

BERNARD KHOURY

Manipuliranje surovim stvarnostima

BERNARD KHOURY

Manipulating Sour Realities

razgovarali
interviewed by



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¶ Bernard Khoury jedan je od najzanimljivijih arapskih arhitekata današnjice, kako za arhitektonsku scenu, tako i za investitore moćnike. U rodni Beirut vraća se nakon završenog diplomskog studija na Harvardu 90-ih godina prošlog stoljeća, a već u prvim projektima suočava se s konceptualnom i materijalnom paralizom arhitektonskog djelovanja u *aftermathu* građanskog rata u Libanonu. Jedini prostor koji

Interviewed in Zagreb on 17 October 2016

¶ Bernard Khoury is one of the most interesting Arab architects of today, both in terms of the architectural scene and the powerbroker investors. He returned to Beirut after graduating with an MA from the Harvard University in the 1990s, and already in his first projects faced a conceptual and material paralysis of the architectural activity in the aftermath of the Lebanon civil war. The only space that welcomed his radical



tada pristaje na njegove radikalne odgovore jest industrija zabave pa tako 1998. gradi kulturni podzemni noćni klub B018, dijelom zgradu, dijelom napravo, ugniježđenu u četvrt Quarantaine (mjesto gdje su ožiljci grada bili posebno vidljivi), čiji se pomični krov otvara prema nestabilnom beirutskom nebu. Gotovo dva desetljeća kasnije, glavninu njegova opusa čine stambeni projekti, no i u tu developerski standardiziranu tipologiju Khoury uspješno unosi performativne elemente i sklonost eksperimentu koji su obilježili rane projekte. Khoury je *gadgetist* kojeg više zanimaju precizni mehanički sustavi nego *veličanstvena igra mase okupljene u svjetlu*.

ORIS — Kada se razmatra Vaš rad, neprestano se nameće tema Vašeg porijekla, postoji stalna potreba za kontekstualizacijom. **BERNARD KHOURY** — Odakle dolazim je složeno pitanje i ne znam jesam li sposoban na njega odgovoriti. Ono nije nužno ograničeno na moje zemljopisno porijeklo, da tako kažemo, iako vjerujem u pojam *lokalnog*, mislim da je vrijeme da lokalni stanovnici uzmu stvari u svoje ruke. Ono što podrazumijevam pod lokalnim nije nužno ograničeno na geografsku definiciju. Ovdje mogu biti kod kuće ako postoje uvjeti koji mi omogućavaju da se udubim u situaciju, a mogu biti i stranac na mjestu koje je geografski definirano kao moj teritorij u situacijama u kojima se ne osjećam kao kod kuće.

ORIS — Što Vas čini povezanim ili isključenim? Može li biti da su Vam karakteri, ljudi važniji od prostornih uvjeta? **BERNARD KHOURY** — Moja knjiga *Local Heroes* jako je usmjerena na pojedince, na likove kroz priče. Riječ je osamnaest likova, s kojima sam ostvario određen oblik bliskosti, koja je vrlo zanimljiva i zbog koje sam se osjećao kao kod kuće ili se nalazim kod kuće u svakoj od tih situacija. Istina je da sam većinu tih ljudi susreo u svojem susjedstvu, ali mislim da ne staje na tome. Mislim da je to još jedan način gledanja na kontekst. Kao arhitekti, obično imamo vrlo nezgodan odnos s kontekstom, imamo veliku odgovornost kada je u pitanju kontekst. Kad se nalazite u vašem zemljopisnom području, na mjestu koje se smatra vašim domom, a mene se često naziva arapskim arhitektom ili mladim poslijeratnim libanonskim arhitektom, biti kontekstualan veoma opterećuje. Morate se uklopiti u neku vrstu zajedničke povijesti, morate se uklopiti u prostor koji su oblikovali drugi. Uložio sam puno truda pokušavajući to izbjeći jer u trenutku kada se vaš karakter prestane uklapati u ovo opasno pojednostavljenje povijesti, više vas ne razumiju.

ORIS — Što se događa s kontekstom kod uvoza poznatih imena, arhitektonskih marki (*brandova*) i gotovih modela?

answers was the entertainment industry and therefore, in 1998, he designed a legendary underground nightclub B018 – part building, part gadget, nestled into the Quarantaine neighbourhood (place where the city scars were especially visible), whose sliding roof opens towards the unstable Beirut sky. Almost two decades later, residential projects form the majority of his work, but in this developer standardized typology Khoury successfully breathes performative elements and a tendency towards the experiment, which marked his earlier projects. Khoury is a gadgetist, more interested in the precise mechanical systems than in the magnificent play of masses brought together in light.

ORIS — When considering your work, one is constantly introduced to where you're from, there is a constant need to contextualize it. **BERNARD KHOURY** — Where I'm from is a complex question and I don't know if I am capable of answering it. It is not necessarily limited to my geographical origins, let's put it this way, although I believe in this notion of the local, I think it's about time that the locals take matters into their own hands. What I mean by local is not necessarily limited to the geographical definition. I can be at home here provided that there are conditions that allow me to be immersed very deeply into the situation. And I can be very much of a foreigner in a place that is geographically defined as my territory in situations where I don't feel at home.

ORIS — What is it that makes you connected or disconnected? Could it be that characters, people, are more important to you than spatial conditions? **BERNARD KHOURY** — Well, my book *Local Heroes* is very much focused on individuals, on characters through narratives. It speaks about 18 characters with whom I had a certain form of proximity that is very interesting, that made me feel at home or where I found myself at home in each one of those situations. And it is true that the majority of those people are people I met in my neighbourhoods, but I don't think it ends there. I think it is another way of looking at context. As architects, we conventionally have a very awkward relationship with the context, we have a lot of accountability when it comes to context. When you are in your geographical proximity, in the place people call home for you, and I have been very often referred to as an Arab architect, or as a young post-war Lebanese architect, being contextual comes with a big burden. You have to fit in some kind of consensual history, you have to fit into a space that's been moulded by others. I have been spending a lot of effort trying to evade that because the minute your character

Ne vjerujem akademskom istraživa-nju. Ne vjerujem jednoglasnim def-inicijama koje proizvodi; vjerujem da određene situacije trebaju stvoriti vrlo specifično značenje

I don't trust academic research. I don't trust the consensual defini-tions it produces; I believe that specific situations should generate very specific meaning

doesn't fit in this dangerous simplification of history, they no longer understand you.

ORIS — What happens to context with the import of famous names, of architectural brands and ready-made models?

