



COMUNICAR LA ARQUITECTURA

DEL ORIGEN DE LA MODERNIDAD A LA ERA DIGITAL

eug

The background of the cover is an abstract composition of broad, expressive brushstrokes in various shades of teal and dark blue. A prominent, dark, textured square, resembling a piece of fabric or a different material, is positioned in the center-right area, overlapping the brushstrokes.

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TOMO I

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a la era digital

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del origen de la modernidad a la era digital

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The Herald of a New World. Aldo Rossi and *The Adventures of Pinocchio*: An Architectural Theory

The Herald of a New World. Aldo Rossi y *Las aventuras de Pinocho*: una teoría arquitectónica

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Abstract

En *Quaderno azzurro* 39, una nota de Aldo Rossi sobre Pinocho, un conocido personaje de la literatura italiana apoya la hipótesis que aquí se expone. Pinocho, estudiado en profundidad a través de la lectura del cuento de Collodi, emerge como figura interpretativa del espacio para explicar la diferencia entre dos mundos, el de lo fantástico y el de lo concreto. A través de sus aventuras, el títere atraviesa lugares y paisajes, cometiendo errores, como en una renovada *Autobiografía Científica*, resuelve la ambigüedad entre los mundos con el uso de la tecnología y el progreso. La lectura que hace Rossi, identificando libro y proyecto, pone de relieve una adhesión plena a la Ilustración, ese momento en el que el nacimiento de un nuevo mundo se verificó a través de sus escritos más que de su obra construida. Es Pinocho, el Herald de un Nuevo Mundo, la figura secreta favorita para refundar la disciplina de la arquitectura.

In *Quaderno azzurro* 39, a note by Aldo Rossi on Pinocchio, a well-known character in Italian literature supports the hypothesis discussed here. Pinocchio, studied in depth through the reading of Collodi's tale, emerges as an interpretative figure of space to explain the difference between two worlds, that of the fantastic and that of the concrete. Through his adventures, the puppet crosses places and landscapes, making mistakes, as in a renewed *Scientific Autobiography*, resolves the ambiguity between the worlds with the use of technology and progress. The reading made by Rossi, identifying book and project, highlights a full adherence to the Enlightenment, that moment in which the birth of a new world was verified through his writings rather than through his built work. It is Pinocchio, the Herald of a New World, the secret favorite figure to refound the discipline of architecture.

Keywords

Aldo Rossi, aventura, Pinocho

Aldo Rossi, adventure, Pinocchio

The Adventures of Pinocchio

The Adventures of Pinocchio. Storia di un burattino was published by Carlo Collodi in its entirety in 1883 after he had circulated the first part in the form of small "episodes" between 1881 and 1882 within the *Giornale per i bambini* (printed in Rome every Thursday in Piazza Montecitorio no. 130) as a supplement to the daily newspaper *Il Fanfulla*.

Pinocchio is currently, according to data released by UNESCO,¹ the second most translated book in the world. This has prompted various scholars and researchers to follow in the footsteps of the figure of Pinocchio in order to identify readings and adaptations that could contribute to an understanding not only in literary terms but also in philosophical, artistic, esoteric and theological terms of the book.² It is Giorgio Agamben who recalls how:

Collodi, with unsuspected skill, played his card between myth and literature, between fairy tale and novella (or novel). He places in the reader's hand a fable that is not a fable and a novel that is not a novel but turns out to be more fairy-tale than any fable. [...] The fact that the protagonist is neither an animal nor a man, but a puppet, corresponds precisely to the hybrid status of the narration of his adventures.³

Going through some critical passages can, in fact, give rise to useful insights into the tale that, precisely, escapes in its details if it is read only on the surface. Starting from Amerindo Camilli's work on the 1883 edition, considered by Tempesti "the first and true critical edition of Collodi's text"⁴, it is considered that Collodi played no role in subsequent publications, which were instead modified by editorial and market choices. On the contrary, the critical edition edited by Ornella Castellani Pollidori⁵ maintains that the author took part in all subsequent editions up to his death, indicating to scholars how a comparison of all *The Adventures* up to 1890 is, therefore, necessary⁶.

¹ According to data released by Unesco, *The Adventures of Pinocchio* is the second most translated book in the world after *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry; excluded from the ranking are The Bible and The Koran; see the link: <https://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bsstatlist.aspx>. See for further verification Giovanni Gasparini, *La corsa di Pinocchio* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1997), 117; Gasparini indicates in the number 240-260 the languages in which the book is translated.

