

Color

C: 100%
M: 0%
Y: 100%
K: 0%

Swatches

Graphic Styles | Brushes | Symbols

Stroke | Gradient | **Transparency**

Normal | Opacity: 50%

Appearance

No Selection

Stroke:

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Opacity: 50%

Layers

- Layer 3
- Layer 5**
- Layer 1
- Layer 4
- Layer 2

5 Layers

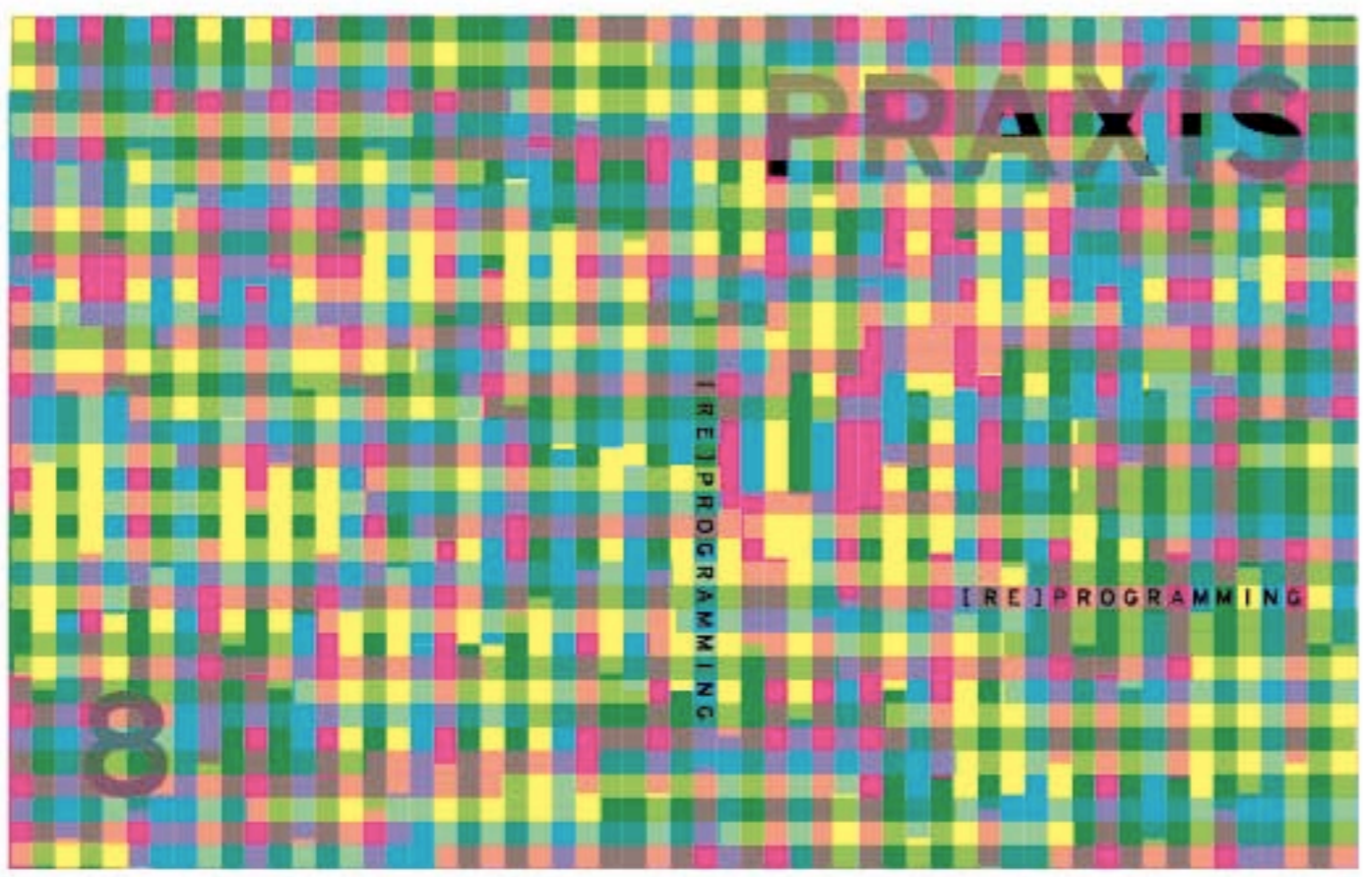
Character | Paragraph | OpenType

Transform | **Align** | Pathfinder

Align Objects:

Distribute Objects:





Color

C 100 %
M 0 %
Y 100 %
K 0 %

Swatches

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of the system, had become its most backward sector. ... the problem lay not so much in the quality of the designs as in the very presence of architecture as such, with its spaces for observing and its metaphorical messages getting in the way of any radical re-foundation of human settlements." *Architettura radicale*, Branzi explains, came to understand that "it had to work on a continuum of the present, refraining from making strategic projections into the future. ... it was understood that the architecture of the future would not emerge from an abstract act of design but from a different form of use. ... Doing architecture became an activity of free expression, just as making love means not just producing children but communicating through sex."

