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RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Distilled Avant-Garde Echoes: Word and Image in Architectural Periodicals of the 1920s and 1930s

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Since the 1980s, architectural avant-garde publications, seen as a laboratory for artists and architects, have given rise to numerous research projects. Although recent scholarship tends toward a more balanced interpretation of architectural publications of the interwar period than studies from the 1980s, most research on architectural books and journals continues to point out only the parallels, or even just the ‘alliances’, between the innovative visual form – typography and photography – of those books and magazines and the ‘new architecture’ they intended to promote: relationships between form and contents. This article tackles the issue of this historical and aesthetical convergence. It draws on a new generation of studies that takes into account photography, graphic design and texts, simultaneously, and focuses on their association in the space of the book. By examining several case studies, it brings to light relationships of texts and images different from those dramatic and disruptive ones elaborated by the avant-garde. This is done, first, by considering a wider range of professional periodicals of the late 1920s and 1930s – both avant-garde and traditional – and second, by focusing more on the modes of perception photography introduced within the space of the book than on photographic or typographic experiments. The driving hypothesis is that in periodicals of the late 1920s and 1930s, even in those of a rather traditional form (*L’Architecte*, *L’Architecture vivante*, *Quadrante*), new modes of perceiving the space of the book as a whole gave rise to semantic associations generated by juxtapositions or effects of distance between word and image. This article also puts into question the way two periodicals in particular, *L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui* and *Casabella*, both deemed ‘modernist’, integrated some of the lessons of contemporary typography and photography.

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**Keywords:** architectural periodicals; architectural photography; graphic design; New Vision; New Typography; architectural criticism; Quadrante; Casabella; *L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui*; *L’Architecte*; *L’Architecture vivante*

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## Introduction

Historiographical interest in avant-garde architectural magazines peaked in the 1980s. These magazines became one of the most investigated type of periodical by architectural historians; their attractive form and their visual strategies were among the main causes for this interest. During this decade, architectural historiography has thrown light mainly on photographic experiments, especially the New Vision developed by the constructivists and the Bauhaus in the 1920s, and to a lesser extent typographic experiments of the avant-garde magazines generally seen as a ‘laboratory’ for artists and architects. Moreover, during the 1980s and 1990s several historians of architecture and photography (see, for example, Robinson and Hirschman 1987; Ciré and Höchs 1991; *Architettura nelle riviste d’avanguardia* 1982) distinguished these magazines as manifestations of a peculiar convergence

between the ‘new architecture’ (especially that of the German *Neues Bauen*), ‘New Typography’<sup>1</sup> (as particularly elaborated in Central European avant-garde circles, then at the Bauhaus and in Germany, where many protagonists of this New Typography were active) and New Vision (sometimes identified as a ‘special and ideal media to present architecture’, to quote photography historian Andreas Haus (1997)). Similarly and even more recently, architectural historians and historians of graphic design (for instance, De Puineuf 2011: 236) adopt the arguments of advocates of the New Typography such as Jan Tschichold. Asserting a strong encounter between typography and modern architecture, in 1928 Tschichold wrote,

Today we are witnessing the birth of a new and splendid architecture, which will set its stamp on our period. Anyone who has recognized the deep underlying similarity between typography and architecture and has understood the true nature of architecture can no longer doubt that the future will belong to the new typography and not to the old. (Tschichold 1995: 60; Tschichold 1986: 9)

By drawing on such statements, historians may have insisted on the blurred boundaries of typography and architecture – both considered as ‘utilitarian’ arts and both shaped by a new aesthetics, elaborated by protagonists such as El Lissitzky, László Moholy-Nagy and Theo van Doesburg. For example, the art historian Jaroslav Andel dedicates a whole chapter of his book on avant-garde graphic design to this ‘interrelationship’, which in his words ‘escalated with the rise of the modern movement’ (Andel 2002: 218). According to Andel, in the 1920s typography and architecture shared ‘abstract geometrical forms, asymmetrical composition, and the grid’ (Andel 2002: 223). As this example shows, graphic design in avant-garde publications continues to exert a noticeable fascination and to give way to a certain emphasis on this ‘interrelationship’. Nevertheless, since the 2000s, architectural history has covered a broader range of topics and objects of interwar architectural publication, far beyond those found in avant-garde magazines and books. Enlarging the range of books or journals under scrutiny has marked the beginning of a more balanced interpretation of architectural publication of the period. Furthermore, whether from the perspective of traditional historiographical studies or that of visual studies, recent research into architectural books simultaneously take into account photography, typography, text and their dynamic association within the whole space of the book (Deriu 2007; Harbusch 2010; Stetler 2008, 2015; Tavares 2016), or even within an individual page (Wilson 2015). Drawing on this new generation of research, this article tackles the historical and aesthetic convergence of the innovative photographic representation and graphic design in periodicals and the ‘new architecture’ these journals promoted.

While the layout of magazines such as *ABC*, *G* or *Das neue Frankfurt* or *Die Form* (Fig. 1a, 1b) has been identified as an active part of their editorial policy, this article considers a wider range of periodicals, in which such intentionality is far from evident. It casts light on relationships between text and image different than those dramatic and disruptive ones elaborated by the avant-garde magazines. This is done by, firstly, focusing on architectural professional magazines of the late 1920s and of the 1930s: Unlike avant-garde ones, they incorporated the approaches of the New Typography and of New Vision without considering themselves a space for typographic or photographic experimentation. Secondly, this article focuses more on the modes of perception introduced by photography within the space of the book than on the photographic or typographic experiment per se. Pepper Stetler also examines these new modes of perception, for example, when she analyzes Moholy’s book *Malerei Photographie Film*, ‘treating the visual material as the focus of the book and exploring what kind of experience that material creates’ and by doing so, ‘considering the perceptual rather than the exclusively visual realm’ (Stetler 2008: 89).

In avant-garde architectural magazines and books, the upheaval of graphic design and photography not only transformed the visual form: it may have contributed to modifying modes of reading as well. The driving hypothesis of this essay is that in architectural periodicals of the late 1920s and 1930s, even those of a rather traditional form, new modes of perceiving the space of the book as a whole gave rise to semantic associations generated by these juxtapositions, collisions or effects of distance between word and image. This article analyzes the effects of the organization and space of the book or journal on



Figure 1: (a, b) Covers of *Die Form* no. 3 (1929) and *Das neue Frankfurt* no. 4 (1929) (layout by brothers Leistikow).

the significations carried by texts, captions and images. Although taking place in French and Italian magazines that are distant, both aesthetically and politically, from the experiments of German and Central European avant-garde typographers and photographers, those effects are sometimes unexpected. Yet are these new modes of perception inherited from the avant-garde or from functionalist experiments? Or are they simply indebted to the wide public dissemination of these experiments through publication, advertising and illustrated magazines from the late 1920s onwards?

### Transfers and Dissemination of Avant-garde Experiments

Focusing on magazines of the late 1920s and 1930s may lead to new hypotheses on relationships of photography and architecture. In fact, one of the dominant assumptions in the history of architectural photography is that the widespread introduction of photography – and above all its new aesthetics – fundamentally transformed architectural publication in the 1920s. Several historians (Haus 1997; Sachsse 1984) have assumed that the advocates of the New Photography and their books worked according to the proposals of the radical architecture. More recently, several scholars have sharply challenged such assumptions. For instance, Antoine Baudin (2003) demonstrates that hypothesizing such an ‘alliance’ between photography and architecture hinges exclusively on observations regarding the aesthetics of photography as involving constructivist geometries and dynamic diagonals, dramatic framings, worm’s eye views or high-angle shots, all of which contribute to the rendering of an abstract image of the buildings. According to Baudin, most historians have usually attempted to demonstrate such an alliance between New Vision and New Architecture by choosing examples within a very limited range of images that showed fragments of architecture, constructivist compositions and abstract compositions in which the building is a pure motif (Baudin 2003). However, as the photography historian Olivier Lugon (2003) points out, the transformations within the space of the book are not systematically due to a new photographic aesthetics but *mainly* to the arrangement of the various fragments: texts, photographs, captions, drawings, as well as black rules and dots – a hallmark of modern book design – and typography.

#### An ‘Alliance’ Between Photography and Architecture: New Interpretations

In fact, by investigating a broader corpus of images (such as New Objectivity, and not just New Vision), historians (of photography as well as of architecture) have recently emphasized the documentary and the indexical values of architectural photography. Most frequently, the books promoting ‘new architecture’ reproduced photographs that were very distant from the experimental program of New Vision. For instance, most of the photographs in Gropius’s *Internationale Architektur* are neither systematically taken from a frontal angle of view nor especially constructed according to a dynamic equilibrium as if following the New Vision principles. The use of photography is

not based on aesthetic experiments exclusively. It relies on the possibility for photography to ‘document’ reality, i.e., to function as an index. In architectural publication from the late 1920s onwards, documentary and indexical values were crucial for architects and publishers who wanted to disseminate and promote an architectural trend, rather than to explore the experimental character of new photography. Particularly numerous in Germany after 1925, publications promoted the architecture of the *Neues Bauen*, no longer as if representing an unimplemented avant-garde program, but as an actual ‘reality’. That is why the indexical value of photography plays a decisive role, since the photographic reproduction of buildings provides ‘proof’ of the concreteness of the *Neues Bauen* (Jannière 2002). Moreover, only a few books or periodicals promoting new architecture proposed multiple series of photography experimentations (as is the case of El Lissitzky’s *Rußland* (Fig. 2), the first volume of the Viennese collection ‘Neues Bauen in der Welt’; see Lissitzky 1930). Instead, most of them adopted what could be called a modern architectural photography that had henceforth become a kind of standard in modernist magazines.

In fact, the promotion of modern architecture mostly relied on the criterion of legibility of the image. The visual material provided by new architecture, even the most radical of the *Neues Bauen*, gave rise to a kind of photography that was modernized but not experimental. According to Baudin, photography in avant-gardist magazines of the 1920s was completely distinct from the photography that he calls ‘photography of modern architecture’, which ‘appears almost exclusively under its documentary and



Figure 2: Cover of El Lissitzky’s *Rußland* (1930).

professional form' (2003: 10). And, as the architectural historian Andrew Higgott has recently asserted, 'What has started as an avant-garde practice very quickly came to be absorbed into commercial architectural photography, and became established through the photographically illustrated magazines of the 1930s (Higgott and Wray 2012: 6). Moreover, the mere photographic aesthetic alone is not the source of all transformations in architectural publications; other upheavals of the architecture book occur within the structure of the book itself.