BERNARD KHOURY — When architects walk on foreign territories, they walk on the tip of their toes, they feel uncomfortable. The supposed questioning and resistance to global certainties makes the politically correct architect find refuge in what has become a very common practice: research. They can produce very thick books, with a lot of data, and very cute graphics that illustrate this data, so that you can swallow it very quickly and then think that you've done your homework when it comes to context. **ORIS** I don't trust academic research. I don't trust the consensual definitions it produces; I believe that specific situations should generate very specific meaning. **ORIS** The big picture, on the other hand, most often produces dangerously simplistic definitions of context.





✦ BERNARD KHOURY — Kada arhitekti kroče stranim teritorijima, kroče na vrhovima prstiju, osjećaju se neugodno. Navodno ispitivanje globalnih izvjesnosti i otpor prema njima tjera politički korektnog arhitekta da potraži utočište u onom što je postalo vrlo uobičajena praksa: u istraživanju. Oni mogu proizvesti vrlo debele knjige, s puno podataka i krasnim dijagramima, koji ilustriraju te podatke, tako da ih možete brzo progutati i da onda mislite da ste napravili domaću zadaću što se tiče konteksta. Ne vjerujem akademskom istraživanju. Ne vjerujem jen definicijama koje proizvodi; vjerujem da određene situacije trebaju stvoriti vrlo specifično značenje. S druge strane, šira slika najčešće proizvodi opasno pojednostavljene definicije konteksta.

ORIS — Kakav je Vaš stav prema Vašem gradu, Beirutu, kako vidite utjecaj Vašeg rada na njega? ✦ BERNARD KHOURY — Kao arhitekti, moramo se nositi s činjenicom da zapravo ne mijenjamo stvari; na grad bismo mogli djelovati iteracijom. Nemam određeni ili posebni stav prema mojem gradu, ponosan sam na činjenicu da od jednog do drugog uličnog ugla mogu doći u kontradikciju sa samim sobom, s dobrom dozom spontanosti i bez imalo cinizma.

ORIS — Kada već imate zbirku više stvarnih zgrada koje se tamo grade, medijske nastupe i stvari o kojima govorite kod kuće, ali i drugdje, stvarate stanoviti novi identitet grada. Je li taj novi identitet nešto što želite u osnovi zadržati pod postojećim uvjetima ili ga želite prenijeti na neko drugo mjesto? Stoji li kakve ambicije iza toga? ✦ BERNARD KHOURY — Bez obzira na to gdje radim, u Beirutu ili ovdje, stvaram primjere za koje se nadam da su relevantni, i to je sve. Ne vidim sebe kao graditelja bilo kakve linearne, koherentne priče. Mislim da je to nemoguće, posebice tamo odakle dolazim, jer ondje ne postoje nikakve izvjesnosti.

ORIS — What is your position in relation to your city, to Beirut, how do you see your work influencing it? ✦ BERNARD KHOURY — As architects, we have to cope with the fact that we don't really change things, we might act on the city by iteration. I don't hold a certain or particular position towards my city, I am proud of the fact that I can contradict myself from one street corner to another simultaneously, with a good dose of spontaneity and no cynicism whatsoever.

ORIS — When you already have a collection of several actual buildings being built there and media appearances and the things that you talk about around, but I'm sure also at home, you are creating a certain new identity of the city. Is this new identity something of which you want to keep the conditions as they are, or you want to take it some place else? Is there any ambition behind it? ✦ BERNARD KHOURY — Regardless of where I work, in Beirut, or here, for example, I create instances that hopefully are relevant, that's the end of it. I don't see myself as building any sort of linear coherent story. I think it's impossible and particularly where I come from, because where I come from, there are no certainties. And I am talking about very basic issues — who provides your electricity or energy, who collects your garbage, who takes care of your sidewalks... We don't have that in the absence of the state, in all its forms, in all its institutions. It's gone completely bankrupt, it's corrupt, incompetent, and the notion of the nation state has completely collapsed. We feed our immunity with very basic mechanisms of survival, and this is how we tackle the political. I think it's not specific only to Beirut, I think the whole world is moving towards that, with the slow disappearance of the state. Beirut could be looked at as a kind of catastrophic picture of where the world is going.

ORIS — U Vašoj knjizi *Local Heroes*, skupina likova stvarno ilustrira ovo stanje. Kako u nju smještate sebe? Koji je arhitektov narativ, koja mu je uloga? ✦ BERNARD KHOURY — Govorim o vrlo osnovnim pitanjima — tko vas opskrbljuje električnom energijom, tko skuplja vaše smeće, tko brine o vašim pločnicima... Mi to nemamo u nedostatku države, u svim njezinim oblicima, u svim njezinim institucijama. Potpuno je bankrotirala, korumpirana je, nesposobna, a pojam nacionalne države potpuno se urušio. Mi hranimo svoj imunitet kroz vrlo osnovne mehanizme preživljavanja i tako se hvatamo u koštac s političkim. Mislim da to nije specifično samo za Beirut, mislim da se cijeli svijet kreće prema tome, uz polagani nestanak države. Beirut se može promatrati kao neku vrstu katastrofalne slike o tome kamo svijet ide.

ORIS — Where do you feel the most comfortable, in what kind of environments or discussions? What pushes you forward? ✦ BERNARD KHOURY — I worked with bankers, I worked with real estate developers, with entertainers, and in a way, it's an extremely interesting and complex set of missions every time. I have recurrent clients, they come back even though I don't have the profile of the submissive architect. They come back because we found territories of complicity that allow us to build meaningful things together. They are not curators of the museums, they are not Ministers of Culture, they are not accountable politically or socially or culturally for what they do. And that is very interesting, because there is another form of responsibility that comes with that, and sometimes far more sour and more difficult realities we have to cope with. I find great interest and sometimes great pleasure in manipulating those sour realities that are very foreign to the architectural elite that sets the current trends of our practice. I think that what

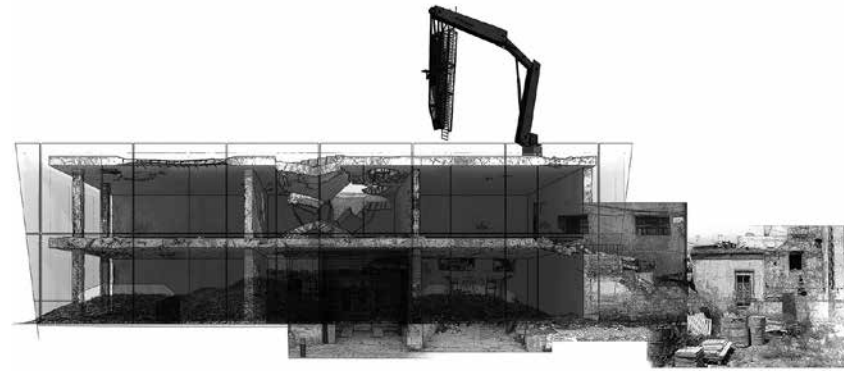
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Instalacija *In Order of Appearance*, Milano, Italija, 2016.

