

Inhabiting a Hybrid History

Houses of the Origins in Mediterranean, during the Modern era



INTERNATIONAL STUDY DAYS

University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, INHA, Vasari Hall, Paris, October 12 and 13, 2021

Organized by Jean-Philippe Garric and Eléonore Marantz, with Camille Lesouef

In 1933, the artist Raoul Hausmann (1886-1971), fleeing Nazi Germany, took refuge in Ibiza for a few years, before Spain fell into civil war and dictatorship. The architecture of the island — two years before, Jose Luis Sert (1902-1983) wrote about it: *“En Ibiza no existen los estilos históricos”* — was already a reference for contemporary modernism. But the former Dadaist now stateless, while photographing the bare volumes of the houses, was mostly seeking there a hybrid ideal and a syncretism: “Carthage, he wrote, had dominated the island and there were fisheries and a vast glass industry. Then Rome, the Barbarians, the Italians of the North, and lastly, the Arabs who, among others, introduced the grandiose terraced cultures”. At the same time the Viennese Bernard Rudofsky (1905-1988), who had just defended a doctorate on the primitive concrete vaults of the southern Cyclades, settled in Italy, where he dedicated several papers to the fishermen's houses of Procida, thus pushing a little further, an interest in alter-architectures, which culminated thirty years later in the successful MoMA exhibition “Architecture without Architects” (1964-1965).

In their respective agendas of the Mediterranean islands and in their separate, but concomitant, quests for an Anti-Parthenon, the two exiles from the Mitteleuropa shared an aesthetic born on the threshold of the Modern Era. The modest house, elementary but rooted in a sunlight bathed nature, embodies the history and the myths of the Ancient Sea. From the end of the 18th century, it has emerged as an alternative to Classical culture, pushing until Capri the Italian journey of a Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841). This interest was developed and renewed in France during the long 19th century, at the margins of Beaux-Arts culture, from the invention of the *Small houses of Italy* by French architects around 1800, to the Pompeian inspirations of Tony Garnier (1869-1948), passing through the graphic works of Théodore Labrousse (1799-1885) or the architectural demonstration of Emmanuel Pontremoli (1865-1956) at the Villa Kérylos.

The Mediterranean archaism crosses the first decades of the 20th century as one of the major references of the Modern Movement architects from Adolf Loos (1870-1933) to Eileen Gray (1878-1976) via Walter Gropius (1883-1969), Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969), Adalberto Libera (1903-1963) or Le Corbusier (1887-1965), whose Cabanon offers a alternative hypothesis to inhabit the maritime landscape. The development of seaside and resort architecture, continuous from the 19th to the end of the 20th century, allowed the appropriation of new territories and the expression of different interpretations of the myth of the Mediterranean house. This attraction for a primitive Mediterranean encompasses the landscape and participate in the invention of the contemporary garden.

These architectural approaches should also be read through a geopolitical point of view. Thus, only for to the Interwar Period, while in Fascist Italy the architects of the regime claim the Italianity of popular architectures, Francoist Spain appropriates the ideal of these “Houses of the poor”, for social programs intended for fishermen in the provinces of Valencia and Andalusia. After the War, José Antonio Coderch (1913-1984) reinvented the Mediterranean house, merging nature and architecture, for the leisure of Barcelona's liberal elites. He was encouraged by several Italian architects and theorists of the 1930s like Alberto Sartoris (1901-1998) or Luigi Moretti (1906-1973) who, faithful to their convictions, saw in the Ibizenca house the expression of a Catalan identity: “the terror and the liberating vehemence of Gaudí, live by the same blood, of the same human density which raised the walls of the houses of Ibiza, closed to the sun and to men, full of shade, sources of shade and of an impenetrable reign”. From these crossed projections from one side of the Mediterranean to the another, French interventions in North Africa offer another dimension, combining modernity and tradition, as evidenced for example by the work of Jacques Marmey (1906-1988), Jean Le Couteur (1916-2020), Fernand Pouillon (1912-1986) or André Ravéreau (1919-2017). Likewise, more recently, from Georges Candilis (1913-1995) to Aldo Rossi (1931-1997), from AUA (Atelier d'architecture et d'urbanisme, 1960-1986) to Alvaro Siza (Born 1933), from Vittorio Gregotti (1927-2020) to Rafael Moneo (Born 1937), the myth of a primitive Mediterranean house has continued to be questioned.

Extending the investigations over the entire Modern period since 1780, embracing the entire Mediterranean region (from Western Europe to Greece and from the Near East to North Africa) but also *ex-nihilo* expressions of this Mediterraneanism, these study days propose to highlight and discuss the architectural, cultural, ideological and political issues of the contemporary myth of the Primitive house in the Mediterranean, where the universalist ideal of inhabiting the Eden of an eternal nature has continuously collide with the tragedies of History.

The expected contributions will deal with

- the investigations and studies carried out for architectural and / or urban purposes on ancient and primitive Mediterranean domestic architectures;
- the integration, assimilation and interpretation of these references in architectural creation since 1780
- the mobilization of historical and ethnological studies on Mediterranean house for the development of contemporary theories of architecture
- the representations of the archetypal Mediterranean house and the resulting conceptual constructions
- the "Mediterranean" inscription (light, heat, water) of domestic architecture in nature and the landscape and the invention of the Mediterranean garden;
- the failures and the ruins of this ideal

The proposals should include

An abstract 250 words long, including the title, the sources and the key questions

Key-words reflecting the problematic

A short presentation of the author, with an email address and a phone number

Calendar

March 21st: Call for papers

May 17th: Limit for sending the abstracts to: MaisonsOMed@gmail.com

June 14th: Announcement of the selected participants

October 1st: Limit for the reception of the drafts of the papers

October 12th and 13th: Study days in Paris or online according to the sanitary situation

Scientific committee

Cécile Bargues (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), Laurent Baridon (Université Lumière Lyon 2), Marc Bédarida (ENSA Paris-La Villette), Monique Eleb (ENSA Paris-Malaquais), Jean-Philippe Garric (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), Eléonore Marantz (Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne), Sergio Pace (Politecnico di Torino), Antoine Picon (Harvard University), Antonio Pizza (Escola Tècnica Superior d'Arquitectura de Barcelona), Marco Mulazzani (Università degli studi di Ferrara), Federico Bucci (Politecnico di Milano), Ornella Selvafolta (Politecnico di Milano), Marida Talamona (Università Roma 3), Panayotis Tournikiotis (Université polytechnique d'Athènes)