

ON HOUSING

Extract from the lecture giving by Josep Lluís Mateo at Harvard GSD

On February 2, Josep Lluís Mateo gave lecture entitled “On housing” at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design (GSD).

The talk aimed to showcase three general but very influential to architectural practice arguments associate to the modern history of the city and explained some buildings, designed by “Mateo arquitectura”, that are connected to the topic.

1. Domesticity as a subject



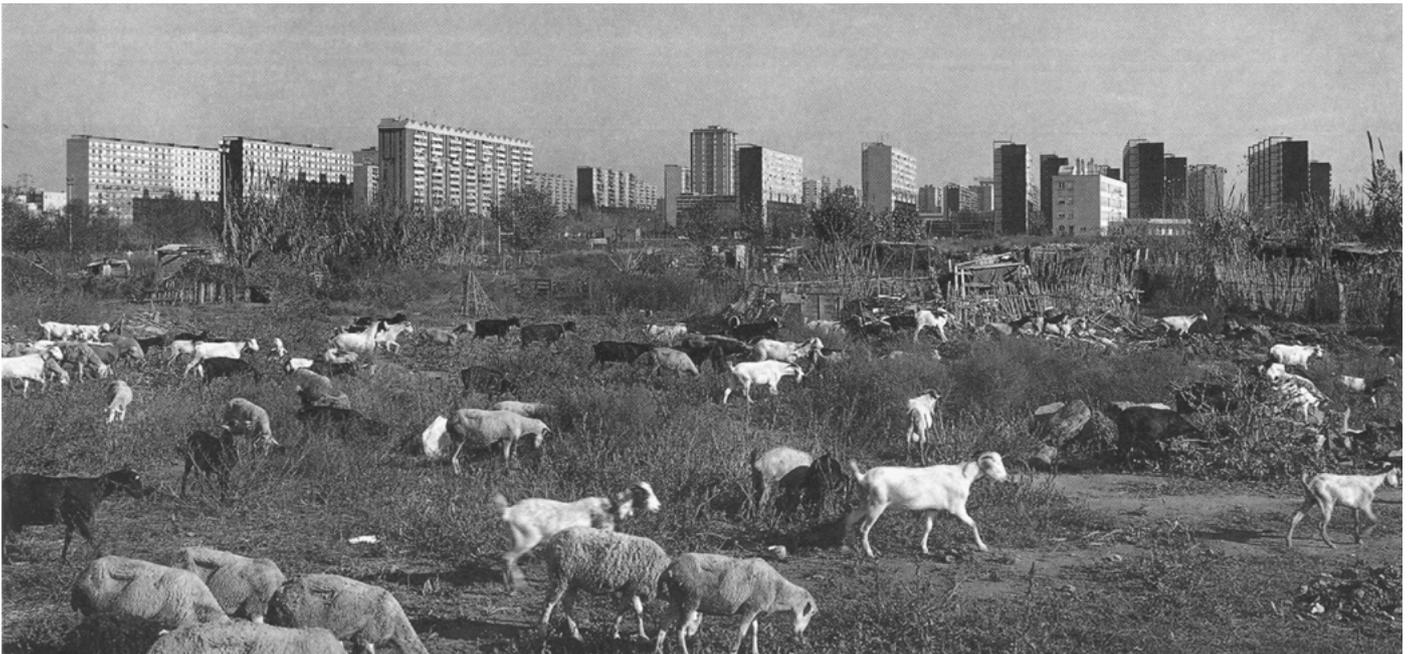
“The one side of the architectural problem of the housing in many aspects is related to the hedonistic activities. Frequently it is something that is connected to the senses. It is not only a protection; it is beyond the protection and based on the luxury, on the quality of live. Case Study Houses in Los Angeles are representing this argument, and, especially, the picture of the Stahl House designed by Pierre Koenig could be taking as an example. The house is transparent, protected just by glass walls. A domestic place but somehow it is opened and dominated the whole landscape.

2. Abstraction

The second series of the arguments is connect to the abstraction. In architecture abstraction is based on the mass housing, has the strong relation to the ideas of the 20ss, the systematism, the minimum existence, the geometry, the Frankfurt kitchen.

