

False Mirror Office: Fanciotti & Hamzeian

Of Mirrors and Plays

Heterotopia as a design tool

Open Lecture #30
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In 1967 the French anthropologist and philosopher Michel Foucault presented to the architecture community the latest findings of his reasoning on the phenomenology of space: "Heterotopias," physical places located in our society and capable to deny their physicality and to refer to other places. From brothels to prisons, up to Club Med vacation villages, the non-exhaustive examples given by Foucault left the most crucial question open. Can heterotopia be designed? False Mirror Office resurfaces the issue of Heterotopia in Graz. The contribution will start from Robert Venturi's and Denise Scott Brown's Las Vegas, Rem Koolhaas' Cooney Island and the Post Modern pastiche of Disneyland as three emblematic examples of the flirt between heterotopia and architectural theory. Looking at contemporary discourse the production of False Mirror Office will be dissected as well, to demonstrate the potential of turning heterotopia into an active design tool.

False Mirror Office gathers five architects sharing the Polytechnic School of Genoa as common background. While collaborating with leading European firms, its members share the interest for selected themes of major relevance, spanning from disciplinary topics to unrelated matters. Believing that the new only originates as a reaction to the existing, False Mirror Office re-discovers the past as the present, re-signifies high as mass culture, re-values forms and functions. As a matter of fact, False Mirror Office mis-represents Architecture.

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