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## SCENARI

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*Fabrizia Bandi*

## **The concept of “Freespace”: architecture as care, gift, place and common good.**

FREESPACE describes a generosity of spirit and a sense of humanity at the core of architecture’s agenda, focusing on the quality of space itself.

FREESPACE focuses on architecture’s ability to provide free and additional spatial gifts to those who use it, and on its ability to address the unspoken wishes of strangers.

FREESPACE celebrates architecture’s capacity to find additional and unexpected generosity in each project – even within the most private, defensive, exclusive or commercially restricted conditions.

FREESPACE provides the opportunity to emphasise nature’s free gifts of light – sunlight and moonlight, air, gravity, materials-natural and man-made resources.

FREESPACE encourages reviewing ways of thinking, new ways of seeing the world, of inventing solutions where architecture provides for the well-being and dignity of each citizen of this fragile planet.

FREESPACE can be a space for opportunity, a democratic space, un-programmed and free for uses not yet conceived. There is an exchange between people and buildings that happens, even if not intended or designed, so buildings themselves find ways of sharing and engaging with people over time, long after the architect has left the scene. Architecture has an active as well as a passive life.

FREESPACE encompasses freedom to imagine, the free space of time and memory, binding past, present and future together, building on inherited cultural layers, weaving the archaic with the contemporary.

Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara

From a philosophical perspective, space can be considered essentially connected to that which is free: an available natural element freely given and also an irreducible category of our experience. On the other hand, architecture can be considered a man-made space, which occurs within this natural element and which, through its existential task, enables man to dwell in it. The term “Freespace”, as we will see, merges essential qualities of architecture and space.

The present inquiry was inspired by the title of the International Architecture Exhibition 2018, chosen by the curators, the Irish architects Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara – founders of the Grafton Architects' Studio, of worldwide renown, and awarded the prestigious Pritzker Prize in the year 2020. The above-cited short extract from the manifesto written by the two Authors immediately describes the historical and archetypical role of architecture as a space given to human beings, as well as the crucial importance which the discipline still embodies, from both aesthetic and socio-ethical viewpoints.

### 1. "Free", "space", "Freespace"

Conceiving architecture as a Freespace discloses a scenario pregnant with meaning that must be explored and developed. Besides the poetry of the Freespace manifesto, we are in agreement with the historian of architecture Marco Biraghi, who states, in his work *L'architetto come intellettuale*, that Grafton's wording "takes the distance from the way in which architecture is conceived nowadays" but, at the same time, is "an idea which undoubtedly smacks of vagueness and abstractness" (Biraghi, 2019, p. 152. My translation). Therefore, to grasp the entire potential of this intuition, we must explore the concept of "Freespace", in order to analyse this intuition.

In his study entitled *The Human Space* (1963), Otto Fredrich Bollnow, attributes three forms to individual space. The first is the more intimate space, namely our body, the second, the house, and the third, the open space in general, namely the "free space". By using these terms, rather than identifying a particular kind of space, Bollnow highlights the "freeness" of space in general compared to the circumscribed, private, space of houses, into which the dweller projects a sense of security and safety:

The third space, of which we can be said that man dwells in it, is what we have called in the broad and general sense free space. [...] The statement that he [man] also lives in the sense of *security and support* that is based, in the house, on the material protection of the exterior and interior walls. But how is it possible where such a material protection is no longer present? (Bollnow 1963: 280. Emphases added)

Inspired by the French tradition, chiefly by Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty 1945) and Bachelard's philosophy of space (Bachelard 1957), Bollnow stresses the original merging of body and space, extending "the concept of incarnation, which we at first

transferred from the body to the house, to the space in general, and cast new light on the concept of dwelling, often too carelessly understood, by saying that man is incarnated in space.” (Bollnow, 1963, p. 283) So, finally, the freeness in the Bollnow’s free space is an existential quality of space just for being space: it refers to the protective character humans experience in dwelling space as their natural condition. Therefore, the first challenge of a free space (still written in this way) is to convey outside the domestic walls that *sense of security and support* we feel in our private space. Here surfaces the importance of the dialectic between the inside and the outside, which could be further developed in the dialectic between private and public, which we will see in the conclusive part of the present paper.