Beyond German and Central Europe avant-garde experiments, innovations were disseminated by functional typography<sup>2</sup> amongst books in a much broader commercial sphere (Drucker 1994). Thus, historians of graphic design and historians of the book assert that from the late 1920s, readers began to become familiar with advertising and with popular illustrated magazines and photo or photojournalism magazines that had developed first in Germany from the mid-twenties onwards. The visual innovations and new modes of association of images and captions that these magazines were disseminating generated new apprehensions of printed material (Meggs 1992). Did readers become equally familiar with the 'cinematic' or at least 'dynamic' modes of perception of the book?

It cannot be assumed that those experiments and visual innovations were directly transposed into architectural journals, whether professional or avant-garde. In the 1920s and 1930s, architectural magazines offered a wide range of visual forms and strategies. Some of these journals, like the Dutch *i10*, the German *Das neue Frankfurt* or the Swiss *ABC*, used graphic and photographic aesthetics stemming from New Vision, 'objective photography' and functional typography: such an aesthetics had first been elaborated by the avant-garde artists and then adapted and disseminated amongst a larger audience. Jan Tschichold played a key role in this process of dissemination, since by publishing 'elementare typografie' (1925), he 'embarked on a mission to explain and diffuse avant-garde ideas in the world of everyday printing' (Kinross 2004: 108). In particular, Tschichold transformed the goals of new typography from 'expression of the content' (as was the case in Moholy-Nagy's and Lissitzky's understanding of typography), to 'order and organization'. Moreover, as a consequence of this functionalization of the page and its elements, the book was considered a 'device for reading' (Kinross 2004: 116). Yet, when architectural magazines used these aesthetics, did they take full advantage of the new possibilities of perception of the printed document, as claimed by the protagonists of the 'New Typography'? The Italian journal *Casabella* has often been analyzed as a 'model' of coherence between critical content and visual form. Although it has frequently been observed that its visual qualities stemmed from German photography and typography, even this magazine did not fully exploit the new possibilities in play for the perception of the printed document.

### ***Casabella and the Heritage of German New Typography and Photography***

In 1929, Edoardo Persico (1901–36) had joined *La Casa Bella*, the early name of *Casabella*, a name which directly expressed the interest of the journal in decorative art and domestic space. From 1933, Persico became, along with the architect Giuseppe Pagano (1896–1945), one of the two main critics of this periodical. Several former analyses (Aulenti 1978; D'Auria 1987; De Seta 1989)<sup>3</sup> – yet little questioned by recent historiography (Baglione 2008) – have stated that *Casabella's* graphic design reflected Persico's interest in German rationalist architecture as well as his critical choices in favor of European art and architecture. Furthermore, most art and architectural historians have defined Persico's layouts, typographical and photographic choices in *Casabella* as a mere expression of his concept of 'taste'.<sup>4</sup> In Italy in the late 1920s, the term '*gusto*' (taste) took on a particular significance against the fascist aesthetics in visual arts: it stemmed from Lionello Venturi's *Il Gusto dei Primitivi*, based on Benedetto Croce's aesthetics. This partially true assertion – graphic choices as mere expression of Persico's understanding of 'taste' – originated in an idealized vision, by the historians, of *Casabella* and in the historiographical image of Persico's critical and political, anti-fascist stance. From 1929 until 1931, Persico mainly contributed to the layout (with Guido Modiano, a typographer and printer), and to the cultural sections of the magazine. Although involved in the symbolic representation of the fascist regime, notably in exhibitions, graphic design and photography were perhaps less polemical than architecture. German graphic design and photography may therefore have provided Persico a way to include more easily some elements of foreign culture in *Casabella*.

Although dedicated to decorative arts in its first years (1928–30), *Casabella* turned into an architectural periodical at the very beginning of the 1930s. Very soon Persico constructed his layouts on a double page, conceived as an aesthetic and perceptive unit, according to the principles of German functionalist typography. The successive layout transformations were based on the growing role of white, acknowledged by New Typographers as 'a proactive element in the page' (Tschichold 1925), on reduced margins and on the elaboration of a geometric grid. Text, images and captions were treated as 'graphic materials'; the interpenetration of wide white and text fields and wide line spacing helped to blur boundaries between fields of critical texts and long captions, which comment on photographs. In *Casabella*, Persico's interests are evident in the importance of columns dedicated to the art of book ('*il libro bello*'), typography and photography – especially functional German typography or that stemming from constructivist aesthetics – as well as the frequent reviews of the magazine *Gebrauchsgraphik*, which presents samples of functional typography in Germany, namely in publishing and advertising. It is worth mentioning that *Gebrauchsgraphik* was in no way an avant-garde magazine. Founded in 1923 in Berlin by H. K. Frenzel (1882–1937) and written both in German and English, *Gebrauchsgraphik* offered a rather neutral

selection of a wide range of trends of contemporary graphic design. It championed the ‘education of the taste of the public’ (Heller 2002: 128) by disseminating contemporary visual culture through magazines and advertising.

Persico very often emphasized this goal – the ‘education of the taste of the public’ – through the means of apparently secondary columns showing artworks, furniture and shops. *Casabella* not only reviewed *Gebrauchsgraphik*; one can even observe similarities of their respective layout patterns. Both magazines often use the same font, the same proportion of white and the same static and abstract grid. Both are constructed on a frontal geometry and do not take up the dynamic disequilibrium of constructivist typography<sup>5</sup> (Figs 3 and 4).

A further testament to Persico’s interest in the most recent German *Buchgestaltung* is to be found in *Casabella*’s columns on European architecture (‘Europa-film’, ‘Architetti europei’). In these columns, Persico indirectly expresses his critical position in favor of German rationalist architecture. For Persico, it may have been easier to evoke foreign modern architecture than Italian rationalism, since the fascist context made it difficult to directly criticize Italian official modernist architecture and to take a stance in favor of a clear-cut Italian rationalism (Janni re 2002).<sup>6</sup> The columns entitled ‘Europa-film’ and ‘Architetti europei’<sup>7</sup> reproduce the graphic pattern of the twelfth book in the Bauhausb cher series, *Bauhausbauten Dessau*, designed by L szl  Moholy-Nagy (Gropius 1930): arranged in a vertical series, the illustrations are framed in black strips imitating a filmstrip (Fig. 5). Yet origins of this arrangement are to be found even beyond the Bauhausb cher series.

German architectural books of the 1920s may be considered as spaces of exploration not only of visual forms but also of a new logic of perception (Noell 2002; Noell 2009; Stetler 2015; Tavares 2016). Pepper Stetler and Julia Walker state that

despite the apparent conflict between modern design and the conservative tradition of book-making, architectural books sought to capture the dynamism of the modern visual experience by making use of incipient visual technologies – in particular, photography – and new principles of typography and graphic design. (Stetler and Walker 2015: 575)

Those books echoed the slogan ‘Nicht Mehr Lesen! Sehen!’ (‘Don’t read anymore! Look!’), launched in 1928 by Johannes Molzahn, painter, graphic designer, typographer and photographer (Molzahn 1928, in Schade 1972). As well as the increasing primacy of image over text,<sup>8</sup> new modes of perception were made possible by the simultaneity of texts and images. New book designers (*Buchgestalter*) stated that the structure of the page and even of the sentence, previously frontal and passive, becomes active and ‘spatiotemporal’. In the words of Theo van Doesburg,

the book is to be read, from left to right and from top to bottom. But at the same time it is to be seen, the whole page at a glance. Due to this simultaneous process (acoustic–optical), the modern book has been enriched by a new ‘plastic’ dimension. (Van Doesburg 1929: 569)<sup>9</sup>

A further mode of relating word and image is the notion of the ‘book space’, a term coined by El Lissitzky in *Merz* in 1923 (Lissitzky in Lissitzky-K ppers 1967).<sup>10</sup> The consequences of thinking in terms of ‘book space’ are significant for the reader. This concept takes into account the mobility of the eye not only within a double page (as is the case of Molzahn’s ‘Buchkinema’), but also through the book considered as a whole. In his manifesto *Topographie der Typographie* (1923), published by Schwitters in *Merz* (Lissitzky 1923; see Leclanche-Boul  1986: 132), and later quoted by Tschichold in his *Neue Typographie* of 1928 (Tschichold 1995: 60), Lissitzky also coined the term of ‘bioscopic book’ to characterize the continuity of reading through the succession of the pages. With it he evoked ‘the continuity of page-sequence’ and the fact that, in his words, ‘the printed page transcends space and time. The printed page, the infinity of the book must be transcended. The ELECTRO-LIBRARY’ (Lissitzky 1928 in Tschichold 1995: 60).

All those *Buchgestalter* (book designers) supported the idea that due to the dynamic conception of the page and the ‘simultaneous process’ of the vision created by modern typography, reading had become a dynamic movement across the double page, which formed the new visual and perceptive unit of the book. The idea was also shared by Johannes Molzahn, who launched the device of ‘Buchkinema’<sup>11</sup> (Fig. 6), which relies on the movement of the eye within the page. Molzahn elaborated this graphical arrangement particularly in Adolf Behne’s book on Max Taut (Behne 1927). The sequence depends on the movement of the eye within the page and aims at giving the reader the impression of movement within the building (Fig. 7). It also strengthens the spatiotemporal (*raumzeitlich*) character of the page, claimed in the second half of the 1920s by the New Typographers. The principle of *Buchkinema* has been abundantly used in German exhibitions, to influence the direction of reading panels. It had been frequently copied since the end of the 1920s, for instance in Gropius’ *Bauhausbauten Dessau* [c1930] (Fig. 8), and later, in 1931, by the Italian magazine *Casabella*; in the latter, the *Buchkinema* emphasized the graphic process and became more static.