² On the theological question, reference is mainly made to the writings of Giacomo Biffi, *Il mistero di Pinocchio* (Leumann: Elledici, 2003); *Contro maestro Ciliegia: commento teologico a "Le avventure di Pinocchio"* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1977).

³ Giorgio Agamben, *Pinocchio. Le avventure di un burattino doppiamente commentate e tre volte illustrate* (Turin: Einaudi, 2021), 13-14.

⁴ Fernando Tempesti, "Introduzione," in Carlo Collodi, *Pinocchio* (drawings by Igot) (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2020), 14; [1993].

⁵ See Carlo Collodi, *Le avventure di Pinocchio*, critical edition by Ornella Castellani Polidori (Pescia: Fondazione nazionale Carlo Collodi, 1983).

⁶ Regarding this Tempesti writes: "In the end, even Pollidori had her fair share of merits and gratitude, because it was made clear to everyone that her punctilious labors, even if they resulted in an edition that we would never take as criticism, were equally useful and important, providing free discussion not only with cuts but also with findings and series of variants, flavoured with the pimento of her, let us call it, comma in patience". Tempesti, "Introduzione...", 14.

The methodology followed by the critics highlights the fluctuations with which the tale is received, and also the difficulties in determining a story or origin, as well as meanings, which seem to be of a different nature. Another nature, like Pinocchio's, "neither man nor animal", but an object that "with its metamorphic, nocturnal, ligneous vocation [...] well represents this untamed material power, which can transform itself every time, which can only open up to forms on condition that it always stubbornly remains itself"⁷ (fig. 1).

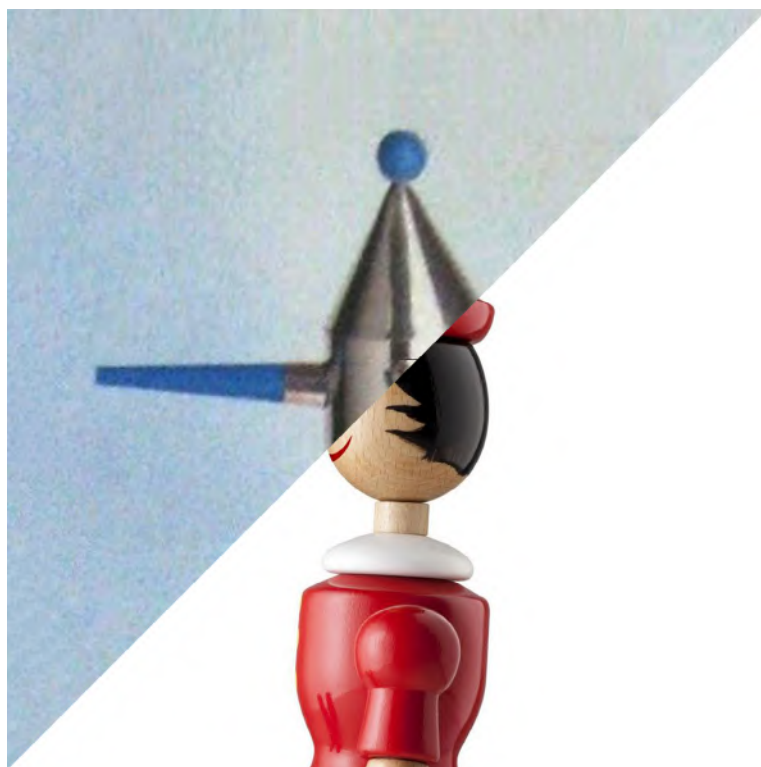


Figure 1. Composition of Aldo Rossi's Teaservice, Alessi, 1992 and Pinocchio. Sources: ©Aldo Ottaviani and ©Davide Trabucco.

It is the ambiguities between nature and artefact, the celestial world and the underworld, life and death, wood and flesh, that underline the elements dealt with. Agamben notes and updates—in the text of 2021—an initiation of the figure of Pinocchio that:

experiencing his adventures as a puppet, the sale of the Abbecedario, the entrance into the Grand Theatre, the escape to Toyland, the meeting with the Cat and the Fox, the transformation into a donkey and the journey into the belly of the Dogfish [...] he is initiated into his own life.⁸

⁷ Emanuele Dattilo, *Il dio sensibile. Saggio sul panteismo* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza, 2021), 122-123.

