MEDITERRANEAN MUSEOGRAPHY. SEMANTIC STRUCTURES BETWEEN TENSION AND SURFACE.

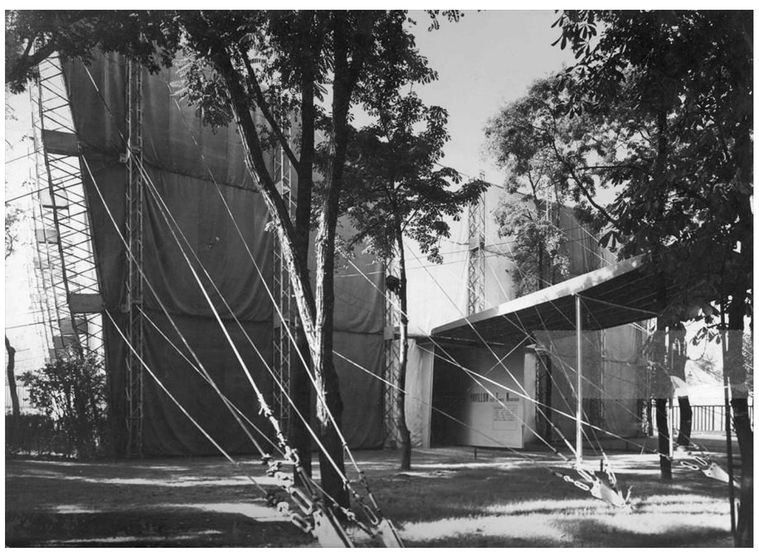
Cristina Fiordimela, ICOM Italia

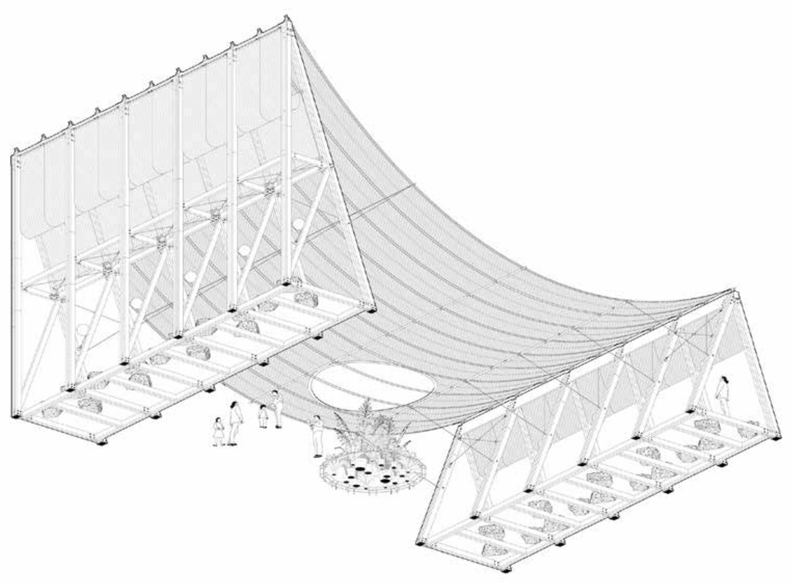
Ninety years on from Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret's design for the Pavillon de Temps Nouveaux (1936), built in the 16th arrondissement with the vision of a "Travelling Educational Museum for the People. Town and Country Planning (Architecture and Town Planning)", echoing the ideas of the newly elected Popular Front, tension and surface are still key words for connecting the Mediterranean museum and narrative. Taking tension/surface as a critical nexus, this poster opens up a long-term perspective on the exhibition design: a subtle envelope, an architectural fold, which accumulates and nullifies the dichotomy between inside and outside, in and out, highlighting the intersections between the Mediterranean landscape and the museum. The graft between tent and pavilion, which has associated the Mediterranean with nomadism and temporariness as an emanation of colonial domination, manifests itself today rather in incompleteness and suspension, as a desire for a '*peau*-saggio where there is no presumption of eternity' (Freddy Paul Grunert).

