

Casa Cassiopea - Initial Project - Introduction

Introduction

02/2024

Casa Cassiopea is not an end, but something more like a mean, even though also this would be, to some extent, erroneous. Like it is not a collective project but also not an individual one, but one that tries to make an appointment with unknown sensibilities. It is a place that can be as much of an empty, abandoned house as it can be brimming with every kind of life forms, traversed by ideas, animated by thought and intertwined with individuals' projectualities. Where people can come together not only for a project, but also for sharing a living space that is designed to give birth to conversations, new stimuli, or an altogether different project from the one you got into the place at first, where the kind of knowledge of each other that leads to interesting developments can spark, between individuals who might not have otherwise had the possibility to give to the time spent together the necessary quality for affinities to develop.

From my experience, knowing each other is not only about knowing each other's ideas, discussing at length about what we think, what we feel, or our experiences, but also, and in my opinion even more importantly, is knowing each other in the day to day life; when one normally wakes up, what mood are they in the morning, how different is their laugh when is not tense but liberatory, how do they like to work, how often will they lose their head-torch, keys, wallet, how do they react to surprises or what is their routine... those are things that cannot be known, or built up, meeting each other for events, discussions, dinners, even less assembleahs. Even sharing the same struggle is often not enough, or rather not the right place for it, somehow, since – for as much as some of us would like it – life in a constantly active struggle (like living in an occupied space that needs defending, or meeting in attack situations etc) is not the totality of our lives. Those are wonderful and important moments of rupture with a deadly status quo, but we are so much more than “fighters”, and knowing each others only in this light means only knowing a side, maybe not even the most interesting one. Cassiopea could be a place where this kind of knowledge (if that is even the right word), not based on rationalization, words and external circumstances, could be fostered, or at least, that's what I felt about this place and one of the reasons why I choose to make it happen.

The first thing I sensed the first time I got here was the smell of burning wood and that of a boiling soup on the fire, a smell that for me means home. And exactly because this is not a space to live in, for the period of time one spends between those walls (and those woods), it can be their home. For the ones among us who want to destroy this world, who feel destruction is the only joy left, the only sensible thing to do, who are always in the midst of a crushing world and feel that is the only place where they want to be, this place can be much more than a home, as I discovered working on it, it can be a place where resting is united with a constant flow of sparks, of shivers, of ideas. It can be a place where you build something to later be transported elsewhere, or where you make an event in which you get to meet your future accomplice. It can be everything and nothing. This is the fascinating thing – for me, at least – of Casa Cassiopea: it is a possibility. Or better, it is a thousand possibilities all together, and no reality, no acronym, no identitarianism to tie them all together and to limit them; the only limit is what the individuals who will come can imagine. Maybe, then, the knowledge I was talking about before can turn into affinity, and the thoughts that were born in this place can turn into action...

Right because Cassiopea is all this, it has its own limits, since it is so easy for something to become more important than the humans who inhabit it, since this house is only valuable if ideas and emotions and life are poured into it by the living, for as beautiful as it is, for as many roses grow on its balconies, as many workshops and wonderful, hidden treasures it holds, it only is a house, and if there is no one passing through it, that is everything it will stay: an empty, even though beautiful, building. There are also other, maybe more obvious, limits, though, the text already talks at length about this, so I'd rather speak of other things here, even though I clearly see those possibilities. But since individuals are unpredictable – as they should be – only time will tell if those sad options will become the reality to which Cassiopea is subjected. The main difficulty I see in this project is closely linked to what for

me is its most beautiful side, the thousand possibilities only limited by individuals' imagination I was writing about before. It is easy to be scared into immobility by a blank sheet of paper, and so much more by such a big project, when everything we can make in it is only up to us. When there are no masters to follow, no guidelines to respect, no predetermined set of guidance or ideas to be followed, no expectations to be respected, only possibilities opening up to us, we are trembling in the unknown, betting against the void this world makes us feel. It is so easy to concentrate on the external aspects of this place, on making it more and more of anything, more beautiful, more adapt, more efficient, more well-known, with more laboratories... It is so much easier to fall in the familiar, and so comfortable, zone of quantities, as it is for the fishes to stay in the “*enveloping and reassuring hug of a cassiopea*”¹, instead of giving ourself the time and space, and overall letting ourselves take the risk of striking for the quality that cannot rest in a house – since, at the end of the day, it is only walls and wheels and gears that we are talking about – but has to be found in what the individuals will do with it. At the start I said that Cassiopea is something like a mean, but that also this was, in some ways, erroneous. The way I see Cassiopea is a spark. If it will land on some flammable materials and help them burst in a glaring flame capable of posing a threat to this System or be put out by the humidity, or die off on its own because of some mistake, or become an amber waiting for the right wind to turn it into a fire, only time will tell; for now, we can only keep on blowing on it, remembering that “*the blankest of social peace always have some mends from which a blow of breeze can try to get the ambers to light up*”².

¹ Quote from the text of Casa Cassiopea – Initial Project

² Quote from the text of Casa Cassiopea – Initial Project

materials

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materials.cassiopea.house