⁸ Agamben, *Pinocchio. Le avventure di...*, 9.

However, in the manifestation of multiple spaces, like an overwriting, the need emerges to ask what this space is that Collodi hints at and builds around the figure of the puppet; a space that is not secondary but is the source through which Pinocchio plans his adventures, discovers worlds, highlights possible projects and architectures. The oscillation of the worlds in which Pinocchio finds himself "living", staying or fleeing, in a condition that can be physically static or dynamic, describes the track on which design strategies are devised. The revelation of the transformation whereby Pinocchio is – Manganelli⁹ also points out – a body in modification, proposes spatial considerations on which this text wishes to base its theoretical and design questions.

Cinematography has tried to work in this vein in both well-known animated¹⁰ and filmic forms. The first of these, directed by Giulio Antamoro in 1911, suggests a folkloristic setting with the intention of restoring a precise cross-section of the Tuscan landscape, of an Italy strongly rooted in its artisan tradition made up of a minor building industry compared to the construction of a few monumental palaces. More experimental is the miniseries directed by Luigi Comenicini (1972) that transports the settings entirely to Lazio between Rome and Viterbo.

But, at the same time, it is the work on photography that also begins to provide answers regarding the space of architecture, probably with a contribution from Federico Fellini, where the character's migration between the capital, the surrounding countryside, and Lake Martignano seems to demonstrate the present of a story that is linked to an Italian landscape and no longer just a local one. An Italy that becomes the scene of an adventure that takes place in unplanned places, as in Matteo Garrone's most recent film (2019), where the fairy's house, for example, is "discovered" near Altamura and Mangiafuoco's little theatre in Noicattaro, both in Apulia.

It is the images of a double journey between outside and inside that signal the possible opening of the story to a broader context, "without details and finished contours" – using the words of Luigi Ghirri's research – in the intention of being able to support the figure that the backgrounds host, that of Pinocchio, mutable. The words of the Italian photographer, among other things very close to Aldo Rossi, not concerning the text, however, support the reasons for the cinematographic choices where:

This work on the Italian landscape [...] like these shifting drawings; again, an imprecise cartography, without cardinal points, which is more about the perception of a place than its cataloguing or description, like a sentimental geography where itineraries are not marked and precise but obey the strange tangles of seeing.¹¹

⁹ See Giorgio Manganelli, *Pinocchio: un libro parallelo* (Milan: Adelphi, 2002).

¹⁰ Reference is made to the 1940 Disney classic entitled *Pinocchio*, supervising directors: Hamilton Luske and Ben Sharpsteen, in 2022 the same production company released a live action remake directed by Robert Zemeckis. However, as early as 1935, Cair (Cartoni Animati Italiani Roma) had already put into production a film based on Collodi's book, but the project remained unfinished. The work consisted of a series of about 150,000 drawings.

¹¹ Luigi Ghirri, *Paesaggio italiano / Italian Landscape* (Milan: Electa, 1989).

An image that for now seems to resist only in the traces of an external path, but which must, in a possible updating of the discipline of architectural design, suggest conditions and operations. In this sense, it is possible to highlight some clues among Aldo Rossi's theories that can provide tools for the project from textual traces. The center on which this hypothesis proposes to build a theory is, first of all, that of the term *adventure*, used in Collodi's book in the plural, as if to indicate a field of variations and possibilities. This is a circumstance that some scholars or architects have made partly practicable, mainly in textual form or with projects left on paper which, if detected and traced back to the hypothesis under examination, can give scientific research and the community new ways to traverse the book. Strategies therefore emerge aimed at providing signs to construct "adventures," i.e. using backgrounds, figures, elements, objects, bodies capable of revealing a new reality of the project.

The Adventures of Aldo Rossi

It is certain that Pinocchio was too great a character to choose or to place in an architecture of his own. [...] It was this naked maiden of white purity not unlike Pinocchio's wood, a wood that the sea and force had turned white like human flesh or bone or building material aged by accident. And the theatre was precisely an accident where Pinocchio landed with the puppets he considered marvelous for this affinity and kinship of bloodless body. With him began and ended his own construction, hostile, or osteological reduction, or form that others attributed to him.¹²

Aldo Rossi has repeatedly used literature as an element of theoretical speculation. Over time, books have become the solid structure of an exercise in writing that has either been reflected in the forms of the project or forgotten and denied. In the eleventh *Quaderno azzurro*, for example, the author himself noted: "On the other hand, quotation in architecture has the same dignity as in literature"¹³, placing the two disciplines on the same level of comparison.

