Media Architecture: Instagram versus Archigram

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Media and architecture have always been closely related, but in recent years, they have become so intertwined that the boundaries between them have become blurred. This has led to the emergence of the term "media architecture." Various exhibitions, discussions, and seminars have been organized to explore the ever-changing relationship between media and architecture in the new 21st-century landscape, which seems to be characterized by digital revolutions. These organizations emphasize integrating digital media systems, particularly in building exteriors. Accordingly, they offer a technical and technological understanding of media architecture. However, media architecture also refers to integrating media technologies into architectural theory and practice, resulting in buildings designed and published as images in printed and non-printed media. In this regard, the paper relates "media architecture" to "architecture without architecture" because both terms refer to the possibility of architectural practice without building a physical structure. The paper explores the term "architecture without architecture" by relating it to the process of creating an image rather than an object. In this way, architecture becomes image-making. Nevertheless, "architecture without architecture" is often defined as building anonymously. While this is a reliable definition, the paper discusses "architecture without architecture" alongside its other meanings, which reveal the embodied aspects of digital media in producing architectural objects and images. This means that people with the ability and access to new digital media tools and technologies can create architectural images, even if they are not architects, designers, or professionals. It broadens the terminological and technological limits of "architecture without architecture" beyond traditional, anonymous structures to include non-traditional, anonymous images. In this context, the paper focuses on Instagram and Archigram as “media architecture”. The aim of the paper is to argue that media is not only changing the way architecture is represented, but also the way it is produced, reproduced and consumed. The paper's originality lies in its discussion of Instagram and Archigram, revealing the evolving relationship between media and architecture. Furthermore, the paper emphasizes that, despite belonging to different times and cultures, Instagram and Archigram exemplify "architecture without architecture" by highlighting images in architectural representation. Both remind us that architecture is not just about buildings, but also about images of buildings. It is a critical part of the practice of architecture; “image-making”. However, Instagram (non-printed) and Archigram (printed) are different mediums through which different meanings are created in architecture. While the former (Instagram) blurs the boundaries between the real and the virtual, the latter (Archigram) creates the virtual as an alternative to the real. Despite their differences, the paper discusses the similarities between Instagram and Archigram, as they both refer to "media architecture," revealing that architecture not only represents, but also realizes itself through media, without constructing buildings. So, it is crucial to understand the new dynamics and realities of media in order to understand the new reality of architecture.

Keywords: Archigram, Instagram, Media Architecture, Social Media, Social Media Architecture

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Medya Mimarlığı: Instagram Archigram'a Karşı

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Bu makalenin amacı, medyanın mimarlığın yalnızca temsil edilme biçimini değil aynı zamanda üretilme, yeniden üretilme ve tüketilme biçimini de değiştirdiğini tartışmaktır. Makalenin medya ve mimarlık arasındaki değişken ilişkiye odaklanırken bu tartışmayı Instagram ve Archigram üzerinden yürütüyor olması güncelliğini ve özgün değerini ortaya koymaktadır. Bilgi ve iletişim teknolojileri ile bilgisayar teknolojilerinde yaşanan gelişmelerle birlikte medya daha çok dijital medya ve sosyal medya olarak adlandırılan alana doğru kaymıştır. Böylece medya yeni bir alanda kendisini yeniden üretmeye başlamıştır. Ayrıca mimarlığın da yeni bir beğeni anlayışıyla yeniden üretilmesini sağlamıştır. Bugün medyada paylaşılan ve beğeni alan imgelerin bombardımanı ve özellikle Instagram gibi sosyal medya platformlarında sürekli bir akış halinde olması, mimarlığın bir imge üretimi olarak görülmesine yol açmıştır. Makalede mimarlık üretiminin değişimi Instagram (basılı olmayan) ve Archigram (basılı olan) gibi iki farklı temsil ortamı üzerinden ele alınmış; dönemleri ve mimarlığı temsil etme biçimleri birbirinden farklı olsa da bu ortamların mimarlık olmadan mimarlık anlayışını örneklediği tartışılmıştır. Çünkü her ikisi de binaların kendisinin değil onun yerine tasarım fikirlerinin ve imgelerinin üretildiği ortamlardır. Instagram, Archigram'a alternatif olarak ortaya çıkmamıştır; ancak Instagram da Archigram gibi mimarlık ortamına metnin ya da nesnenin değil imgenin hakim olmasını sağlamıştır. Medya sürekli olarak değişiyor olsa da mimarlığın kendisini hala medya aracılığıyla temsil ettiği ve yeniden ürettiği anlaşılmaktadır. Bu yüzden mimarlığın gerçekliğini sorgulayabilmek ve anlayabilmek için medyanın önceliklerini, beğeni düzeyini, değişkenlerini ve gerçekliği yeniden üretme biçimini anlayabilmek büyük önem taşımaktadır.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The paper's research question is, what does "architecture without architecture" mean, and how does it relate to "media architecture"? Media and architecture have always been closely related, but in recent years, they have become so intertwined that the boundaries between them have become blurred. This has led to the emergence of the term "media architecture." Various exhibitions, discussions, and seminars have been organized to explore the ever-changing relationship between media and architecture in the new 21st-century landscape, which seems to be characterized by digital revolutions. These organizations emphasize integrating digital media systems, particularly in building exteriors. Accordingly, they offer a technical and technological understanding of media architecture. However, media architecture also refers to integrating media technologies into architectural theory and practice, resulting in buildings designed and published as images in printed and non-printed media.