Yet, as used by Persico in *Casabella* (then in the course of graphical transformation and of professionalization), Molzahn’s ‘system’ does not incorporate all lessons of the dynamics and the time dimension in the page. In *Casabella*, the filmstrip frames unrelated fragments (e.g., photographs of different buildings) and remains static (Fig. 9). Thus, this layout system appears as a simple artifice. In *Casabella*, such processes do assume elements of the new aesthetics of German book design, of which Persico was perfectly aware. For instance, he began to use large spaces of white within his pages, but contrary

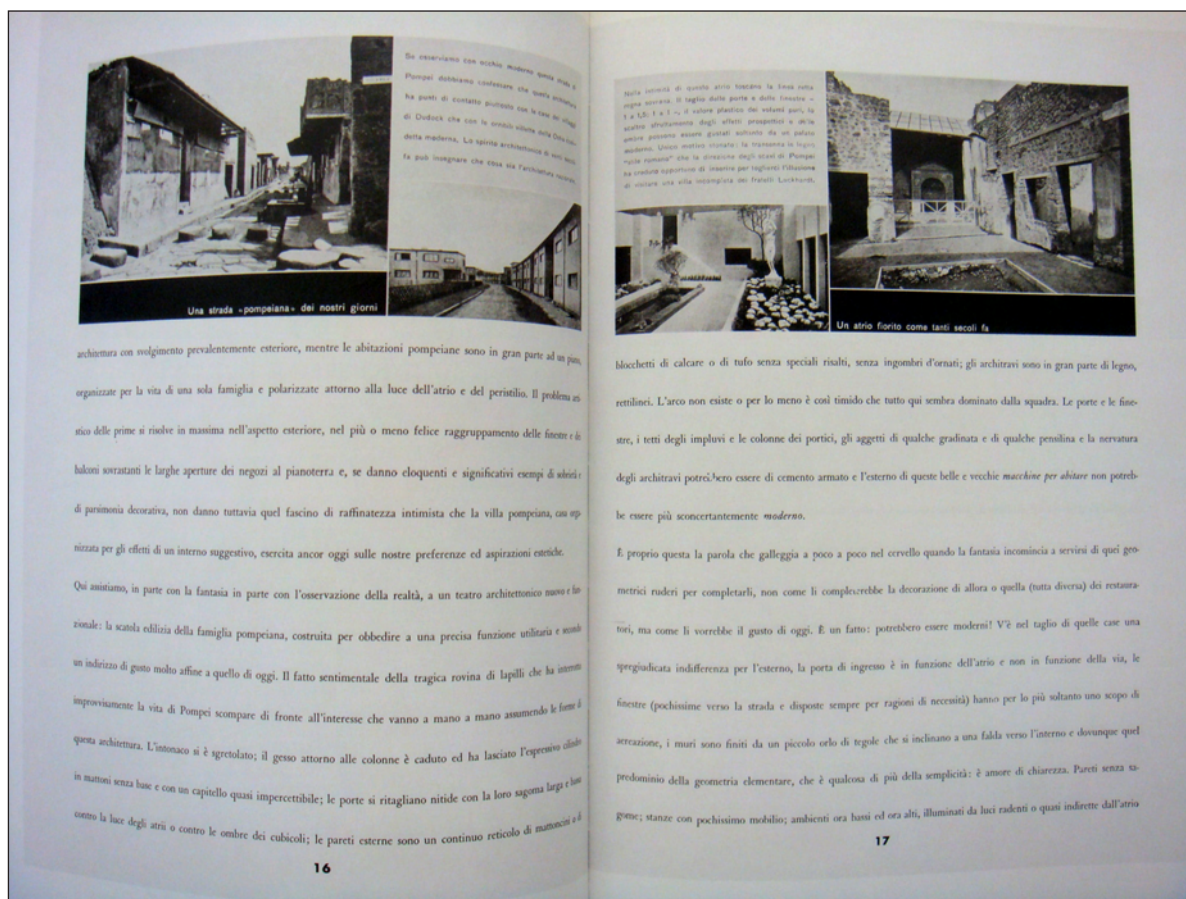


Figure 3: The layout of *Casabella*, conceived upon the basic unit of a double page, uses large spaces of white and an orthogonal, static grid. Giuseppe Pagano, *Architettura moderna di venti secoli fa (Modern Architecture from 20 Centuries Ago)* Casabella no. 47 (November 1931): 16–17.

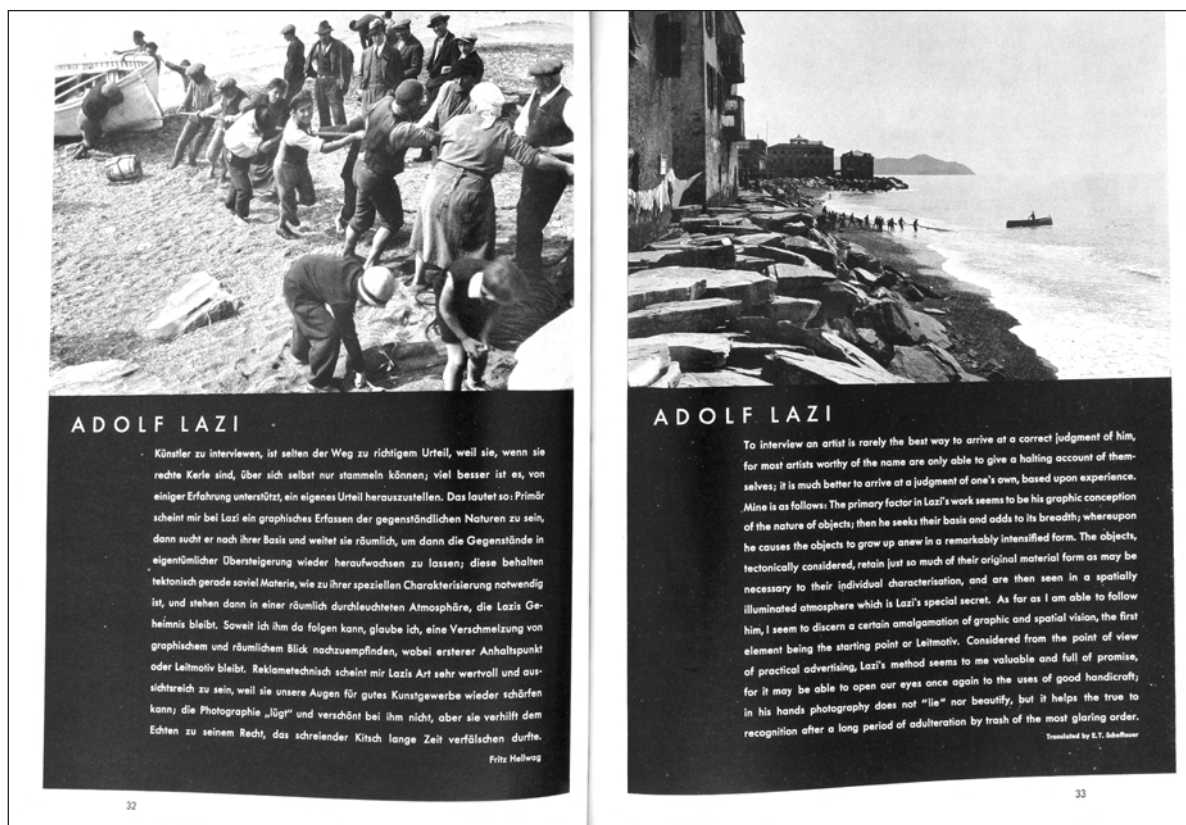
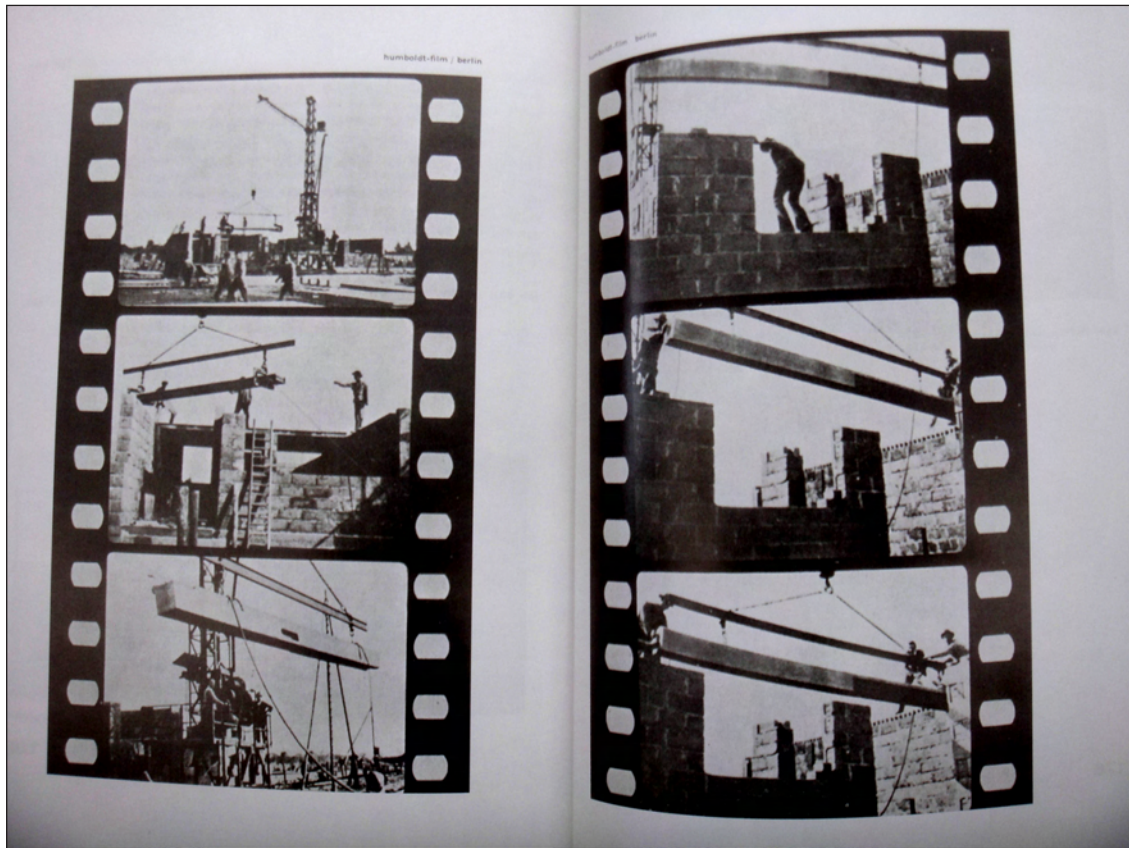
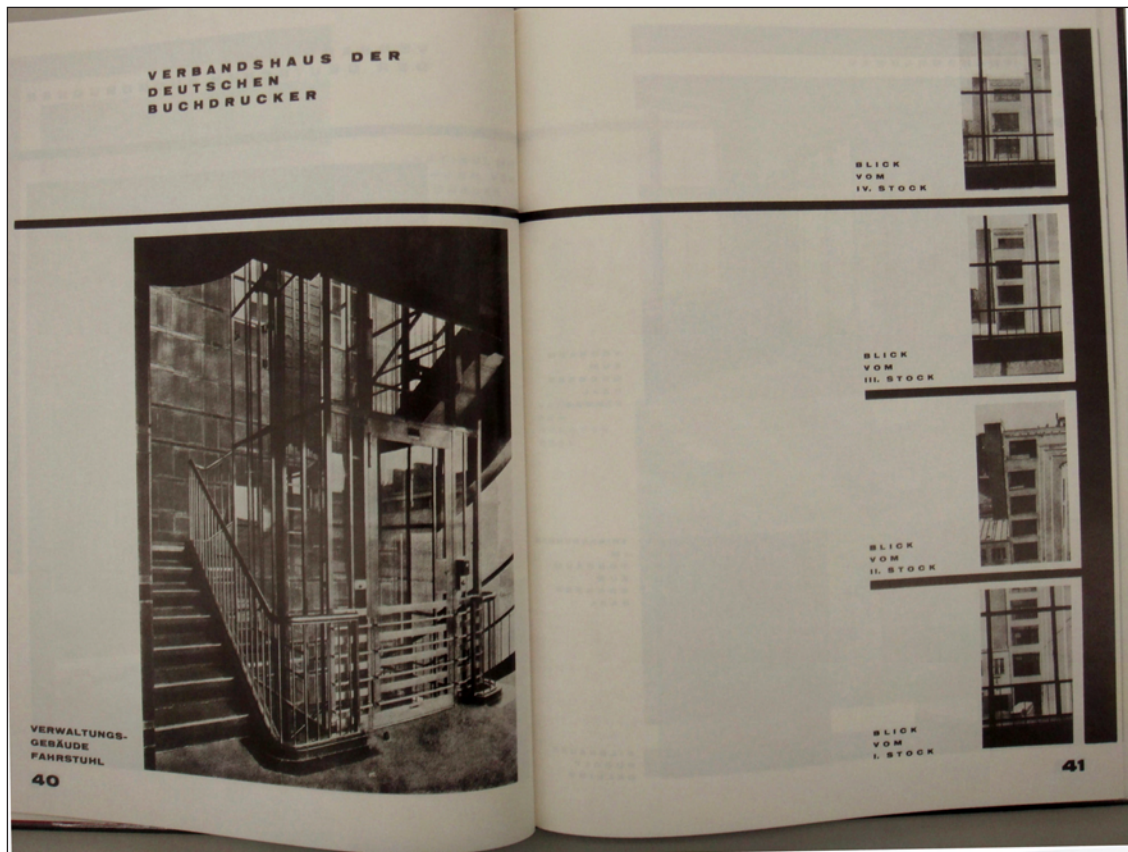