On this condition, the relationship between the literary work of Collodi's Pinocchio and the project theorist's work undertaken by Aldo Rossi emerges as an indication for understanding what the repercussions and tools of a "textual" discipline are in a practice. The reading of *The Adventures of Pinocchio* supports the reasons for a project activity, Rossi's, which is actually far removed from ideologies to land in a world of verifications that do not always coincide with those of technique, as much as with those of human life, full of errors and upheavals (fig. 2).

¹² Aldo Rossi, "Notes on Pinocchio, March 1980", Aldo Rossi Fonds, *Writings, contributions and interviews*, Writings by Aldo Rossi, ref. n.º S2/5, Architecture Archives Centre, MAXXI National Museum of XXI Century Arts, Rome.

¹³ Aldo Rossi, *I quaderni azzurri 1968-1992*, ed. by Francesco Dal Co (Los Angeles-Milan: The Getty Center- Electa, 1999), Q/A 11.



Figure 2. Pages of Aldo Rossi, *Quaderno azzurro* n.º 44, 1991. Source: ©Eredi Aldo Rossi 2024.

In order, therefore, to identify and construct a theory of the project—one of the possible ones, it is understood—it is necessary to separate theory precisely from its history.¹⁴ Insisting on the etymological condition, the observation from which theory originates prescribes that “speculative doctrine that consists in the investigation of truth, made abstraction of the practice to which it gives norm”¹⁵. A process of analysis, therefore, that architecture assumes as its own consolidated field of experimentation to determine actions and operations in the design palimpsest.

¹⁴ “History can in fact remind theory to certainly consider everyday life but also at the same time the universal, to evaluate the rules of the natural but inscribed in ideal designs. History can support theory in keeping its gaze fixed on the design of the concrete forms of time”. Sara Marini, “Affresco”, in *Teorie dell'architettura. Affresco italiano*, ed. by Sara Marini (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2021), 14.

¹⁵ See “Theory,” entry in Ottorino Pianigiani, *Vocabolario etimologico della lingua italiana*, vol. 2, M-Z, (Milan-Rome: Dante, 1907), 1422.

The action of seeing associated with the sense of theory does not stop at looking but at doing so intensely, choosing, creating a personal archive of mental images in which personal history and the history of others can participate, as Aldo Rossi's *Analogous City* recalls. If history orders, theory summons all architecture at the same time, cancels the timeline, erases its distances to put other orders or connections into place and form.¹⁶

Unlike literary criticism, from which it is unavoidable to start with regard to the topic discussed, architectural criticism with its theories, in nullifying the chronological line, introduces figures into the system that define a new order without dis-ordering the initial story, rather placing another operative one alongside it.

The texts that punctuate the chapters of *The Adventures*, as well as the film adaptations and especially the iconographic apparatuses supporting the words, emphasize a world of apparatuses in which the story unfolds. This alternation between the two disciplines is thus congruent with how much the history of architecture has over time contributed, in a broad sense, to the development of disciplinary rules. In this sense, *Autobiografia scientifica*¹⁷ itself can be recognized as a work of literature in which the space of the project finds new boundaries, relying on citations and memories to narrate and explain a story –that of architecture– turned towards broader focal points. It is not only the technical datum that influences the author as much as an experiential datum that can fall into the process of construction of the project and its possible lives (fig. 3).



Figure 3. Pages of Aldo Rossi, *Quaderno azzurro* n. 44, 1991. Source: ©Eredi Aldo Rossi 2024.

¹⁶ Marini, "Affresco...", 13.

¹⁷ "'Scientific Autobiography' Japanese edition. Perhaps it is the most beautiful because it appears, as indeed it is, to be a book of literature. Small, subtle". Rossi, *I quaderni azzurri...*, Q/A 13.

The entry of Collodi's book coincides in Rossi's research activity with the "discovery" of the term adventure. *Avventura* (adventure) in fact, at least in the indications of the Italian language, establishes an event, an accident, or rather an "unexpected case, [...] singular and extraordinary". Passages that clarify in the etymological condition operations and actions of the project that the author, in a theoretical association, may have brought into the statutes of the analogy.

