



SuperPosition

L'Innovation Inspirée
de Jeanne d'Arc

Extract - Introduction

Philippe Cartau

Extract
from
Part 1 - Architecture

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Extract - Architecture

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Cover: montage by the author from a painting by Albert Lynch and an image by Gerd Altmann

Back : Sketch of Clément de Fauquembergue, Clerk of the Parliament, May 10th 1429

Superposition, Innovation inspired by Joan of Arc

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Architecture

Part I - Architecture

Jeanne and Jehan heard distant voices. If, in the evening around the fireplace, they had asked those around them how to save France, the answer, accompanied by laughter that went with the smoke, would have been blunt. The elders would have invited Jeanne with her delicate hands to weave faster, the other with his heavy sword to strike harder, and in any case, not to ask silly questions anymore. Yet, in these answers neither of them would find relief. Did this dissatisfaction open their ears? And not just to vain and repetitive words, but to the indiscernible rustling, as furtive as the wind swirling through the trees?

Jeanne would not be content to simply serve as reinforcement, to do only a little more at the risk of becoming a burden. Jehan would not be satisfied with ever heavier bombards or ever bigger cannonballs. Both saw bigger, both saw further. Only, the distant forms that were being outlined were moving slowly, cautious like a virgin who is still slow to deign the first touch. At the risk of evading their grasp, the Vision would ask for patience, for fear of withering from eagerness or of petrifying, still barely formed. Time imposed itself, demanding from each day its lot of waiting and feverishness. It was not a question of improving the house with a larger chimney or a brighter window, but of conceiving it anew, from top to bottom, all in stained glass bathed in lightness.

If the framework of their Vision would be made of patience, obstinacy and their inner voices, they would nevertheless make fire of any wood, one of the sacred, the other of its charred coal⁷⁴. The Fairy Tree would nurture discretely the frail voices and their clues, the one at the edge of knowledge would mother Jehan's dreams with its shadow. The labour interspersed with these escapes would only serve to give body to the images, to give matter to the words that would come.

Blablacar's architecture was forged over many years, its business model changed several times⁷⁵ before arriving at the one known to most people. Darwin waited twenty years before publishing his Theory of Evolution. Architecture is the car that replaces the horse, the jet engine that replaces the propeller or the aqueduct that replaces the well or the river. The way is not better, it is quite different.

Architecture is a strategy. It is the art of changing the question instead of answering it. We define a new framework that will give a radical and

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obvious advantage, regardless of the incremental improvements. Wasting time, wandering along the longest path is allowed, even encouraged. Doing ten times as much as requested is recommended. Primacy is given to the dream even if it has to go down at times to feed on earthly food. One conceives the destination even if one still doubts the way. The measurable is not yet of avail, the incubation is done in the shell, it protects from the draughts but lets through the light. The burden of proof belongs to the disdainful and unbelievers, the trial is no rush; taking the time to mature, mischief is prescribed.

In Architecture, we tend to listen to what is being done, much less to what is being said. To provocations we take the time to answer. Moreover, it is often time that sees to it. Architecture defends itself from being linear. It is born sometimes of a simple stone, of a brick, new of form or function, which hastens of reason to run into a wall, to circumvent the challenge or come back to the starting point in order to give this brick a house, and before that, the foundations of a Vision.

Disruptive innovation changes the architecture of the existing. It is akin to a scientific revolution⁷⁶, to overcome the approaches that operate solely with observable causality. Science has great difficulty in observing the multitudes that interact in myriads. This complexity could certainly call upon powerful calculations, if chaos, temerity and the weight of the measure did not come against its plans.

Architecture cuts through this jumble of hesitations, it imposes its agenda on the sluggish description of reality bogged down by the endless convolutions of liminal fractals. Architecture is the workshop of Matter, Energy and Mission. We abandon it sometimes, emboldened by our dreams, to quickly come back stung by derision or vilified by so much outrage done to Reason. No matter, innovation is amoral. We push layers, of resilience for ourselves and of value for our prodigy. Like a scout, the architect of our dreams makes regular and ever deepening forays into reality in search of a Vision. The words of the scout often contradict our purpose, the sieve of time filters out the passing resistances. We adjust, provoke with ephemeral incursions, to be desired but not too pubescent at the risk of overdoing it.

Architecture imposes the field, whether of the Possible or Elysian; the ground where to fight, where to plant the floating flag, sponsor of possible talks. A new Architecture changes the rules of engagement. Indecent, it parades, braving even death. Even the latter belongs to it, at the cost of metamorphoses or inert horizons.

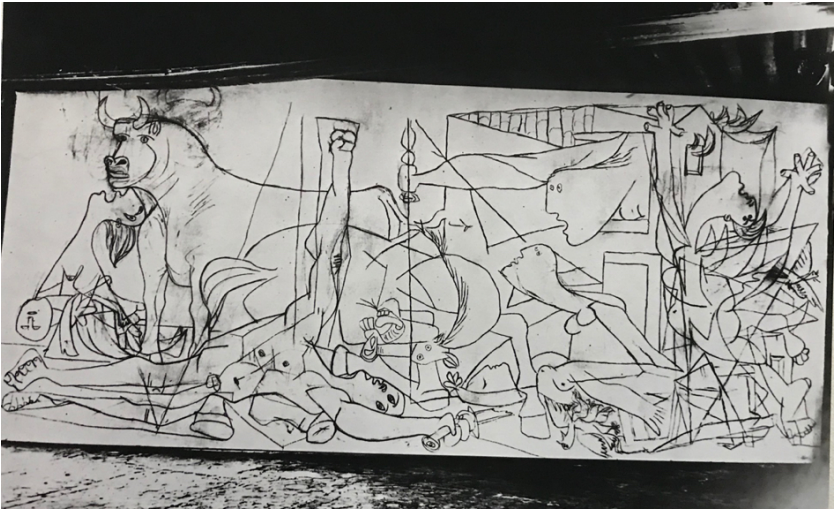
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The Vision inspires the Architecture. It underlies it, without going so far as to dictate the details of its work. This low task returns to the Energy which animates a carnal and viable envelope within Matter. In its progression it doubts and calls upon the Mission to guide the Gesture and to insufflate it with a soul. Jeanne's Vision required her to change her approach, notably the way she leveraged Matter. She would call upon her Mission to redirect the Energy.

The Vision can be born from an object, a meager imperfection which by dint of being brutalized by impertinent questions or kneaded by an indigent reality, reveals to us little by little the essence of a much greater dream. Did Jeanne announce at dawn that she would save France? Did Jehan venture, without exordium or maturation, to make fun of these pathetic canons? Beyond Orleans, beyond the bombs, for years they would be preoccupied in the shadow of mockery to protect their doubts, to feed the lamb, to tame the snake. By reckless incursions they would subject it to the causticity of the quibbles, but to learn and certainly not to surrender.

From this icon that is Jeanne and this unknown that is Jehan would emerge that which baffles and marvels us, that which escapes the yoke of sense as well as the tyranny of measure, that which delights us with its intrepid intelligence. The question is not to know how to go to Reims, but to know that it is to Reims that one must go.

Matter



Guernica by Picasso, at the beginning. Photo taken at the Musée des Abattoirs by the author. Architecture before we knew it.

End of Extract - Part I - Architecture

Matter

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