The paper relates "media architecture" to "architecture without architecture" because both terms refer to the possibility of architectural practice without building a physical structure. It discusses the term "architecture without architecture," which describes the process of creating an image rather than an object. In this way, architecture becomes image-making. This term is famously used by Rudofsky as the curator of the MoMA exhibition Architecture Without Architects (1964), in which he attempts to convey a new understanding of architecture. This understanding moves away from modern trends and focuses on architecture's origins and influences. The exhibition presents primitive examples that anticipate heavy technology and models that address practical problems with great ingenuity. It shows his support for the idea that the intuition and knowledge of anonymous builders form the main inspiration for industrial man (Martínez Matos, 2022). So, "architecture without architecture" is about building anonymously. For Rudofsky, anonymous buildings and building techniques by anonymous practitioners exemplify “architecture without architecture” throughout history (Rudofsky, 1964). While this is a reliable definition when discussing the term “architecture without architecture”, the paper explores this term alongside its other meanings, which reveal the embodied aspects of digital media in producing architectural objects and images. This means that people

with the ability and access to new digital media tools and technologies can create architectural images, even if they are not architects, designers, or professionals. It broadens the terminological and technological limits of "architecture without architecture" beyond traditional, anonymous structures to include non-traditional, anonymous images.

Today, it is easier than ever to create architectural images thanks to the adoption of artificial intelligence as a tool for image-making. Digital and social media promote these images, allowing people to publish and share them with others in a matter of seconds. In this respect, the paper establishes a relationship between the terms “architecture without architecture” and “media architecture.” The paper relies on Sadler's discussion of "architecture without architecture" since he discusses this term in relation to Archigram's "paper architecture," which prioritizes images over objects in architecture during the 1960s and 70s (Sadler, 2005). Nowadays, images are mostly produced, consumed, and reproduced in digital and social media, particularly on Instagram, in the field of architecture. The paper discusses this as a paradigm shift from "paper architecture" to "screen architecture" by comparing Instagram and Archigram, both of which function as mediums for sharing images. It reveals these mediums' characteristics and highlights that, despite their different media tools and technologies, they demonstrate that architecture is a form of media construction and achieves this by constructing images.

In this context, the paper focuses on Instagram and Archigram as “media architecture”. The aim of the paper is to argue that media is not only changing the way architecture is represented, but also the way it is produced, reproduced and consumed. The paper's originality lies in its discussion of Instagram and Archigram, revealing the evolving relationship between media and architecture. Furthermore, the paper emphasizes that, despite belonging to different times and cultures, Instagram and Archigram exemplify "architecture without architecture" by highlighting images in architectural representation. For example, Archigram magazines represent utopian designs beyond time, and these designs mostly remain as futuristic and fantastic images in the 1960s and 70s. We encounter even more architectural images (utopian or not) due to the expanding media platforms in the 2010s and 20s. Media today is not restricted to printed media such as newspapers,

magazines, catalogues, journals, etc. It is expanding into non-printed mediums such as digital media and social media. In social media, there is a bombardment of architectural images. The constant flow of images on social media platforms, such as Instagram, leads to architecture being seen and understood as an image production.

The paper argues that there are surprising similarities between Instagram and Archigram, as both are the mediums prioritizing images over text and objects. The members of the Archigram group publish architectural images in the Archigram magazines, and these are not images of architectural objects built on a real site. This is why the practice of Archigram is known as "paper architecture". Today, images of architectural objects, whether built or not, are more likely to be shared on Instagram. We see and experience these images on the screens of our phones, tablets, and computers. The paper describes this phenomenon as "screen architecture."

The methodology of the paper is to compare the terminological and technological framework of Instagram and Archigram by highlighting that both define a medium for sharing information about architecture, even though the former is a non-printed medium associated with “screen architecture” and the latter is a printed medium described as “paper architecture” (See Table 1). Nevertheless, it is surprising that the terms "Instagram" and "Archigram" are very similar. Instagram is a combination of "instant photography" and "telegram," a method of sending text and photographs to others. The term "Archigram" is a combination of "architecture" and "telegram," meaning architecture is also a means of communication. However, advances in information and communication technology are radically changing the way architecture is communicated, and vice versa.