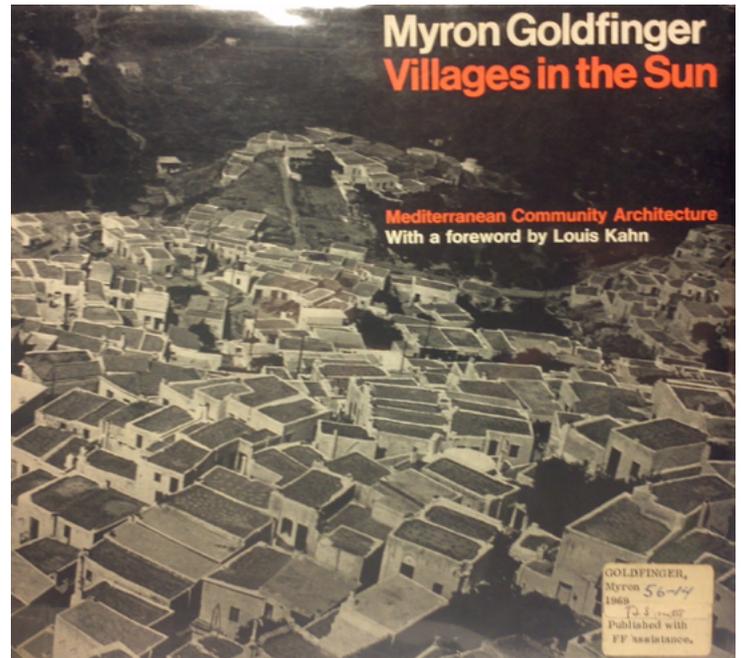
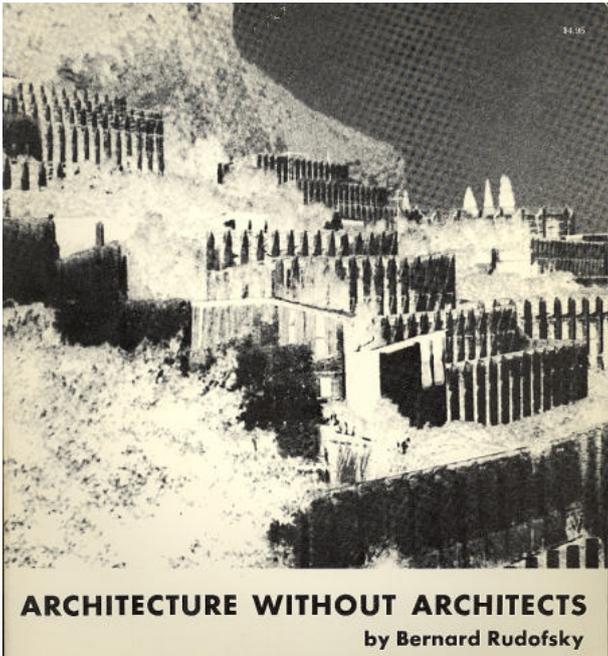


That set of concepts could be represented by picture of the Hilberseimer´s Vertical city: the continuity infinite presence of the very rectangular and narrow housing blocks. The Hilberseimer´s idea has to be thought and understood as an idea to be in a new type of city, utopian and propositional.



Another image that represents the abstraction idea is a photo of the Bellvitge area, Barcelona. You can see really narrow housing blocks with only windows and small balconies, another expression of the repetition, the systematism but utopian metaphysical ideas could not be applied here. These blocks are built on the land that keeps all the traces with rurality and archaic pre-modern times. On the picture we can see sheep, small rural constructions and most of us would find more interesting this picture than just a pure abstraction. That means that the abstraction has to be used somehow in architectural practice but in a less naive way.

3. Vernacular Architecture



The third concept has appeared on the 60ss and comes from the t Bernard Rudofsky´s exhibition and publica- tion «Architecture without architects» at the Museum of Modern Art and Myron Goldfinger´s book «Villages in the Sun», both of which stressed the idea of Mediterranean vernacular architecture. The Vernacular architecture understands houses in continuity with a certain tradition, the ways of living and nature conditions. As an example could be used Casablanca building where Bedouins´ traditions have been applied and adopted to more stable set- tlements.”