In Order of Appearance Installation, Milan, Italy, 2016



◀ Instalacija Evolving Scars, SAD, 1991.

◀ Evolving Scars Installation, USA, 1991

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Radio sam s bankarima, s developerima nekretnina, sa zabavljačima i na neki način je to svaki put izuzetno zanimljiva i složena grupa zadataka

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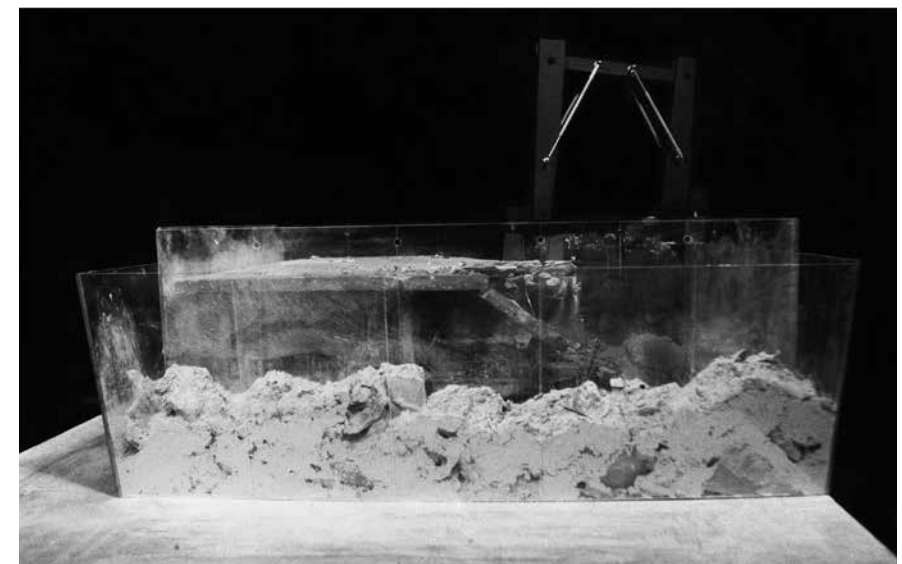
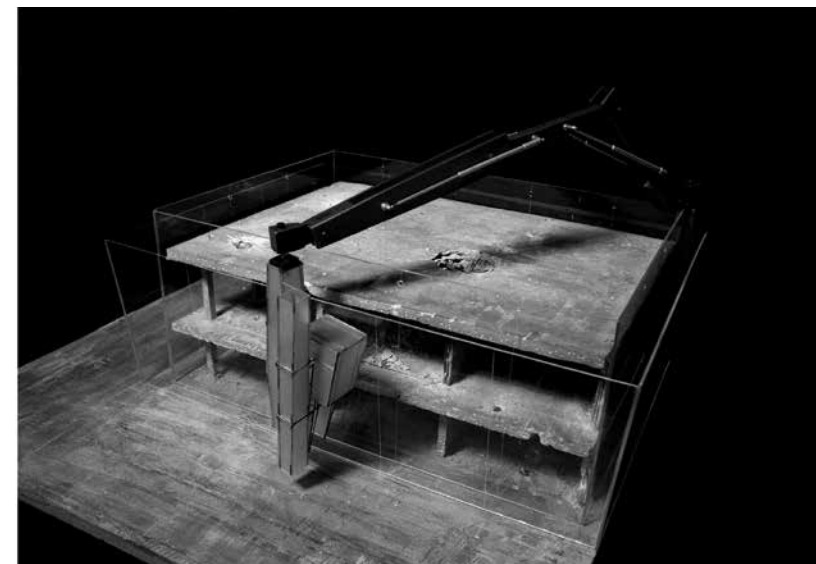
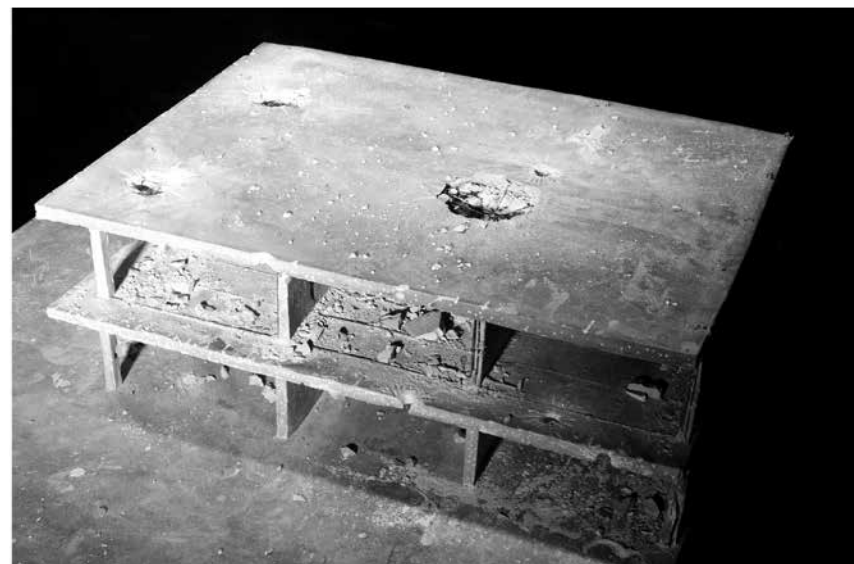
this architectural elite is producing is pathetically simplistic, naive and boring as hell. Well, hell is not necessarily boring.

ORIS — You've talked about very literally localising these individuals, real people and characters. Do you think that the sum of your work has this capacity to vocalise a kind of group vision or a group provocation of the state of the amnesia? Do you think that your buildings do that? ▼ BERNARD KHOURY — You have put it in very precise words and much better than I would have; and yes, I would like it if my work did that.

