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EDITORIAL

Introduction:
Aesthetics of the Anthropocene 2

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Following up on the call that identified the controversial aspects of the idea of the Anthropocene, its relationship to philosophical reflection and forms of artistic expression, as well as the transformations and impact that related phenomena have had on the city and the urban and sub-urban landscape, the previous issue of the journal, also entitled to the Aesthetics of the Anthropocene and constituting with the present one a thematic and argumentative continuum, explored a number of theoretical notions, exemplary figures of thought and paradigmatic cases of the relationship between the two terms. In this way, the definition of the world implied in the debate on a critical theory of the Anthropocene, the risks of catastrophic narratives of the ecological crisis, the need for an anthropological foundation of the relationship between environment and architecture, as well as the everyday dimensions in which relationships to health and environmental crises are declined, have come to the fore. Bernard

Stiegler's perspective on perceptual impoverishment and socio-political transformations and Peter Sloterdijk's metaphorical spatial spectrum then provided opportunities to deepen the theoretical grounds for redefining the very concept of the Anthropocene, while case studies turned to nineteenth-century public parks and the aestheticization of nature, conflicts in land use planning, and site-specific and temporary architectural interventions to refine responses to environmental challenges.

With the second issue presented here, it was possible to further expand the lines of investigation that focused on visual culture and the imaginary, on certain authors and theoretical junctures (Schelling, Adorno, Tsing), on relations with territory and landscape, on the urban dimension and its social representations, on the return of nature in architecture and in ecosemiotic studies, and finally concluding on a review of the possible relations between the conceptual heritage of aesthetics and the counter-visualization modes of the Anthropocene.

About visual culture, in his remarks for a discourse on Anthropocene Hyper-Aesthetics, **Stefano Ascari** refers to the figurative and visual outcomes that have been produced within the specific reflection associated with the representation of global climate change. Just as the definition of Anthropocene has been widely questioned both from a terminological and chronological point of view, the visual contents in fact turn out to be partial and, in some cases, misleading. In order to articulate the theme and insert these results in a more effective and broader framework, it is necessary to retrace the history of those images and integrate this narrative heritage with aesthetics generated, even if only apparently, outside the context traditionally referred to the Anthropocene. Also referring to visual culture, in this case as a way of perceiving the Anthropocene as a public health risk, **Daniel A. Finch-Race** takes its cues from the widespread scientific and cultural evidence that Earth's planetary boundaries are being exceeded in irreparable ways due to unsustainable behavior in the Global North's resource-hungry nations in particular, but responsiveness to the climate crisis is still lagging. He then questions about how galvanizing socially just degrowth in the face of barriers to individual commitment that range from a sense of powerlessness to disinterest in futures-thinking. In this context, it is worth considering the motivational power of ecological dangers in terms of the potential for personal harm and develop an artistically and emotionally oriented approach to the totalizing extractivism of the Anthropocene as a source of public health problems, not least the COVID-19 pandemic.

Also fossil culture, investigated by **Jaime Vindel** between industrial revolution and global warming, shows to refer to an imaginary, more appropriately, an imaginary of energy. The transformations that took place in the energy matrix of productive processes, with the new social and geographical organization of work derived from the use of fossil fuels, had their

correlate in the appearance of a series of discourses and images with a strong ideological component. The emergence of thermodynamic science, based on the observation of the processes of energy transformation, was underpinned by narratives oriented to boost the denigration of subjects who resisted integration into the productive devices of the industrial world. These imaginaries contributed to naturalize a certain worldview, where the universe was assimilated to an immense repository of energy at the service of the West civilizational project. Even the case examined by **Andrea Righi** of the Kim Stanley Robinson's latest Sci-fi novel, *The Ministry for the Future* (2020) focuses on key narrative elements developed in the text that offer solutions to our current climate crisis. Although fictional, these ideas are theoretically relevant because they challenge the current symbolic system of neoliberalism based on a sacrificial economy and a notion of transcendence that demands the infinite accumulation of surplus value.