The paper does not claim that Instagram is an alternative to Archigram as a medium for communicating and representing images. Archigram is a magazine published specifically to share architectural ideas and images designed by the members of the Archigram group, such as Peter Cook and Ron Herron, in the 1960s and 70s. Instagram, on the other hand, is a medium that is not specifically created to share or publish architectural images, but rather to foster social relationships between people in the 2010s. We see that Instagram is becoming a platform for

promoting architectural images, especially those designed by famous architects of the 2020s.

The medium is the massage, as Mcluhan suggests (Mcluhan, 2006). When the medium is Archigram, we are confronted with architectural drawings, illustrations and collages. With these materials, Archigram magazines give us the message of an architecture of fantastic buildings and cities. When the medium is Instagram, we are often exposed to architectural photographs and renderings. With these renderings, the Instagram posts give us the message of an architecture of not always fantastic, but fetishistic buildings. Yet both remind us that architecture is not just about buildings, but also about images of buildings. It is an important part of the practice of architecture; “image-making”. As the paper argues, Instagram and Archigram are the mediums that lead to images being seen not as virtual but as real constructions in architecture. Advances in computer technology and media, and more recently in artificial intelligence, make images look even more real. As a result, the medium through which architectural images are represented is constantly changing. The paper focuses on this change by comparing Instagram, a social media platform, and Archigram, a printed medium, revealing that they both refer to "architecture without architecture."

2. ARCHITECTURE WITHOUT ARCHITECTURE

The term "architecture without architecture" is derived from Sadler's seminal work about the practice of Archigram, which is actualized itself not on the construction site but on paper. He describes the practice of Archigram as “architecture without architecture” because the members of this group construct ideas and images rather than objects, and they disseminate images, which illustrate the present and future dynamics of architecture, through the Archigram magazines of the 1960s and 70s (Sadler, 2005). The paper argues that “architecture without architecture” is a relevant term also to describe the status of architecture in the 2010s and 20s. It is precisely because of today's advanced computer technology, not only in the practice of architecture, but also in the perception and communication of architecture, that “the object” is mainly replaced by “the image”.
It is a fact that architecture is not limited to buildings. It also involves the images of buildings. The images are a means of communication

between city, architecture and people. But when architecture is reduced to images, it becomes a flattened practice. Nevertheless, architecture relies on the recognition of a mass of famous pictures, as Rattenbury explains. Sometimes these pictures are more iconically famous and even more satisfyingly architectural than the buildings. They are indeed iconic, not only as a picture of architecture, but of architecture itself. Images (or pictures, as Rattenbury calls them) are media constructions that allow buildings to exist even when they are not constructed (Rattenbury et al., 2002). Moreover, images allow constructed buildings to continue to exist even after they have been damaged or demolished.

Architecture has a virtual existence due to its images. With the advancements in the communication tools and technologies of the 20th century, images are produced, reproduced and consumed through newspapers, magazines, journals, exhibitions, catalogues and advertisements. As Colomina discusses, the advent of photography has expanded the audience for architecture enormously. The audience is not only the user, but also the tourist in front of a building, the reader of a magazine, the viewer of an exhibition, etc., who sees the building (or the image of the building), gives it meaning, and consumes it (Colomina, 2002).

Throughout the 20th century, architectural photography is largely confined to the printed media. In the 21st century, however, and particularly in the 2010s and 20s, it is being (re)produced and consumed by masses of people who are not necessarily professionals, but who use computers, tablets, phones and other technological devices, through the proliferation of non-print media, namely digital and social media. Social media, as an accessible platform for everyone, leads images to be published and shared instantly around the world. Drawings, collages and illustrations in printed media, such as Archigram magazines, are still used as virtual images for communication, but today new virtual images made of pixels and posts in non-printed media, such as Instagram, are more relevant for communication in architecture.

The changing relationships between media and architecture offer new ways of communication between buildings, cities and people. So much so that we are now talking about “media architecture” to indicate that media is embedded in the practice of architecture. Archigram and

Instagram are both media platforms; however, Archigram magazines are published specifically for the dissemination of architectural images, while Instagram is used as a platform more for socialization. The paper does not discuss Instagram as an alternative to Archigram. Instead, it discusses the characteristics of these mediums that represent architectural productions. The paper emphasizes that Archigram is a printed magazine, and Instagram is a non-printed social platform. Despite their differences in meaning and media tools and technologies, both platforms exemplify their own time and culture. Both of these platforms are discussed in the paper as "architecture without architecture", as they define a medium that prioritizes "the image" over "the object", whether printed or non-printed.

