IV.
Casa da Música
Location:
Rotunda da Boavista
Porto, Portugal
Apple Profits
Up Six-fold to $290m as iPod Leads Way
THE GUARDIAN / 14 APRIL, 2005

Apple Computer last night reported a more than six-fold increase in quarterly profits as sales of the iPod music player continued to soar. The iPod, which has transformed the fortunes of the company, now accounts for almost one-third of Apple's revenues.

Champion Endurance Horse Cloned
BBC NEWS / 14 APRIL, 2005

The birth of the world's second horse clone has been announced by scientists. The foal is a copy of a world endurance champion, Pieraz, an animal that has been castrated and was therefore incapable of normal reproduction. He will not be used for competition himself, but will instead make his living siring new generations of horses.

Is Chirac Too Late to Save EU Constitution?
WWW.TELEGRAPH.UK.CO / 14 APRIL, 2005

President Jacques Chirac's campaign to persuade a deeply sceptical French public to vote Yes in his referendum on the European Union constitution will finally be launched tonight in an atmosphere that could hardly be less promising.

Soyuz Blasts Off
NASA.COM / 14 APRIL, 2005

The Soyuz TMA-6 spacecraft blasts off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan at daybreak on April 15, carrying cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev, Astronaut John L. Phillips and Astronaut Roberto Vittori for a two-day trip to the International Space Station.

L'astronave Soyuz TMA-6 si è staccata dal cosmodromo di Baikonur in Kazakhstan all'alba del 15 aprile, con a bordo il cosmonauta Sergei Krikalev e gli astronauti John L. Phillips e Roberto Vittori, per un viaggio di due giorni alla Stazione Orbitante Internazionale.
Brazil’s Lula ‘Sorry’ For Slavery

Brazilian President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva has apologised for his country’s role in African slavery while on a visit to Senegal. Brazil imported the most African slaves of any country during that time and only abolished slavery in 1888. “I want to tell you... that I had no responsibility for what happened in the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries but I ask your forgiveness for what we did to black people,” said the president, commonly known as Lula.

Il presidente brasiliano Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, in visita nel Senegal, ha chiesto scusa al suo paese per il ruolo che questo ha avuto nella tratta degli schiavi. In quegli anni, il Brasile ha importato più schiavi africani di qualsiasi altro paese, ed ha abolito la schiavitù solo nel 1888. “Voglio dirvi... che non ho alcuna responsabilità per quello che è accaduto nel quindicesimo, sedicesimo e diciassettesimo secolo, ma vi chiedo scusa per quello che abbiamo fatto alla gente di colore,” ha detto il presidente, meglio noto come Lula.

Mother of Alleged Victim in Jackson Molestation Trial May Not Testify

The mother of the boy who has accused Michael Jackson of molestation in his current criminal trial may not testify at all, ABC News has learned, putting the prosecution’s conspiracy case against the singer in potential jeopardy.

Secondo la testata ABC News, la madre del minorenne che ha accusato Michael Jackson di molestie potrebbe non testimoniare al processo a carico della rock star, mettendo in pericolo la tesi della cospirazione nei confronti del cantante.

Asian Giants Keep Up War of Words

China and Japan have kept up their war of words over disputed gas reserves and Japan’s wartime behaviour. China said Tokyo’s decision to issue drilling rights in a disputed area of the East China Sea was a “serious provocation”. But Japan’s Foreign Minister signalled he would take a tough line in weekend talks in China. The (Chinese) protests were also directed at Tokyo’s bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat.

Il prof. Paul Steinhardt presenterà un nuovo lavoro che potrebbe rinvigorire la ricerca sugli universi futuri. Il Big Bang potrebbe non aver rappresentato l’inizio dello spazio e del tempo, ma un ponte con una preesistenza di contrazione. Se questa teoria si dimostra corretta, potrebbe aiutare a spiegare come siano venute all’esistenza le galassie, i pianeti e le stelle.

Cathedral of Sound

Resembling a massive meteorite come to Earth, the Casa da Musica in Oporto is an astonishing building.