Converging on a more strictly philosophical level are the contributions of **Francesco Di Maio**, **Rodolfo Vitali** and **Ivano Gorzanelli**. The first one, Di Maio, analyzes the early recurrences of the concept of "Anthrobscene", as proposed in media studies by Jussi Parikka, in the aesthetics of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, as advanced especially in "On the Relationship of the Plastic Arts to Nature" of 1807. The second one, Vitali, investigates the relationship between the concepts of mimesis, technology and art in Theodor W. Adorno, in the light of some epistemological implications of the Anthropocene and proposes an interpretation of the work of art which identifies its natural moment in the peculiar kind of productive praxis that takes place within it. Art in this sense is a mimetic technology that does not only imitate nature as an object, but also imitates the productive process of nature. The third one, Gorzanelli, proposes an interpretation of the category of "assemblage", starting from Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's reflection in *The Mushroom at the End of the World* (2015). The assemblage becomes both the concrete experience of a place and a way of observing that allows an aesthetic reading and a critique of Landscape and cultural heritage to be combined.

Federico Diodato questions a central tool in French land policies from the 1960s onward, the *Zone d'Activité Économique*, and shows how their impact on soil artificialization and the fragmentation of agricultural land forces us today to question their ability for the sustainable development of the territory. **Gianni Lobosco** and **Lorenzo Tinti**, for their part, examine the representation of landscape temporal scale as a driver for landscape design and planning, questioning the univocal relationship between human and environmental processes, both from an aesthetic and procedural point of view. Thus, they explore how the merging of time and space represents a prerequisite for landscape designers, and a necessary exercise for students, in order to critically address design practices within the context of landscapes in transition.

Starting from the case study of Venice' Exceptional High Tides in November 2019, **Zeno Mutton** investigates the social representations of the city stressed by an event connected to the Anthropocene. The results of the research show that there are several intersections between aesthetics of Anthropocene and social representations of the event analyzed, with particular concern for the themes "sublime" and "future as a threat", and their relation to attribution of responsibility processes. These findings reflect an elaboration of what happened based on aestheticization and trends of "deresponsibilization". Another case study presented in **Styliani Bolonaki**'s contribution is the examination of the impact of the art institution *Documenta* on the Athenian urban environment which aims to give an answer to the question of how and why the art exhibition "Learning from Athens" gained such popularity in urban and economic developers, locally and globally, that has not yet led to enough critical discussion on the cultural, and political researchers.

Nicola Zengiaro's ecosemiotics of the city tries to demonstrate that every kind of space is a habitat for those who survive in it and to deconstruct the opposition between nature and culture, thanks to a semiotic reading of the city, especially of the urban park. The attempt is to rethink our time in a multi-species project aimed at the post-Anthropocene, imagining a posthuman that can survive the catastrophe and thinking a new space for a peacefully coexistence with non-humans. **Aurosa Alison**'s interview with the architect **Carlo Ratti** seeks to understand how to interpret the human impact on the environment, and the concrete design of architecture can do so much to this purpose. The approach to the sensitivity and phenomenology of the present is the central aspect to be understood as a starting point to read future elements. In this regard, an architect creates a warning for the future generations who will inhabit the earth.

Finally, the concluding text by **Andrea Borsari** aims to establish a tentative assessment of the possibilities of countervisualization and lines of research within the conceptual field of aesthetics for a different rendering of relations with phenomena linked to the notion of the Anthropocene. He explores the relationship between the conceptual heritage of the aesthetic-philosophical tradition and its metaphorical variants with the thematic core of the Anthropocene. On the other hand, he also attempts to define how this process intertwines and interferes with the forms of visualization of the "human epoch" and thereby conditions the possible reactions that descend from such representations.

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Andrea Borsari is full professor of Aesthetics at the Department of Architecture, University of Bologna, directs the book series "Life and Forms" (Bup) and is deputy editor of "Iride. Journal of Philosophy and Public Discussion" (Il Mulino). He has recently been a visiting professor at UCLA, ENSA-Paris La Villette, the 4 Cities Unica Euromaster in Urban Studies - University of Copenhagen and the University of Sichuan. His publications include *Mondo, cose, immagini. Sulle forme dell'esperienza estetica* [World, Things, Images. On the forms of aesthetic experience, Bup, 2018], *Mimicry. Estetica del divenire animale* [Mimicry. Aesthetics of Animal Becoming, Mimesis, 2018], together with G. Leoni, *Hypermnesia and Amnesia: Remembering (with) the Body and Post-Conflict Memorials and Architectures*, «Heritage, Memory and Conflict Journal», 2022, and, co-curated, *Temporary. Citizenship, Architecture and City* (Springer, 2022).