For *Architettura radicale*, then, the praxis of architecture is envisioned as an expanded field, surpassing the act of simply making buildings. Nor is this a question of producing what would later be called a critical architecture that would use the tools of architecture as a mode of critique. That would be Superstudio's task. On the contrary, particularly within the hands of Archizoom, *Architettura radicale* is a research project, more akin to the present-day OMA/AMO—a albeit continuing undertaking research through architecture rather than graphic design—than with Daniel Libeskind or Peter Eisenman of the 1980s.

Branzi shared his suspicion of modernism's legacy with Marxist architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri who, in his 1969 essay for the journal *Contrappunto*, "Towards a Critique of Architectural Ideology," declared the obsolescence of the avant-garde and the plan. In that signal piece, Tafuri argued that if the avant-garde set out to solve the problem of the city through the architectural plan, and if that plan was now subsumed by the economic plan of the welfare state economy, then modernism's purpose had been exhausted: "architecture as the ideology of the Plan is swept away by the reality of the Plan the moment the plan came down from utopia and became an operating mechanism." Echoing Friedrich Engels's position in *The Housing Question*, Tafuri proposes that the architect must abandon any goals of changing society through architecture. In his subsequent writings, Tafuri would outline three choices available within the discipline: ideology critique wielded by the historian, the fatalistic development of a language of silence by the neo-avant-garde, or an acceptance of architecture's complicity with capital and a cordon sanitaire between radical politics and architecture.

Certainly, Tafuri's analysis was brilliant for the time. But for all his insight, Tafuri is a man of first modernity and the owl of Minerva spreads her wings at dusk: by 1969 the planned economy was itself a thing of the past. Tafuri observed the death of modernism at the hands of Fordist State planning, but the Keynesian economic plan was well on its way to being replaced by the programmed modulations of post-Fordism. And if, in the hierarchical disciplinary society, the possession of the plan determines who has power, as Deleuze observes, in the society of control, power disseminates insidiously throughout so that everyone is both master and slave. In this, architect and Marxist historian in the academy are no different.

In contrast to Tafuri's pessimistic verdict, *Architettura Radicale* maintained a continued neo-avant-garde role for the designer. For this Tafuri roundly condemns *Architettura Radicale*, concluding that its position is deliberately nothing but a provocation for the

elite, occupying the marginal position staked out by postwar Italian design when it turned to production of luxury objects. Neither Branzi nor any of the other members of the movement subsequently engage Tafuri in a direct argument, but Branzi engages Tafuri's question of the viability of the avant-garde and the plan in his writing. Like Tafuri, Branzi concludes that the task of the architectural plan and the architectural avant-garde is over; however, unlike Tafuri, he takes an interest in the post-Fordist culture emerging around him and the return of architecture not as technologized, planned utopia but as a space to be programmed.

Archizoom's response to Tafuri emerges in their most significant project, the "Critical Utopia" of *No-Stop-City*, begun in 1969 and published in *Domus* in 1971. Whereas in their projective utopias, Archigram and the Metabolists hoped to realize their plans for a neo-mechanical architecture and a dynamic metropolis, Archizoom developed *No-Stop-City*, like Superstudio's contemporary *Continuous Monument* as "purely cognitive," aiming for "a level of clarity beyond that of reality itself." For Archizoom, *No-Stop-City* performs a scientific analysis of the contemporary urban condition, simultaneously utopian and dystopian, that is, beyond good and evil, employing the "abstract, theoretical, and conjectural" tools of architectural representation. The city is treated as "a chemical datum" to understand its formation and impact. Referring to this kind of conceptual project, Germano Celant would later conclude, "Nowadays, the architect and designer do not produce more ideas, they find themselves as of ideas, producing ideal programs that are less ideas, 'mental liberations from one's own acting and being.' Branzi explains: *No-stop-City* was a mental project, a sort of theoretical diagram of an amoral city, a city 'without qualities', as Hilberseimer would have described it. ... The nihilistic logic of the maximum quantity was the only logic of the system in which we were living instead of denying this logic, we decided to make use of its inner workings to achieve a demystification of all its ideals of quality and at the same time to carry out scientific research into the real nature of the metropolis ..."

A comparison of *No-Stop-City* with Hilberseimer's *Hochhausstadt* project of 1924, however, reveals both the influence of Hilberseimer on Archizoom and the radical differences between the two moments. Both projects consist of a bleak, infinite grid of featureless structures extending to the vanishing point and beyond. The subject, in both cases, is no longer autonomous and whole but exists only as integrated into a larger system. If the *Hochhausstadt*, as K. Michael Hays writes, shifts "architectural meaning from the aesthetic realm to a deeper logic of the socio-economic metropolis," so does *No-Stop-City*. But Hays concludes that *Hochhausstadt* is a dead end for Hilberseimer; afterwards, his architecture all but ceases to develop. Hays: "we are led to focus on the apparent fact that logically, axiomatically, such a totalizing organization—one in which the productive, causal source of signification is based on reproduction—can only be repeated." All that is left for Hilberseimer is to endlessly reproduce the socioeconomic conditions of capital, giving architectural form to his moment of capitalism.

But, as we have outlined above, Archizoom's moment is very different and so is their response. In Hilberseimer's project, the difference between each building unit and the urban order is abolished, in *No-Stop-City*, the difference between architecture and urbanity