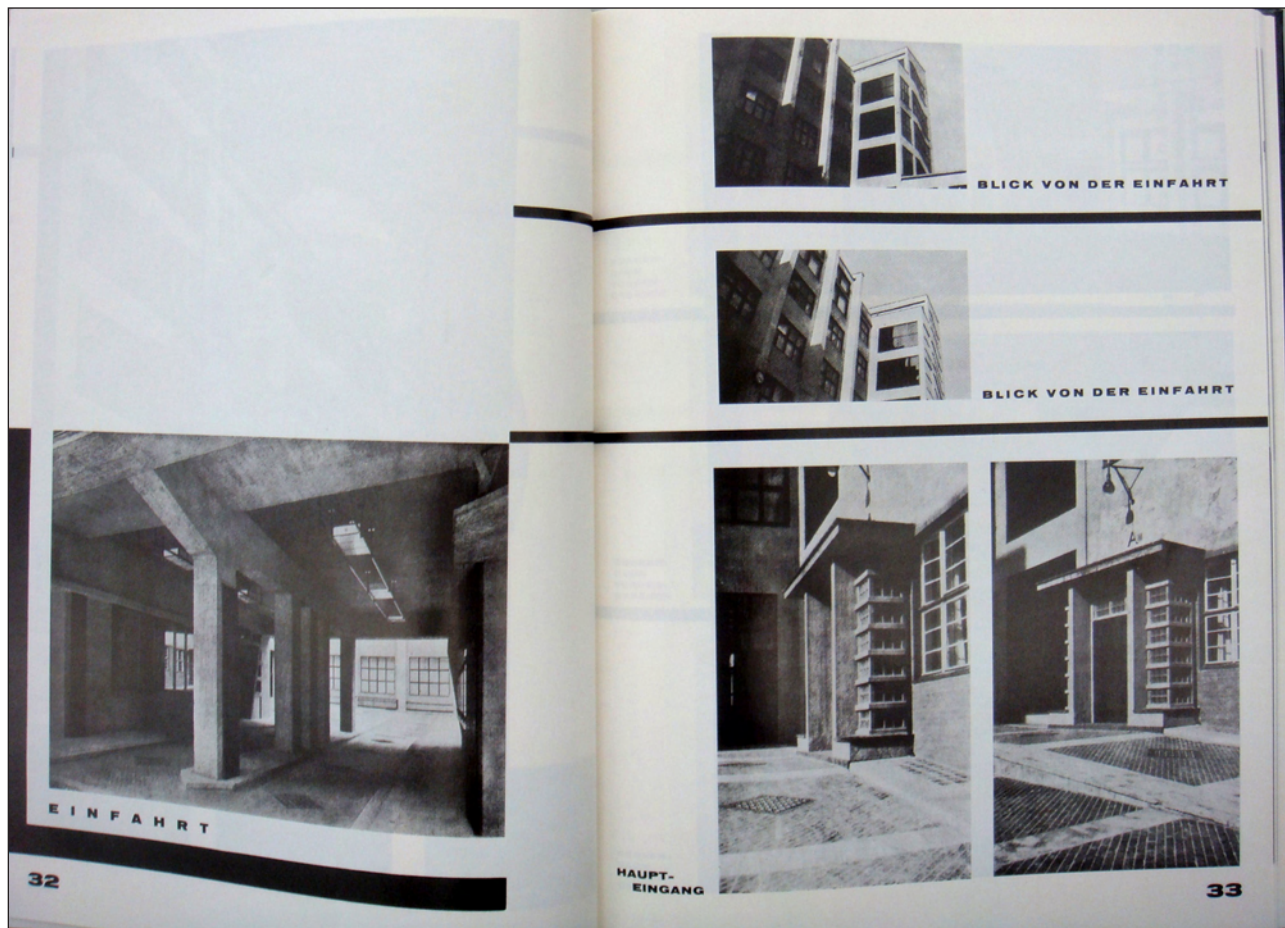
Figure 4: Double-page spread of *Gebrauchsgraphik*, 9 no. 9 (1932): 32–33.



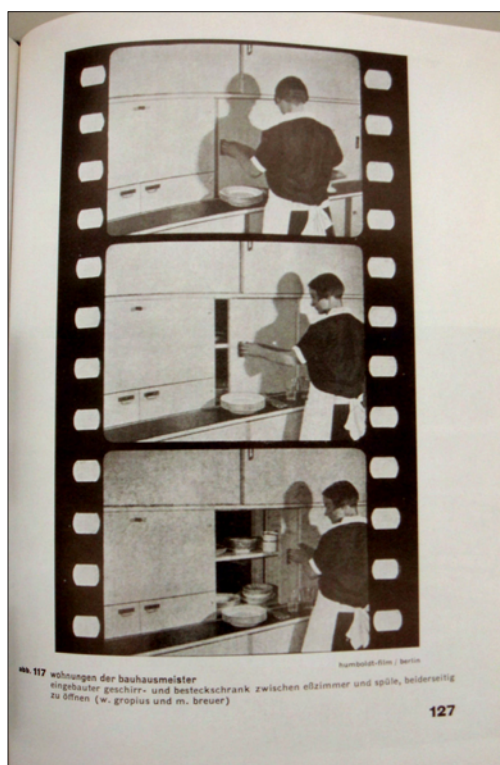
**Figure 5:** This graphic arrangement, which repeats several times in the book by Gropius, *Bauhausbauten Dessau* (1930; layout by L. Moholy-Nagy), is inherited from Molzahn's 'Buchkinema' device.



**Figure 6:** An example of Johannes Molzahn's 'Buchkinema' device, from Behne's book, *Max Taut. Bauten und Pläne* (1927: 40–41; layout by J. Molzahn).



**Figure 7:** Johannes Molzahn's 'Buchkinema' arrangement from Behne's book, *Max Taut. Bauten und Pläne* (1927: 32–33) gives the impression of movement towards the building. The use of further elements specific to New Typography, such as the wide black filets, is worth noticing (layout by J. Molzahn).

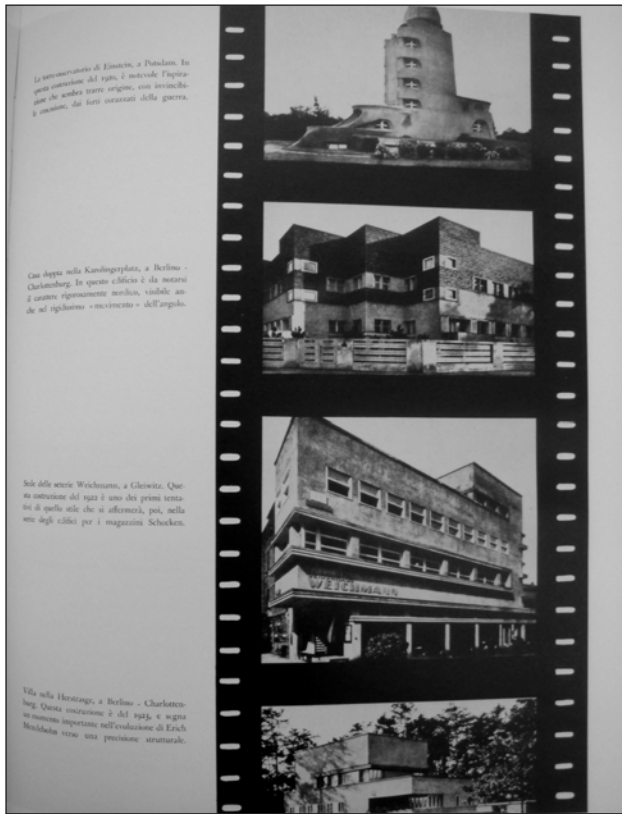


**Figure 8:** The kitchen in one of the Bauhaus masters' villas, from Gropius (1930: 127).

to Bauhaus or constructivist typographers, he did not emphasize the diagonal in his compositions. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that in *Casabella* the construction within an orthogonal grid constrains the reader's eye to move along the diagonal of the page from one image to another; it thus associates two or more images, and these juxtapositions give rise to metaphors or metonymies. For instance, in the column 'Città 32' – formerly 'La città che si rinnova' (The City in Renewal), a more evocative title – such diagonal constructions lead the reader's eye from the urban scale (the map of Milan) to the details (a shop window, an Olivetti typewriter, a piece of furniture) and vice versa, engendering an effect of zooming in and out (**Fig. 10**).