This system of analogy can be understood in two complementary ways. I always refer to purely compositional matters.

a) the use of superimpositions of extraneous elements, real quotations, which have in the compositional process the value of a collage. A column or a classical tympanum, a stained-glass window, a gargoyle, etc. that either resolve a certain detail or go so far as to make explicit the character of an architecture whose solution is ultimately definitive. [...] Every naturalist or organic system also belongs to the analogy. In the latter case, it is false as with functionalism to refer to the making / but the transport of form is correct.

All this must be highly developed.

b) The analogical analysis of the meaning of form. This is certainly more related to the individual filtration aspect of form education. But this individual aspect - which constitutes the imagination - is founded on an education, knowledge of the constructed forms of architecture. I do not want to get into the epistemological aspect of this problem. I only deal with technical questions of architecture, and I want to reduce architecture for what is most proper to it, the compositional aspect, to a technique with discrete characters of clarity.¹⁸

An elaboration, that around the analogy, which reasons on two channels of discussion: that of the quotation and that of the meaning of the form to which possible technical data can also be traced. Therefore, the condition in which Pinocchio provides the architect with an elaboration plan that can reconcile the technical form, the constructive presupposition, to that of life seems to occur on this tension; to a datum therefore further to the system's functioning mechanism by admiring its minimal variations.

Perhaps this is why I liked fairy tales and the one of Pinocchio in particular where the puppet's state of life is purely intermediate and as such is predominantly linked to encounters and his figure remains unresolved even in the second ending where he is transformed into a child. For even the survival as a corpse of the child he has transformed into does not realize the significance of his encounters. Yet we often love our corpse. And what about architecture? [...] When Tafuri writes "[...] The Ariadne's thread with which Rossi weaves his typological research does not 're-found the discipline' but dissolves it, verifying in extremis the tragic recognition of George Simmel and Lukács: 'a form that serves life, open to it, cannot give itself'" (La sfera e il labirinto, 333).¹⁹

The initially blurred contours find their own ground of confrontation where the theory expressed by the puppet signals the existence of a project life beyond technique. Pinocchio's palimpsest of adventures determines the functions of a static space that undergoes human

¹⁸ Rossi, *I quaderni azzurri...*, Q/A 14.

¹⁹ Rossi, *I quaderni azzurri...*, Q/A 27.

movements and happenings. A system of literary references –which Rossi had accustomed his audience and his readers to– that became increasingly insistent in order to identify design operations that later materialized around the figure of the Teatro del Mondo in Venice (1979)²⁰.

The project developed for the Theatre Biennale highlights the consequences of a reading of the text that can verify elements of the architecture. Built on a “raft” and therefore lacking anchorage and stability, the stage space, like Pinocchio, is shaky and uncertain. Its figure is entrusted to the movements of the waters and the thrusts of the winds. The theatre, though static in its full awareness of forms and citations, emerges as a new and unpredictable object in relation to the context of the stone city, that white stone worked by Jacopo Sansovino and Andrea Palladio, to accommodate inside-as in the belly of the whale-any object or fantasy.

Just as in Collodi’s book, in Rossi’s project geography is recomposed by parts and by parts proceeds, so in Venice it is credible “how [...] architecture becomes the vehicle for an event we desire, whether or not it actually occurs; and in our desiring it, the event becomes something ‘progressive’”.²¹ The architectural instruments thus trigger eventuality, hypothesis and also uncertainty, where the theatre –child of a previous genealogy– updates the position, opposing drowning to propose itself as an intermittent monument, as another facade²²; re-establishing quotas and paradigms in the field of the lagoon. The mechanical body of the puppet thus becomes flesh, man, child. The wood is consumed like that of the character invented by Collodi, it changes its positions in a disjointed manner, reworking its image, which precisely in the furrow of adventure progresses, grows, deforms, becomes something else. “This mechanism, which seems to be foreseen and desired, goes beyond the moments

²⁰ “The theatre, inaugurated on 11 November 1979, was realized by the Biennale. It was part of the initiatives of the architecture sector directed by Paolo Portoghesi and the theatre sector directed by Maurizio Scaparro. The theatre was built in the Fusina shipyards and transported by tugboat to Venice where it was placed at Punta della Dogana. The theatre is set on iron beams welded onto the raft plane. It has an overall height of approximately 25m from the raft plane to the flag. It consists of a cube (9.50m on a side and 11m high) to which a 6m high octagon is superimposed. The top of the cube leads to a terrace that has views of the Dogana, San Marco, San Giorgio and Giudecca. The theatre’s structure is made of iron tubes; it is clad in wood on the outside and partly on the inside. The roof is made of wood covered with galvanized sheet metal. Typologically, the theatre combines the system of tiers of seats with that of galleries. The tiers face two sides of the central stage divided by a window on the short side. Above are successively three tiers of galleries. The capacity is 200-250 seats but can be greatly exceeded. The stage and the galleries correspond to three orders of windows framing the sea, the Venetian buildings, and the sky: thus the city is always present, and the scenic space enlarges to the architecture of Venice”. Manfredo Tafuri, “L’éphémère est éternel: Aldo Rossi a Venezia”, *Domus*, n.º 602 (January 1980): 10.