La Casa da Musica in Porto è un edificio meraviglioso, che ricorda una meteorite caduta dal cielo.
Users: Pre-Occupancy vs. Post-Occupancy

Utente: Pre-Occupazione Post-Occupazione

Photograph:
1, 2 Hans Werlemann (Hectic Pictures)
3 Leonardo Finotti
4 Philip Meech
Photograph:

5, 6 Hans Werlemann (Hectic Pictures)
7 Philippe Ruault
8 OMA (Nicolas Friket)
Photograph:

9, 10  Hans Werleman (Hectic Pictures)
11  Philippe Ruault
12  OMA (Nuno Rosado)
Notes on some photographs from the Casa da Música, Porto

Has photography changed in its relationship to architecture? And if so, did it change of its own accord, driven by an internal logic, in response to specific motivations? Or rather, has the art of building evolved so much, in terms of tectonic as well as topological structures, that one may no longer avail oneself, in its regard, of the received forms of “architecture photography” that have long been a choice reference for specialized journals?

Whether these two questions meet or overlap (as occurs when one leafs through the photographs of the Casa da Música of Porto selected by the members of the OMA team overseeing the project), they give pause to reflect on the conditions in which architecture may “produce an image,” in what forms and to what ends, within the context of what might be called

Note su alcune fotografie della Casa da Música di Porto

La fotografia è cambiata nel suo rapporto con l’architettura? Se ciò è avvenuto, è cambiata spontaneamente, guidata da una logica interna, in risposta a proprie motivazioni? O è vero piuttosto che l’arte di costruire si è evoluta a tal punto, interminatasi di strutture tettонiche e topologiche, da far sì che non ci possa più avvalere, nei suoi confronti, di quelle forme ereditate della “fotografia di architettura” che pertanto tempo hanno costituito un puntuale riferimento per le pubblicazioni specializzate?

Si che queste due domande si fondano, o che si sovrappongano (come accade quando si sfoglia le fotografie della Casa da Música di Porto scelte dai membri di OMA che hanno seguito il progetto), esse offrono materia di riflessione riguardo alle condizioni in cui l’architettura può essere portata a “produrre
“our culture” – inasmuch as the possessive, “our,” is acceptable: what authorizes us to preen ourselves on a culture considered as properly belonging to us, in the case of architecture as in other cases? That is part of the problem, and the reason why it is significant.

I would first observe that photography today appears less intent upon “reproducing” architecture in its most recent forms and disseminating its image for the purpose of propaganda (as was the case during the glory days of the Modern Movement), than in fixing a certain dimension of the art of building that, at a critical level, seems increasingly to resist the reign of the image. It is as if it were now incumbent upon photography to imitate architecture, in its most inimitable and even deliberately non-reproducible forms, as in the prominent case of the Casa da Música, one of architecture’s most recent productions. What makes the photographs presented here so...
interesting and so powerful is the recognition that what was true of translation according to Walter Benjamin is true today of architecture photography. That is, while a transfer from one medium to another, and from the perceptual to the imaginative register, does occur, the essence of the operation does not amount to its content, to its message, or to communication. Like translation, architecture photography is a mode; and what Benjamin said about the former applies to the latter: “In order to comprehend [translation] as mode one must go back to the original, for that contains the law governing the translation: its translatability.” Still, for this investigation to take on its full meaning, it would be necessary to sort the reactions of those who have seen these photographs into two categories: those who happened to view the “original” beforehand, and those who will discover it through these, for the most part highly partial, shots. And yet, recenti, la Casa da Música. Ciò che rende così interessanti e potenti le immagini qui presentate è riconoscere che quanto valeva, secondo Walter Benjamin, per la traduzione, vale oggi anche per la fotografia di architettura. Equidiché, pur se ha luogo il passaggio da un medium a un altro e dal registro percettivo a quello immaginativo, l’essenzadell’operazionenonisiedenecontenuto,nel messaggio o nella comunicazione. Come nel caso della traduzione, la fotografia di architettura è una forma; e ciò che Benjamin ha detto della prima va applicato anche alla seconda: “Per comprendere [la traduzione] come tale, bisogna riandare all’originale. È quest’ultimo infatti, in virtù della sua traducibilità, a contenere la legge di questa forma”. Perché quest’indagine assuma il suo pieno significato, sarebbe però necessario distinguere le reazioni di quanti hanno visto queste immagini in due categorie, ponendo da un lato quanti hanno avuto la possibilità di vedere prima l’ “originale”, dall’altro coloro che lo scopriranno per mezzo di
one of the integral characteristics of this object – its “cubist” quality, as Rem Koolhaas likes to point out – is precisely that it allows for no general overview and that it can only be grasped as it develops, a peculiarity in stark contrast to the notion of an “architectural tour.” These efforts are made in priority to retain the attention of the designers, who themselves have a lot to learn from it.