3. MEDIA ARCHITECTURE

"Media architecture" is a relatively new term that emerged in the 2000s. The relationship between "media" and "architecture" is not just about building things, but also about shaping, discussing and rewriting intellectual practices in the digital world. Moreover, media leads an interdisciplinary approach to be adopted in the disciplinary field of architecture (Lindsay et al., 2025). However, the term "media architecture" is mostly used to refer to facades, applications, social media, screens, projections and responsive environments. Through these communication tools and technologies, Junte suggests that media architecture is shaping our cities. Yet it is beyond designing buildings and cities, it is also a way of imagining our lives (Junte, 2021).

Wiethoff and Hußmann also suggest that media architecture is a new term that means using information as a construction material such as glass, wood, or concrete in the built environment. Due to media architecture, we can access information through screens and other technologies in cities without using personal devices. So, media architecture is about making information accessible to everyone in a public location (Wiethoff & Hußmann, 2017).

Fischer and Hornecker define media architecture as the construction of a media facade as an interface between the building and the city. Since contemporary architecture communicates with the city and its inhabitants through screens, they associate media architecture with screen culture (Fischer & Hornecker, 2017). Media enables buildings to

be interactive forms of information and communication. In other words, buildings communicate with people through screens and other media technologies. This recalls Virilio's theory of the aesthetics of disappearance, as the screen replaces space, or space hides behind the screen and disappears. According to Virilio, media architecture refers to buildings with facades made entirely of screens. The screens that display images become the walls of buildings. Real space is therefore replaced by virtual space in architecture. These transformations of space make architecture disappear (Virilio & Ruby, 1993).

We perceive not only architecture but the world through screens, or the ephemerality of the images on these screens. As Mcluhan says, media changes the way we perceive the world (Mcluhan, 2006). Media changes our everyday routines, desires, behaviors, clothing, buildings, cities, and so on (Junte, 2021). Architecture is also changing and evolving with the media, not because its primary purpose of building shelter for people is changing, but because the media changes the ways of communicating with people and the built environment. As Tovar states, keeping up with the world of architecture, seeking inspiration, discovering new processes or materials, require hours of searching through magazines, talking to colleagues, and traveling. But with the improvements in transportation infrastructure, technology, and the advent of the Internet, the world is becoming more connected and everything is accelerated. This allows for the emergence of new terms such as “Instagrammable” and “Instagram friendly” design, which refer to a new architecture, especially for audiences who experience buildings not in the built environment, but in a new environment such as social media platforms (Tovar, 2025). These platforms allow users to connect, share and engage in various ways at accelerated speeds and scopes. The possibilities afforded by social media have a significant import for architectural practice as well as for the political communication of spatial imaginings of the future (Alaily-Mattar & Jones, 2025).

Social media platforms, particularly Instagram, have emerged as powerful mediators between individuals and their built environments, reshaping not only spatial perceptions but also temporal interactions with architecture. Since its launch in 2010, Instagram has attracted over 1 billion active users, who share more than 100 million photos and videos daily. Its visually driven interface, featuring posts, accounts,

filters, hashtags and stories, makes it a prominent tool for visual storytelling and social interaction. Instagram not only redefines the presentation of architecture but also transforms the way users experience, interpret and contextualize architectural spaces across different times and places. Architects are increasingly designing with Instagram in mind, creating “Instagrammable” moments that capture attention and drive engagement. Digital representations on Instagram can create familiarity with spaces users have never physically visited, influencing expectations and interpretations while disconnecting them from the temporal narratives of these spaces. The platform’s emphasis on visual content often leads to a disembodied experience, where multisensory aspects of architecture, such as the play of light throughout the day or the aging of materials, are overlooked (Wagiri et al., 2024). Hence, social media platforms, Instagram in particular, lead us to see and understand architecture as a practice that creates amazing images.

On the other hand, Pallasmaa reminds that the task of architecture is not to shock, to amaze or to entertain, but to give us a foothold in the realm of the real (Pallasmaa, 2011). Nevertheless, architecture today seems to create amazing and shocking images that are detached from reality. We are constantly exposed to these images through digital and social media, and the shocking effect of the images reinforces the state of distraction (Beasley, 2015). According to Benjamin's theory, buildings are truly experienced in a state of distraction, not in a tourist-like state of concentration. Benjamin defines distraction as a condition that governs the everyday experience of architecture. But concentration leads to seeing buildings only as objects separated from everyday life. In this regard, he says: “Buildings are appropriated in a twofold manner: by use and by perception, or rather, by touch and sight. Such appropriation cannot be understood in terms of the attentive concentration of a tourist in front of a famous building.” (Benjamin, 1999).

