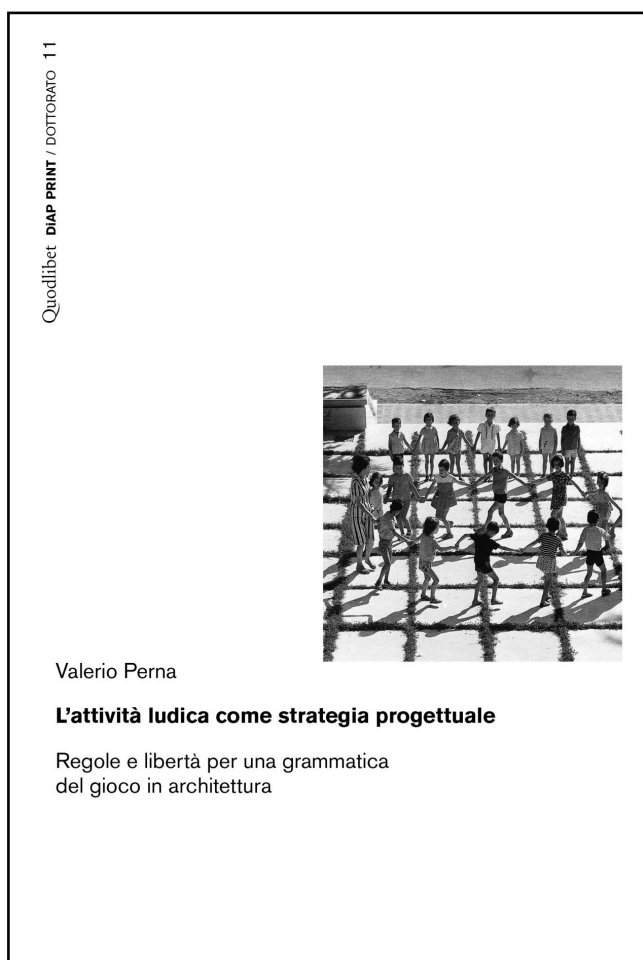# L'attività Ludica Come Strategia Progettuale
Regole e Libertà per una Grammatica del Gioco in Architettura

LEDIAN BREGASI

POLIS University

Quodlibet **DIAP PRINT** / DOTTORATO 11

Valerio Perna

L'attività ludica come strategia progettuale

Regole e libertà per una grammatica
del gioco in architettura

Creating is a mysterious activity, happening somewhere between the mind and the body. It is mysterious indeed but it is not an arbitrary act. At least this is the position of who needs to teach how to create.

The same challenge is faced when designing. One of the most difficult design tasks for an architect would be to generate a project without constraints. We are taught that one of the first decisions an architect should take is to position oneself relative to the boundary conditions. One can take inspiration from the context or choose to oppose it. Any position a creator takes, the *horror vacui* is a real challenge for the designer. The phobia of the blank space is confronted by some architects through the avoidance of the outer context. Instead, an inner disquisition on abstract formal speculations can be used to generate the design concept. In other cases, the spirit of the time is taken as the driving force for creating the new architecture. So did the modernist movement that turned the idea of the machine, born out of the industrial revolution, into a design paradigm. The architecture of the XX century and its city were born from the idea that they were machines for living.

Valerio Perna, in his "L'attivatà ludica come strategia progettuale" *Playful activities as design strategy,* makes the designers follow a different path. He explores the possibilities of creating architectural space starting from strategies borrowed from the games. The mechanically organized architecture of the first half of the XX century could not follow the pace of an evolving society. The forms that followed the functions were not able to host the explosion of activities needed to sustain the contemporary life so the need for new conceptual paradigms emerged. Perna describes how the idea of the game can help us understand some of the most important design strategies of the second half of the XX century and how architects can use strategies borrowed from other fields of knowledge for creating and negotiating new rules of designing.

It is on the idea of rules that the architectonic game can be played. As in a game, a set of rules define the constraints, and

it is in the ability of the designer to navigate these rules, create new strategies, have an open-ended mentality, and take into account the ever-changing environment. As in a chess game where there are no predefined sets of moves that lead you to victory, there are no recipes for designing the perfect architecture. But there can be strategies. The difference between a ready-made recipe and a strategy is that the latter allows the other, the unpredictable, the life to be part of the game and by doing so allows the emergence of a new kind of architecture.

Perna organizes his book into three parts. The first analyses and describes the game and its rules. A review of the scientific research applied to the games is conducted. Through it, we can understand that historically there can be identified a number of branches in the study of games. Some study children's games in order to understand the development stages while others study the rules and strategies of the famous games. Only recently some new categories of studies have emerged that treat the game as a biological function of humankind, necessary for individual development and interconnected to complex social interactions.

The second part describes how the architect uses games as a generative method. Topics such as lateral thinking and the idea of error are explored on their potential for creating novelty in design. At the same time, it is analyzed how games played during childhood have influenced architects in their design methodologies. Famous examples such as the relation between Froebelian games and the organic architecture of F. L. Wright are explored in this section.

The conclusive part deals with methodological aspects of using games in bottom-up processes of urban regeneration. The regeneration project is one of the most complex endeavors an architect can undertake since it needs to mediate between the conflicting needs of different stakeholders. Games are very similar in nature, they are the playground of contradictory objectives of different players so, by borrowing methods from them, new strategies of design can be formulated. These strategies, as in the games, are evolving with the development of the game environment and can accommodate complex scenarios of interaction for non-zero-sum games.

The majority of the "games" we play in our everyday life are non-zero-sum games, meaning that the winning of one faction is not equal to the loss of the opposing group. We make friends, we negotiate, and we create long-term relations based on our ability to play long-term games. Valerio Perna opens this new horizon of methods, strategies, and actions to the architectural design practice. He opens up the possibility for a better architecture and for a playful city.