This juxtaposition evokes the modern city by the bias of associations of photographs, metaphors and metonymies; for instance, a shop window standing for the modern city or a typewriter as symbol of rationalist design may both also symbolize rationalist buildings. This arrangement asserts the high importance of rationalist design and architecture – which are supposed to shape the 'modern' city – without directly showing it, which might have been difficult in the context of fascism and in the position of Persico at *Casabella*. By creating collisions and associations of images, this arrangement manages to evoke this contemporary city, despite the absence of any representation of 'real' urban space or 'real' architectures able to





**Figure 9:** In Ivo Panaggi's 'Architetti europei: Mendelsohn' in *La Casa Bella* (September 1931: 11), the layout, by Edoardo Persico, is similar to Molzahn's 'Buchkinema'. Instead of giving the illusion of movement, as is the case in Behne's *Max Taut* or Gropius' *Bauhausbauten Dessau*, this layout juxtaposes several photographs of the same object, each 'film' frame containing a single image, and thus the strip illustrates several buildings. The arrangement therefore loses its dynamic effect.

embody the 'modern city', which is also a manifestation of style and taste, two highly significant concepts for Persico. Nevertheless, these diagonal constructions resolve in *Casabella* in a rather static grid that will then constitute the layout pattern of *Casabella* (Fig. 11), a grid closer to the aesthetics of Italian Abstraction than to the dynamic disequilibrium of layouts by the Central European avant-garde.

### Juxtapositions and Semantic Collisions in Magazines of the 1920s and 1930s

The last part of this essay addresses the issue of word-image relationships in periodicals, which unlike *Casabella* were not particularly concerned about graphic layout. On the basis that photography transformed the aesthetic perception of the book, and modes of reading it, the history of architectural photography has emphasized the visual strategies of architects' or critics' books. Instead, for the purpose of this article, the question is, can we partially invert this proposition and ask, what are the effects of publication on the photographic image? The relationship of the photograph and the editorial content involves, as the historian of photography Olivier Lugon writes, 'the relationship text/image, the succession of pages, the very action of going through a volume' (Lugon 2007: 100). More recently, by examining the process of elaboration and the layout of Sigfried Giedion's 1929 book, *Befreites Wohnen*, André Tavares (2016: 61–108) focuses on a similar process. Also within the constrained frame of a double page or the whole book as well, he examines the dynamic arrangement of the disparate textual and photographic material gathered by Giedion. He shows how Giedion's mode of building sequences of images draws on his experience of the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin's famous dual slide lectures, as well as his own slides lectures – some-



**Figure 10:** The double page arrangement of Persico's column 'Città 1932' in *Casabella* (September 1932).



**Figure 11:** Cover of *Casabella* (September 1935).

times premises to his books – and from cinema, which ‘might offer the key to translating the best aspect of a slide lecture into a book’ (Tavares 2016: 71).

If the effects of an image derive from its publication, rather than vice versa (i.e., the effects of image *on* publication), then examples of text-image relationship need to be examined in the whole context of the magazine, as the following case studies attempt to demonstrate. This article challenges the illustrative function of certain images in the frame of the printed page, especially when the structure of the magazine creates gaps and distances between the images and the text they are to illustrate. The examples come from three French professional magazines – *L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui* (founded 1930), *L’Architecture vivante* (1923–33), *L’Architecte* (1906–14; 1924–35) – and the political and cultural review *Quadrante* (1933–36), a leading magazine in the architectural debate in fascist Italy. Looking at these examples – though taken from very different political and cultural contexts – sometimes show that in architectural periodicals, a traditional layout may paradoxically present unexpected combinatory effects of word and image that are clearly *not* the result of graphic experiments. Nevertheless, valid effects are created by the new perception of the page or even of the book as a whole. As the following examples intend to illustrate, effects that could be said ‘similar’ to those of Lissitzky’s ‘book space’ (for instance, semantic collisions created by the succession of the pages) can be found in architectural magazines that may be considered as rather traditional. The pending question is that of intentionality of such effects: Are they

simply due to technical constraints? Or, are these effects the traces of ‘errors, incongruities and distortions within the generic structure of the journal page’, the ‘internal contradictions between, broadly speaking, the editorial frame and its content’ (Wilson 2015: 7), which Wilson strives to address?

#### ***L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui and the Union des Artistes Modernes***

Although architectural history has put into perspective the role of such magazines as *L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui* in advocating the modern movement in the 1930s, their graphic design has scarcely been analyzed.<sup>12</sup> A commonplace notion is that they take on a ‘modern’ (or ‘modernized’) form on account of the widespread introduction of photography in ways that corresponded with the ‘modern’ nature of the editorial content. Yet we should not overestimate deliberate aesthetic intentionality in these layouts.

Despite typographic and graphic experiments of the avant-garde in the 1920s, the structure of most architectural magazines remained governed by a rather classical layout, characterized by columns, symmetry and respect for the ‘traditional’ proportion of the margins. Most of the French architectural periodicals, even those founded in the 1920s and 1930s, did not take advantage of innovations brought about by functional typography. This has to be analyzed considering the French milieu of graphic design. Since the 1920s, the main actors of the renewal of typography (Charles Peignot, Maximilien Vox, Cassandre) championed a so-called Latin typography,

which would perpetuate the French tradition of the book (Jubert 2006). This is not due to an ignorance of the German or Dutch works. Founded in 1927 by Peignot and Vox, *Arts et métiers graphiques* broadly disseminated Tschichold's work (Tschichold 1930) (Fig. 12) and published the FiFo Exhibition as well (see the issue dedicated to the New Vision (Sougez 1930). But in the anti-German ideological context of the interwar period, numerous protagonists of French graphic art openly took a stand against functional typography experiments, which were seen as emanating from *Germanic* (not 'German') culture or, at least, perceived as 'ideological' (as French typographers qualified the abolition of the capital letters).<sup>13</sup> This anti-German ideological context appeared in numerous other cultural fields; among them, the radical architecture of the *Neues Bauen* would be denigrated as 'Teutonic' or 'Bolshevist' as early as 1931.

*L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* has very often been praised as a modernist periodical for either its architectural discourse (its editorial policy regarding the modern movement, which is not so clear-cut, has been abundantly discussed) or for its form. In particular, it is well known as the 'spiral magazine': many modernist magazines, especially those of graphic design like *Arts et métiers graphiques* used the spiral as a mode of binding. To book designers, it stood for modern book design, as were metallized papers or sanserif fonts. The typographer Jacques Nathan (1919–2001), a member of the *Alliance graphique*,<sup>14</sup> elaborated the layout of *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* according to the principles

and the dominating 'modern' taste of typography, as advocated by the Union des Artistes Modernes (UAM). Since its foundation in 1929, UAM has promoted a renovation of typography, but it is not directly experimental. It may be considered as a 'modern' typography more based on an alliance with the spheres of industrial production and commercial advertising. The 1932 UAM Exhibition mainly disseminated the principles of a renewed typography, though it equally disseminated the taste for constructivist compositions and photomontages,<sup>15</sup> which in 1932 were no longer being used in the Soviet Union. But although *tipofoto*, for instance, was known in France, the alliance of typography with photography did not give rise to mere experimentation; nor did French graphic designers grasp the political and critical potential of photomontage. Nor did they explore photography and type as new devices of vision (Wlassikoff 2005: 73).

A parallel may be established between *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui's* modernized but not clear-cut innovative graphic policy – very close to that of UAM – and its editorial line regarding 'modern' architecture. Actually, this 'modernist' magazine frequently expressed a certain reserve towards the most radical European architecture, noticeably German and Dutch. As early as its second year of operation, 1931 – not just after the change in political situation of 1933 – the magazine took no clear stand in favor of radical and internationalist architecture. Julius Posener (the German correspondent and one of the main critics) and Pierre Vago (editor-in-chief) tended to give a noticeable place to such 'forerunners'



Figure 12: Double page of Jan Tschichold's article 'Qu'est-ce que la nouvelle typographie et que veut-elle?' in *Arts et métiers graphiques* (1930: 52–53).

as Poelzig, Garnier and Perret, rather than promoting Gropius, Stam, May or Le Corbusier. Of course, founded in 1930, it could not advocate an improbable 'avant-garde' at this date. After *L'Architecture vivante* ceased in 1933, *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* remained the unique French media by which to disseminate international modern architecture; nevertheless, it fostered what it called 'a third way' between avant-garde and traditionalism. In fact, *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* considered the *Neues Bauen* – and Dutch New Objectivity as well – as just one of the numerous trends of German (Dutch) architecture, in no way identified with the concept of modernism that Vago's magazine advocated. Although *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* was the best supporter in France of modernism on an international scale, it was also interested in the research of a 'national character' in modern architecture (Jannière 2002).

### **Professional Magazines: The Permanence of Traditional Form**

A more classical layout may also be the expression of a clear 'retour à l'ordre' as in *L'Esprit nouveau* and in *L'Architecture vivante*. *L'Esprit nouveau* was a privileged vehicle of Le Corbusier's ideas in the first half of the 1920s, and conducted experiments far beyond the illustrative function of the images. As Beatriz Colomina (1994) has pointed out, Le Corbusier's skilled use of the printed media took into account its power of creating significations by the means of photographic reproduction – not just the capacity of representing a pre-existing 'reality' by means of text and image. Thus, *L'Esprit nouveau* was a space for experimental manipulation of the relationship between word and image, but did not promote any renovation of typography and graphic design.<sup>16</sup> Such experimentation was pursued further by the manipulation of word and image in *L'Oeuvre complète*, which may be read as a 'cinematographic' experience created by the succession of the photographs and sketches and intensified by the horizontal format of the book (Cohen 2011: 78–81).<sup>17</sup> Jean-Louis Cohen points out its similarities with cinematographic montage in the assembling of fragments in the space of the double page. It may even be compared to a 'hypertext', as Alan Powers (2002) does, for instance. All these complex 'machines à lire' (in Paul Valéry's words in 1926, in Valéry 1977: 1249) – comparable to Le Corbusier's 'machine à habiter' (De Smet in Bresciani 2003) – did not rely particularly on photographic or graphic upheavals. Such is the case of *Malerei Photographie Film* (1925), in which László Moholy-Nagy inserted many photographs excerpted from political or cultural magazines, demonstrating that in Moholy's eyes, their intrinsic visual value was not the most important (Lugon 2007: 100; Stetler 2008: 89). Far from any anaesthetization of architectural photography, Giedion, who was nonetheless perfectly aware of the avant-garde experiments (Oechslin 2010), mixed and pasted in *Befreites Wohnen* newspaper clippings and photographs borrowed from the CIAM architects or directly excerpted from architectural journals. Out of this disparate material he managed to publish, in a popular collection, a book that presented modern archi-

itecture to the public dynamically, relying more on montage strategies and cinematographic experience of vision (Tavares 2016: 89–94) than on photographic or typographic aesthetics. In all these examples, upheavals in the mode of perceiving were mainly due to the arrangement within the space of the book. Could this be considered as a 'heritage' of the avant-garde book designers?

