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Architectural Reflection on Italo Calvino's Invisible Cities

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ABSTRACT

Cities actually endure a considerable lack of space for much needed urban development. Moreover, nowadays contemporary architectural challenges are extensive and complex social issues. Furthermore, present challenges represent a fundamental city necessities, or a broad of society demands which we must take seriously into consideration, hence, we must make the necessary preparations for direct urban actions on fulfilling those issues from the best possible known urban strategies. Urban planning is a design process with a primary course to protect the environment, to manage urban infrastructure as a whole integrated system, and deliver the most appropriate style for living. In relation to sustainability and ecology, a qualitative urban design can significantly improve condition, and quality of life of urbanites. The study presented in this paper, has conceptually researched, a design model of high-rise structures with its proportions mainly, focussing imaginary on future urban planning structures. The study applied an empirical observation method through the arranged and combined structure models, strengthened with studied handmade drawings. The studied models were investigated mainly through literature review, and especially analysed "Invisible Cities" of Italo Calvino's prose poems, as a research inspiration. Hence, according to the conceptual conclusions of this study, we much prefer urban pattern where the urban expand of the cities, are more prose poem influenced as the visually presented by the design models of this study. Immediate and global issues which represent urban reflections, regarding to the: air pollution, built heritage, climate changes, lack of cities expanding space, and public health, requires holistic integrated environmental actions, moreover, actions that preserve ecological processes as an environmental healing strategies.

Keywords: Architecture, Invisible Cities, Urban planning, Modelling, Environment

INTRODUCTION

Cities actually endure a considerable lack of space for much needed urban development. Moreover, nowadays contemporary architectural challenges are extensive and complex social issues. Furthermore, present challenges represent a fundamental city necessities, or a broad of society demands which we must take seriously into consideration, hence, we must make the necessary preparations for direct urban actions on fulfilling those issues from the best possible known urban strategies. As Calvino stated: “When a man rides a long time through wild regions he feels the desire for a city.” [1], furthermore, cities are open integrated structures and wide entities with specific and convoluted metabolism that transform enormous amount of energy, generate huge amount of waste and originate a sum of distinct environmental circumstances, and urban oscillations [2].

However, new and future challenges will present a completely new life style issues, new trend concepts, and quite new original requirements of future generations. Thus, today we aim to the better and higher quality of life, better urban course of living, claiming future urban geometries and qualitative expansion for the cities. Nowadays, we develop a quite common spatial framework, primary aiming to achieve a better quality of day to day life, aiming qualitative conditions and wellbeing for urbanites. Therefore, future urban planning must scientifically determine: the areas, location of urban blocks, and architectural structures that can potentially, and probably fulfil future new style society needs. According to the Calvino, “The city ... consists of relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past” [1].

Hence, the Calvino argued on those prose poems: “there exists another Beersheba, where the city’s most elevated virtues and sentiments are poised, and that if the terrestrial Beersheba will take the celestial one as its model the two cities will become one [...] In Beersheba’s beliefs, there is an element of truth and one of error. It is true that the city is accompanied by two projections of itself, one celestial and one infernal; but the citizens are mistaken about their consistency” [1].

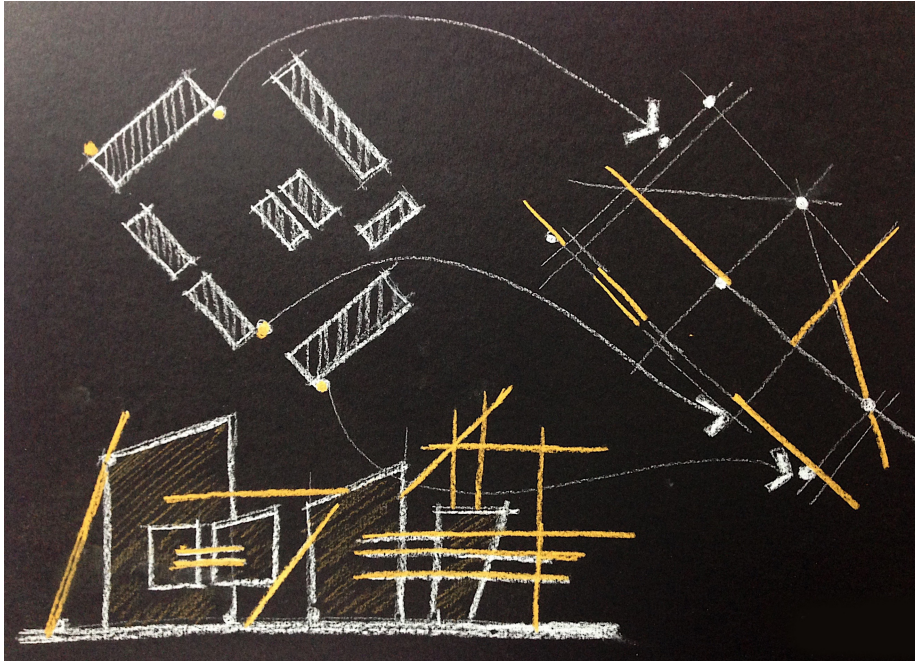
Urban planning is a design process with a primary course to protect the environment, to manage urban infrastructure as a whole integrated system, and deliver the most appropriate style for living. In relation to sustainability and ecology, a qualitative urban design can significantly improve condition, and quality of life of urbanites. The challenges will remain on implementation and in enforcement of these design legal instructions. Therefore, it is crucial to encourage every action, related to city functionality

