even if it is maybe consider a past concept, I systematically refer to the definition given by Quatremère de Quincy.

Notes

Summary



18m 52s



Castelmeier de Cansi, in order to explain what is a type establish a comparison between model and type. According to his vision, a model is something which has to be repeated exactly like it is, "everything is defining a model", says Quatremère de Quincy. But on the other hand everything is free when dealing with the type. So when I use the word typology, I refer to the very correct meaning of the word "study of types." When I say housing typology, I refer to a larger panel of experiences dealing with this topic from Berlin to Moscow, to Vienna and I don't know what. You, you will contribute to the construction of a new extremely rich typology answering to the exercises that we are proposing to you. You will contribute to the construction of of a world ancylopædia about housing types and it will be fundamental not only for your education, but also for a shared culture about these very fundamental and delicate theme which is housing. So please don't consider that typology is corresponding to a debate which is practically forgotten or useless today. No, no, it's a very rich component of your reflection, if you want to deal with the housing problems.

Notes

Summary

21m 32s





Type is the possibility of recognizing recurrent characters in everything. I mean we can discuss about typology in architecture, but also in medicine. It is possible to speak about the morphology, typology and INAUDIBLE, I don't know the current word in English. But typology is a typical product of the so-called enlightened culture. It is based on the possibility of classify things as a searcher, typology is a tool, a scientific tool used in different disciplines with the very scientific perspective. It is possible to, as for instance, the classification of plants done by INAUDIBLE is an example of a wonderful typology. It is possible to look at many fantastic books produced starting from the end of 18th century about typology of animals, insects, mamifers and so on. Type is also a word that we use, maybe unconsciously, many many times in our lives. Concerning architecture, a type is the possibility of recognizing a recurrent elements. If we consider typology as a tool, it is clear that we can apply this notion to different themes. For instance, here we can recognize different type of buildings town building, culture building, and the fantastic potential of a typology is the fact that basically typology has to deal with the homogenials objects.

Notes

Summary

23m 51s





It is not possible to imagine a typology of apples and pears, apples and oranges, but in architecture it is possible to consider better, for instance, the culture as a fundamental principle of space organization, can be adopted for building a house, a school, a museum, I don't know what. There is a transversal potential of typology when it is applied to architecture, allowing us to recognize that a principle could be used in different contexts and for different kinds of buildings. Another very important point is the fact that through typology, we can really recognize the strength of some specific elements in time; courtyard. We know courtyard buildings dating back to many many centuries and today we still go on building objects, architectural objects distributed by a courtyard. And according to the character of the building, it is possible, looking at this typology, to understand how a courtyard can contribute to the definition of the architectural character of a museum, a house, a school and I don't know what. So from the point of view of our understanding of architecture itself, it is a fantastic opportunity because using typology we can really cross time and space.

Notes

Summary





So, please considered beyond the ideological political implication that typology is a very useful tool. typology is to be considered like the study of different types. And this tool will give you the possibility of understanding how the way of living are modified according the type or on the other side how the way of living changes and modifies the type itself. Look at Paris, look at Milan, look at every european city between the end of 19th century and the beginning of 20th in order to understand how the bourgeoisie arises defining a new way of leaving, and starting from the massification of industrial production, how the society gives an answer to the problem of housing for the working class. It is fundamental and very important for us in order to understand not only architecture, urban context, but also in order to understand the evolution of our societies.

Notes

Summary

29m 13s

