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## EDITORIAL

In the preface of the Italian edition (2015) of Mallgrave's *Architecture and Embodiment* (2013) pivotal book, Gallese argues that the body is the true protagonist of our faculty to appreciate the aesthetical characteristics of architectural artifacts. The subjectivity of our perspective is, primarily, situated in time and space, constituted by the potentialities of the body to move, and linked to the world through affective, emotional involvements. These experiences influence physiological parameters like blood pressure and respiratory rate as well as the sensorimotor relationship with the world interrelated, in turn, with embodied simulation and mirroring.

A pioneering contribution to this vision, from the town planning standpoint, can be found in the epistemological break led by Kevin Lynch. His book *The image of the city* (1960) paved the way to a qualitative, subjective way of observing and living the urban space based on the perceptions of the city dwellers instead of the standardized, purely physical-infrastructural, way of measuring the space to plan the organization of the city. Furthermore, the Lynch's vision has been largely used to build observation tools for participatory planning projects especially with children: a pristine way to enhance interdisciplinary - fully educational – projects. In some areas of Italy and Europe, the golden era coincided, undoubtedly, with the two decades following the approbation of the Children's Rights Convention.

Roughly around the same time, the neurosciences began to disseminate the results of researches highlighting educational processes, already envisaged and developed by several disciplines (above all pedagogy, human movement, architecture, and town-planning), that allowed fruitful contaminations and the systematization of intuitions, only in some cases previously consolidated in systematic corpus of publications and long-established practices.

Mentioning the well-known Umberto Eco's "Space speaks, and speaks even when we do not want to listen to him" (1968), Ceruti and Mannese (2020) assert:

"Space appears as a system of signs and meanings. Spatiality tells of society, of its way of life, of the dynamics that run through it, and of the values that substantiate it: it is a way in which society builds meaning. [...] Thus understood, space cannot simply constitute a scenario on which the educational action takes place, the inert background of a process defined elsewhere: the space itself becomes an actor of the process, becomes a *dispositif* of transformation, causes actions, conveys meanings, values, information. It becomes dynamic and active subject of education".

### **Spaces and places**

When speaking about space, we primarily, even if not exclusively, think about public spaces and their – often unperceived – educational and learning relevance. Since the last century, a process of indoorization of the didactics has affected at least European educational systems, even in different ways and degrees. This process has occurred concomitantly with a progressive restriction of the allowances (Shaw et al., 2015) granted to children for their independent mobility (the freedom of children to roam and play in public spaces without adult supervision), which has affected their active mobility also when escorted by adults. As a reaction to this process, in the last decade, a renewed pedagogical awareness, schools' networks, and social movements, have brought attention to outdoor education (for the Italian case see Farné, Agostini 2014; Bortolotti A., 2019). Nevertheless, this movement is still facing obstacles in the didactical application due to cultural and administrative point of views even if the pandemic has highlighted the need of a wider conceptualization of spaces for didactics. Moreover, with some exceptions, little attention has been brought to the urban outdoor education also involving the requalification of public spaces like school routes, playgrounds, green areas etc.

Under these assumptions, outdoor education is, per se, a multi-level and complex pedagogic *dispositif* (Massa, 1987) that can be activated almost everywhere also when green or natural surrounding areas are lacking. This *dispositif* can generate not only active lifestyles but habitus (see Bourdieu - 1996, for the specific discussion about the topic of the call) structured also through the capabilities of learning, acting, playing, walking, also without specific apparatuses and infrastructures.

The theme of the relationship between spaces and places is similarly relevant considering the differences between the infrastructural features connotating

spaces and the meaning of places as spaces where the life occurs (Hubbard, Kitchin, 2010).

If truly planned for and with humans, involving people through participatory processes, accessible, inviting, loose, a space can become a place expressing an educational intentionality (Borgogni, 2020; Dorato, Borgogni, 2020)

## **Bodies**

The reasoning about the body starts from the assumption that is a renowned key player of studies, research, and cultural discourse but, at the same time, is still marginalized at scholastic, educational, organizational, and institutional levels.

“The body is always elsewhere. It is tied to all the elsewheres of the world. And to tell the truth, it is elsewhere than in the world, because it is around it that things are arranged. It is in relation to it - and in relation to it as if in relation to a sovereign - that there is a below, an above, a right, a left, a forward and a backward, a near and a far. The body is the zero point of the world. There, where paths and spaces come to meet, the body is nowhere. It is at the heart of the world, this small utopian kernel from which I dream, I speak, I proceed, I imagine, I perceive things in their place, and I negate them [...]. My body is like the City of the Sun. It has no place, but it is from it that all possible places, real or utopian, emerge and radiate” (Foucault, 1966-2006).

The body as zero point of the world, as place in (it)self, as learning, as movement, as perception, as expression is, merely, undoubtably, forgotten in many school systems as well as in town planning: the body is excluded as place-maker.

Despite the evidence of the scientific literature and some nationwide programs like “School on the move” (Schule.bewegt) in Switzerland or “Schools on the move” (Liikkuva Koulu) in Finland, nevertheless, the body, when at school, in many countries is still confined in Physical Education classes – not infrequently focusing on sport - or becoming the object of study in Biology, Philosophy, or other subjects. When wandering in the city, the body is more and more restricted in designated public (standardized playgrounds, parks...) or private (inflatable games...) spaces following the process of exclusion of the “little indomitable crowd [the children]” (Ariès,1979) by the public space.

## **The call**

The focus of the call was rooted on the intertwined, complex, relationships between the roles of the spaces and the body to enhance education. The invitation, sent to researchers in Education, Human Movement, Sport, Performative Arts, Town planning, was to discuss about the topics with a genuine interdisciplinary approach inspired by complexity. The recommendation to those willing to submit, even when beginning from their disciplinary field, was to open the theoretical reflection, and/or the presentation of the research findings, to other fields. Theoretical reflections, research, good practices, examples, and images were welcomed. The keywords of the call were: (public) spaces, body, (children) education, human movement, neuroscience, (urban) outdoor education, town planning.

The researchers' answer has been multifaceted, interpreting the contents and the meanings of the calls from different point of views.

The theme of the outdoor has been discussed by several authors, mainly discussed in terms of education and inclusive education, through the proposal of activities facilitating learning, wellbeing, and play by means of the body. Some articles emphasize the relevance of available and well-designed urban spaces. A particular perspective is offered by the relationship between performative arts and urban/natural outdoor through an ecological perspective.

Some articles debate about the theme of the technologies: accessibility and navigability of cultural spaces, the use of avatar in long-term care units, the disputed issue of the "place" of the body on the virtual world. Other articles face the role of the active body in the urban context, reasoning about the counter-spaces and the involvement of university students in the critical observation of the public spaces. Some articles, in closing, positively assessed but partially focusing on the call, have been placed in a separate section of the present issue.

I would like to personally thank all the contributors, inviting them to further develop their research on the theme, and wishing young researchers to find spaces and places for their bodies in the academic context.

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