which will minimize any faced functional, and ecological problem. With a new millennium began a new era, a globalisation era, which will present a totally contrasting and new living habits in the coming decades [2].

“Andria was built so artfully that its every street follows a planet’s orbit, and the buildings and the places of community life repeat the order of the constellations and the position of the most luminous stars: [...] and thus the days on earth and the nights in the sky reflect each other” [1].

MATERIALS and METHODS

The study presented in this paper, has conceptually researched, a design model of high-rise city with its proportions mainly, imaginary focussing on future urban planning structures. The study applied an empirical observation method through the arranged and combined structure model, strengthened with studied handmade drawings. The studied models were investigated mainly through literature review, and especially analysed “Invisible Cities” of Italo Calvino’s prose poems, as a research inspiration. Graphic studies contain handmade drawings of conceptual urban composition with the multi structural parts of the studied models, accenting to the structural interrelations of the form, position, proportions, and constructive abilities regarding to the city urban structures. Study concept was the interrelation of art, and architecture with modelling reflection and transformations, based on the further analysis of the ‘fantastic cities’ described on the Calvino’s work, a variety of literature segments from which we concluded that described prose poems are different attributes of the same city. “With cities, it is as with dreams: everything imaginable can be dreamed, but even the most unexpected dream is a rebus that conceals a desire or, its reverse, a fear. Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else” [1].



*Figure 1. Conceptual drawings, a holistic approach to the sum of all parts.
Contemporary architecture reflection of Calvino's prose poems.*

Furthermore, Hawking in his work: *A brief history of time*, state: "In real time, the universe has a beginning and an end at singularities that form a boundary to space-time and at which the laws of science break down. But in imaginary time, there are no singularities or boundaries. So maybe what we call imaginary time is really more basic, and what we call real is just an idea that we invent to help us describe what we think the universe is like" [3].

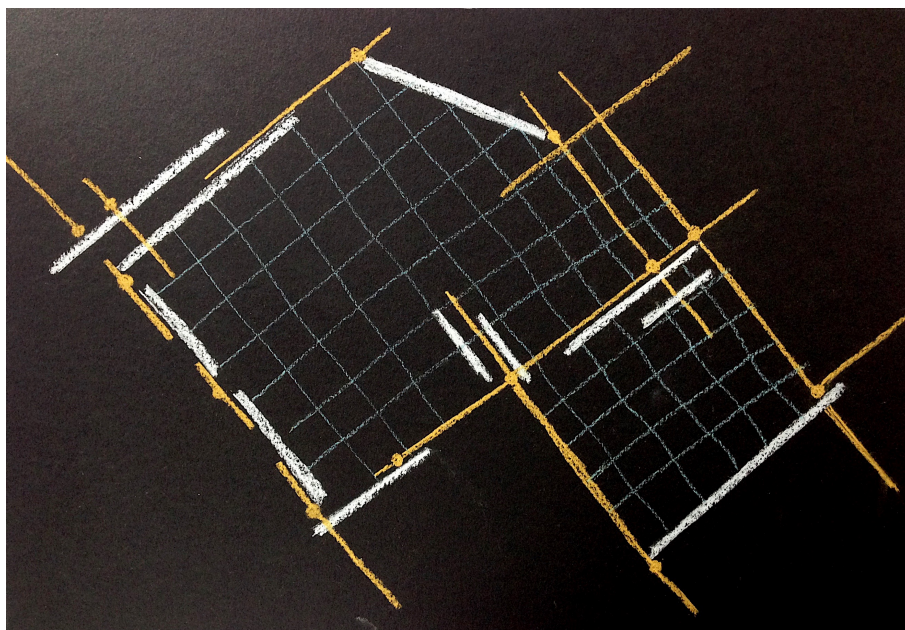


Figure 2. Conceptual drawing, proportional grid of design. Structure and Construction.

