



 UrbanMetaMapping



UrbanMetaMapping Semester Talks: Winter Term 2023 via zoom, 11.00 - 12.00 (CET)

Registration via: talks.urbanmetamapping@uni-bamberg.de

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The tabula rasa of Hiroshima and the post-war urban reconstruction in Japan

This contribution focuses on the meaning assumed by the tabula rasa of Hiroshima in the collective memory of Japanese architects, analyzing the reconstruction plan made by Tange Kenzō and the theme of urban destruction explored by Isozaki Arata.

The man-made catastrophe of Hiroshima is central to the production of Tange and Isozaki; they are engaged in a process of reconstruction and rebirth that affected Japan following the material and ethical devastation of World War II. Indeed, the air raids on Tokyo (almost completely razed to the ground) and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki forced the Japanese people to live with the traumatic loss of their cities as a result of man-made devastation. Such drama forms the backdrop to the professional affairs of Tange, the first architect - in order of time - to question the relationship between destruction/reconstruction by seeking a "Japanese" way to the violent experience of the tabula rasa. The devastating force of the war leads Tange to investigate the country's urban heritage; within this, the destruction/reconstruction relationship is not perceived as dualism but as a relationship with an unstable balance, susceptible to new reversals and continuous as unexpected spatio-temporal trespasses. If Tange seeks in the co-presence Saisei (regeneration)/Saiken (reconstruction) new tools to operate at the urban scale, for Isozaki, the post-atomic condition of Hiroshima marks a kind of boundary between "before" and "after", and is conceived as the last possible layering of the city.

The presentation aims to trace the different phases of the reconstruction project proposed by Tange, as well as the figurative and significant role that the tabula rasa of Hiroshima played in defining new urban strategies for Japan post-World War II (clearly visible in Isozaki's work).



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