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Every pitched roof is an arrow

*A form of survival
from the object's
inherited inertia*

¹ The sound of an outdoor dancing party results from the battle between the sound system and the wind.

² +44° 55' 20.07", +10° 12' 8.46" (coordinates at the use of new classes of "desk" travelers)

³ The total isolation is the product of agricultural mechanization and the corresponding elimination of the rows of grapevines and elm trees that once surrounded the church.

⁴ [...] As the 11th century author wrote, celestial things cannot be represented unless through earthly objects of desire and delight [...] it is said that similar travels are the prerogative of the few who find themselves in a trance and benefit from vision [...] Pag. 9, Michele Bacci, Lo spazio Dell'anima. Vita di una chiesa medievale (The space of the soul: life in a medieval church), Laterza Edition, 2005.

⁵ between 29 and 32 cm in length and 7 cm wide

⁶ In these disused industrial areas, a equally important linguistic variation was also occurring. Places which blazoned names of industrialists slowly faded, and were replaced by our colorful nicknames – its young new inhabitants. The abandoned industry guaranteed large, wall-enclosed spaces, protected from inclement weather, becoming the first places dedicated to workshops – complete and completely improvised – of urban cartography.

Much like the tango lives in the pauses between one step and the next, an outdoor dance party is nurtured by the oscillation of bodies that await the rhythm's repetition. The celebration is the summit reached through reflections made in the solitude of silence, a millennial chorus of vocal components that even when liberated in a crowd maintain the identifiable intimacy of the individual. Within the practice of the sharing of sounds, there are numerous architectonic structures that integrate themselves naturally into the landscape. A disposition of volumes rich with first-hand clues, relished with the senses, a vision so phenomenal that it becomes credible. Architectures originally created to accompany man's journey until his last breath, seem instead the fruit of temporary needs: ephemeral but constructed with materials that challenge any type of finale. A great example is the rural church built in honor of Saint Genesio, a building that is quite familiar to me. The church, or La Pieve di San Genesio as

● it is called in Italian, was first built 1084 in the space created by the intersection of two rivers, to the left of the Taro and to the right of the Pò. My grandfather's family – I recently discovered – lived in the right nave, converted into residential building in 1939 and in 1941 deemed unsafe and subsequently abandoned:

▲ My father's father was just 15 years old when I took this photo in the company of friends during a party, which unfortunately I don't remember. After many years, the synchrony of events desired that a farmstead move just a few hundred meters from the church, where my father would pass his youth, and where I spent many of my summers. In that period of life in which one devotes most time to the imagination, for me the Pieve was a volumetric presence suffocated in the repetitive landscape and the infinite vastness of the surrounding flatlands. A simple interruption to the horizon's linearity was enough to stop time for an instant: I think I always saw the building as an ancient camouflage, (what on earth!) an imaginary mountain constructed on the emptiest point. The mountain, fruit of a far ancient derives, is the first step toward the lofty peak, the apparition necessary to the invisible. From this follows man's attempt to reproduce divine action through the geometric organization of the landscape. Today I am able to observe the church in diametric opposition, as a ruin whose result is the force of time, of floods, inclement weather, and seasonal flux. The perspective of a ruin is a time machine. It speaks of me because I observe it with mud-covered feet: I come from a people that learned to reconstruct their homes by confiding in destruction as a form of production. The rest was done through the unrelenting floods that brought pebbles, which when mixed with mortar gave way to an abundance of free building brick.

The laborers that during the course of the year worked in the demolition and remodeling of the church, were paid with the remnants and scraps, building materials that were subsequently reintegrated into up keeping of the local farmsteads. The Pieve, and its ruins that I never feared, were created for celebratory reiteration, an interface calibrated upon me. The last attempt at survival from a misty romantic aura is to whisper the morning's arrival. When I see the church's reflection in

▲ the surrounding wallows I understand why fireworks exploded on a body of water double in their value and become celestial geometries. Just beyond the threshold one discovers a muffled microclimate, the olfactory sense is reactivated, its walls delimit the confines of calibrated sound chamber. These walls are escape lines that protect the elected from the imposed horizon of the everyday. While constructed in roman-style brick , the materials recall reinforced concrete with overbearing insistency. I myself lived through the controlled demolition of the vast surrounding industrial areas. Amid the most limpid invisibility, dancing with my own to legs, I discovered that a temple in ruin is the best

container for the reformulation of the ritual.

In the 1990's those shabby, prefabricated industrial habitats – the sum of our fathers' severance pay – hosted Techno parties. These former places of systematic production became the multiethnic piazzas for endless weekends, even before the substitute architecture of the mall could envisage them. I organized an archeological tour in an area where a commercial shopping center was slowly peaking above the debris of a recently demolished industrial complex. The commingling of dusty remnants and fresh totems created a stuttering horizon line. An urban abstractionist capable of convincing us to rethink the paradigm was fundamentally absent (for which the two-footed creature is disabled or retarded) during this period. The return of extreme organized noise to its birthplace of the party means to restart the machine in other machines: "on" wins against "off" even in absence of an auto-reverse key. The Pieve was a construction belonging to an animal species that was capable of reading the transparency of air with the many eyes of the community, almost to the point of challenging the invisible mass to the force of gravity.

