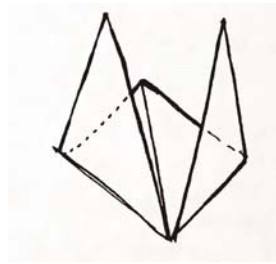


The Soul of the City. Seoul 2016



Cities are re

Regenerated, re-born, renewed, re-discovered, re-invented, recuperated, re-used. Their soul survives and is reborn in every each of us.

I could never have enough of the subtle linden flower scent that invades me every spring I return to Cluj, Romania, the city of my childhood. Linden flower scent, one could agree, is definitely the urban scent of Romanian cities. It is that “Madeleine de Proust” that each and every Romanian expat experiences along he’s’ or she’s’ journeys all over the world.

Living a city is a sensorial experience and the city that we left continues to live within us wherever our life takes us. There is something about its’ scents, its perfumes, its odours that penetrates deeply in our skin and we carry it along us all our life. It can be the scent of linden flowers, the odour of coal, the perfume of the rain on the heated pavement, the scent of the subway, the perfumes of the city in the morning, the scent of sunrise and of sunset. Every city we experience engraves a sensorial fingerprint in our memory.

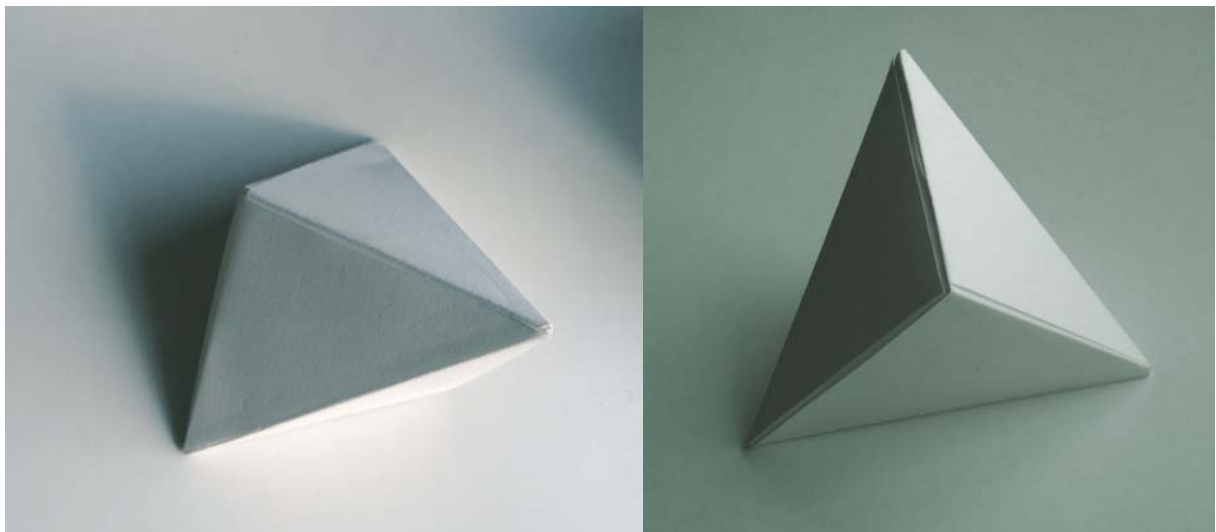
In this manner we carry with us a piece of the soul of each city we have lived in. But this piece doesn’t grow there by itself. It is the result of an exchange. It has replaced the piece of our soul that we have left in each and every city that has touched us. The soul of a city is composed in its turn of the pieces of the souls of the lives it has altered. The soul of the city is aligned with the soul of its inhabitants.

What happens to the soul of the cities that fall into oblivion? Where does their soul go and how does it mutate? How can it be helped to be re-born? Could it be found in the ruins? In the architecture of the industrial structures that used to be so impressive? In the people?

By these means, the role of urban regeneration projects is to grasp, observe, analyse and understand the true soul of a city and then ensure its rebirth and survival. In the wide game of urban regeneration architects are called to choose the more invisible, rather humble, yet very strong gesture of connecting, empowering, stimulating and challenging its energies. Their gestures might be less visible than the habitual role of an architect but are nonetheless very powerful as they alter the soul of the city and the lives of people. Much alike the soul of the city, architects working in urban regeneration are often invisible. But that doesn't make them less strong.

In Romania, architects and artists have been taking over the post industrial cities for the past decade or so. The city dwellers have yet to keep up with the pace. Since 2010, bottom-up regeneration projects have been flourishing all around the post-industrial cities of the country. Photographers leave on journeys to discover them, artists build museums in those cities.

The Romanian Chamber of Architects, through its cultural projects financing programme, has been supporting a very high percentage of the urban regeneration projects, workshops and activities initiated by young architects. We could say that urban regeneration projects exist in Romania also due to their support.



The Romanian stand

The Romanian Chamber of Architect's stand talks about regenerating the soul of the city and the way it is seen through the eyes of architects, of the artists and of the inhabitants of the city.

Conceived as a three-dimensional canvas that is meant to capture the soul of the city, it is a canvas that can be touched, felt, experienced. In its three-fold, are projected upon the three main components of the soul of the city: **the nature**: through the lenses of photographers Ioana Carling and Marin Raica with the project "Post Industrial Stories"; **the culture**: through the camera of Andrei Dascalescu and his documentary – "Planeta Petrila" from which an extract will be projected and **the future** through the images of the regeneration projects conducted in Romania in cities such as Petrila, Anina, Baia Sprie and so forth. The extract presented is not an exhaustive one, and a selection will be done after contacting as many teams as possible with the help of the Chamber of Architects. The future also inquires upon the endurance of such initiatives in time, when they are not necessarily or immediately sustained by the local constituencies. How can we allow or encourage their perseverance given the fact that such transformation processes expand regularly over decades.

The visitor will be immersed in a tactile space presenting the universe of the soul of the city.

The material presenting the concept will be a three-foldable origami box that will fit in an A5 envelope. Each piece will represent a part of the concept and in the box the visitor will be able to find a "piece" of the soul of the city – a dried linden tree flower and a small piece of coal.