Is photography an art of imitation? Yes, if by this one means not merely to imitate the forms architecture adopts, or plays with, but rather to imitate its operation, as it passes through moments and achieves the sort of effects that photography might itself recognize as echoes of what it aspires to create (for example, the plunging views of the large auditorium’s multiple rows of seats, some occupied and some empty, which at first I perceived – a question, in part, of topology – as a vertical plane), and even as photography allows
itself to be lured by architecture’s way of blurring the tracks and sidestepping an entire repertory of conventional images and architectonic metaphors – in particular those of the “window” and the “curtain-wall,” as several reproductions prove in detail. Indeed, apart from the narrow slit that serves as an entrance at the base of one of the steeply sloping volume’s sides, and a few windows letting the light in, the only opening of consequence in the compact mass of the building is the rectangular lobby, flanking to the west the smaller side of the main auditorium. Nothing in this series of photographs (which have nothing “documentary” about them) can allow a viewer who hasn’t visited the space or seen a floor plan beforehand to form an idea of the building’s configuration, and of the way its two concert halls are literally and perpendicularly interlocked. However, they place an emphasis on the fact that this space for pedestrian traffic is
sandwiched between inside and outside, with a view on both. One might add that the two longitudinal and transparent walls, which come across as undulating curtains made of alternately concave and convex half-cylinders, serve in fact as bearing walls and also allow, whether they are viewed from the inside or the outside, certain visual effects better described as kinetic rather than having to do with perspective.

Koolhaas has been said to pay little attention to what is rather hastily called “the context,” as if the concept was self-evident. Whatever the reservations I may have about them, the few photographs that play on this or that aspect of a paradoxical environment are here to remind us of Le Corbusier’s lesson, namely that it is architecture which creates the site and that the context cannot be considered to precede it, nor to have its own existence and autonomy. Let us note along these lines that, despite the

Tuttavia, le immagini pongono enfasi sul fatto che questo spazio per il transito pedonale è connesso tra l’interno e l’esterno, offrendo una visione sia dall’interno che dall’esterno. Si potrebbe aggiungere che le due pareti trasparenti, che hanno l’aspetto di tramezzi ondulati composti da un’alternarsi di forme semicilindriche concave e convesse, hanno in realtà la funzione di murature portanti e permettono inoltre, sia che siano viste dall’interno che dall’esterno, il prodursi di effetti visuali che è più facile definire cinetici che prospettici.

Si dice che Koolhaas presti poca attenzione a quel che viene piuttosto frettolosamente chiamato “contesto”, come se il concetto avesse una sua evidente autonomia. Quali che siano le riserve che posso avere nei loro confronti, le poche immagini che giocano con questo o quel punto del contesto propongono di considerare che è l’architettura a creare il sito e che il contesto non può essere né considerato come antecedente,
long-standing proscription against any human presence in architectural shots, the visitors who are seen here, pacing up and down the stairwells or standing in the halls, further prove how Koolhaas’ team succeeded in taking advantage of a structure that doesn’t, strictly speaking, have separate floors, but rather a sequence of circumvolutions and recesses leading to various stations and taking place in the space between the two large parallelepiped shapes of the concert halls and the polyhedral envelope, a quasi-futuristic opening out of the cube full of oblique vectors held in tension. While, according once again to Benjamin, the emptiness of a stage transforms it into the scene of a crime, the influx here of the public, and particularly this shot of a stage crowded with musicians in the middle of a still vacant parterre, plays a role in the tectonic, as well as symbolic, dynamic of the place.
Crowning the work of metaphor, outside of which there is no architecture, the photograph of the Casa da Música taken at night as people are leaving the building triggers my recollection of an image from one of my childhood books, showing Noah’s Ark opening to let off the animals saved from the Flood: a timely, if problematic, vignette, returning us as it does, under the combined signs of the disaster and the rampart erected against it by culture (“our” culture?), to one of the articles, if not the founding myths, of modernity. It is a fitting paradox that one of the more resolutely partial views presented here of the Casa da Música serves in the end, under the emblem of the ark, as the most proper illustration of its overall concept.