However, the above-mentioned free space is not yet the actual Freespace we intend to discuss. Indeed, Bollnow keeps the terms separate, addressing the question solely to non-circumscribed space. Conversely, the fact that Grafton merged them is significant in itself. It is evident that the word “Freespace” consists of two words, but we must investigate *how* they are related and *why* they have been fused into a single term. *The first, most simple, strategy for explaining this word involves considering “free” as an adjective, as Bollnow does, or little more than an adjective, of space. Using the same approach, we could, for example, employ the term “Extendedspace”, signifying that “space needs essentially to be extended to actually be space”. We are thus subsuming the present issue under the broader/ inquiry into the essential qualities of space, namely its nature and phenomenology. However, although the term “Extendedspace”, deals with the essential qualities of space, it is saying something solely about the perceived and aesthetic aspects of space. Instead “Freespace” seems to involve more than that, eliciting an interconnection between the aesthetic and ethical plane.*

Therefore, the idea of *Freespace* calls for a step forward: we claim that the term “free” is something that coexists with the term “space” and / determines it so closely that, rather than being enclosed and separate, it deserves to be exposed and attached to its noun. *In line with this*, the concept of space does not simply represent a category, whether it is considered an *a priori* condition or an experiential dimension, but even a booster of anthropological and social contents, merging the more aesthetic analysis with the ethical one.

Finally, Freespace is not just a question of adjectives but of nouns. From a more careful reading of Grafton’s manifesto, it immediately becomes clear that Freespace indicates a specific kind of architecture: in some passages it is the very subject of the sentence, even replacing the very word “architecture”. Therefore, the issue also concerns

which kinds of quality surface in the moment in which we pronounce the word “Freespace” as a *separate category*<sup>1</sup> in the architectural scenario. Hence, the question is why one has felt the need to coin this term and determines a new architectural classification. The term, in fact, sounds like a memorandum, as if nowadays we need to continuously bear in mind that architecture should be something free. Consequently, we must first investigate how in Freespace the term “free” is intimately interconnected with the space itself, and why it is relevant for architecture. Second, we wish to extend the notion: Freespace could be enlarged to each space, be it an architectural or urban space, which has certain features.

## 2. Qualities of Freespace

Therefore, we must define the types of quality required for a space in order for it to deserve such a qualification. We have sought three main elements that could define the core of this concept, thus condensing this prolific intuition: care, gift and place. From this perspective, we should gain one important reference, which will enable us to establish the significance of the term “Freespace” related to architecture and dwelling: Martin Heidegger’s thought. We will refer to two texts, in particular: *Building dwelling thinking* (1951) and *Art and space* (1969), in which the concept of space related to what is *free* becomes central.

### Freespace as care

In *Building dwelling thinking*, Heidegger shows the essence of dwelling exactly under the light of the concept of “the free”. Using the ancient Saxon word, which indicates the dwelling, as a starting point, the author recovers the inner significance of the term:

The Old Saxon *wuon*, the Gothic *wunian* like the old word *bauen*, mean to remain, to stay in a place. But the Gothic *wunian* says more distinctly how this remaining is experienced. *Wunian* means: to be at peace, to be brought to peace, to remain in peace. The word for peace, *Friede*, means the free, *das Frye*, and *fry* means: preserved from harm and danger, preserved from something, safeguarded. To free really means to spare. The sparing itself consists

<sup>1</sup> This semantic procedure could be compared to Rem Koolhaas’ definition of “Bigness”, which is no longer conceived as a common noun to identify architecture with exact specifics, but is used as a proper noun for a type of building that supersedes the architecture itself (Koolhaas 1995).



not only in the fact that we do not harm the one whom we spare. Real sparing is something positive and takes place when we leave something beforehand in its own nature, when we return it specifically to its being, when we “free” it in the real sense of the word into a preserve of peace. (Heidegger, 1951, en. tr., p. 149)<sup>2</sup>

The idea of dwelling is existentially related to the domain of that which is free, which, in turn, has to do with the word “peace” [*Friede*], as Heidegger suggests. Indeed, the idea of circumscribing a space, marking boundaries, is pertinent to the idea of maintaining peace, and to the concept of security and safety. In short, it relates to the way in which our freeness can be modulated, and the way in which to order the space, which beforehand was considered free and maybe unknown and unfamiliar, thus making it a space to live, or to dwell in, with the consequent creation of community: a space that must be *safeguarded*.