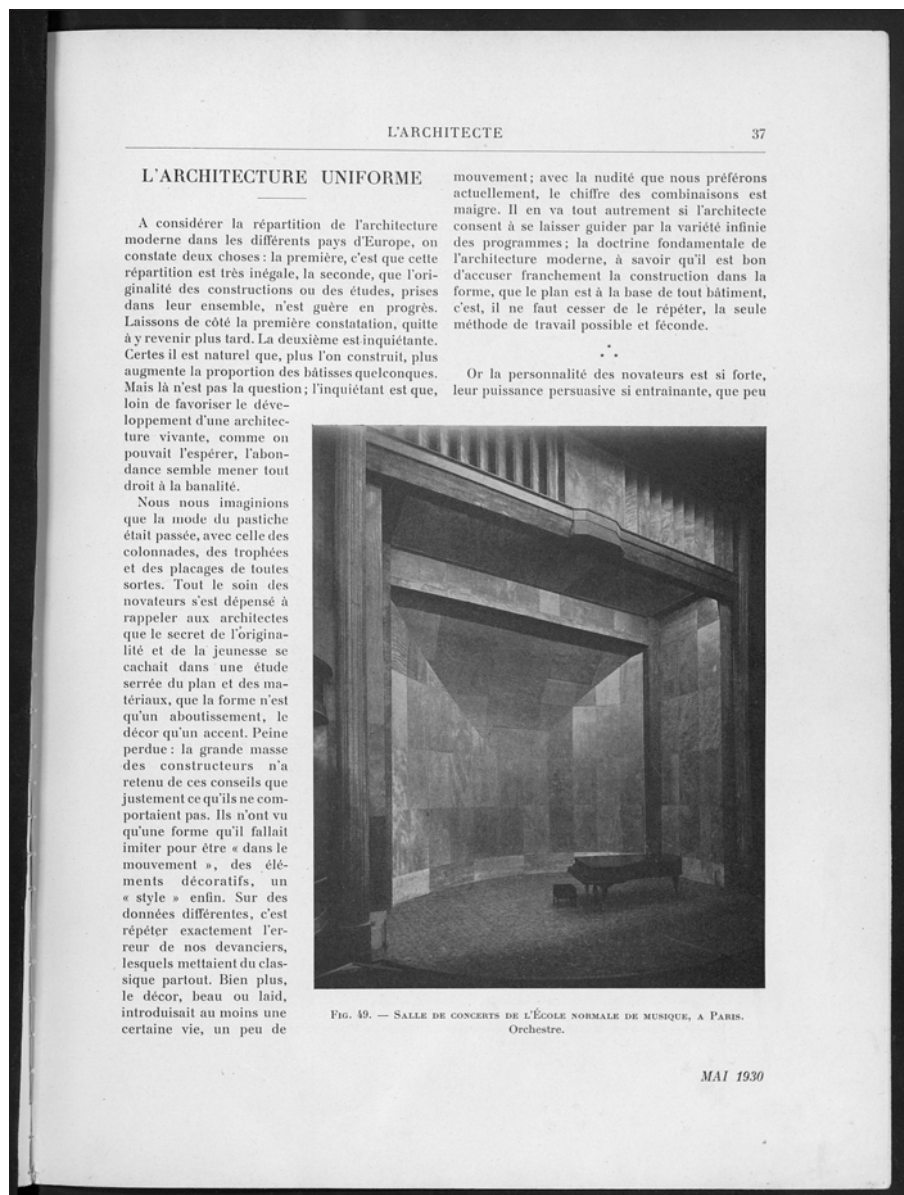
Far from the avant-garde architectural book, most magazines perpetuate distinct relationships between word and image within the frame of the printed page, as established by the long-lasting model of the architectural periodicals from the 1880s. Due to the halftone process invented and disseminated in the 1880s, photographs of a satisfactory quality could be printed on the same page as columns of text. Nevertheless, in the two last decades of the 19th century, architectural magazines continued to use separate printed plates. They thus created, or perpetuated, a physical distance between the textual description of the building and its illustration by drawings or photographs. The tradition of separate plates dominated architectural publishing till the end of the 19th century; the images functioned in a relative autonomy from the printed text. The cause was not only technical. It had also to do with the way readers used magazines. In *L'Architecte*, founded in 1906 as the organ of the Société des Architectes Diplômés par le Gouvernement, editor-in-chief Jean-Louis Pascal<sup>18</sup> deplored the fact that 'in all periods, artists go through publications just as do children, looking at the images, and often this summary reading is enough for them' (Pascal 1906: 1–2). In his view, this kind of 'fast reading' was responsible for the poor critical quality of texts – lower, he believed, in France than in other countries. In France, some 19th-century magazines consisted of articles with no relation to plates, and of plates printed separately from the related article (Saboya 2001: 73). In certain magazines such as *La Revue générale de l'architecture* (1840–90), plates were not used to directly illustrate the often long, discursive articles, but were frequently not bound with the journal so they could be detached to supply models for architectural details and copied in the *ateliers* of the Paris École des Beaux-Arts. Such a structure for a journal (one or more long texts, commentaries of the plates, 'in-testo' drawings or photographs, separated plates) seemed to remain standard till the 1920s. In France, it is noticeable that this was the case not only for magazines supporting traditional architecture, such as the conservative *L'Architecture* (1888–40), but even for more moderate ones, such as *L'Architecte* (1906–14; 1924–35), or those supporting 'new' architecture, such as *L'Architecture vivante* (1923–33).

Such a structure also echoes technical and commercial choices. Technical, because *L'Architecture vivante* reproduced engraved plates by means of an expensive process, the 'héliotypie'. Although anachronistic by the 1920s, the decision to continue using 'héliotypie' was taken by the publisher, Albert Morancé. The plates of *L'Architecture vivante* were recycled in monograph volumes, sold separately, and from 1927 were part of *L'Encyclopédie de l'architecture* (1927–39). In *L'Encyclopédie de l'architecture*, there was no text, only plates – more a collection of loose

plates than a magazine. Morancé paid great attention to the graphic and documentary quality of the images. Although their graphic quality made them real 'documents' (as stated by Le Corbusier when the magazine closed in 1933), most of them have no link to any particular part of a text, and often they represent buildings not even mentioned in the articles. Long texts – Platonic dialogues written by the architect-critic Jean Badovici – are interrupted by line-illustrations in the text; these figures echo the separate plates, but do not systematically relate to textual descriptions of buildings.<sup>19</sup>

One can find similar gaps between text and image in *L'Architecte*. This professional periodical remained very distant from, almost opposed to, all the tendencies supported by *L'Architecture vivante*: De Stijl, Russian constructivism and Le Corbusier. *L'Architecte* saw these as expressions of formal radicalism and fought against them, championing instead a 'modernized' rather than 'modern'

architecture, an architecture stemming from French rationalist tradition, as practiced by Auguste Perret. In *L'Architecte*, effects of juxtaposition and of distance were most probably engendered by technical constraints. Indeed, in 1931, on the eve of a substantial transformation of layout and typography, *L'Architecte* announced that from now on, 'the layout of the text will be modernized and modified so as to allow juxtaposition of figures and their comments and to increase their number' (*L'Architecte* 1931: 101). Yet in numerous cases, theoretical and rather general texts, which echo *L'Architecte's* moderate position in the French debate, are opposed to images, which form a counterpoint to the opinions expressed in the articles. Titles strengthen such oppositions; for example, drawings and photographs of Perret's École normale de musique (Paris, 1928–29) illustrate a long theoretical article entitled 'L'Architecture uniforme' (Fig. 13). In the opinion of the two editors of the magazine, Perret's school



**Figure 13:** A case of 'gap' from *L'Architecte* (Porcher 1930) between technical or doctrinal articles and illustrations, which occurs frequently. These gaps are due to the structure of the magazine and commentary of plates. They create figures of opposition.

of music building is clearly quite the opposite of a 'uniform architecture': it is the mere expression of a 'really' modern architecture, which hides neither its constructive system nor its national or historic heritage.

*L'Architecte's* main critic, Jean Porcher, and his technical adviser, the architect Michel Roux-Spitz, frequently used the expression 'uniform architecture' to describe the architecture of the so-called avant-gardes, in which they included a wide range of modern radical architecture, and which they both rejected. The article 'L'Urbanisme, art traditionnel' (Town planning, a traditional art), published in 1929, is a further case of counterpoint between content and image (Fig. 14). Illustrated with images of the 1929

*Werkbund* Exhibition in Breslau, the text asserts that there is no innovation in radical architecture and urbanism. In this periodical, recurrent examples suggest that the choice of images was not completely fortuitous. These quasi-systematic oppositions of signification reveal the median position of *L'Architecte* in the architectural debate. It published photographs of radical architecture, while texts in the journal expressed an opposite aesthetics, stemming from French rational tradition and classical modernism.

Much more than layout, typography or even photographic innovations, the technically and spatially constrained frame of the printed magazine gave rise to two or even three parallel discourses: the text (articles), the



Fig. 102. — EXPOSITION DE L'HABITATION, A BRESLAU (ALLEMAGNE). — Vue générale.

### L'URBANISME, ART TRADITIONNEL

L'« urbanisme » est-il un art, une science nouvelle? Question moins vaine qu'il ne semble. Si le mot est nouveau, ce qu'il désigne ne l'est guère, car depuis qu'il existe des villes il a bien fallu les aménager: mais la chose est aujourd'hui plus ardue que jamais. Les faits se sont compliqués de telle sorte que ceux dont le rôle était de prévoir se sont laissés dépasser par eux, de même que longtemps, en construction, les architectes n'ont pas su tirer parti, pour s'en rendre maîtres, des matériaux nouveaux que les industriels leur forgeaient. Le résultat, de part et d'autre, a été ce que l'on sait. L'architecture est sortie des hésitations. L'urbanisme, puisque urbanisme il y a, en est encore loin. Les Parisiens en savent quelque chose.

Comme toujours en pareil cas, les théoriciens foisonnent. Chacun a son idée là-dessus, son système, et les remèdes sont aussi variés qu'il y a

de compétences à en proposer (1). C'est bon signe: les réalisations ne tarderont pas. Bon signe également que les architectes se mêlent ardemment à la discussion, car leur rôle, ici, ne peut être que le premier.