How are the semantic and semiotic structures of exhibition design changing, understood as a space of interconnection immersed en plein-air within the urban fabric, as well as within museum complexes, where signs multiply and codes overlap, rendering the complexity and indecipherability of the contemporary landscape? The Mediterranean landscape and its reverberation in the architecture of museum exhibitions and installations: how is the space between exhibition, performance and research changing today?

A little selection of projects, theoretical or built, which explore the relationship between tension and surface, viewing the museum as an interconnecting landscape-space between urban architecture, city and countryside, bringing to the surface museum traces as 'bodies without organs' (Gilles Deleuze), 'bodies without functions', semi-open shells, 'active surfaces' (Andrea Branzi), and tensile structures.

In these projects, the tent appears as a kind of archetype, yet at the same time marks key junctures between exhibition design, culture and the Mediterranean landscape: the travelling museum conceived as a tented pavilion by Le Corbusier/ The tension-folded 'Mediterráneo' pavilion, which pays tribute to the Mediterranean blind, whose mechanism has allowed the adaptation of living spaces to adverse weather conditions by offering an effective, simple, and lightweight solution to combat high temperatures/In models of Frei Otto, manual and empirical knowledge integrate with the coding of architectural pre-algorithms condensed in the membrane: not a technical-structural shell for wrapping contents, but rather a receptive skin-tent, that recovers in the word "pneumatic" the physical-chemical action as a principle of life, of breath/





Le Corbusier, Pavillon des temps nouveaux, Paris,1936-1937. Photo © FLC, Paris.
Manuel Bouzas, Mediterraneo, Valencia, 2023. Image © M. Bouzas.





Frei Otto. Denken in Modellen, Exhibition by Georg Vrachliotis, with Sabiha Keyif for the ZKM, Karlsruhe, 2016.
Photo © C. Fiordimela, Werkarchiv Frei Otto.





Regner Ramos, Once Upon Three Femisites, 4th International Exhibition Inequalities,
Triennale di Milano, 2025. Photo © DLS Studio
Angela Ferreira, Zip Zap Circus School, Cape Town, 2000-2002. Photo © David Goldblatt.





Federica Fragapane, Midori Hasuike, Shapes of Inequalities, 4th International Exhibition Inequalities,
Triennale di Milano, 2025. Photo © DLS Studio.
Cristina Fiordimela, Freddy Paul Grunert, Fabrizio Tamburini, Uwe Wössner, Symmetries of Light, ZKM
Karlsruhe, 2018. Photo © Zilius.

The absence of the body as an absence of tension in the fabric that envelops and interlocks, as in a loom, in *Once Upon Three Feministes*, within a "queer" continuum between the organic body and site-writing installation/The unfinished space, light and airy, the graft between the pavillon and the tent, the as a tool for the decolonization of Mediterranean language in Angela Ferreira's research in Africa (Zip Zap Circus)/In the last two case studies, the essence of the Mediterranean is conveyed through the interplay between light and surface: in the "crystallization of metadata" in Federica Fragapane and Midori Hasuike's "curves for the", the installation is a scenographic effect representing the idea of flows through a wave of shadow lines, while in "SoL Symmetries of Light" by the team of C. Fiordimela, F. P. Grunert, F. Tamburini, U. Woëssner (an art-science experience produced by ZKM and exhibited at the Science Gallery in Melbourne in 2018), the installation coincides with the work itself; it is not a representation, but a data stream that corresponds to a direct interference of the human body with the curvatures of space.

In conclusion, the tent, as a concept of Mediterranean space—unlike its Nordic counterpart, namely the cabin's concept distinguished by peepholes and windows separating the interior from the exterior—is more sensitive, more fragile, plays with shadows, offers glimpses of the surroundings, and is an atmospheric space.