Yet concentration is usually seen as a positive condition and distraction is seen as a negative condition. This dichotomy is still relevant today, as the term distraction is used negatively to describe the state of people when they experience architecture or other forms of art such as film and photography in a distracted condition (Beasley, 2015). Today, we are in a constant state of distraction due to the bombardment of

images on the screens of our computers, phones or other smart devices. It is the new media that makes us the distracted people of the new century. Manovich defines new media as the Internet, websites, computer multimedia and virtual reality (Manovich, 2001). We are all distracted by these new media tools and technologies. But distraction here does not have the same meaning with the term described in Benjamin's theory. In the 21st century, distraction paradoxically has the meaning of concentration in that theory, which refers to a tourist gaze and experimentation. We usually experience architecture as tourists, taking pictures in front of buildings and posting them on social media to create memories.

It seems that Instagram, as one of the most commonly used social media platforms, has the ideal of creating a picture-perfect society (Fiocco & Pistone, 2020). People use this platform not only to show their lives, but also to advertise things, goods, other people, their work, experiences, environments and so on. People's tendency to share, advertise, use and consume almost everything in their daily lives is changing the way we experience architecture, in that the architectural object (building, space, structure, etc.) seems to be replaced by the architectural image. Rather than experiencing “the object”, we now experience “the image of the object”. We see and use the image to experience space, to share it with our colleagues, friends and other people, and finally to consume it without actually seeing it. This is why we call it “media architecture”, to refer to the new reality of buildings and spaces that do not even need to be built to be experienced. Our memories of built environments are created by the images of those environments that are shared in the media.

As the paper discusses, Instagram and Archigram define their own specific environments, disseminating architectural ideas and images to the world through screen, that is, posts, renderings, photographs, and through paper, that is, drawings, illustrations, collages. Instagram is an interactive, but of course not an alternative platform to Archigram for sharing and disseminating architectural images. As with Archigram magazines, Instagram also allows images to be seen as real practices, reminding us that architecture is the practice of “image-making”. The paper discusses Instagram and Archigram as “media architecture” because they show us that media is not only a platform for representing, but also for producing, reproducing and consuming

images in architecture. Furthermore, both share images through their specific printed (Archigram) and non-printed (Instagram) platforms to be consumed by masses of people. Consumption is the key to these platforms, both of which serve popular images for popular culture. However, Instagram and Archigram do not use the same tools and technologies, nor do they have the same architectural language. It is therefore important to understand both the differences and the similarities between them in the ever-changing atmosphere of architecture.

4. ARCHIGRAM AND ARCHITECTURE

Archigram is a London-based architectural magazine that appeared irregularly in 9 issues between 1961 and 1970. It is also known as the famous group of avant-garde architects such as Peter Cook, David Greene, Cedric Price and Ron Herron (Sadler, 2005). As Banham notes, Archigram is in the image business, and they are blessed with the power to create some of the most compelling images of their time (Banham, 1965). They sweep away the differences between buildings and media constructions, or in other words, the real and the virtual. This is why Gannon suggests that Archigram's drawings are more real than images of virtual buildings (Gannon, 2008).

For Archigram, image is the real construction (Sadler, 2005). They are interested in designing the images of plug-ins, geodesics, plastics and inflatables for the world of the 1960s and 70s, which is in a constant state of flux (Steiner, 2009). According to Rattenbury, these iconic and fantastic pictures suggest a new way of looking at the world, as in the picture of The Walking City, the colored version in the desert. These pictures, or images, designed by Archigram do not depict a static world but a dynamic one with objects of popular culture such as electronics, advertising, vehicles, clothes, etc. (Rattenbury et al., 2002).

The images published in the Archigram magazines represent the shift from high to low (or popular) culture in the post-war world. As such, the members of the Archigram group plug telephones, refrigerators, washing machines, scooters and automobiles in houses. These images inform us about the new era of architecture, where speed, technology, dynamism and movement define everyday life, and where users become consumers. Archigram magazines illustrate the new images of

a new lifestyle by designing images as if they were architectural advertisements (Sadler, 2005).

Architectural magazines not only document the architectural movements of a particular period but also reflect how these movements are perceived and evaluated by society. Magazines play a vital role in promoting, criticizing, and preserving a particular architectural style or project in the public memory, thus ensuring that these structures have a longer-lasting place in the social memory. In this context, newspapers and periodicals significantly impact the history of architecture and that the buildings designed by architects are considered physical entities and phenomena reconstructed in the media and social memory (Irapoğlu et. al., 2025).

Archigram magazines are among the publications that has a special place in the social, spatial and cultural history of architecture. Güneri states that Archigram magazines are the medium for understanding architecture not only as an architectural, but also as a cultural practice (Güneri, 2019). The Archigram group uses an ironic and caricaturistic language in the magazine to represent the changing nature of culture, cities and architecture (Güneri, 2020). This language reflects a cultural shift from production to consumption and communication (Steiner, 2009). One of the main roles of architecture is to communicate with people, the city and the built environment. It is also the role of the media to create communication between people and architecture. This is the common ground between media and architecture in that they communicate with people. The medium used for communication may vary, but the fact is that Archigram magazine is a popular medium that disseminates utopian architectural ideas and images to an international audience, mostly through drawings and illustrations.