Qu'il y ait dans l'aménagement d'une agglomération urbaine une part très importante à faire à ce qui se mesure et à ce qui se pèse (transports, circulation, ravitaillements), c'est incontestable. Si l'on entend par science l'étude d'un ensemble de faits exacts, on peut dire que l'urbanisme est une science. Les phénomènes qu'elle constate relèvent d'une observation scrupuleuse, délicate certes mais parfaitement définie, et leur interprétation ne prête à aucune discussion, pour peu que l'on s'abstienne d'en tirer des lois à tort et à travers, comme la fameuse loi du développement vers l'ouest. Paris se développe sans arrêt,

(1) On trouvera une fort intéressante collection d'opinions diverses, présentées sous une forme alerte et vivante, dans le *Cahier* n° 12 de la *République des Lettres, des Sciences et des Arts* (Vers un Paris nouveau. — Paris, Les Beaux-Arts, 39, rue La Boétie, 1929).

SEPTEMBRE 1929.

Figure 14: An example from *L'Architecte* (Porcher 1929: 69) of the opposition between the contents of images and the title of the article.

illustrations in the text (drawings, photos and captions) and finally, photographs and plates, most frequently detached at the end of the volume. Such a structure created gaps between photograph and text, often physically distant within the space of the journal. The three discourses become increasingly autonomous in *L'Architecte*, *L'Architecture vivante* and *Quadrante*. Whether fortuitously or deliberately, the possibility exists for semantic collisions to occur between the three distinct discourses of text, illustrations in the text, and photographs and plates. That is what the last case study aims to illustrate.

### ***Quadrante: Evoking the Corporatist City by Image-Text Associations***

*Quadrante* (1933–36) was founded in 1933, as the Italian debate on the fascist city intensified. In *Quadrante*, discussions of planning methods, about the structure and the form of the corporatist city, dominated the urban debate. Emerging in 1926 as a political theme for a new organization of the state and the society,<sup>20</sup> from 1929 to 1934 corporatism became part of the construction of the totalitarian state and of the 'reactionary mass regime' (Ragioneri 1976: 2199). At the time of the creation of *Quadrante* in 1933, there were no concrete examples to point to, and although the idea of 'plan' was part of corporatism, the corporatist project for global economic and territorial planning remained a dead letter until the very end of the fascist regime (Ragioneri 1976). From 1922 until 1943, the only major action was the construction of new towns in the area of land reclamation on the Agro Pontino. From 1933 to 1935, the view that town planning should reflect, on a territorial and spatial level, the organization of the corporatist state was growing in political circles (Zucconi 1989: 175–76): urban or regional scale master plans ('piani regolatori') should become the 'unit cell of the regulating plan of the nation' (Ciocca 1934). *Quadrante* dedicated a substantial amount of editorial space to this political doctrine.

Yet, though the very rhetoric of the fascism constructs an analogy between fascist and corporatist city, the place and role of the CIAM functional city (supported in Italy by the *Quadrante* group of architects, Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini and the BBPR) in the trilogy 'fascist city – corporatist city – functional city' remains rather indistinct. The link between corporatism, amply commented on by the magazine at the political level, and the rational city was never made directly explicit in *Quadrante*. That may be due either to the indistinctness of the corporatist idea at the political and social level or to the difficulty of combining this idea with the CIAM rational city.

The hypothesis is that the visual organization of the magazine<sup>21</sup> played an essential role in the representation and, more, in the concretization of the project of the combined modern *and* fascist city. The juxtaposition of images within the page as well as the photomontages were signed by one of the main *Quadrante* critics and main protagonists of the relations between the architects and the fascist state, Pier Maria Bardi (Fig. 15). Visual arrangements contributed to connect this project – the combined modern *and* fascist city – with the new political organization



**Figure 15:** Photomontage by Pier Maria Bardi, 'Questo non lo permetteremo' (Concourse for Palazzo del Littorio, Rom, 1934), from *Quadrante* no. 18 (October 1934): 7.

championed by *Quadrante*. The very point of this magazine was to demonstrate the equivalence, essential to the doctrine of *Quadrante*, between the CIAM rational city on the one hand, and the corporatist fascist city on the other (see Rifkind (2012); for a further analysis of *Quadrante*'s cultural aspects, Biscossa (1988); for its politics of image, Jannière (2005)). The visual discourse and its relationship to the text provided a powerful instrument of persuasion for this equivalence.

In spite of its traditional layout, divided into columns, the order of pages and plates plays a key role. The plates interrupt a continuous text, which apparently runs independently from the images. One can question the status of these images as 'illustrations'. Long articles expounding the corporatist political doctrine are juxtaposed with reproductions of projects – in particular, the master plan for Pavia in 1934 (designed by Banfi, Belgioioso, Peressutti, et al.)<sup>22</sup> and the plan of the new town of Sabaudia – suggesting that these are to be interpreted as consecrated examples of the corporatist city.

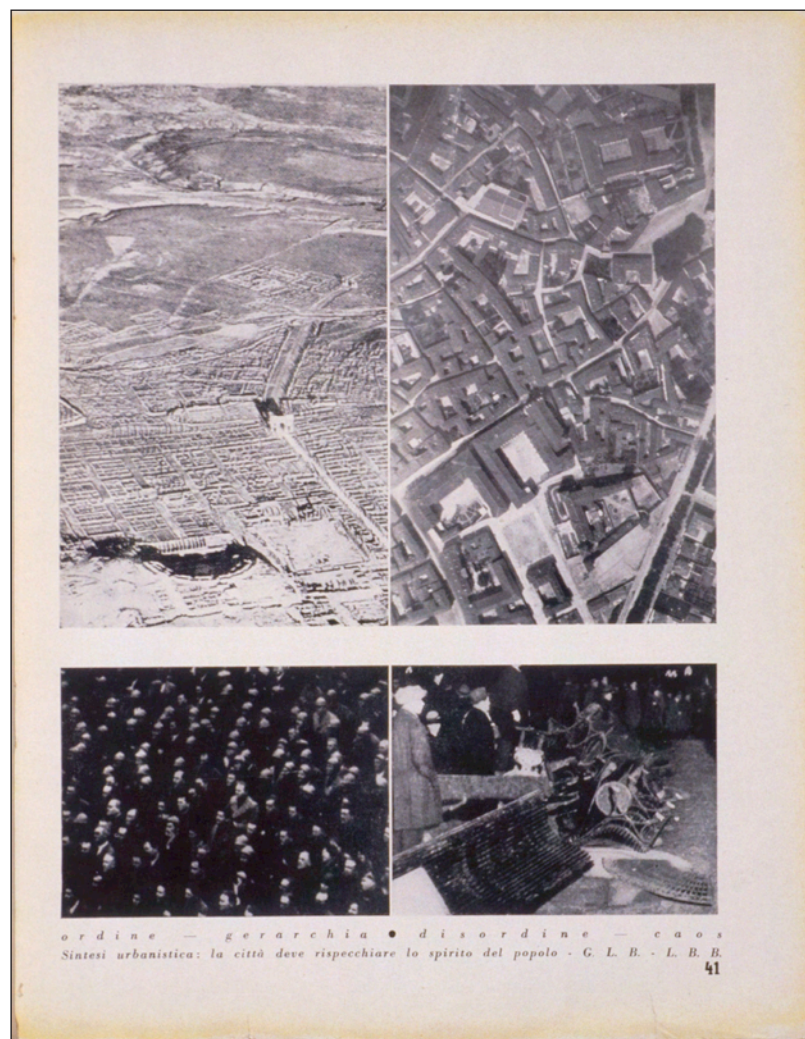
Moreover, *Quadrante* published only a limited number of representations of professional town planning – maps, plans on urban or territorial scale – with the exception of the master plans of Pavia and Milan (Sul piano di Milano, 1934) or particularly for the new town of Aprilia (Inchiesta su Aprilia, 1935). Although its discourse on urban planning essentially concentrates on the relation between the rational city and corporatism, the magazine reproduces mostly images of *buildings* and numerous photographs of *models* of unimplemented projects. The aerial view is more

a vehicle for rhetoric than an instrument of territorial analysis, as the photos of Libyan villages confirm; according to the architect Luigi Figini their 'simple, solar, geometrical, essential, tense, rectilinear profiles' reveal 'unexpected aspects of classicism' (Figini 1934: 43). In aerial views they embody Mediterranean civilization – and '*mediterraneità*' is the very character of Italian rationalist architecture in the view of the *Quadrante* group (Fig. 16). These photographs and the accompanying comments stress the order and hierarchy of the urban form of these cities and villages: metaphors of the order of the rational city.

Texts repeating the definition of the corporatist city, in its processes of planning more than in its spatial configuration, are recurrently placed opposite such aerial photos. These are included in series of all kinds of urban representations: high-angle shots of orderly or chaotic crowds are associated, for example, with aerial views of regular cities, or opposed to dense medieval urban fabric. Their organization on the page brings out the contrasts within these series. The confrontations of images and captions – which like slogans are mainly formed of word

juxtapositions – echo the keywords of the fascist propaganda, i.e., opposition between chaos and hierarchy, between individualism and the collective spirit.

The construction of the Agro Pontino new towns offered *Quadrante* a further opportunity to strengthen the equivalence between the fascist modern city, the rational city and the corporatist city. Once again, the visual discourse is essential to formulating this concordance, which is not present in the texts. The article on the new town of Sabaudia, 'L'urbanismo di Mussolini' – one of the most significant texts on the Agro Pontino land reclamation – is accompanied by photos illustrating agricultural scenes and, among these, a cliché high-angle shot of 'Mussolini celebrating the first harvest in Littoria' (Fig. 17). Here, one of the most advanced experiments of Italian rational city planning is illustrated by images of rural themes. The absence of specifically urban representations is striking. Nevertheless, the theme of agriculture does not contradict the main issue: on a political level, the metaphor expresses the will of the fascist regime to emphasize the rural values of traditional Italy. Besides,



**Figure 16:** An aerial view as a vehicle for rhetoric expression of the order of the rational and corporatist city: 'Ordine – gerarchia · disordine – caos: sintesi urbanistica: la città deve rispecchiare lo spirito del popolo' (Order – hierarchy · disorder – chaos: The city must reflect the people's spirit). From *Quadrante* no. 16–17 (August–September 1934): 41.





**Figure 17:** Mussolini and the First Harvest in the New Town of Littoria, from *Quadrante* no. 5 (1933): 3.

the series of images extolling these first harvests could confirm the interdependence between rational town planning and rural planning as contained in corporatist doctrine and disseminated by *Quadrante*.

