A DIALOGUE BETWEEN HUMAN AND NATURE
Architecture as a medium for the perception

The aim of this research and consequently of the design, is to show how humans are able to establish a direct connection with nature, even when using artificial intervention. To achieve the necessary knowledge, in order to design a project able to answer to this wide problematic, the research had to touch different arguments concerning many different fields and using different approaches.

The structure of the research is made of three main chapters, and a conclusive one:
Man is nature;
The in-between realm;
The body memory;
The project;
This last, chapter as a matter of fact, serves as an introduction for the design project and, at the same time, being the project the formal translation of the theoretical knowledge, works as conclusion for the first part of the investigation.

The contents of each chapter, is a combination of theoretical research, reference projects, and experimentations made on the basis of the knowledge acquired from the theoretical part.

The first chapter focuses mainly on the relationship between human and nature in a philosophical an historical way. It gives an overview on how we have been interacting with the land during the history and how we see it now.

The second chapter is related more to the kind of formal interpretation that I want to give to the design, in relationship to the philosophical ideology of the first one. In this section there is a combination of theory and case studies on contemporary architectural projects that, in my opinion translate well the kind of space and geometrical composition that I want to achieve in my design.

Also by looking at the choice of the case studies and references project is easy to understand how wide this topic is. Indeed, sources of inspiration have been founded in different fields, such as: architecture (contemporary and ancient), art movement (Land Art, Romanticism, Arte Povera), philosophy, photography etc.

The third chapter instead, focuses more on the way we perceive architecture and the space: a sensorial perception. Also in this case, experiments are combined with theory in order to build up a background knowledge for the subsequent design process.

I believe that this combination of different topics give to the research and therefore to the design, an added value. Is really important, in my opinion to be able to overcome the disciplinary boundaries and research contribution from other fields of interest.

The relationship between human and nature, nowadays in particular, I think is an argument that should not be forgotten. Is undeniable that human beings are part of the nature their self, and as inhabitants of the earth they are effected from it and at the same time they can provoke effects on the planet as well.

Man is part of nature, but at the same time is also in a way autonomous subject that, depending on the situation, can assume the role of allay and partner or opponent and sometimes even enemy. The relationship between man and nature is one of the crucial issues of the twenty-century from which, as a matter of fact depends also much of the future quality of life of mankind. It is good to realize that, we are part of a unique system.

Today we know quite well what ‘Man’ is. Is an animal, a part in all respect of natural cycles, he feed himself, he grows, he reproduces and dies like other mammals. The concept of,
Man being part of the nature, might be easier accepted if we consider the planet earth not only in the present moment, but also as a cycle of the million of years of its life, during which it saw the rise and flatter of mountains, moving continents, drying inland seas, deserts formation, succession of warm and cold periods, appearing of new animal species, including humans and entire plant extinction as a result of catastrophic events. Never the less it can be said that nature has also its own dynamic rhythms, different times from the one of human kinds. Nature follows its essential physical low of necessity; it does not know the concept of wanting or discretionary needs. Relentless in its beauty and expressive power, still its devastating destructive power is visible to all.

The attraction towards nature has always therefore been quite conflicting, since on one hand we are attracted to it but on the other hand we are submissive and powerless against its power. Somehow it might be because in the depth of nature we are able to discover our deepest self but since we have no control over it we feel in a way lost and vulnerable to its power. Therefore, is easy to understand why the relationship between man and nature always existed, even if during the history it has experienced different stages.

They way I see the interaction between human and nature sees nature as a source of inspiration for human kind and this should comes only from the simple fact that we live in this world, we grow up and change in it, we think and we remember. All this transforms in ‘lived experience’ which will influence all our actions, decisions and therefore designs.

Primary elements such as: light, simple shapes, natural materials and symbolism should become the main components for the design process. This kind of architecture can be considered almost as a critic against the usual design, where the architectural objects are usually designed as protagonists in the space without any dialogue with the nature and surrounding.

The architecture that the research lead towards, should proposes itself as a dissolved and soft presence; transgressive but not piercing, uninhibited, unusual, obviously artificial, but not arrogant, authoritative, not authoritarian. This kind of approach tents to a type of architecture that lies horizontally, wedging and compressing in the free spaces. Therefore, the graft within architectural object and landscape, creates a symbiosis between nature and artifice, where both, while managing to hold their own identity and recognition, are designed and modified in such a way that the result of their synergy is better than the two single individuals. This new synergy is able to create and reveal a landscape, or a place that did not exist before. The graft is an operation that should strengthens, gives and shows the meaning of the place.

Hence, in my design product the architectural object become a medium for humans’ perception of the natural environment. Architecture is the transitional point, is the edge between nature and artifice and it is on this precise edge that the dialogue takes place.

The whole point of the design is to capture the things that people normally overlook and propose them in a new way, in order to generate thoughts and feelings. The architectural object is considered as an enhancement of the natural landscape, a spatial research to achieve a place for harmony between human and nature.

The same goes for the shape of the architectural object.

Inside the condition of being in a pure form with an instantly understandable geometry the space washes away any attention towards the architecture itself. Inwardly the structure is a medium to lead one’s attention exteriorly. Ultimately the form is a function of the purpose, the contemplation of nature.