Whether these images are defined as iconic, fantastic, ironic, caricaturistic or utopic, Archigram designs cities and buildings to be presented on paper, not to be built on the ground. However, they design the most memorable and remarkable images of the 1960s (Sadler, 2005). These are the blueprints of the utopian images of architecture. Archigram's utopian images define a new terrain in architecture, in which information and communication become a new material with the power to reshape social arrangements, in which city becomes a continuous construction site in the most literal sense, in

which things and people vibrate and oscillate around the globe in an ecstatic consumption of energy. When we see architecture as a means of communication, we understand that the built form is only one form of expression. So, Archigram is also a form of expression through which communication between architecture and people is built. Archigram creates images rather than objects to communicate with people about the present and the future of architecture. Through these images, Archigram shows that there is no difference between architecture and communication. The dominant culture is American culture in the post-war world. Archigram thus uses the images of American popular culture to highlight consumerism and Americanism in the world of architecture. Nonetheless, the last issues of Archigram point out to the fact that that printed media alone is insufficient for conveying architectural messages to people. So, the members of the Archigram group think that they need to find new ways of creating communication between architecture and people (Steiner, 2009).

With advances in information and communication technology and media, it seems that architecture today has various ways of communicating with people. In particular, social media allows new architectural ideas, messages, trends and images to be shared instantly with people around the world. The new ways of sharing and communicating are mostly achieved through screens, not paper. Architecture is therefore experienced through screens and images. The virtual world of images becomes the medium for seeing and experiencing the real world. So, today, we need to understand architecture not just as a building or a material fact, but as “an image effect” created through the media.

5. INSTAGRAM AND ARCHITECTURE

Instagram is one of the most commonly used media platforms established in 2010, and now it has millions of active users all around the world. It is used also as a platform for representing architectural works, architects, designers, cities and buildings in the world. As Wilkinson notes, buildings are mostly photographed with smartphones, and their most photogenic images, with few clues about their internal or external relationships, are instantly shared with the world on social media. It becomes difficult to criticize these buildings in terms of their spaces or contextual relationships. When architectural criticism is

stripped of actual users, spaces, and context in general, it is reduced to "like" or "dislike" on social media, by commenting only on the external views of buildings (Wilkinson, 2015). Social media users see and experience famous buildings through their famous photographs, which are repeatedly published and shared on social media. These photographs begin to define iconic images of buildings that are recognizable to everyone, whether or not they are involved in the profession of architecture.

The photogenic and photorealistic images of buildings published on social media lead people to perceive them as if they were built. So, it almost becomes irrelevant for today's architecture whether it is built or not. Because the computer-generated images of buildings look like photographs of buildings that we think are actually built. Furthermore, these images look more real than the buildings themselves. Social media, particularly Instagram, is the medium through which realistic images are instantly shared with masses of people. It changes the ways of seeing, perceiving and experiencing architecture. It creates instant communication between architecture and people, but this way of communicating blurs the boundaries between "the real" and "the virtual".

In this regard, Goffi states that we often cannot be sure whether we are looking at a real image, for example a photograph or a drawing of a building. Computer-generated drawings and renderings usually look like photorealistic images (Goffi, 2007). But, as Grillner suggests, architectural photography captures the object, whereas architectural drawing captures the material fact, such as the exact location of the wall or the extension of the floor (Grillner, 2007).

Architectural photography paves the way for buildings to be seen as images rather than objects. Social media promotes this way of seeing, as it prioritizes images over objects. This reminds Archigram's approach to architecture, through which the members of the Archigram group design images rather than objects to represent their visionary architectural projects. Instagram's approach is slightly different in that it results in architectural objects being reduced to images in such a way that images begin to represent themselves apart from the objects. Images have their own reality, as they do not need to represent objects. They can even be more real than objects.

Pallasmaa emphasizes that buildings are often seen as objects that are not embedded in a physical, social and cultural context. This way of seeing leads them to be perceived only as aesthetic objects or images. There is a tendency in contemporary architecture to see buildings as seductive images. But buildings cannot be reduced to images as they are repositories of our daily lives, memories and sensual experiences (Pallasmaa, 2011).