ORIS — Going back to accountability and to the locals taking the initiative, you have been very critical about the Solidere master plan for the downtown Beirut for the Solidere. Do you think that those starchitects whose imported models land in this extremely unstable context feel accountable at any point? ▼ BERNARD KHOURY — I have been very often

judged, sometimes too quickly as an anti-Solidere, because in Beirut, just like in many other places, you are either with them or against them. Solidere has done some very interesting things and achieved impressive accomplishments. In the absence of the state, there was only one project, the privately driven former prime-minister Hariri's project. He was the founder of a private company, Solidere, that took charge of the reconstruction of Beirut. It was the early 90s and I was a young graduate student, secretly in many ways pro-Solidere, because it was not politically correct for an intellectual to be pro-Solidere, the hyper capitalistic machine that was taking charge. The interesting thing about Solidere was that it invented a whole new notion of ownership. It took the parcels, erased them, and compensated the owners of those parcels, apartments, shops, etc. with shares in the company that now owned the whole city centre and was

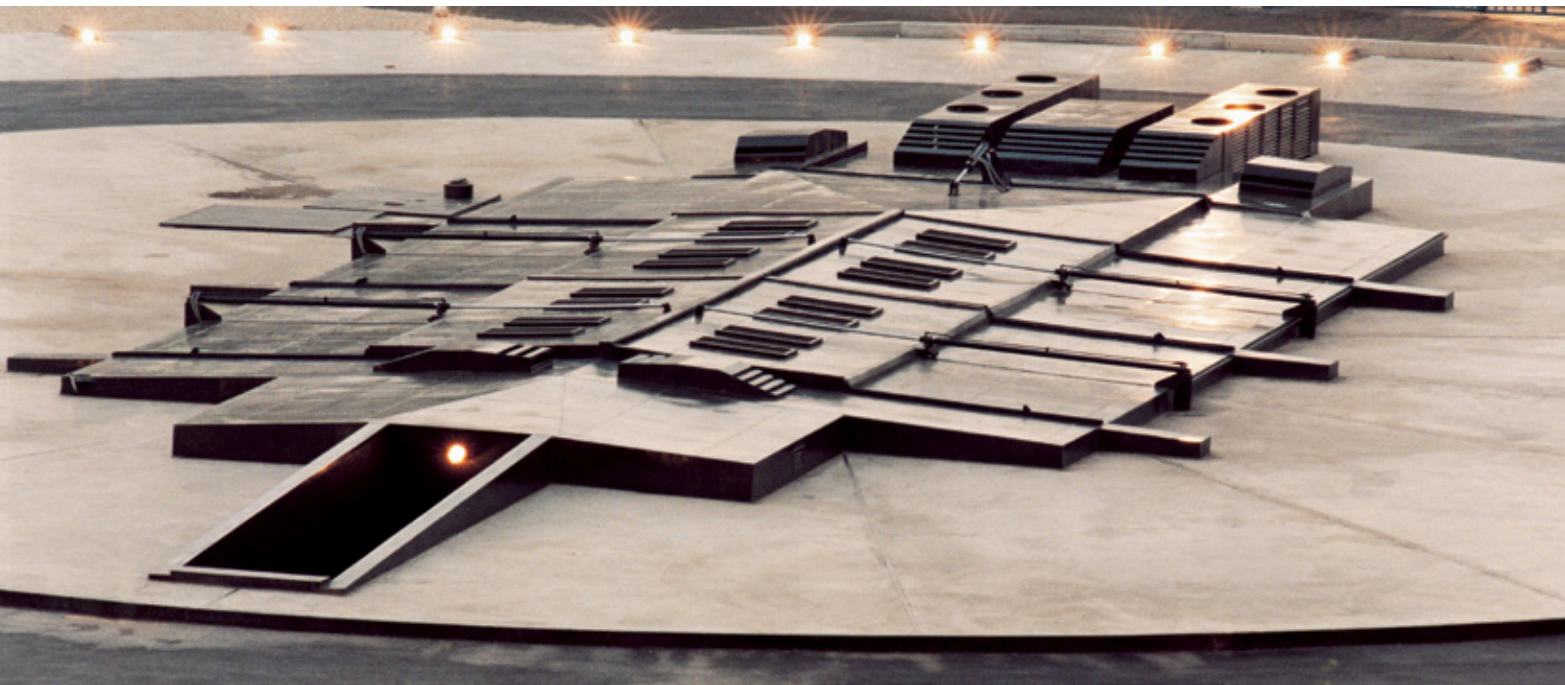
KHOURY — Lokalni heroji nisu svi bili primjermi likovi. Nemaju mnogo zajedničkog. Bankar, premijer, sin diktatora bili su ključni u stvaranju situacija kojima sam se bavio. Svaka je priča drugačija. Odnos arhitekt - klijent izuzetno je složen. Mnogo je na kocki i potrebna je visoka razina inteligencije za konstruiranje relevantnog značenja iz svake situacije. ORIS — Gdje se osjećate najugodnije, u kakvim okruženjima ili raspravama? Što Vas tjera naprijed? ▼ BERNARD KHOURY — Radio sam s bankarima, s developerima nekretnina, sa zabavljačima i na neki je način to svaki put izuzetno zanimljiva i složena grupa zadataka. Imam klijente koji mi opetovano dolaze, vraćaju se, iako moj profil nije onaj podložnog arhitekta. Vraćaju se jer smo pronašli područja sudionništva koja nam omogućavaju zajedničko stvaranje smislenih stvari. Oni nisu kustosi muzeja, oni nisu ministri kulture, oni nisu odgovorni politički, društveno ili kulturno za ono što



◀ Instalacija Evolving Scars, SAD, 1991.

◀ Evolving Scars Installation, USA, 1991

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▲ Noćni klub 8018, Beirut, Libanon, 1998.

▲ 8018 Night Club, Beirut, Libanon, 1998

rade. I to je vrlo zanimljivo jer postoji još jedan oblik odgovornosti koji dolazi s tim, a ponekad i mnogo daleko gorčih i težih stvarnosti s kojima se moramo nositi. Jako me zanima, a ponekad mi je i veliko zadovoljstvo manipulirati onim gorkim stvarnostima koje su vrlo strane arhitektonskoj eliti koja određuje trenutne trendove naše prakse. Mislim da je ono što ova arhitektonska elita proizvodi jedno pojednostavljeno, naivno i pakleno dosadno. A pakao nije nužno dosadan.

ORIS — Govorili ste o vrlo doslovnom lokaliziranju ovih pojedinaca, stvarnih ljudi i likova. Mislite li da ukupnost Vašeg rada ima sposobnost da vokalizira neku skupnu viziju ili provokaciju stanja amnezije? Mislite li da Vaše zgrade tako djeluju? ▼ BERNARD KHOURY — To ste vrlo precizno formulirali, puno bolje nego što bih to ja učinio; i da, želio bih da moj rad tako djeluje.

