YOUTH AS A STATE OF BEING
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«Resist
to him who builds a small house
and says: I am fine here.»
—Michalis Katsaros[1]

The architectural process seeks a way of arriving at a final design product. Moving towards a starting point though, we feel the urge to distance ourselves from the existing constructed reality, reflect upon it and question our creator-self in it.

Youth is the source of life. Youth is associated with qualities such as instinct and spontaneity, which in conjunction with enthusiasm and thrill set a person in action, in order to materialize and create a context. At that time, through a combination between shock and experience, the person doubts and questions the previous act by being both suspicious and fearless. As a result, she explores, experiments and reformulates her context. Meanwhile, rebellion or love is possible to lead to irrational territories. She is learning in a process of encountering various truths, something that intensifies her curiosity and pushes her to continuously reinvent, reformulate and restructure her surroundings, her environment, her self. The aforementioned characteristics and series of actions are usually linked to a certain period in a person's life. However, it is worth thinking about and identifying these processes with every person, regardless of his or her age. In other words, youth is addressed not as an age signifier, but as a state of being, in which it presents itself as constant regeneration; an ongoing process of questioning and reconstructing oneself.

Dealing with the idea of the self, ‹work› stands out as a foundational and formative factor. This is easy to comprehend, only by thinking the ostensibly defined time-span it occupies in daily life. There, mechanisms of normalization, traumatic everyday frictions and overloaded subjects shape a structured reality of imbalance that constrain ‹youth›. With regard to constraints, reality as it is currently expressed can be an unhospitable environment of constant change and demands. Hence, individuals in social milieus attempt to simultaneously adapt to these circumstances, resulting mostly in competition and stress, expressions that do not allow the qualities of youth to emerge and be developed.

In this reality, the economic system equates objects, concepts, labor, synthesizing a ruthless, omnipresent and pervasive meshwork. Indeed, Mark Fisher argues that, «capitalist realism has successfully installed a ‹business ontology› in which it is ‹simply obvious› that everything in society, including healthcare and education, should be run as a business»[2]. Following this reasoning, profit inevitably turns into the longed-for goal for professionals. It becomes an aspiration and the actors involved, from a company, an office or an atelier—a smoother term for architects' ears—to each working individual, take part in this chase for it. As can be expected, speed is the absolute means to reach the target in a pursuit stance. As such, along with profit, it is itself an important attribute and something that must be further improved and enhanced. At the same time though, the growth rate of speed increases the repression of the ‹youth›; Virilio suggests that «speed resembles senescence, and death, this death that brushes up against the evil that carries him off and bears him away from his people»[3]. Let us take a moment and think at the scale of an architecture office, how speed is possible to cause a senescence in creativity and essential collaboration. There, people in charge, feeling the pressure to perform under the constant competition and fear of failure, try to develop methods to achieve decent design standards. With time such procedures end up being rather stiff, letting no other inputs interfere. Input etymologically refers to the notion of contribution and relates directly to new information, ideas and thoughts. Its absence means at the same time a lack of dialogue and collaborative experimentation leading to possible exclusion of team members and finally to their indifference.

Mark Fisher unfolds the way bureaucratic tactics proliferated, instead of being reduced, in late capitalism, as well as how «additional layers of management and bureaucracy» are put together. He argues that «work becomes geared towards the generation and massaging of representations rather that to the official goals of the work itself», unmasking the importance of appearance nowadays (PR)[4]. Bureaucractic logic and practices, with the meaning of managing oneself, impose a need to constantly assess, prove and present performances. At this level of representation and PR-production, people invariably feel flustered between fragmented temporalities and desires. Against this background, the most traumatic friction is the collision between the self and time. Through many conversations with colleagues, the following observation has surfaced: One does not place one's desires into the present, but to an ever-coming future. This future will always send its vectors back to the present, confusing

Crisis and Control 2013. HD Video, 14′ 12″, videostills. Burak Delier.

the self that simultaneously keeps producing ambitions. He does not reconstruct himself in an essential manner, he plays roles instead, dividing himself into thousands of pieces hoping to be someone that will be ‹respected› by ‹successful others›. In that case, experiencing stress is a usual outcome, and obviously an obstacle to perceiving and enjoying the virtues of the present. To put it more simply, the stressed self is not willing to get inspired by his context, the information that surrounds him remains hidden behind a heavy load of duties and obligations. Thus, creation, with attention to the present, is postponed, from a fifteen-minute drawing, to a three-month project to a sketch in the bus, to a discussion with his partner.

«Meanwhile, I manage».[5]

The mapping of the aforementioned instances provides a valuable foothold on an attempt to rethink the context of ‹work› by recognizing its inconsistencies. As stated above, managing processes and profit complicate any possibility of healthy co-existence and lead to an alienation of individuals reinforcing the ‹I› instead of embracing the ‹we›. This is an anomaly of the economy and at the same time its cornerstone, that is, the establishment of foot-racing paths towards the build-up to the successful self. The false interaction with success weakens the creator-self, who finds himself in a condition of permanent striving for accomplishment, mostly by surpassing others. Certainly, the term of creation is expansive, directly relates to work, and it is composed by ideas communicated by more than one individual and mediums. In this context, Brian Eno deconstructs the notion of ‹genius› and argues that every composition is produced by «the creative intelligence of a whole community»[6] which operates on a ‹scene›. In the period of time now occurring, the creative power of «scenius»[7] can flourish if the attributes of ‹youth› are embraced. In other words, spontaneity, curiosity, exploration, enthusiasm, mutual support, are characteristics able to support fruitful interactions and essential collaboration. Shared vocabularies between individuals can therefore emerge in the discourse and practice of work in order to critically question its processes and even its end-products. In conclusion, people in this setting may change the way they pose questions, the way they accept and reject, say no, yes and I prefer not to.

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