Introduction

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.

Him: Peter Eisenman - our professor.

At that time, he was our professor. Subsequently, in the time that has passed from that period to the present day, we are now architects\* and teachers, and that same relationship that exists between a teacher and their students has been formed. He is a teacher who, from the very first moment, sets his students free. His intellectual and architectural journey is the one lesson that is ever-present in the background. Venice Biennials, a Triennale in Milan, an honorary degree in Berlin and in Rome. A spot of collaborative writing, and a handful of projects. As the years have unfolded, we have had a fluctuating perception of his position in relation to an international debate on autonomy that has now completely disintegrated, melted away in comparison to the discussions that characterised architectural culture between IUAV with Manfredo Tafuri and the United States until the 1980s. 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, the epigones hypothesis 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 course. He develops and clarifies parts of this notion in the pursuit of fundamental themes. With very few frills and a lot of care for 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, while at the same time emphasising choice. Words from history are some of Peter’s favourites. Crash, for example, is one word in the book that is referred to 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, finding in Peter a passion for the word. In the book, each student recounts their crash. In his interview, meanwhile, Peter offers the ambience.

The book is dedicated to architecture students\* and studios\* so that their research can be for all of us.

Shuli Beimel, Raffaella Laezza

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