

CAN CREATIVITY BE TAUGHT ?

In 1923 Le Corbusier published "Vers une architecture" in which he exposed the five points of the new architecture: The Pilotis, pillars by which the building had to be raised from the ground; The roof garden, at the top of the building to recover the green space; The free plan, the ability to freely arrange spaces without being bound by the load-bearing structure typical of masonry buildings; The free façade, emptied of the static function it had always fulfilled, in order to accommodate the ribbon windows, which could finally run free along its entire length. While recognizing these formulations as historical testimony, following careful observation of daily practice it is believed that they cannot be a valid statement. Nothing about matters of taste or style, but because they are based on inconsistent assumptions: a new architecture (today we would say a valid and original architecture) cannot be linked to material elements defined a priori. These always depend on extremely variable factors, not least the relationship with the context; in some cases it may be necessary to use thin glass next to carbon on a large scale, in others for small details ancient stone next to concrete. It is not possible to establish a material or a formal solution for architecture in an absolute sense. What guides the composition, upstream, is the sensitivity and imagination of the architect who will have to read, assimilate and process the external stimuli and the environmental context, thus formulating an idea-image, today we would say a concept, possibly new and original, which responds creatively to all initial aspects. We could say that the main qualities for an architect (and in general for an artist) are first and foremost human and certainly irrational. Sensitivity, intuition, imagination, creativity, reactivity to stimuli must merge with technical knowledge and the ability to do, to intervene. An internal dimension of fusion is very important, understood as the opposite of dissociation. Firstly as a fusion between mind and body, because thought must be one with the ability to do, and in this sense we recover the etymology of the word Art which comes directly from the Latin ars, artis, with a practical meaning in the sense of ability in a productive activity, ability to do harmoniously, in an appropriate manner. Secondly because it must respond to the perennial request to find a solution to a multifaceted multitude of problems of various kinds. It cannot be hidden that the architecture developed by Massimo Fagioli together with a large group of architects in the context of collective analysis follows these settings. But can these skills be taught? The problem of training in the artistic field is not insignificant. Bringing back the educational experience I had during my university years at the Faculty of Architecture in Rome, I often heard it stated that creativity and imagination were innate qualities. Therefore not "teachable". On the other hand, however, the method encountered, although rational and based on technique and notions, in the long run generally managed to have effects on personal sensitivity as an aptitude for solving problems, above all thanks to the interest and critical spirit of the student. The imagination and the ability to make images, beyond and together with the technique, were however increased. What had happened? The comparison with the various subjects and the continuous study of the practical examples created by the masters of architecture had allowed the attentive student to extrapolate the theoretical principles and indispensable contents to be able to build his own professional identity, internalizing them and making them part of his own baggage. A process of identity maturation further enriched by sharing with all the other students in training who were following the same path, and with more or less valid teachers. We proceeded until we acquired the necessary confidence to be ready to intervene and propose our own originality. This process, although gradual and not easily visible, is far from rational. Ultimately it can be said that imagination and creativity can be developed, increased and transformed. The term teaching does not sound very good since it suggests a concept of transfer from one subject to another (see the etymology of the term which derives from the Latin *insignare*, "to impress signs on the mind"), while

following what theorized by Massimo Fagioli we can say that imagination and creativity are present in each of us from birth and can be developed (not transferred), so much so that in some cases they become the main quality of a profession, as happens with artists. "Fantasy is a real relationship with reality, it is the profound relationship that surpasses the mechanical relationship with material reality (the positivistic relationship), the only one that allows knowledge of the latent or psychic reality." (Fagioli, 2013, page 186) It could be said that artists are not born, artists are made. All this opens up a very delicate question on the reality and training of teachers, who should be professionally prepared to allow the maximum development of those qualities that are already present, to varying degrees, in the student. In particular, the ability to continually provoke and stimulate his creativity, knowing how to recognize in him the choices he has undertaken or wants to undertake to direct him in the best way, facilitating and accelerating the development of his imagination, but above all opposing the false beliefs that in our culture, and therefore even in architecture, there is certainly no shortage. The theme of training in the artistic field is certainly that of the student's activity and interest, but to a large extent it is also the theme of the professional and human identity of the trainers.

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