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At the time, in the holder of this issue of *TECHNE Future Scenarios*, no one could certainly imagine the serious incidents of public health emergencies that have invested nations and peoples, heavily engulfing the global economy. ‘What is to come’ – future scenarios – is not a new question’: this was the incipit of the call of the number, challenging and purposeful, certainly assertive as can be the thought of those who look to the future with positivity and optimism: «[...] As humans, we always have adapted our being in the world through artifacts, tools, built spaces to give a (precise) shape to the image of the future environment in which we will live»¹.

However, how will the future be? What environments we will live in and use? The current dramatic events necessarily require some reflection, albeit brief one. The pandemic that has taken the world by surprise, is removing optimism and security by highlighting a profound weakness in dealing with an event that, although announced over the years by other similar forms but underestimated by most people, has caught politics and science unprepared to give comprehensive answers and propose acceptable solutions even in the emergency. It is precisely the unpredictability of virulence that makes difficult the control if not through social distancing and confinement. A solution that can only be temporary.

It is inevitable, however, to wonder why the many possible dangers and risks that have long been linked to health problems (ebola, sars, etc.), environmental (climate change, disruptions, earthquakes, etc.) and, socio-economic (poverty, ghettoization, immigration, etc.) have not been addressed with the necessary attention. There are no convincing answers, also because in many cases the events appear unintentional but, almost always, they refer to serious human responsibility in not knowing how to prevent the event and, above all, not knowing how to deal with it. A lot of debate is going on, answers are being sought that science and politics have to mediate even in the face of an economic default that seems unstoppable. So the deep concern for physical health is associated with the psychological fear for the future resulting from the traumatic event that – as S. Freud says «[...]not being predictable makes any form of defence impossible»².

It is, therefore, legitimate to ask oneself what will be the future scenarios – possible, probable, preferable – with the awareness that at the moment there are no exhaustive answers. In fact, many of the certainties acquired during the last decades have disappeared, first of all, the deep conviction of being able and knowing how to control nature by serving its own needs.

If, therefore, the pandemic is creating an inevitable disorientation and a consequent slowdown of life in all its expressions, it cannot be denied that the environmental crisis that has characterized the last 50 years, and the economic crisis that occurred between 2007 and 2013, second only to the great depression of the early twentieth century, have long imposed on humanity a change of pace with effects, especially on the social level, not easy to solve.

Architecture, in front of the multiple challenges and their complexity, has to be able to relate to a multicultural society, in rapid change, increasingly forced to deal with the unpredictability of events. Therefore, the attention to the new scenarios, which are already prefigured in this issue, can provide adequate answers from the world of research and architectural culture, having in itself the ability to «[...]to develop a synthesis of scientific, social, political and cultural points of view at a time when the anthropocentric perspective has radically changed our approach to the environment, construction, technology and materials[...]»³.

Numerous and diversified papers contained in the text – 27 selected by double blind review among the 104 received – that through the development of the five topics⁴ proposed in the call, focus the issues on possible future arrangements.

It is, in fact, evident that with the wide diffusion of digital technologies, the culture of the project is undergoing significant transformations. On the one hand, by obtaining greater design and implementation performance. On the other hand – in the transition from a traditional, linear and sequential approach to an integrated and interactive one – modifying the ideation and expressive methods that will necessarily require a change in the management of the relationship between human creativity and artificial intelligence.

The result is an appropriate and profound transformation of the approach to the “project” of cities and for cities that will increasingly face urbanization and population growth, energy problems, land consumption, climate change and possible serious health events, associated with significant social problems already present in large urbanized areas. There are many simulations in worldwide to predict the extent of the phenomena, especially climate phenomena. There are also many backcasting processes done for the construction of future development scenarios and different approaches that, starting from ecological thinking, talk about Collaborative Design, Nature Based Solution, Circular Economics in which the production and consumption processes promote a circular logic “from cradle to cradle”. Certainly, the architectural and urban design, with greater attention to the metabolism of cities, will have to focus on new structures in which a renewed vision of sustainability reviews the relationship between anthropized and natural systems to contribute to their resilience as a stable condition, albeit dynamic, and not as an emergency solution.

This will be possible if there is a real cooperation between the world of design and that of industrial experimentation/production in which technological innovation – technical, material and design – associated with knowledge innovation, will make it possible to govern complexity, identifying transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary ways, even with immaterial collaborative forms, to respond to the main challenges of the future⁵.

It will be fundamental to re-think the figure of the Architect, his training and his new or renewed skills. For some time now, the

growing needs of the world of design and construction, increasingly aimed at a global market, require knowledge and ability to manage digital tools and skills in process and project management. It follows the need to form a new figure of architect, able to govern the various phases with greater knowledge of the potential that lies ahead and full awareness of a future with many uncertainties. A transformation that requires, together with the ability to adapt, new skills and abilities to manage the relationship between human creativity and artificial intelligence. Therefore, there is the need for a revision of training models that are not only based on the use of platforms, even if they are useful facilitating tools, but that identify new and diversified fields of knowledge capable of renewing the figure of the Architect and projecting him into the future, starting from the places of training, in particular the University. Problems, all of which find interesting answers in this Special Issue of *Techne*.

NOTES

¹ Campioli, A., Converso, S. and Paoletti, I. (2019), *Call for paper Techne Special Issue n. 2*, Firenze University Press, Florence.

² Recalcati, M. (2020), "La Repubblica", *Newspaper of 16.03.2020*.

³ Campioli, A., Converso, S. and Paoletti, I (2019), *op. cit.*

⁴ Topics: «1. Architecture and change management: theory, criticism, vision» «2. Cities in transformation: environmental and social design and large scale perspective» «3. Project for climate change: policy and technology for adaptation and mitigation» «4. New challenges for technical innovation: production, techniques and materials» 5. Architect of tomorrow: knowledge, education, pedagogy».

⁵ Lucarelli, M.T. (2019), "I nuovi scenari della Progettazione tecnologica", Lauria, M., Mussinelli, E. and Tucci, F. (Eds.), *La produzione del Progetto*, Collana Politecnica, Maggioli Editore, Sant'Arcangelo di Romagna (RN), Italy..