Weaponry-Theory:
Architectural Theory in an Age of Capitalist Warlords

Christian Girard

Abstract

The opening of a new architectural periodical with the question “The End of Theory”, contradicts the tradition to inaugurate a journal with a view of the future rather than a lament on the recent past. The cause of theory in architecture is not desperate. If we define theory in architecture as being as much a general attitude and an atmosphere, as any actual and rigorous thought production, the immediate contemporary theoretical atmosphere appears indeed world-wide much thinner than before. Pragmatism seems the contemporary canon and agenda. Theory is mutating but not brought to a mute state. If theory, especially in architecture, has reached an end, this does not mean that architecture can escape from any theoretical constraint. The necessity of architecture’s autonomy is still present. It raises a host of unanswered questions, in turn requiring some degree of theoretical treatment. The dissolution of the notion of the ‘end’ stands as a mirror-image of the dissolution of the notion of the ‘new’. Three areas of concern will be engaged, the first “Theory as a Weapon”, the second ‘The Chinese Experiment’ and the third ‘The possibility of instant theory’.

________________________

Christian Girard

Christian Girard is an architect and theoretician practicing in Paris. He studied architecture in Paris, and holds a PhD in philosophy from the University of Paris I Sorbonne. From 1993 to 1999 he was Professor of Architecture at Ecole d’Architecture Paris-Villemin where he served as Chairman 1996-98. He was a founding member of the Ecole d’Architecture at Paris Malaquais, which opened in 2000, where he heads the Theory History Projects Department. In 1986 he published an essay on architectural epistemology "Architecture & Concepts nomades, Traité d'Indiscipline" (Edition Mardaga). He has lectured in France, USA, Japan and Brazil. He opened his own practice as Atelier d'Architecture Christian Girard in 1987. Works by the firm have been published in professional magazines. Christian Girard serves on the editorial board of Chimères, founded by G.Deleuze & F.Guattari and is a member of the Comité Technique of the FRAC Centre, Orléans. He is a regular participant in the Archilab conferences.