ORIS — Vraćajući se na odgovornost i lokalno stanovništvo koje je aktivno, bili ste vrlo kritični u vezi sa Solidereovim master planom za središte Beiruta za Solidere. Mislite li da se arhitektonske zvijezde čiji uvezeni modeli ulaze u ovaj iznimno nestabilni kontekst u bilo kojem trenutku osjećaju odgovornima? ▼ BERNARD KHOURY — Vrlo sam često proglašavan, ponekad prebrzo, protivnikom Soliderea jer u Beirutu, baš kao i na mnogim drugim mjestima, ili ste s njima ili ste protiv njih. Solidere je napravio neke vrlo zanimljive stvari i postigao impresivna dostignuća. U nedostatku države, postojao je samo jedan projekt, privatni projekt bivšeg

listed on the stock market. The ownership was recomposed from the ownership of land, from grounded plots to immaterial shares. Having given up on the practice of urban planning which was stuck in the stone age, I thought that was absolutely fascinating. I thought we were bringing about a new parameter in urban planning that the history of urbanism has never seen before. We were going to liberate ourselves of the grounded, the immovable, and move towards a different logic, different strategies for planning, something far more dynamic, far more fluid, and in direct relationship with the economy. I thought we could plan a city like no other city in the world. However, as far as town planning is concerned, they ended up applying conventional town planning methods, very archaic, morphologically driven, envelopes that are pre-set on every single plot. They have re-established plots and every single plot had a thick booklet describing the pre-determined envelope, pre-determined setbacks, pre-determined percentage of openings in the facade, pre-determined use of materials etc., and there was a list of international architects that was under the table. At the end of the day, we missed the opportunity of conceiving a city by using the most contemporary town planning that I thought could produce very relevant meaning.

ORIS — Is this project still ongoing? ▼ BERNARD KHOURY — It is still ongoing. One of the aspects of Solidere that I've often criticized was comprised in their slogan that would

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premijera Haririja. On je bio utemeljitelj privatne tvrtke Solidere koja je preuzela kontrolu u rekonstrukciji Beiruta. Bilo je to početkom devedesetih, bio sam mlad student diplomskog studija i po mnogo čemu sam potajno bio za Solidere jer za jednog intelektualca nije bilo politički korektno da bude za Solidere, hiperkapitalistički stroj koji je preuzeo kontrolu. Zanimljivo je da je Solidere izmislio potpuno novo poimanje vlasništva. Preuzimao je parcele, brisao ih, a vlasnike tih parcela, stanova, trgovina itd. obeštećivao dionicama poduzeća koje je bilo vlasnik cijelog gradskog središta i koje je kotiralo na burzi. Vlasništvo je preoblikovano iz vlasništva zemlje, iz zemljišnih parcela u nematerijalne dionice. Nakon što sam odustao od prakse urbanog planiranja, koje je zapelo u kamenom dobu, mislio sam da je to apsolutno fascinantno. Mislio sam da donosimo novi parametar u urbanističkom planiranju koji povijest urbanizma nikad prije nije vidjela. Htjeli smo se osloboditi uzemljenog, nepokretnog i krenuti prema drugačijoj logici, drugačijim strategijama planiranja, nečemu daleko dinamičnijem, daleko fluidnijem i u izravnom odnosu s gospodarstvom. Mislio sam da možemo planirati grad kao nijedan drugi grad na svijetu. Međutim, što se tiče urbanističkog planiranja, oni su na kraju primijenili uobičajene metode urbanističkog planiranja, vrlo arhaične, morfološki pokretane, ovojnice koje su unaprijed postavljene na svakoj pojedinoj čestici. Ponovno su uveli parcele, a svaka pojedina parcela imala je debelu knjižicu koja opisuje unaprijed određenu ovojniciu, unaprijed određene prepreke, unaprijed određeni postotak otvora na fasadi, unaprijed određenu uporabu materijala itd., a ispod stola je bio popis međunarodnih arhitekata. Na kraju smo propustili mogućnost da osmislimo grad koristeći najsuvremenije urbanističko planiranje za koje sam mislio da može proizvesti vrlo relevantno značenje.

ORIS — Je li taj projekt još uvijek u tijeku? ▼ BERNARD KHOURY — Još uvijek se događa. Jedan od aspekata Soliderea koji sam često kritizirao bio je obuhvaćen njihovim sloganom koji bi u prijevodu glasio: *Grad je duboko ukorijenjen u povijest, za budućnost*, a smatram ga zanimljivim jer govori o prošlosti i govori o budućnosti. Ne govori o sadašnjosti. Ta nemogućnost postojanja u sadašnjosti nije fenomen vezan samo za Solidere, to je nešto čemu smo svjedočili u svakom navodno poslijeratnom okruženju širom svijeta, a konkretnije u arapskom svijetu. Prošlost su za njih slojevi arheologije pod gradom, od Feničana, Egipćana, Mezopotamaca ili Rimljana, neki od ostataka iz otomanskog razdoblja, mnogo francuskog kolonijalnog razdoblja koje je tamo još bilo iznad površine zemlje, obnovljeno, a povijest se zaustavlja neposredno prije neovisnosti. Neovisnost nastupa 1943. godine.



Tako je mlada republika, mlada moderna republika potpuno izbrisana. A zatim je tu budućnost. Budućnost je obećana budućnost i to je sindrom u arapskom svijetu, to je uvezena, unaprijed zapakirana modernost.

ORIS — Kako izgleda budućnost izvan ovih uvezenih unaprijed zapakiranih modela? **BERNARD KHOURY** — Vrlo sam ukorijenjen u sadašnjosti. Kao što je Nouvel prije više od trideset godina rekao u jednom intervjuu: *budućnost će se pobrinuti sama za sebe.*

ORIS — Tko su kreativni ljudi iz Beiruta koji Vas nadahnjuju u ovom trenutku? **BERNARD KHOURY** — Prijatelji od kojih profitiram, od kojih kradem, koje slušam jer su mudriji od mene, inteligentniji, čitaju mnogo više nego ja. Da navedem samo neke, Rabih Mroué je fantastičan umjetnik, performer koji mi je posljednjih nekoliko godina bio velika inspiracija i

Kao arhitekti, moramo se nositi s činjenicom da zapravo ne mijenjamo stvari; na grad bismo mogli djelovati iteracijom

As architects, we have to cope with the fact that we don't really change things; we might act on the city by iteration

Rezidencija
N.B.K. (2), Beirut,
Libanon, 2013.
▼
N.B.K. Residence
(2), Beirut,
Lebanon, 2013
▼



koji je vjerojatno, što se mene tiče, jedan od najtalentiranijih umjetnika naše generacije, ne samo odakle ja dolazim. Khalil i Joana Joreige, koji djeluju uglavnom u Parizu, ali su također iz Beiruta, bili su vrlo sposobni i odlični kritičari moga rada, Walid Raad je sjajan umjetnik, Charbel Haber je sjajan glazbenik, tako da sam jako sretan.