Therefore, along with Heidegger, we can say that the concept of “freeness” is originally related to that of space according to its double acceptance: to circumscribe a space and at the same time to preserve it, so, in a sense, to *care for* it. This aspect of “caring for” is contained in the verb *Schonen* (translated into English as “spare”), which means to safeguard with care, while preserving and protecting<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, to characterise “sparing” the philosopher uses the word *einfrieden*, which means “to enclose”, as it has been reworded in the Italian translation edited by Gianni Vattimo “enclosing with protection” [cingere di protezione.] (Heidegger 1951; it. tr. 99)<sup>4</sup>. The element of *caring for* emerges also in the meaning of

<sup>2</sup> To facilitate the understanding of the next steps, we quote the original text: “Aber das gotische “wunian” sagt deutlicher, wie dieses Bleiben erfahren wird. Wunian heißt: zufrieden sein, zum Frieden gebracht, in ihm bleiben. Das Wort Friede meint das Freie, das Frye, und fry bedeutet: bewahrt vor Schaden und Bedrohung, bewahrt – vor... d. h. geschont. Freien bedeutet eigentlich schonen. Das Schonen selbst besteht nicht nur darin, daß wir dem Geschonten nichts antun. Das eigentliche Schonen ist etwas Positives und geschieht dann, wenn wir etwas zum voraus in seinem Wesen belassen, wenn wir etwas eigens in sein Wesen zurückbergen, es entsprechend dem Wort freien: einfrieden.” (Heidegger, 1951, pp. 150-1)

<sup>3</sup> Here we must return to the original text: “Der Grundzug des Wohnens ist dieses Schonen”, which in English is reworded as “To free really means to spare”. This word, the most difficult to translate, is also the “beating heart” of the text, as Cattin states (Cattin, 2012, p. 127; the issue recurs also in French see Cattin, 2012, p. 129). There is wide disparity between the various translations, probably none of them rendering the richness of the original. Now we intend to just to put the accent onto the connotation “caring for” which, conversely, is preserved the Italian: Vattimo translates “*Schonen*” into “*aver cura*”, thus directly rendering the idea of “caring for” (Heidegger, 1951, it. tr., p. 99)

<sup>4</sup> Instead, in the English translation, the German word “*einfrieden*” is reworded as “a preserve of peace”, thus losing the etymological meaning associated with the concrete reference to the “enclosing”, which surfaces in the original.

*bauen*, which is at the root of “build”. It preserves its dual significance of “cultivating” and “raising up edifice”: “The old word *bauen*, which says that man is insofar as he dwells, this word *bauen* however also means at the same time to cherish and protect, to preserve and *care for* [...]” (Heidegger 1951, en. tr., p. 147)

In this sense, Freespace brings to light these inner shades of *caring for*, *preserving* and *protecting* originally encompassed in both dwelling and building, which, finally, cannot be reduced solely their functional aspects, to erecting and inhabiting, respectively, but instead disclosing their existential character connected to the *being itself* of humans<sup>5</sup>.

### Freespace as gift

In *Art and space* (1969), a text dedicated to sculpture, Heidegger states anew the inner connection between freeness and space. In this context, the emphasis is on how the space is etymologically related to “ridding of” (*Räumen*), thus enabling the organisation of the space. Through the reconstruction of the language, the philosopher leads us to discover how much inhabiting the space is intimately related to that which is *free*, and how the significance of the space (*Raum*) recovers its own original essence as a place “freed”, “cleared”: “Whereof does it speak in the word “space”? Clearing-away (*Räumen*) is uttered therein. This means: to clear out (*roden*), to free from wilderness. Clearing-away brings forth the free, the openness for man’s settling and dwelling. [...] Clearing-away is release of places.” (Heidegger, 1969, en. tr., p. 5)

The connection between space and freeness emerges more clearly and repeatedly in Heidegger’s wording. The last sentence of the quotation in German sounds thus: “*Räumen ist Freigabe von Orten*”. The word “*Freigabe*” is translated into “release”, but literally means “free gift”. “Release” actually signifies “a freeing from” something, but it neglects the aspect of “donation” (*Gabe*) which, on the contrary, surfaces in German. This acceptance enables us to emphasize the role of the *gift* related to space, and thus understand the sense in which the act of clearing-away (*Räumen*) could be considered a free gift of places.

