Introduction

*Crash* features four people. The three of us: Shuli Beimel, Raffaella Laezza and Joerg Gleiter - third-year students in Architectural Composition at IUAV University of Venice, 1986-87. We hail from Tel Aviv, Venice and Berlin. Our professor: Peter Eisenman.

Back in the 1980s, Peter Eisenman was our professor. Nowadays, we are architects\* and teachers and, in the intervening years, we have developed that special relationship that exists between a teacher and student. Peter Eisenman is a teacher who, from the very first moment, sets his students free. The intellectual and architectural journey is the one lesson that is ever-present in the background of his teaching. He has featured at several Venice Biennials and a Triennal in Milan, as well as receiving honorary degrees in Berlin and Rome. Over the years, we have written collaboratively and worked on a handful of projects together. As the years have unfolded, we have had a fluctuating perception of his position in relation to the international debate on architectural autonomy. The debate between Manfredo Tafuri’s team at IUAV and architects in the United States raged in the 1980s and has now completely disintegrated, melted away in comparison to the discussions that once characterised architectural culture. It is not his role in the debate that this book aims to address. Rather, we address how an architect and teacher can create different, heterogeneous pathways among their students, imitators aside. The three of us are a vibrant testimony to this.

Peter taught us that a person of genius knows how to hold their own and it is this notion that he develops and explores in the core themes of his teaching. With very few frills and a lot of attention to the relationship between intellect and spirit, he tells us that ‘Students need to learn the discipline before they begin to invent the new.’ His teaching goes beyond the architecture that runs through its core and at the same time emphasises choice. Words from history are some of Peter’s favourites. Crash, for example, is a word we refer to in the book only by its etymological meaning, i.e. according to the Oxford University Etymology Dictionary: ‘*crasschen*: break in pieces; make a loud, clattering sound; probably imitative’. Shuli and I chose it for the title in full knowledge of Peter’s passion for the word. In the book, each student recounts their ‘crash’ moment, while the interview with Peter sets the scene.

The book is dedicated to architecture students\* and studios\*, as their research is for all of us.

Shuli Beimel, Raffaella Laezza

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