The recent discovery of a flute, carved from bird bone and estimated to be nearly 35,000 years old, attests to music's salvation power within a collective model and our conquering of the thousand-year erosion of the battle for survival. The gestural conjuring and the illusionist fancifulness with which Professor ▼ Nicholas Canardi illustrates the discovery to journalists demonstrates how science and magic intersect on the pilgrimage to the depths of undiscovered archeological excavations. Discovery is an activity of the everyday only in the desert of amnesia. The anniversary is a sophisticated form of tardiness that allows man to always be on time. I have always felt that I stare at the fixity of the wrong moment. For this reason I have consistently divided the architectural forms between just-landed and ready for take-off. However, the Church of San Genesio incorporated its interior with the emblematic symbology of a deeply rooted desire for mobility. A definite will of elevation from the earth's surface, from sea level. Every roof is

a unidirectional vector of functional origin that man preserves with astuteness. If you give a child a pen and paper and ask him to draw a house, the resulting image is more a reflection of our adult idea of an arrow. The Pieve is the crux in the approach toward the origin, symbol of the plausibility of the total transhumance abandoning the earth. I thought for a second to be walking on my hands and opening my eyes just as my arms begin to give. Distance therefore has a consented route, a mystic propulsion for the upward journey of my species. A climb without curves, because they would present obstacles in front of the return. A rectilinear form presents the best reservoir of vivid memories and the landscape's repetition challenges time and laughs in the face of space. The changes made to the Pieve throughout the course of history converge on the form's upward thrust. Even though I was torn by an opposing sentiment, I found myself observing, from the navel down, the reduction of two bays that date to 1787, which determined the new length of the building (18 meters from its original 28). The annual celebration of Saint Genesio on August 25th was moved to another place and the church, in absence of performances with a distinct astral function, lost its fundamental value. The areas, at the time destined for the use by women and non-professionals of the cult, were dismantled and quickly replaced: four robust trees were natural substitutes for the four columns that had vanished in the demolition. A magnificent replica was thusly created for the fertilization of the original geometry. The reduction also gave way to the emergence of two triangle capitals, the facades only relief. The capitals were considered by art historians as arbitrary because they were conceived exclusively for rain-water drainage, giving us yet another example of an evolution that tends toward impermeability: if before one took distance from the sea level, now every single drop of rain is avoided! The buttresses rendered in cement and erected in the 1960s demonstrate another sty-

le (the metabolized aesthetic of the fascist period). Constructed to preserve the structure from cracking, the buttresses reflect a current of 18th century thought promulgated by Viollet Le Duc whereby the desperate need for conservation or restoration is abated by refurbishment, writing instead of transcribing history. Concrete mixers win against carbon paper, *historia res gestae*. There remains the last formal attempt of elephantine subtleness to anchor the Pieve to the planet that witnessed its birth together with the other forms of organic life. This new, threefold wing emerges from the point where for centuries a canopy was installed and repeatedly replaced: an ephemeral structure built to host vagabonds, the reaffirmation of the cult's values in the response to meteorological anomalies. These buttresses invert the gaze, responding to a quick salute of the interrogative fixity of my own gaze onto the Pieve; it is a distracted farewell for who feels at home anywhere, always traveling, for who has just awoken but is already prepared to leave and has trained the body and mind for any type of climate. To loose oneself and to find oneself, without waiting.

⁷ Even today, when the sun sets, people continue to walk on a bit of road that once before was in the shade, and they call it night.

⁸ *Decline Decadenza Tour! Visita alla ex zona archeologica Ex-Feltrinelli*, Centro Ricerca Arte Contemporanea (CRAC) [Research center for Contemporary Art], Feb. 2005, Cremona

⁹ Forms created by generic needs of display, if observed from the outside, present sumptuous portals from which one can expect creatures from another world to appear from one moment or another.

¹⁰ "[...] natural landscape is replaced by a more original one in which everything is volatile, indeed, flammable." Paul Virilio, *Bunker Archeology*, pag. 39, Princeton Architectural Press, 1997

¹¹ "[...] 'it's not so much that we make them [pitched roofs] – but it's a comment on the notion that retro landscape is often desired. In Europe or certain parts of America where you see the pitched roof, it's used as a visual confirmation of existing values. It's part of the same fearful, protectionist attitude [...] in urban planning. We're using the form of the pitched roof to subvert [...] We use this shape because it is visually expected, but more importantly because it carries our criticism of the interpretation of form." *Mono-Kultur #18 – MVRDV / Carson Chan, On Statics and Statistics*

¹² "[...] in order to turn the wheel, must have a fixed point, a hub that doesn't turn," Paul Virilio, *The University of Disaster*, pag. 62 Raffaello Cortina Editore, 2008.