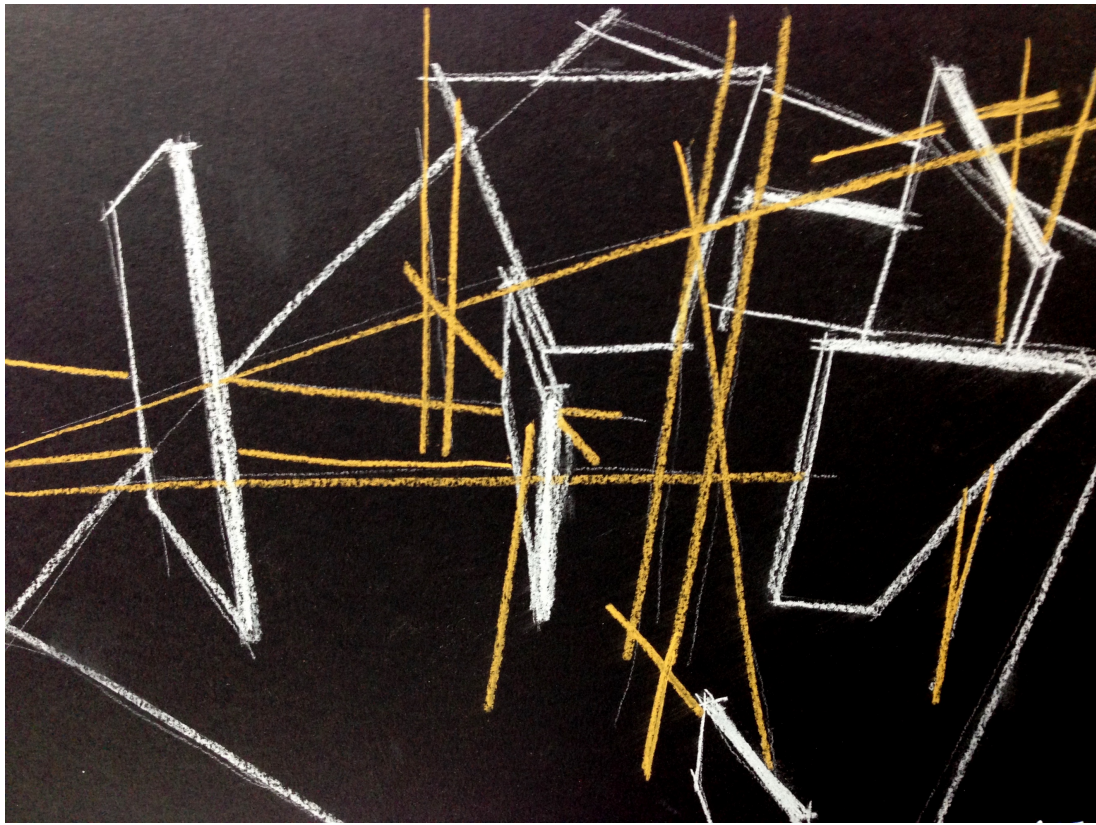


Figure 3. Conceptual perspective - 3D modelling, interrelation of all structural parts.



Figure 4. Composition of urban city structure, proportions and construction.