Nevertheless, social media allows images of buildings to become even more seductive than the buildings themselves. We usually sense and experience architecture through images, not buildings or objects in bodily presence. We are constantly exposed to popular images of popular buildings on Instagram. Whether we visit these buildings or not, their images become recognizable to us. When we have the opportunity to visit them, we try to take the most photogenic picture to document it on our social media accounts. It is the new “popular culture” of our time. We tend to experience buildings through their images, even when we see these buildings in their own location. Architects therefore prioritize designing the most photogenic buildings for today’s “screen culture”. So, it is the new tendency of architects to create an image effect on social media, which is likely to result in their buildings being shared and experienced by masses of people, making them a trending topic.

In fact, architects have always tended to design photogenic buildings, but it is probably only in the 21st century that this has been emphasized as a priority of architecture. This is why contemporary architects design buildings as if only their facades and exteriors are worth experiencing. As a result, the built environment is flattened and turned into a giant selfie stage (Fiocco & Pistone, 2020). As Kushner explains, taking a selfie in front of a building carries weight. It carries a different kind of weight than seeing a building or reading about a building in an architectural magazine. It has become a part of our personal history. It becomes a place that people want to visit, that they want to see with their own eyes, and most importantly, it becomes a visual story that can be shared on social media (Kushner, 2015).

Thus, a new term emerges: "Instagrammability." This term is not only about making something photogenic, but also about creating a scene

where people can place themselves to be photographed. Instagrammability is becoming part of our vocabulary, and an important way of thinking and imagining buildings (Wainwright, 2018). We are accordingly witnessing a substitution between “the object” and “the image”, and between “the real” and “the virtual”. As Virilio suggests, it is difficult to believe in the stability of the real, in the fixation of a visuality that is constantly fleeing. The public space of the building disappears behind the instability of a public image (Virilio & Ruby, 1993). Today, it becomes possible to reinterpret “instability” as “instagrammability” when we think of the constant flow of virtual appearances (and disappearances) of buildings, or rather, images of buildings on social media, accelerating the processes of production, reproduction and consumption in architecture.

Fiocco explains that social media is leading to a shift from a functional understanding of design to a formal and commercial one. This affects almost all types of design, including architecture and urban planning. The built environment is becoming a space populated by social media users, who feel the need to self-document their lives by using these spaces as backgrounds for their selfies. These are called “Instagrammable”, or “Instagram-friendly”, spaces in cities. As Fiocco notes, these spaces are mostly designed with transparent, reflective, shiny and slippery materials that prioritize “photographability” over “functionality”. In other words, they are designed to be photogenic for Instagram (Fiocco & Pistone, 2020).

There is a constant flow of images on social media that we are often exposed to in our daily lives. Instagram, in particular, leads us to believe that architecture needs to create stunning images. We see on Instagram that these images become backgrounds for the selfies of the social media users. There has always been an interactive relationship between media and architecture, so much so that media determines architectural trends, styles and innovations. It is also a means of communication in architecture. If the media is an Archigram magazine, architecture communicates with people through paper. But if the media is Instagram, it is screen that creates communication between architecture and people. Whether on screen or on paper, Instagram and Archigram communicate through images and imaginary visions. Since the media prioritizes "the image" over "the object" as a means of communication, the paper discusses Instagram and Archigram as

"media architecture." However, as the paper emphasizes, Instagram and Archigram have their own specific mediums and conditions.

6. INSTAGRAM VS ARCHIGRAM

Instagram and Archigram, as the mediums for disseminating architectural ideas and images, belong to different times, as Instagram is advanced in the 2010s and has had a widespread use in the 2020s, and Archigram is published in the 1960s and 70s. Despite the similarities in their names, Insta-gram and Archi-gram, which refer to information and communication technologies such as the telegram, these are the mediums of different lifestyles and ideologies.

Archigram appears as a printed magazine at a time when hippies and anarchists are challenging the status quo. It is also a time when societies are confronted with the advance of new technologies. With the impact of anarchist movements and technological advancements, Archigram creates a new language that interrogates the differences between high and low culture in architecture. Accordingly, Archigram magazines promote a popular culture in between, declaring that architectural designs need to adapt themselves to the emerging electronic tools and technologies. Archigram is indeed an ideological magazine that informs people about the new lifestyles of societies. Although the Archigram magazine is based in London, it illustrates the American lifestyle, which is largely established on the consumption culture. In this context, pop figures, consumption culture, new lifestyle, electronic technologies, popular culture, Americanization, transportation technologies and movements are some of the leading terms that define the new architectural language of Archigram. By using this language, the members of the Archigram group such as Peter Cook, Ron Herron and Cedric Price publish texts, drawings, illustrations and collages to share their projects with the world through the Archigram magazines. It is through the printed media that these architects disseminate the images of their projects.

Instagram, on the other hand, is being advanced in a different context, where buildings are mushrooming in cities and cities are becoming more crowded and connected spaces in the world. Advances not only in transportation, but also in information and communication technologies, and the internet are connecting people all over the world.