ORIS — Mislim da je zanimljivo da je prvi kojega ste spomenuli performativni umjetnik jer smatram da se neki od Vaših najzanimljivijih radova bave performansom, korisnikom, Vi vrlo svjesno radite protiv standardiziranog iskustva, donoseći čak i razinu nelagode u prostor. Govorim o nekim Vašim ranijim djelima, poput 2018, Yabani ili projekta Centrale. Mislite li da možete uspjeti integrirati dio toga u svoje standardizirane stambene projekte? **BERNARD KHOURY** — Mislim da smo to učinili do određene mjere, ponovno, kroz očajnički pokušaj da budemo vrlo specifični. Ako pogledate vrlo jednostavan presjek ili pročelje našeg

BERNARD KHOURY, Interview



◀ Ugostiteljski objekt Centrale, Beirut, Libanon, 2001.

◀ Centrale Bar and Restaurant, Beirut, Libanon, 2001

(JK)

translate to *A city is deeply rooted in history, for the future,* and I found that very interesting because it talks about the past and it talks about the future. It doesn't talk about the present. This impossibility to exist in the present is not only a Solidere phenomenon, this is something that we witnessed in every supposedly post-war environment around the world, and in the Arab world more specifically. The past for them are the layers of archaeology under the city, from the Phoenicians, the Egyptians, the Mesopotamians, or Romans, some of the Ottoman period leftovers, a lot of the French colonial period that was still there above the ground, restored, and then the history stops right before the independence. The independence was in 1943. So, the young Republic, the young Modern Republic is completely swept off. And then there is the future. The future is the promised future and that's the syndrome in the Arab world, it's an imported pre-packaged modernity.

BERNARD KHOURY, Interview

Stambeno-poslovni kompleks *Al Qurm*, Muskat, Oman, 2012.

Mixed Use Development *Al Qurm*, Muscat, Oman, 2012

(BK)

projekta za Parcelu 183, shvatite da možete prošetati do svakog pojedinog dijela svakog od apartmana kroz terase, vanjski prostor. Neću to nazvati nelagodnom, ali to je situacija koja slijedi iz vrlo jasne namjere, a to je ponovno se povezati sa susjedstvom, ponovno se povezati s ulicom, ponovno se povezati s vanjskim prostorom u gradu koji je posljednjih četrdeset godina bio talac recepata *developer*a koji su na grad gledali kao na neprijatelja. Ovo je snažan pokušaj da vas se izbací na ulicu s balkonima koji su uski krugovi. Pokušavao sam formulirati drugačije tkivo, ne samo urbano tkivo, već drugačije društveno tkivo. Nadam se da je to značajan politički čin. Kao rezultat mojeg prvog projekta za zabavni sektor, prečesto sam se smatrao arhitektom senzacionalnih situacija, koji ne može graditi za svakodnevicu, i ne može se nositi s domaćim prostorom ili permanentnijim strukturama. Ipak, većina onoga što sam radio tijekom posljednjih deset godina uglavnom je stambena izgradnja, a zanimljivo je vidjeti da smo pobijedili *developere* na njihovu teritoriju tako što smo preispitali tipologiju kojom su nas hranili tijekom posljednjih četrdesetak godina. Naši se projekti prodaju mnogo brže, postoji veća potražnja za njima, a to je još jedan oblik otpora.

ORIS — To znači da su krajnji korisnici prepoznali ove nove, alternativne koncepte života? BERNARD KHOURY — Prije nekog vremena bio sam pozvan na svečano otvorenje stambene zgrade koju sam sagradio, sa četrnaest stanova od kojih je osam već kupljeno. Bila je neka vrsta *otvorene kuće* u kojoj je osam različitih stanara imalo otvorena vrata. Kad sam stigao, svaka mi je kućanica otvorila svoj dom i ispričala mi kako se ujutro probudi, kako se tušira na svojem balkonu, o svojem

Parcela #7950, Faqra, Libanon, 2010.

Plot #7950, Faqra, Lebanon, 2010

(15)



ORIS — What does the future beyond these imported pre-packaged models look like? BERNARD KHOURY — I'm very much rooted in the present. As Nouvel once said in an interview over thirty years ago: *The future will take care of itself.*

ORIS — Who are the creative people from Beirut that inspire you in this present moment? BERNARD KHOURY — Well, friends that I profit from, that I steal from, that I listen to because they are wiser than I am, they have more intelligence, read much more than I do. To name a few, Rabih Mroué is a fantastic artist, performer who has been a great inspiration over the last few years, and probably, as far as I'm concerned, one of the most talented artists of our generation, not only where I come from. Khalil and Joana Joreige who are based mostly in Paris, but are also from Beirut, have been very resourceful and great critics of my work, Walid Raad is a brilliant artist, Charbel Haber is a brilliant musician, so I am very fortunate.

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putovanju kroz svoju produljenu terasu koja zavija kroz kuhinju u dječje sobe... One su slavile moje zamisli daleko više nego što sam mogao očekivati ili opisati. Bio sam jako dirnut, to je bilo jedno od najugodnijih iskustava koja sam imao kao arhitekt.

ORIS — Sada gradite projekt, grupu visokih volumena, s kiber-strukturom pričvršćenom na njih. Neizbježno je da ga vidimo kao neku vrstu *hommage*a Lebbeusu Woodsu. Njegov oblik podsjeća na mnoge njegove crteže, ali je postavljen u vrlo različitom svijetu, Woods je uvijek govorio o nehijerarhijskim okruženjima, a ovo je superhijerarhijsko.

BERNARD KHOURY — Sigurno. Nisam uvijek u potpunosti razumio što je crtao, ali volio sam ga. Bio je fantastičan profesor i veliki kritičar, i svakako netko tko je imao važan utjecaj na mene. Ovaj projekt o kojem ste govorili je sada u izgradnji i ima vrlo složenu priču. Započeo je kao hotel za jednog od likova iz *Local Heroes*, a da je bio izgrađen kako je na početku

BERNARD KHOURY, Interview

ORIS — I think it is interesting that the first one you mentioned is a performance artist because I find that some of your most interesting work deals very much with the performance, the user; you very consciously work against the standardised experience, even by bringing a level of discomfort into space. I am talking about some of your early works, like the *bo18*, the *Yabani* or the *Centrale* project. Do you think that you can manage to integrate some of that into your more standardised residential projects?