The juxtaposition and sequences of images build a representation of the rational city, which in Italy, at the beginning of 1930s, existed only in very few projects, most of them unimplemented, either competitions launched in the first half of the 1930s or new towns. Thanks to these rhetorical figures created by the visual arrangement, the magazine associated *Quadrante's* own conception of the rational city – largely indebted to the CIAM discussions – with the evocation of the so-called corporatist city, which ‘naturally’ (as the text puts it) stems from the corporatist political doctrine. The role of the images here was vital, since it was theoretically difficult to make the urban projects into demonstrations of corporatist principles. Thanks to semantic collisions

generated by sequences and montages, it was the task of representations to express the equivalence between rational city, fascist city and corporatist city.

### Conclusion

Although largely referring to the history of photography and graphic design, this article has mostly taken into account the visual form of the periodicals from an architectural historian’s point of view. Accordingly, it would be worth questioning the same issue while inverting the ‘optical lens’: what might be the contribution of the history of photography or the history of graphic design and typography to such an analysis?

The issue of word and image in architectural publication opens up a reflection on the relationships of architectural historiography and history of photography. Although their respective goals and interpretations may differ, both fields have widely investigated the uses of images in

architectural publication. Without falling into a perfect parallelism of their respective views, one can notice certain similarities, a 'common historiographical scheme' (Baudin 2003: 9–10). In a very limited measure and from a very specific point of view, this article has striven to challenge this commonly accepted 'parallelism' or 'shared historiographical scheme' between the history of architecture and the history of photography, which mainly hinges on a few 'peak' historical moments, and especially on the period of avant-garde magazines. Instead, it attempted to tackle the issue of the 'convergence' of innovative graphic form with the promotion of 'new architecture'. By using as examples magazines that reveal a gap between an affirmed disruptive aesthetics and a traditional graphic form (*L'Esprit nouveau*), or by challenging the so-called strict coherence between graphic design and editorial policy (*Casabella*), this article has set out some more complex situations. Conversely, in more traditional magazines the very material structure of the periodical can give rise to associations of texts and images that can not be considered as entirely fortuitous. This complexity suggests the need for a more systematic study of all kinds of relationships of word and image, and in all manner of periodicals and books – the visually 'unattractive' journals as well.

In 1983 Paolo Portoghesi asserted in *Domus* that 'the material and formal identity of architectural magazines, their changes of course and their publishing adventures' (Portoghesi 1983: 2) represented a fundamental chapter in the history of architecture that had yet to be written. In his eyes, the transformations of graphic presentation were to be associated with the changing conception of architecture, promoted successively as art, ideology and media. Portoghesi thus assumed a form of 'convergence' between the form of the periodical and the architectural trends championed by the periodical.

Since Portoghesi's claim, architectural periodicals have given rise to a great number of historical studies; however, word and image associations are now coming to be explored more deeply thanks to new conceptual frames. Visual studies have largely influenced those investigations (Deriu 2007; Hultszch 2014; Stetler 2015). The material history of books (in Roger Chartier's perspective), together with the systematic analysis of their 'anatomy' (Tavares 2016) and the inquiries into the actors of their design – from the publisher to the graphic designer – leads to promising results. Out of those inquiries, new questions may be asked about the periodicals, even the traditional ones, as 'reading devices' that, contrary to avant-garde publications, have large print runs and therefore may have influenced architects' modes of reading, and, even, experiencing architecture.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The main ideas of the 'New Typography' can be traced to as early as 1923, when expressed by Laszlo Moholy Nagy and El Lissitzky; between 1923 and 1925, the leading principles and the main statements of the New Typography were formulated and began to be disseminated: '[F]or the laws of this kind of typographic design represent nothing other than the practical application of the laws of design discovered by the new painters'

(Tschichold 1928: 30). See Lugon (2007) and Kinross (2004: 103–109).

<sup>2</sup> Elaborated by constructivist artists as 'New Typography', then transformed, for instance, as 'elementare Tipografie' by Lajos Kassak and Jan Tschichold, and from 1925, by teachers at the Bauhaus, namely Herbert Bayer and Joost Schmidt, in the late 1920s functionalist typography was widely employed in the domains of publishing, advertising and posters. The experiments are widespread, far beyond the circles of the avant-garde; by doing so, they may also lose their radical and subversive aspect (see Schröder-Kehler 1986).

<sup>3</sup> Gae Aulenti stated that the *Casabella* layout represented an attempt to 'express the original of the [published] architecture: a real transformation process that consists of its own characteristics', due to 'a continuous effort to identify the signification of architecture' (Aulenti 1978).

<sup>4</sup> Direct analogies have been proposed (D'Auria 1987) between Persico's graphic design in *Casabella* and his scenography of exhibitions; for instance, his *Sala delle Medaglie d'Oro* at the *Esposizione dell'Aeronautica*, 5th Milan Triennial in 1934, entirely constructed on an orthogonal grid, close to the *Neue Sachlichkeit* aesthetic, and designed with Marcello Nizzoli, this room was praised by Walter Gropius. See also Polo (1993: 28).

<sup>5</sup> See Heller (2005: 130) for the double-page spread of the September issue of volume 8 (1930) of *Gebrauchsgraphik*.

<sup>6</sup> As well as more recently on *Casabella*, see Astarita (2010), and for the anthology of significant articles of 80 years of the magazine, see Baglione (2008).

<sup>7</sup> In Ivo Pannaggi's article in *Casabella*, the history of the Bauhaus and the technical description of the *Törtensiedlung* are directly inspired and even literally taken from this book.

<sup>8</sup> *Das neue Frankfurt* (1926–30) had understood the primacy of image on text. This journal had created the *Bilderberichte* (image-narratives), a kind of report formed only of images and captions on metropolitan, architectural and cultural actuality: art events, new buildings, photograms, pictures of exhibition, all this material was chosen by its correspondents, namely Roger Ginsburger in Paris and Adolf Behne in Berlin.

<sup>9</sup> 'The old phrase structure was passive and frontal, while the new phrase structure is active and spatio-temporal'; 'Das Buch wird gelesen, und zwar von links nach rechts und von oben nach unten. Aber gleichzeitig wird es gesehen, die ganze Seite auf einmal. Durch diese gleichzeitige Vorgang (akustisch–optisch) hat sich das moderne Buch auf eine neue 'plastische' Dimension bereichert. Der alte Satzaufbau war passiv und frontal, während der moderne Satzaufbau aktiv und raumzeitlich ist' (Van Doesburg 1929: 569).

<sup>10</sup> This concept 'collapses the distances between the literary artefact and the documentary form of textuality whose home is the modern bureaucratic archive'. The word is coined for the first time in El Lissitzky

(1923), (reprint in Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers, *El Lissitzky*, 1967). On this concept see Schwartz (2000).

- <sup>11</sup> A concept that could be translated as a 'movie effect due to the book'.
- <sup>12</sup> Graphic design in architectural publication has been studied per se, sometimes without links to the architectural debates that publication conveys, as in the case of De Puineuf (2011).
- <sup>13</sup> In the 1920s, the main protagonists of French typography (Charles Peignot, Maximilien Vox, Cassandre) championed a sort of typography that would perpetuate the French tradition of the book (Jubert 2006).
- <sup>14</sup> Nathan (Jacques Nathan-Garamond) was a former member of the Alliance graphique, a creation workshop founded in 1930 by Cassandre, Charles Loupot and Maurice Moyrand (Wlassikoff 2005:106).
- <sup>15</sup> The room dedicated to typography and the book provoked an aesthetic as well as a political scandal, since the UAM organizers dared show Russian constructivist posters. The French extreme right-wing press accused UAM of 'Soviet propaganda', as in the same room Jean Carlu, a member of UAM, had exhibited a manifesto entitled 'For the Disarmament of the Nations' (Wlassikoff 2005: 107).
- <sup>16</sup> *L'Esprit Nouveau* sharply criticizes the very successful Cassandre's poster 'Au bucheron': 'Ce cubisme n'est pas drôle, il est faux. Démarquage sans finesse de travaux sérieux (Léger est-il triste ou gai?) formule chipée et brutalisée par un barioleur.' (*L'Esprit Nouveau* 25, July 1923, quoted by Wlassikoff 2005: 37): it points out the 'avant-garde' derived aesthetics of Cassandre's poster, in its opinion not innovative but 'commercializing' and weakening a former cubist aesthetics.
- <sup>17</sup> On *L'Oeuvre complète*, see also (Monnier 1990: 205–215).
- <sup>18</sup> Jean-Louis Pascal (1837–1920) designed the Periodicals reading room of the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (1906–32, realized after Pascal's death by Alfred Recoura). From 1872 to 1920, he was 'patron d'atelier' (professor) at the Paris École des Beaux-Arts.
- <sup>19</sup> This structure lasted until 1927; at this turning point, *L'Architecture vivante* reproduced an increasing quantity of Le Corbusier's projects and articles.
- <sup>20</sup> That was Giuseppe Bottai's response to the crisis of the liberal State; Bottai (1895–1959), a journalist and essayist, founded *Critica fascista* in 1923. Originally politically situated at the 'left wing' of the Fascist party, on November 6, 1926, he was appointed under-secretary, then in 1929 minister of corporations.
- <sup>21</sup> Fascist visual rhetoric has been studied, for example, concerning significant exhibitions such as *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista* (1932), a vehicle of propaganda and of aesthetic form. See Stone (1997).
- <sup>22</sup> Architects: E. Aleati, G. L. Banfi, L. B. di Belgioioso, G. Ciocca, M. Mazzocchi, E. Peressutti. See *Quadrante* 11, March (1934), plate 11.

### Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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First trained as an architect, Hélène Jannière got a PhD (1999) and a Thesis of Habilitation (2011) both in Art History. She has been teaching History of Architecture and Town Planning in French architectural schools from 1994 to 2012, namely at the Ecole nationale supérieure d'architecture de Paris-La Villette. Since 2012, she is Professor of contemporary architectural history at Rennes 2 University. Her main domain of research is architectural criticism and architectural periodicals of the XXth Century. After several publications about architectural magazines of the 1920s and 1930s, her research focuses on the history of architectural criticism, especially on architecture and urban criticism in the 1950s–1980s, including: *Architectural Periodicals in the 1960s and 1970s* (Canadian Center for Architecture, IRHA, Montreal 2008) with France Vanlaethem and Alexis Sornin. She co-edited with Kenneth Frampton the special issue n. 24/25 of *Les Cahiers de la recherche architecturale et urbaine*, entitled, "La critique en temps et lieux" (2009) and with Richard Leeman, Michel Ragon, *Critique d'art et d'architecture* (2013). She is currently the scientific director of an international research program, funded by Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR, 2014) *Mapping.Crit. Arch. A cartography of architectural criticism, XXth-XXIst centuries* (International Research Network).

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