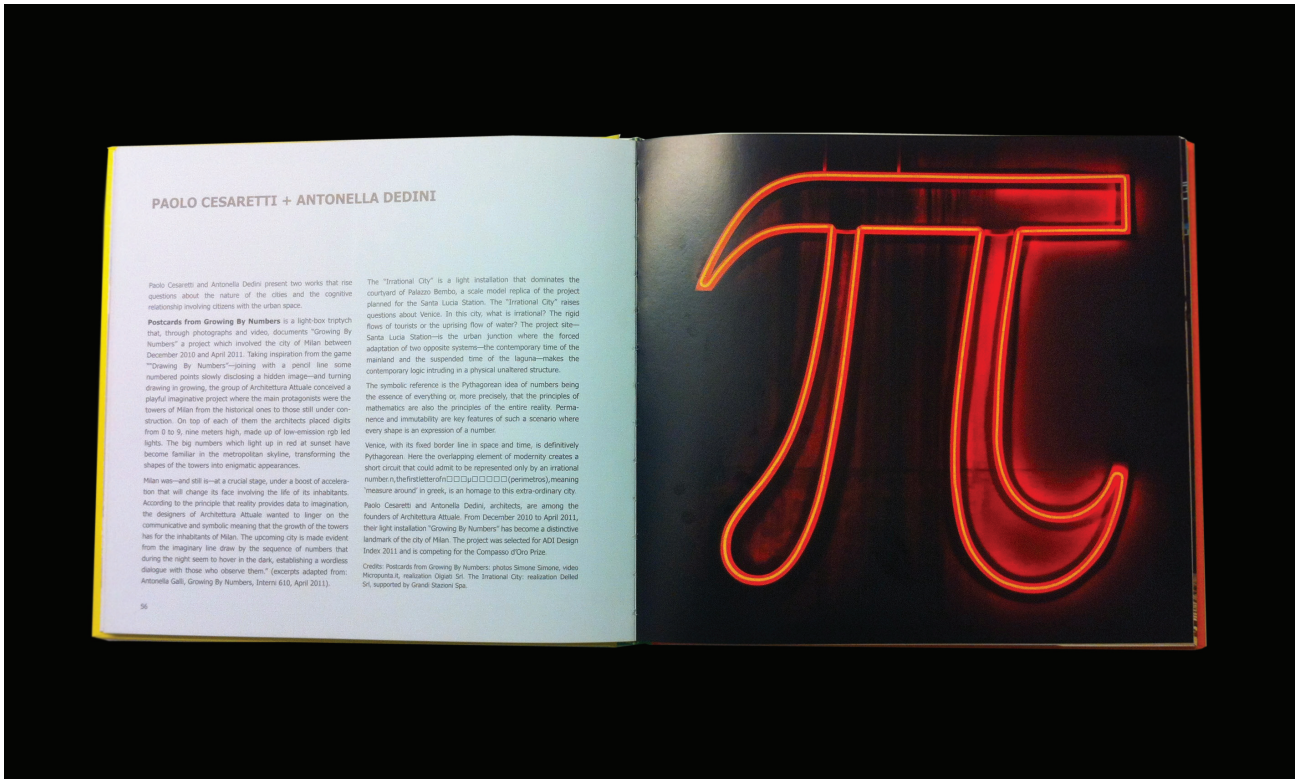

PAOLO CESARETTI + ANTONELLA DEDINI

Paolo Cesaretti and Antonella Dedini present two works that rise questions about the nature of the cities and the cognitive relationship involving citizens with the urban space.

Postcards from Growing By Numbers is a light-box triptych that, through photographs and video, documents "Growing By Numbers" a project which involved the city of Milan between December 2010 and April 2011. Taking inspiration from the game ""Drawing By Numbers"—joining with a pencil line some numbered points slowly disclosing a hidden image—and turning drawing in growing, the group of Architettura Attuale conceived a playful imaginative project where the main protagonists were the towers of Milan from the historical ones to those still under construction. On top of each of them the architects placed digits from 0 to 9, nine meters high, made up of low-emission rgb led lights. The big numbers which light up in red at sunset have become familiar in the metropolitan skyline, transforming the shapes of the towers into enigmatic appearances.

Milan was—and still is—at a crucial stage, under a boost of acceleration that will change its face involving the life of its inhabitants. According to the principle that reality provides data to imagination, the designers of Architettura Attuale wanted to linger on the communicative and symbolic meaning that the growth of the towers has for the inhabitants of Milan. The upcoming city is made evident from the imaginary line draw by the sequence of numbers that during the night seem to hover in the dark, establishing a wordless dialogue with those who observe them." (excerpts adapted from: Antonella Galli, Growing By Numbers, *Interni* 610, April 2011).

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The "Irrational City" is a light installation that dominates the courtyard of Palazzo Bembo, a scale model replica of the project planned for the Santa Lucia Station. The "Irrational City" raises questions about Venice. In this city, what is irrational? The rigid flows of tourists or the uprising flow of water? The project site—Santa Lucia Station—is the urban junction where the forced adaptation of two opposite systems—the contemporary time of the mainland and the suspended time of the laguna—makes the contemporary logic intruding in a physical unaltered structure.

The symbolic reference is the Pythagorean idea of numbers being the essence of everything or, more precisely, that the principles of mathematics are also the principles of the entire reality. Permanence and immutability are key features of such a scenario where every shape is an expression of a number.

Venice, with its fixed border line in space and time, is definitively Pythagorean. Here the overlapping element of modernity creates a short circuit that could admit to be represented only by an irrational number. π, the first letter of πμ□□μ□□□□□ (perimetros), meaning "measure around" in greek, is an homage to this extra-ordinary city.

Paolo Cesaretti and Antonella Dedini, architects, are among the founders of Architettura Attuale. From December 2010 to April 2011, their light installation "Growing By Numbers" has become a distinctive landmark of the city of Milan. The project was selected for ADI Design Index 2011 and is competing for the Compasso d'Oro Prize.

Credits: Postcards from Growing By Numbers: photos Simone Simone, video Micropunta.it, realization Olgiati Srl. The Irrational City: realization Delled Srl, supported by Grandi Stazioni Spa.

Argomento: LIGHT EXHIBIT DESIGN