BERNARD KHOURY — Well, I think we have done that to a certain extent, again, through the desperate attempt to be very specific. If you look at a very simple section or an elevation of our project for Plot 183, you realize that you could walk to every single part of each of the apartments through the terraces, the outside space. I'm not going to call this discomfort, but it is a situation that is driven by a very clear intention, that is to reconnect to the neighbourhood,

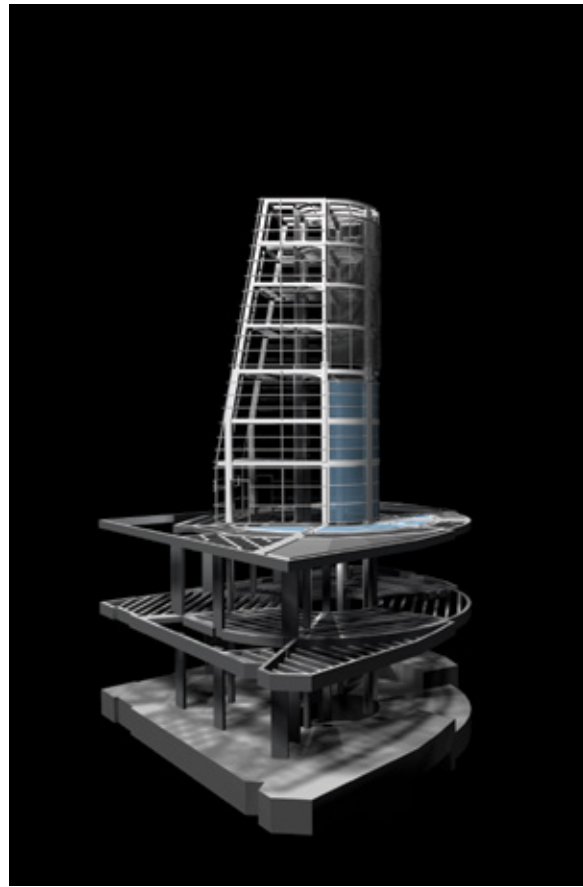
BERNARD KHOURY, Interview

Projekt *Preface*: 2016 – 20— (*Beirut Museum of Art*), natječajni rad, 2016.

▲ *Preface*: 2016 – 20-- (*Beirut Museum of Art*) Project, competition, 2016

(BK)

Ugostiteljski objekt *Yabani*, Beirut, Libanon, 2002., 3D vizualizacija



Yabani Bar and Restaurant, Beirut, Lebanon, 2002, 3D visualization

(BK)

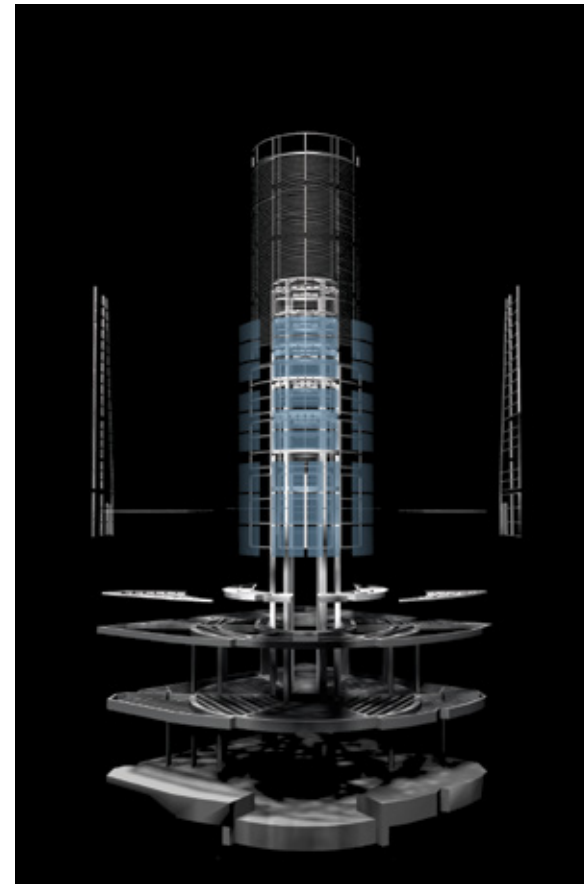
Ugostiteljski objekt *Yabani*, Beirut, Libanon, 2002.



Yabani Bar and Restaurant, Beirut, Lebanon, 2002

(JC)

bilo planirano, vjerujem da bi bio zanimljivo odredište u Beirutu. No, prilike su se u jednom trenutku promijenile i morali smo smanjiti vidljivost projekta pa se od ambicioznog scenarija hotel pretvorio u stanove prodane *developeru*, budući da smo već lijevali podrumne. Potom sam to ponovno promotrio i shvatio da će se neizbježno pretvoriti u tvrđavu; prostore

