

FOREWORD

In 2004 I wrote a book called *Architecture of Defeat*, as a summary and critique of the 20th century. The 20th century was a period of ‘victorious architecture’ – buildings that employed the hard, strong, heavy material of concrete as a means of defeating the environment. As an alternative, I proposed the concept of ‘defeated architecture’.

Although I was convinced that architecture of this kind would meet with a crushing defeat, I subsequently received a host of questions from people asking how it could best be defeated.

The book was not intended as an ideological sermon calling for the failure of architecture. When I began the book, I strove to deal with the subject matter in a realistic way, but while I was writing it became clear that unless I went way back in history – long before the 20th century – I would never find any method of defeat.

In more precise terms, the works of the early Italian Renaissance architects Alberti and Brunelleschi¹ proved to be a watershed in the development of a method of victory and defeat.

Although these units that make up architecture may have been small, they served as the basis for this method. At the same time, I realized that it was not enough to simply say that they were small. There are many kinds of smallness – for example, points, lines and planes. While a diverse range of small things might be embedded in each other and cause each other to jump, this might also amount to a vigorous ‘failure’.



1 View of Florence cathedral Santa Maria del Fiore, dome designed by Brunelleschi

As I observed this state in which a dimension was embedded and began to jump, I realized that it was impossible to explain dimensional dislocation without addressing the question of time. Moreover, I realized that I had to bring human beings down to the same level as these small things. It was not so much that architecture had won, but that, by assuming a higher position, human beings had made and used architecture that had won.

I had been considering democratic and socially open architecture for many years, but now I had a hunch that this method could also be used to discuss and make things that were democratic. Thinking that this would lead to a variety of explorations regarding the method, I came to refer to this undertaking as a 'discourse on method'. This notion was supported by my own personal preferences, as I felt compelled to create physically large architecture. This made me wonder if it might be possible to create something that, while being large, existed in a small state that would convey a sense of defeat to people.

It was this sense of pressure that drove me to write this book.