²¹ Aldo Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography* (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1981), 3.

²² “While Venezia looks motionless and angrily at this futile search for an anchor. In the *Pearl of the lagoon* architecture is everywhere, it is reflected in the water obsessively. Fronts, faces, masks proudly reveal deep *piani nobili* (main floors), stairs with an unsketchable path lead to unexpected *altane*, terraces above the roofs from where one can mock the two seas, the urban one without architecture and the flat one where only the navigation tells stories of change”. Sara Marini, Alberto Bertagna, *Venice: a document* (Venice: Bruno 2014), 35-36.

of definition to become part of the life of forms whose encounter with needs and habits does not interrupt their life cycle or limit their autonomy."²³

The texts on the Theatre of the World constitute the true paraphernalia of the project, grasping atlases and geographies, adding to the Dalmine tube structure, composing the façades and anticipating the interventions that actors, spectators and water will make to the stage space.²⁴ Thus John Hejduk's words reserved for Rossi's architecture also clarify the intentions of a project that sums up conditions and geographies, that takes notions from the land crossed by Pinocchio in the first part of the book and then turns to the sea, to the Ocean where the whales live:

I was very interested again in John Hejduk's criticism of the Venetian theatre photos "Inside is Europa but outside, the shell is America". An America that lies between the towers of N.Y. but perhaps above all in the houses of the New England where always the landscape is for me revisited or rediscovered.²⁵

The sheets become surfaces where tension lines, devices, like lagoon waters, write architectural signs in text form:

What about architecture? Architecture was no longer forgotten, or abandoned, or lost / it was the last room built. [...] One had to live the space desperately for a night and for a few hours / there was no guarantee for either love or pleasure. Everything in the room was as certain as the unpredictable speed of the already seen. The room could move. As in *Midsummer Night's Dream* the wall is a character. [...] The wall is a fiction here theatrical, but it affirms that the real is such and exists only as a medium through which lovers can whisper anxiously. This means or instrument for life, love or science, is the best definition of architecture. And so Theseus asks, "Could a wall speak better?"²⁶

Like a patina, the overall representation is the summation of the motifs that this architecture takes on to survive or anticipate the relationship with the water that it erases, absorbs, drags, adds. In and around this same water, the theatre is destroyed.

In the sense expressed by the adventures of Pinocchio, the construction of Rossi's project is affected by the conditions expressed by Collodi, making them specific in the elements and objects: the interior is rational, logical, ready to classify the entrances and positions, the exterior in its geometric austerity, composed of the amalgamation of several Euclidean solids, is predisposed to the randomness of events, to life itself implemented by physical geography.

²³ Alberto Ferlenga, "Incontri pericolosi", in *Aldo Rossi. Architetture 1959-1987*, ed. by Alberto Ferlenga (Milan: Electa, 1987), 9.

²⁴ "Tuttavia, l'ipotesi che quella di Rossi sia un'architettura senza rapporti con lo spazio, ma che cerchi piuttosto di reincarnare i luoghi è forse la più feconda per l'interpretazione della sua opera". Daniel Libeskind, "'Deus ex Machina', 'Machina ex Deo'", in *Teatro del Mondo*, ed. by Aldo Rossi (Venice: Cluva, 1982), 122; original text "'Deus ex Machina', 'Machina ex Deo'", *Opposition: Journal for Ideas and Criticism in Architecture*, n.º 21 (1980): 3-23.

²⁵ Rossi, *I quaderni azzurri...*, Q/A 26.

²⁶ Rossi, *I quaderni azzurri...*, Q/A 27.

Nevertheless, a fundamental and disciplinary update that surpasses technique and artefactual work around materials to clarify a new attainment of architecture, the landing place towards a new world reaffirmed by the return of the body in space; as much in the theatre as in Collodi's Pinocchio (fig. 4).