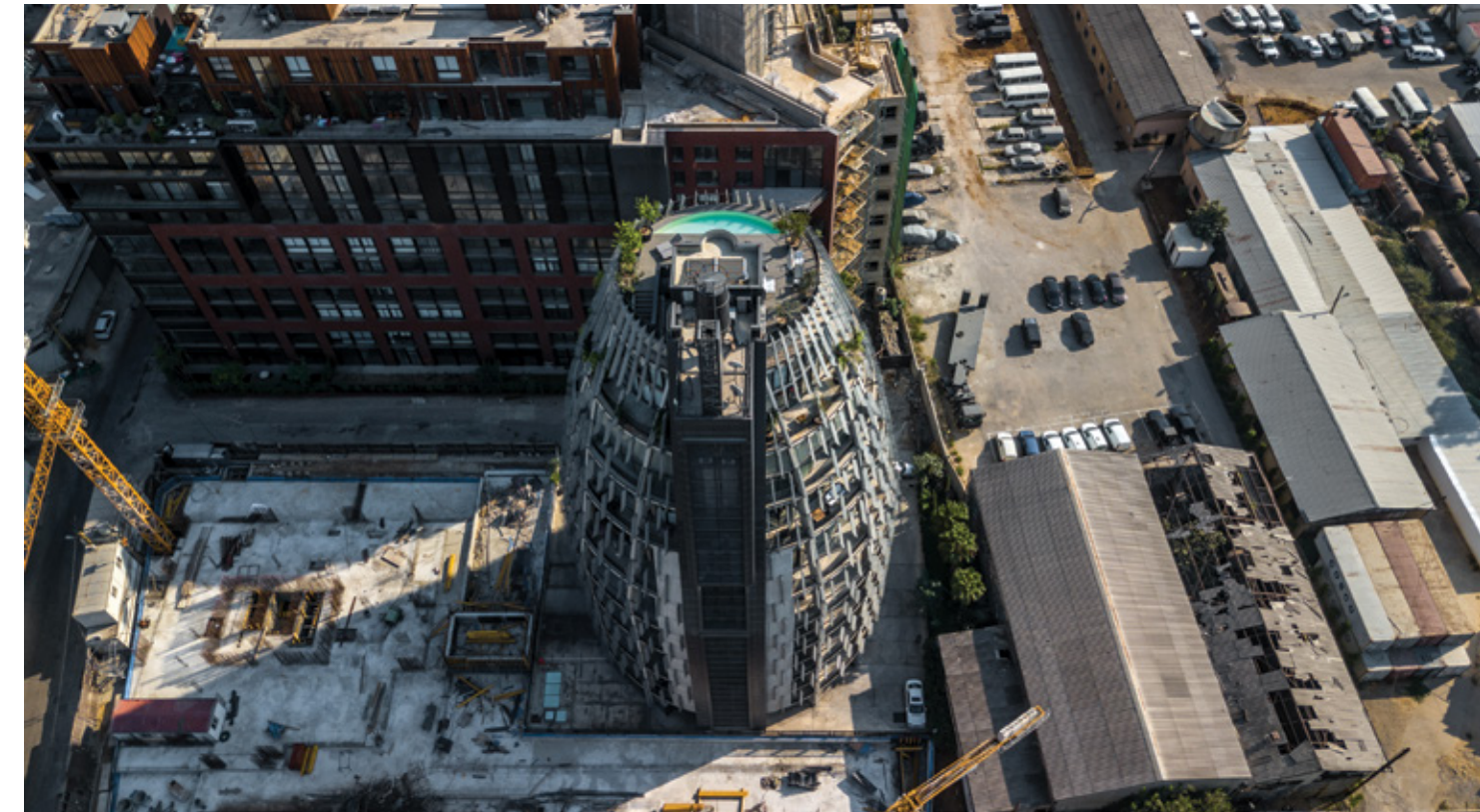


to reconnect to the street, to reconnect to the outside, in a city that for the last 40 years has been the hostage of developers' recipes that have looked at the city as hostile. So, this is a forceful attempt to throw you out into the street with balconies that are narrow circuits. I was trying to formulate a different fabric, not just an urban fabric, but a different



koji vam omogućuju da gledate van, a da vas ne vide, stanove gdje je sigurnost prioritet, da ne kažemo fobija. Ove privatne zgrade obično imaju kontrolne sobe i opremljene su vrlo sofisticiranom sigurnosnom i nadzornom opremom. Kontrolne sobe obično se nalaze u podrumima, one su nevidljivi prostori opremljeni ekranima; suvremena *high-tech* inačica stražarskih tornjeva. *Kiber*-struktura o kojoj govorite u ovom je projektu pretjerano vidljiva kontrolna soba koja

(BC)



(BK)

social fabric. This is hopefully a relevant political act. As a result of my first project for the entertainment sector, I was too often considered an architect of sensational situations who cannot build for the everyday and who cannot deal with the domestic space or more permanent structures. Yet, the majority of what I have been doing over the last 10 years is mainly residential, and it is interesting to see that we've beat the developers on their own territory by questioning the typology that they have been feeding us over the last 40 years or so. Our projects sell much faster, there is a greater demand for them, and this is another form of resistance.

ORIS — It means that the end users have recognised these new alternative concepts of living?

BERNARD KHOURY — A while ago I was invited to an inauguration of a residential building I have built, with 14 apartments in it, 8 of which are already sold. It was an open house of sorts where 8 different tenants had open doors. When I arrived, each one of these housewives opened their home to me telling me how they wake up in the morning, how they shower on their balconies, about their journeys through their elongated terraces that snake through the kitchen into the kids' rooms... They celebrated my plans way beyond what I could expect or

Parcela #4371, Beirut, Libanon, 2015.

Plot #4371, Beirut, Lebanon, 2015

(BC)

Parcela #4371, Beirut, Libanon, 2015.

Plot #4371, Beirut, Lebanon, 2015

Vrlo sam ukorijenjen u sadašnjosti. Kao što je Nouvel prije više od trideset godina rekao u jednom intervjuu: *Budućnost će se pobrinuti sama za sebe*

Parcela #1072,
Beirut, Libanon,
2014.

Plot #1072,
Beirut,
(BG) Libanon, 2014



I am very much rooted in the present. As Nouvel once said in an interview over thirty years ago: *The future will take care of itself*

describe. I was very touched, it was one of the most gratifying experiences I have ever had as an architect.

ORIS — You are building a project now, a set of high volumes, with a cyber-like structure attached to them. It is unavoidable that we perceive it as a sort of homage to Lebbeus Woods. Its form reminds of a lot of his drawings, but it is set in a very different world. Woods was always talking about non-hierarchical environments and this one is super hierarchical.

BERNARD KHOURY — Certainly. I didn't always fully understand exactly what he was drawing, but I loved it. He was a fantastic professor and a great critic and certainly someone who had an important influence on me. This project you are referring to is now under construction and has a very complex story. It started off as a hotel for one of the characters of *Local Heroes*, and if it had been built as initially planned, it would have been an interesting destination in Beirut, I believe. But, the tide turned at some point and we had to scale down the visibility of the project so it turned from an ambitious hotel scenario into apartments sold to a developer, as we were already pouring the basements. And then I looked at this thing again and realized that it would inevitably transform into a fortress; spaces that allow you to look out without being seen, dwellings where security is a priority, not to say a phobia. These private developments are usually fitted with control rooms and equipped with highly sophisticated security and monitoring equipment. Control rooms are usually tucked in basements, they are invisible spaces fitted with screens; the contemporary high-tech version of watch towers. The cyber-like structure you refer to in this project is an overly visible control room suspended above the street and celebrated on the façade. It will house the security guards or the modern-day sentinel. It holds a strange resemblance to the Apache helicopter cockpit, or maybe a creature from Lebbeus Woods' drawings. This story



je obješena iznad ulice i slavljena na pročelju. U njoj će se nalaziti čuvari ili moderni stražari. Ima čudnu sličnost s kokpitom helikoptera Apache, ili možda stvorenjem iz crteža Lebbeusa Woodsa. Ova priča može biti u kontradikciji s prijašnjom stambenom shemom koja se otvorila gradu kroz izložene terase. Ova bi se, s druge strane, mogla promatrati kao slavna tvrđava. Ne mislim da su Woodsovi nacrti bili svi naivno romantični ili uljepšani; u mnogima od njih vidio sam oblik slavljenja neke vrste tame. Volim misliti da je moguće izgraditi relevantno značenje na gorkim stvarnostima naših gradova. Usvajam različite strategije za različite situacije. I to ponekad činim istodobno.

may be in contradiction with the previous residential scheme that opened itself to the city through its exposed terraces. This, on the other hand, could be looked at as a celebrated fortress. I don't think that Woods' schemes were all naively romantic or sugar-coated; I could see, in many of them, a form of celebration of a kind of darkness. I like to think that it is possible to build relevant meaning on the sour realities of our cities. I adopt different strategies for different situations. And I sometimes do that simultaneously.

▲ Parcela #1342 – 1343,
Beirut, Libanon, 2014.

▲ Plot #1342 – 1343,
Beirut, Libanon, 2014

(15)

Parcela #1282, ▶
Beirut, Libanon,
2017.

Plot #1282, Beirut, ▶
Lebanon, 2017

(BG)