Important anthropological studies, starting with the work of the sociologist Marcel Mauss (Mauss 1966) who, in the Sixties, dedicated a whole study to the role of the gift in archaic societies, indicate how crucial the gift is to the creation of social relationships. More recently, Jacques

<sup>5</sup> The theme of the “care” is more than crucial in Heidegger’s thought. Describing the original dimension of the human condition in *Being and Time*, the word “care” [*Sorge*] and also its declensions, “concern” [*Besorge*] and “solicitude” [*Fürsorge*], are used to depict the Dasein Being in itself. (See Heidegger, 1927)

Godbout made an interesting definition of gift: “Let us define as gift each provision of good and services done, with no guarantee of return, in order to create, nurture or recreate the social bonds among people” (Godbout, 1993, p. 30. My translation). In this sense, the gift becomes valuable in the light of its purpose, or rather, its reverberation. Along a similar line, Alain Caillé suggests that society might be founded neither on individuals nor on collectivity, but on the gift in itself as the power to generate society. Beyond the strictly sociological outcomes, the value which Caillé attaches to gifts themselves is particularly thought-inspiring. In addition to the use value and exchange value that things possess, he accords a peculiar value to gifts, which he named the “bonding value”: “If we accept the third paradigm, we must then add that another kind of value exists, that which is related to the capacity of goods and services, if donated, to create and reproduce social bonds: this value can be named bonding value, because, with this approach, the bond becomes more important than the good in itself.” (Caillé, 1998, pp. 79-80. My translation)

Freespace is a gift exactly in this sense: it occasions social bonding, having an intrinsic value that transcends its functionality, that is the effective presence of places. So, Freespace conceived as gift, by virtue of its gratuitousness, its freeness, can be a possible generator of social bonding. Especially nowadays, that we live increasingly often in an ideal dimension beyond the sensible, in an *unperceivable space* in which communities become increasingly virtual, this actual “bonding value” of space can be recovered though the intervention of architecture. Freespace is to be imagined as a material space for *opportunity*: a place where people gather, find a new a social capital, experience people and relationships. As the manifesto states: “FREESPACE can be a space for opportunity, a democratic space, un-programmed and free for uses not yet conceived. There is an *exchange between people and buildings* that happens, even if not intended or designed, so buildings themselves find ways of sharing and engaging with people over time, long after the architect has left the scene.” (Farrell McNamara 2016. Emphasis added.)

However, Freespace has to be considered a gift also from an aesthetic viewpoint. As stated in Grafton’s manifesto: “A beautiful wall forming a street edge gives pleasure to the passer-by, even if they never go inside”. (Farrell McNamara, 2016). That people should have the possibility of enjoying the beauty of architecture, that is another expression of its intrinsic gratuitousness. The fact that beauty has given freely must induce us to reflect on how much beauty constitutes, still today, a privilege. The paradoxical comparison between a city’s suburbs and its historical center immediately reveals the extent to which the aesthetic issue is inextricably intertwined with social problems. This idea might be expressed by that which Giancarlo Amendola calls “*the right to the beauty*”, according to

which beauty is not conceived as an optional element only for the few, but as an essential need for all humans beings: “According to the principle of urban equality, one demands not just a more beautiful city, but an urban beauty accessible for all and enjoyable for all, regardless of people’s economic resources and residential areas.” (Amendola, 1997, p. 86)

### Freespace as place

Place always opens a region in which it gathers the things in their belonging together. Gathering (*Versammeln*) comes to play in the place in the sense of the releasing sheltering of things in their region. And the region? The older form of the word runs “that-which-regions” (*die Gegnet*). It names the free expanse. Through it the openness is urged to let each thing merge in its resting in itself. This means at the same time: preserving, i.e., the gathering of things in their belonging together. (Heidegger, 1969, en. tr. p. 6)

Two aspects of this quotation from *Art and Space* are to be underlined. First, Heidegger states that the peculiarity of a place lies in the fact that it opens a region, which is a wider zone characterised by things having same features. Second, the author goes back to talk about *caring for*, since the region opened by the place – we could also name it the *field* which is emanated – “lets each thing merge” [*Lassen*]<sup>6</sup> and at the same time “preserves” [*Verwahren*] the spontaneous order of things themselves. So, in Heidegger’s view, the place embodies this dual vocation: on the one hand, it expresses the spontaneity intrinsic to *Lassen* while, on the other hand, expressing the constraint demanded by the *Verwahren*.