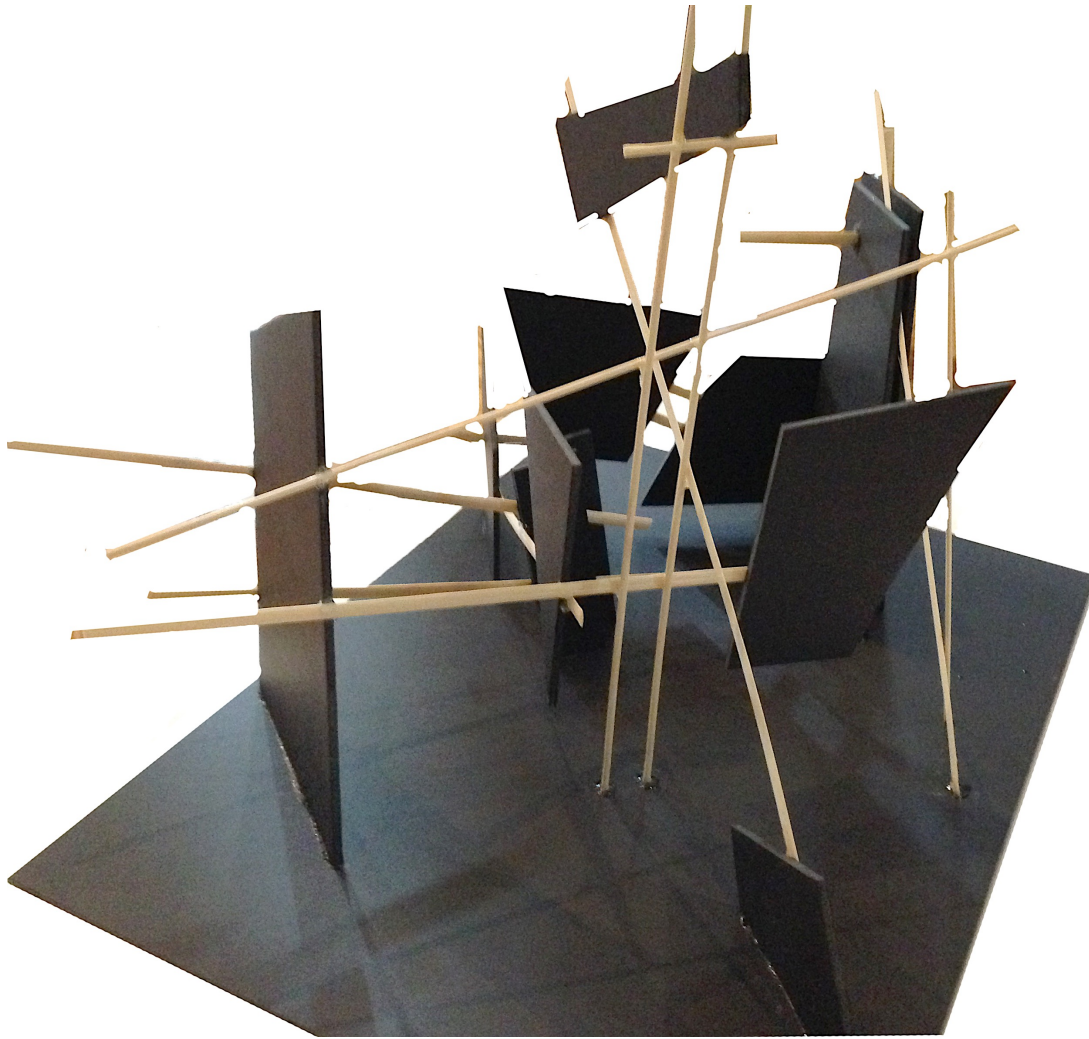


Figure 5. 3D model – Integrated urban city structure as whole system.

DISCUSSION

Required expanding urban space is a global issue, furthermore, those urban advancement challenges can't be addressed only for the present time, moreover, futuristic environmental design concepts are crucially necessary, to preserve and accomplish a better living conditions, a better quality of life for future generations. In this paper, we argue that actual cities, or even better mega cities, must arise to be physically and mentally prepared for the challenges of the upcoming decades. As visually described in this paper, prose poems of Calvino's "Invisible Cities", can conceptually correspond to our research model as future contemporary artistic expression, interrelated with the high-rise structures, and urban development.