A coronamento della metafora, fuori dalla quale non c’è architettura, una fotografia notturna della Casa da Música, scattata mentre il pubblico esce dall’edificio, risveglia il mio ricordo di un’immagine contenuta in un libro che avevo da bambino. Si trattava di una rappresentazione dell’Arca di Noè, dalla quale sbirciavano gli animali salvati dal Diluvio: una illustrazione appropriata, ancorché problematica, che combinando segnido disastro ed edificio eretto contro di esso dalla cultura (la “nostra” cultura?), ci fa di fatto tornare a uno dei prodotti, senon mai delemitifondanti, dell’ammodernità non paradossale, che sia proprio una delle viste della Casa da Música decisamente più parziali tra quelle presentate a proporsi, sotto l’emblema dell’arca, l’illustrazione più appropriata del suo concetto complessivo.

[Translated from French to English by Anthony Allen]
CAD-scan: Anatomy of a Rock

CAD-scan: L’anatomia di una roccia
Reference Material:
Audio Components

Materiale di Riferimento:
Componenti Audio
1. Acoustic diffusers reflect sound to audience. 2. Stages are diffusers, by controlling combustion, monitor reflections and contributes to scattering of sound in auditorium. 3. Acoustic curtain (by Birt-Watts/Parlott) controls light and reduces sound within time. 4. Knob allows circular motion to reflect sound to audience. 5. Wood diffuser panels (modified Birt-Watts 730, 850mm) applied to walls and ceiling, optimize acoustics. 6. Control box of acoustic reflects sound to audience. 7. Audience seating (60mm x 20mm) components for the sound absorption of the audience in non-rehearsal live concert. 8. Steel mesh of the auditorium reflect sound to audience and contributes to sound absorption in the hall. 9. Replica of an National organ (wood sound absorption in the hall. 10. Acoustic bearings (X X sound) separate the auditorium structures from the main structural.
Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **1996**: Porto is chosen European Capital of Culture 2001
- **1997**: UNESCO includes Porto in its World Heritage list
- **1998**: Guggenheim Bilbao opens
- **1999**: Y2K House (OMA) comes and goes
- **2000**: Lisbon Expo '98
- **2001**: Porto designated as European Culture Capital
- **2002**: Porto's Ponte do Infante bridge opens
- **2003**: AMO's EU exhibition "Future of Europe" in Brussels and Munich
- **2004**: Casa da Música, 22,000 m²
- **2006**: Inauguration gala

Scale

- Casa da Música: 22,000 m²
- The Netherlands Embassy in Berlin: 4,500 m²
- Seattle Central Library: 38,200 m²
- The McCormick Tribune Campus Center: 10,690 m²

Programme

- Casa da Música: 22,000 m²
  - Rehearsal: 659 m²
  - Restaurant: 1036 m²
  - Terrace: 271 m²
  - Auditoriums: 1550 m²
  - Circulation: 1079 m²
  - Equipment: 5360 m²
  - Support building: 1830 m²
  - Technical rooms: 3630 m²
  - Restaurant (semi-open): 271 m²
  - Halls, performances, music shop: 3940 m²
  - Circulation: 2140 m²

Equivalences

1 Casa da Música

- 9.7 minutes of Super Bowl 2006 TV advertising
- 2.4 months of Porto wine exports
- 3 years of David Beckham's income
- 13 millennium's worth of income of a Portuguese worker's minimum wage


© 2005