Let us now leave aside Heidegger’s conception of place, which we will return to toward in the later paragraphs. The issue of places, and their definition, has been well defined in contemporary thought by Marc Augé, the French anthropologist who, in his most famous text, coins the term “nonplaces” which, in his view, are the quintessence of supermodernity, in contrast, with places. The latter are characterised by identity, relation and history (Augé, 1992, p. 52; p. 77) and, conversely: “the space of non-place creates neither singular identity nor relations; only solitude, and similitude. There is no room there for history unless it has been transformed into an element of spectacle” (Augé, 1992, 103, pp. 77-8). It is immediately clear how places and nonplaces are more than their spatial features. Indeed, as Augé states, both are mixtures of spatial and social: people create social superstructures which are also translated into physi-

<sup>6</sup> Cattin (Cattin, 2012, p. 127) equates the term *Lassen* with *Schonen*, discussed on previous pages.

cal structures. There is a reciprocal influence between the spatial and the social: a specific space elicits certain relationships due to its own nature and, vice versa, a specific idea of individuals and their needs develops a certain kind of space.

Collectivities (or those who direct them), like their individual members, need to think simultaneously about identity and relations; and to this end, they need to symbolize the components of shared identity (shared by the whole of a group), particular identity (of a given group or individual in relation to others) and singular identity (what makes the individual or group of individuals different from any other). The handling of space is one of the means to this end [...] (Augé, 1992, p. 51. Emphases added)

The concept of place appears somewhat anachronistic, being consigned to the past and no longer seeming to belong to the contemporary vocation. Conversely, the nonplace seems to embody all the elements of our global society, in which identity becomes ever more liquid. The key term in this context is identity, which is conveyed through the space of the place, finally, defining it. The loss of places ends up as the loss of the capacity of spaces to open meaningful regions, where things, but also persons, can *identify*; where identity is not lost in the flow, as well as history and culture, but is rooted in that precise place; where, still inspired by Heidegger, things themselves *are* places and do not merely belong to them (Heidegger 1969). Moreover, nowadays the question of identity has to be thought of also in a global scenario, as Castells claims: “In a world of global flows of wealth, power, and images, the search for identity, collective or individual, ascribed or constructed, becomes the fundamental source of social meaning.” (Castells, 1996, p. 3).

Nevertheless, we should consider whether the concept of identity, strictly related to the one of place, is still exhaustive in discussing the current era. Indeed, the concept of nonplace seems to suggest the idea that identity progressively leaves room for the anonymity of the average man, and consequently to the creation of a generic city which is finally liberated from the “straitjacket of identity” (Koolhaas, 1995, p. 1250). Hence, rather than concerning the compelling dissolution of cultural identities, the question concerns its possible counterpart. In other words, it is to be asked whether the only counterpart of identity is its loss, and, by extension, whether the only alternative to places is nonplaces. The idea of cultural identity, according to François Jullien, originates in the logic of *difference*, “which presupposes a similar genre from which it emerges, eventually reaching the determination of an identity” (Jullien, 2016, 3§. My translation). Jullien therefore suggests the very idea of identity should be questioned, and one might think in terms of *gap* [*écart*] rather than *dif-*

*ference*: “The gap instead leads us to get out of the identity perspective: it brings out not an identity, but what I would call a *fertility*, or in other words, a *resource*.” (Jullien, 2016, 3§).

In the light of the above concepts, Freespace can be thought of as a place of fertility and resource, as an alternative to the place based on an identity that is both individual and cultural. Such a space should be a space in which individuals have the opportunity to gain experience, activating their own personal and cultural resources. Where the historical meaning continuously merges with something new, in which relations are free to be. A place that is capable, inspired by Heidegger’s lesson, to let people merge and, at the same time, preserve and gather them in their belonging together by virtue of their shared resources. Finally, Freespace should be a place capable of meeting the complex challenge of our global era, also capable of representing a mixed, extant culture that has not yet a place for expression.