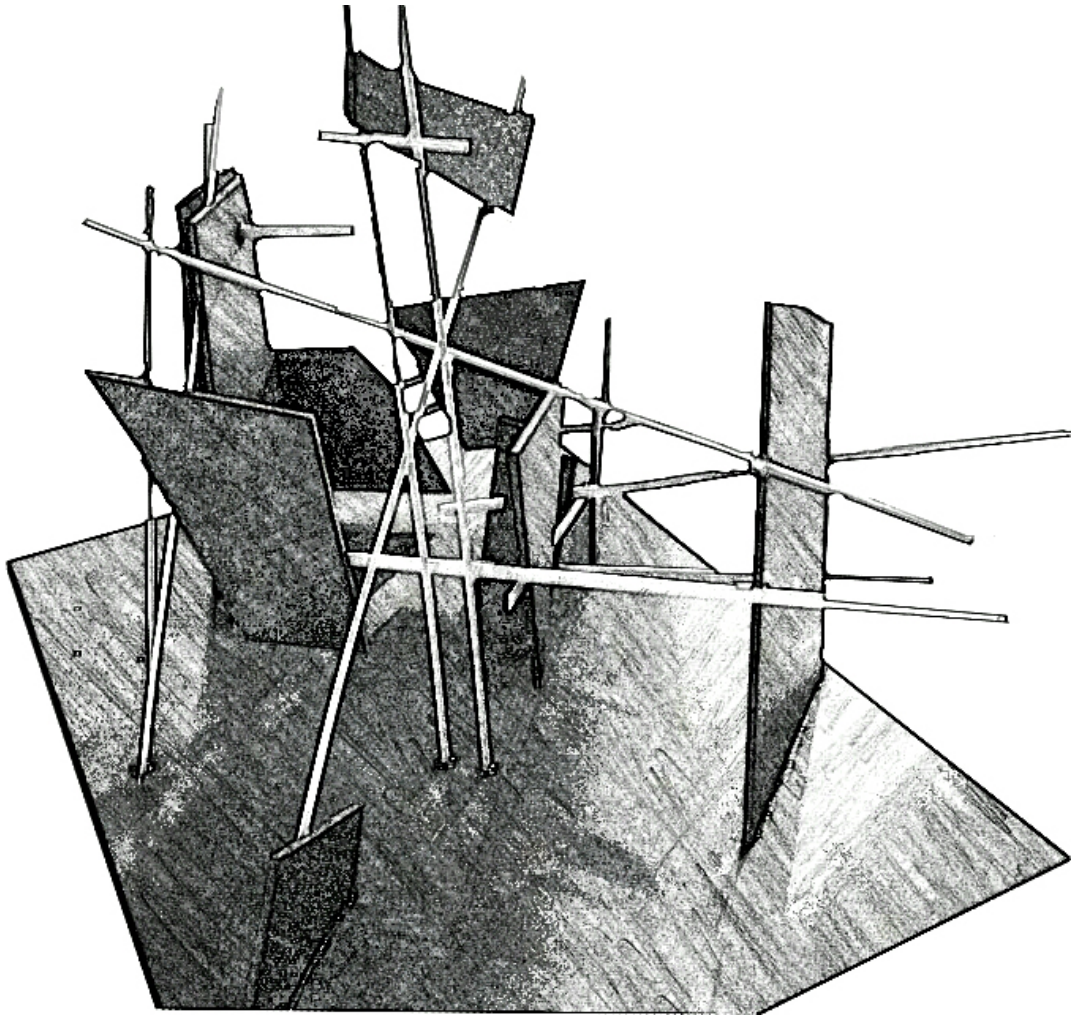


Figure 6. Contemporary Artistic reflection on Calvino's Invisible Cities.

In relation to the complexity of the prose poems of Calvino's "Invisible Cities", we argue that cities are huge, and complex ecosystems with a specific phenomenon directly reflected in our health, resources, economic, social and aesthetic fields. Furthermore, it can be conceptually considered that cities are locally and regionally specific [2], hence, we technically conclude that there are no cities which fulfil all the needs of its urbanites, moreover, there is no city which aren't talked as a model for the other city attributes, positively or negatively. Thus, there is always a need for expanding the capacities of the urban zones, or varieties, of expanding of whole spatial area as a future research model. Hence, when the impact of urban growth and demographic volumes shifts, those issues are very serious and demanding contemporary challenges for each fast-growing city. In this environmental situation, we must carefully further develop, and update the urban strategies regarding to the less known upcoming city challenges, which will directly influence the environment and public health of the next generations.

CONCLUSION

Humanity wellbeing is a greatest global concern, therefore, can't be addressed only locally, hence, local and international actions are irreplaceable and crucially necessary. The current urban state of the cities, requires specific municipal's responsibilities and activities, especially when the situation is directly linked to the quality of life, and present the potentially hazard for the public health. Hence, according to the conceptual conclusions of this study, we much prefer urban pattern where the urban expand of the cities, are more prose poem influenced as the visually presented by the design models of this research. Immediate and global issues which represent urban reflections, regarding to the: air pollution, built heritage, climate changes, lack of cities expanding space, and public health, requires holistic integrated environmental actions, furthermore, actions that preserve ecological processes as an environmental healing strategies.

REFERENCES

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