Figure 4. Drawing, *Lo Yatai di Pinocchio* / *Pinocchio's Yatai*, 1989, Aldo Rossi. Source: ©Eredi Aldo Rossi 2024.

Herald(s) of a New World: a Theory

Pinocchio is not actually a puppet; his destiny is to become at the end or beginning of his life a child and therefore a man. Pinocchio is therefore a difficult character, easy but also neurotic, uncertain between two worlds.

[...] He knows that the cat and the fox, the whale and other dangers await him, but also friends like the boring talking cricket and the beautiful fairy, and he has faith in technology and in a better world.

That is why the puppets follow him on old, rickety constructions that are not sure how long they can last, even though they know they will last in the fiction of theatre.

In contrast, Pinocchio has chosen technology and possible progress, his ambiguity as a puppet-man allows him to be *The Herald of a New World*, and to accept its contradictions.²⁷

²⁷ Rossi, *I quaderni azzurri...*, Q/A 39.

In this 1989 note addressed to the Yatai²⁸ project, it is, once again, the figure of Pinocchio²⁹ that is used by Aldo Rossi to define an uncertainty "between two worlds". The oscillation between concreteness and imagination, practice and theory, and technique and life, establishes the elements of a discussion on which the work is based. Pinocchio is a technical object capable of transformation. It is progress, dimensioned by adventure, that signifies metamorphosis. Thus, in Aldo Rossi's theories, the possibility of being able to accept the datum of the unexpected in the static nature of the project, a technical object, is consolidated.

It is a form of initiation that, step by step, reinvents a craft whose works, observed with desire, are broken down with the desire to steal its secret, skipping the stages and subverting the rules starting from a condition of extraneousness that is maintained as necessary and that will avoid the deceptions of mere mastery or knowledge. Thus for the architect, if the city, travelled and studied, becomes or remains the field of every possible reference, the keys to truly understanding it only lie beyond, in stories, books or paintings that, like so many lenses, deform and clarify places and buildings.³⁰

The image of the puppet emerges as a consequence of a theory of the project that, by necessity of survival, finds space beyond construction alone, as if to indicate that the building site in itself cannot suffice to experience all the conditions of the discipline of architecture. This is not a magic realism, but rather a system of projects that become part of a landscape in which life and death confront each other to define backgrounds in which figures and objects mingle in the midst of possible happenings, or rather adventures (fig. 5).

Pinocchio's escape is the same as that undertaken by the Teatro del Mondo, which certainly followed a program with respect to the character in literature, but which, at the end, finds its reality along the coast, that of a technical object-turned-puppet transformed into a living object, a child.

The search for a theory of design that sees the elements in this key indicates Rossi's reading of being in the midst of a new world in which the body has returned and where architecture, in order to exist, can no longer be separated –like Pinocchio– from the notion of life. *The Adventures of Pinocchio* proves to be an instrument for updating the matter of design where unmeasurable places, fantastic characters, reveal something more about the world to the static discipline of architecture.

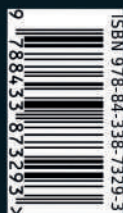
²⁸ See "Yatai di Pinocchio, architettura mobile per la Japan Design Expo '89 a Nagoya, Giappone," in *Aldo Rossi: architetture 1988-1992*, ed. by Alberto Ferlenga (Milan: Electa, 1993), 174-175.

²⁹ "Rossi's very intriguing figure of Pinocchio, the puppet who acquires the gift of life: 'I was given a very beautiful Pinocchio, as big as a little boy. It reminded me of the Yatai (in Japan, the travelling carts that sell food) and the reason for my love for the puppet'. Pinocchio will in fact reappear in the yatai in Nagoya in 1989: 'Pinocchio,' we read in the presentation, 'accepts all his responsibility in order to better defend himself from all pitfalls, drives a tractor and challenges the adversities of the road [...] he has faith in technology and in a better world [...] his ambiguity as a man-puppet allows him to be *The Herald of a New World*, and to accept its contradictions'". Paolo Portoghesi, *Aldo Rossi. Il teatro e la città* (Genoa: Sagep, 2021), 45-46.

³⁰ Ferlenga, "Incontri pericolosi...", 9.



Figure 5. Drawing, *Lo Yatai di Pinocchio* / *Pinocchio's Yatai*, 1989, Aldo Rossi. Source: ©Eredi Aldo Rossi 2024.



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