

Claude Parent, man of many possibilities

He inspired many and will undoubtedly remain a reference for a great number of architects, artists and other creators. Claude Parent died on 27 February 2016, the day after his 93rd birthday, leaving French architecture an orphan of one of its visionaries.

When his death was announced, *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* was going into print with this issue dedicated to architecture and climate. We have changed the scheduled layout to pay tribute to the one who was a friend of André Bloc (founder of AA in 1930) and, always, an attentive and faithful reader.

Claude Parent was a reference for the profession. Renowned architects or students were always welcome in his home in Neuilly-sur-Seine, near Paris. Tributes were plethoric even before February 27. In 2007, Jean Nouvel dedicated his Philharmonie de Paris to him. In 2014, Rem Koolhaas devoted a room of the Venice Architecture Biennale to the oblique function, and it is impossible not to see in Zaha Hadid's work a literal borrowing, much too literal to Parent's taste. We retain of course the iconoclastic dimension of the oblique structure, theorized with his friend and colleague Paul Virilio in 1963, but, above all, it represented "the intention of a new type of investment of the lived-in space", an alternative to the "obsolete" horizontal and "its abstract and heretical corollary", the vertical. Thanks to the oblique, the obstacle becomes surmountable, the circulation, inhabitable, space, evolving, the world, tangible and the body, invigorated by effort. The architect of the Drusch house in Versailles (1966) did not so much formulate a utopia then defend the absolute necessity of creating a new way of moving and being in our increasingly banal, aseptic, regulated and militarized cities. Claude Parent had invented the possibility of another world, and he respected the same freedom for every object, every undertaking.

This was the case with his observations on the recent changes in *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* that he shared with the magazine's team through handwritten letters. Here's what he wrote on 17 May 2014 about issue 400: "Open [the magazine] to other categories of professionals: architects smother their magazines. It is up to you to play without them. You'll reap more originality, hope and PLEASURE." On 13 November 2014, about issue 403 devoted to the suburban habitat: "Bravo for the single-family housing. It will never die and this persistence clearly deserves an issue. But it will nonetheless never progress. This stubborn but victoryless survival is interesting."

A straight-shooter, in the avant-garde all along, Claude Parent embodied, alone, the free-thinking that every creator defends.

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