After this dissertation, in the way architects usually do, I would like to describe two cases that, in my view, may match the characterization of Freespace, as space cared for by its users, felt as a gift that can give people opportunities, lived in as a place that allows the fertility of different cultures to be expressed. In some of their aspects, these different architectural projects are similar, particularly with regard to the involvement of citizens in projecting and planning a common space; but they also represent two different kinds of subjects involved: in the first case, the project has been promoted by the public power, whereas in the second, it is the result of the spontaneous initiative of cultural associations. However, at the core of both projects lies the re-appropriation of public spaces, which are turned into common spaces, or, rather, the public space is turned into a common good. In line with this concept, Freespace could embody a new kind of urban space outside the dichotomy of public and private; a space fundamental to the daily life of its inhabitants, with the provision of a place for social integration and cultural expression, created by the collective action of the people.

The Dokk1 and the new urban waterfront in Aarhus (Denmark) designed by Schmidt Hammer Lassen Architects, which is the first example I wish to refer to, is part of the conversion of Aarhus’ inner industrial harbour into a city space. The main edifice, the Dokk1, houses the main library and the Citizens’ Services department. The building counts numerous facilities for social activities, association activities, and networking. The building and its surroundings have a multitude of spaces: project rooms, study cells, café, teaching rooms, halls, children playgrounds, and multi-functional spaces and, not least, many informal open areas. Entrance is free for all, everyone being asked to be responsible for the space

they inhabit. For instance, toys and facilities are available for children, and parents, or even children themselves, are asked to manage resources, with the consequent promotion of the capacity for self-management, and the furthering of a profound sense of community. The project has been successful, thanks to collaboration between the municipal administration and citizens, who have been given a say throughout the development process and in the final project, which has taken into account the intended use, the ideas and wishes of citizens themselves.

The second example I refer to concerns an entire portion of a city. The Isola Art Project (2001) was born in the suburbs of Milan, in Isola (meaning “island” in English), a neighbourhood that was mainly working-class. Despite its evocative name, Isola actually was an area that had been separate from the city because of its location in the countryside, and then, later on because of a railway line construction. One of the main focuses of the project has been the reconversion of the industrial building “Stecca degli artigiani” into a centre of art and culture, Isola Art Center (2005), and a place of experimentation for the whole Isola community. Since its onset, the Isola Art Centre’s main challenge has been the creation of a platform of experimentation, promoted by artists, architects, philosophers, and intellectuals, merging contemporary international art, emerging work by young artists, theoretical research with the needs and wishes of the inhabitants of a working-class neighbourhood. One of the founders, the Luxembourgish artist Bert Theis, described the project as “A fragile and over-local project in a situation of global and conflictual transformations”. Indeed, the project lasted little more than a decade and, since then, most of the available spaces have been privatized, and the cultural project has become fragmented. Yet this project still symbolizes the resilience of citizens in challenging the privatization of public areas of cities, and bears witness to collectivity: its history appears in a volume that, not surprisingly, is entitled “Fight-specific Isola” (2013)

In conclusion, undertaking and completing meaningful Freespace projects both now and in the future are likely to be seminal challenges for architecture. Creating places incorporating all the above-mentioned qualities should be the mission of responsible and thoughtful contemporary architecture, which must be able to inspire “a lasting and responsible design of the parts and the whole of the city, of the spaces between things and their singular and collective use” (Gregotti 2013: 147. My translation). In this perspective, the International Architecture Exhibition 2016 raised a fundamental issue of our age, representing an exceptional theoretical attempt to recover and return to the essential qualities of architecture, which can be expressed by the several acceptations of the “free”.

I cannot conclude without observing that this paper is appearing in extremely precarious times. Now that we are facing a global epidemic, our space has never been so limited, and we have never before felt so deprived of our freedom. Nowadays, although virtual space supports our lives, we understand what losing the experience of places and their free beauty really means. Finally, now that we have been deprived of Space, the common good that we, until now, had at our disposal, we are acutely aware of its value.

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### **The concept of “Freespace”: architecture as care, gift, place and common good**

The latest International Architecture Exhibition, curated by the architects Yvonne Farrell and Shelley McNamara, was entitled “Freespace” and focused on the idea of gift and gratuitousness. Architecture represents a man-made space that can be *freely* donated to humans. Therefore, to grasp the entire potential of this intuition, the paper discusses the concept of “Freespace” and its possible meanings, identifying three main elements that characterize the core of this idea: care, gift, and place. Finally, Freespace could also concern a public space turned into a common good, embodying a new type of place outside the dichotomy of public and private.

KEYWORDS: Freespace, gift, care, place, common good.