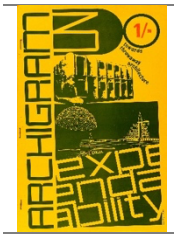
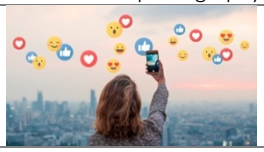
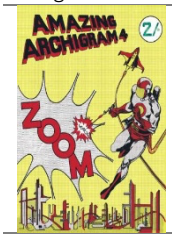
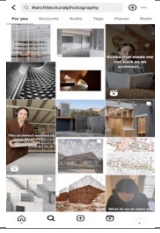
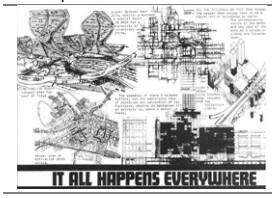
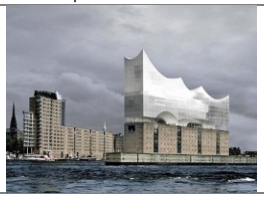
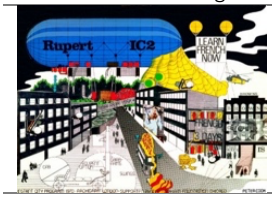
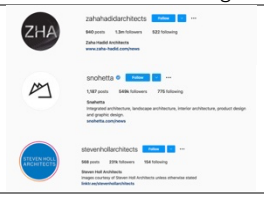
But there is also a growing sense of loneliness and isolation in societies. This is why Instagram and other social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are being developed to promote people's social relationships. Apart from people's need to socialize, these platforms are also used for professional needs, careers, networking and advertising. However, it seems that social media is weakening real social relationships as it separates its users from real life by trapping them in front of screens. In addition, social media, particularly Instagram, encourages more and more consumption by influencing and advertising. On Instagram, we see pictures of new designs of phones, computers, clothes, houses or cars, and we are instantly influenced to buy them, even if we do not actually need them in our daily lives. Instagram is leading the way for consumption culture to become the dominant culture of the 2010s and 20s. We can say that Americanization is still dominant in our daily lives. As such, selfies of people in Starbucks and shopping malls, the popular spaces of American culture, dominate social media platforms. These images define the popular spaces of our time on Instagram, as in the pop figures and images in Archigram.

As the paper argues, Instagram has surprising similarities to Archigram in that both media platforms promote popular culture and consumer culture. However, Instagram is a non-printed platform, accessible to anyone to share and publish, whereas Archigram is a printed platform, constituted by a group of architects who publish design projects and imaginary places. In this respect, Instagram is seen as a more democratic media platform, open to people who are not necessarily professionals, but who still have opinions about architecture to share. The users of Instagram share their opinions mainly through images. So, another similarity between Instagram and Archigram is that they prioritize images over objects. Whether they are drawings, collages, renderings or photographs, they are virtual images that represent real objects, or objects that are imagined to be real. When we see these images in the Archigram magazines, we know that they are virtual. But when we see them on Instagram, we often cannot be sure whether they are real or virtual. Instagram paves the way for blurring the boundaries between reality and virtuality, but Archigram exposes the differences between them. We see speculative images in the Archigram magazines, as the members of Archigram create an alternative reality, usually by publishing images of utopian buildings and cities in the

magazines, beyond the technological limits of the time. But, on Instagram, we are confronted with even more speculative images, or more accurately, seductive images, apart from their utopian or non-utopian qualities, as architectural photography, computer technology and, more recently, artificial intelligence are advancing in ways that often deceive us about the reality of building renderings and photographs.

Instagram and Archigram show us that architecture is not limited to real constructions, that is, buildings or other structures. It is also about constructing virtual images. Rattenbury, therefore, discusses architecture as "media constructions" (Rattenbury et al., 2002). Media provides another construction site for architecture. Instagram is a non-printed medium that leads to the construction of images on screen, and Archigram is a printed medium that leads to the construction of images on paper. So, we can say that the former represents “screen architecture”, while the latter represents “paper architecture”. However, both media platforms remind us that architecture is not only involved in “building”, but also in “image-making”. It is not necessary to build an architectural design to be real, it is already real when it is imagined, and its images are represented in media. When these images are represented on Instagram, we tend to criticize them in terms of their “Instagrammability”. But when they are represented on Archigram, we tend to criticize them in terms of their “imaginal visionary”. We see on Instagram that building images are usually flattened as the backgrounds for the selfies of people and criticism is limited to these images; however, criticism of buildings is expected to cover their social, spatial, functional, and environmental relationships. Instagram thus defines a new type of criticism that can be considered a non-critical approach to architecture. On the other hand, Archigram is a medium that criticizes the existing static architectural language through designing dynamic images of buildings, spaces and cities for the magazines. These are not only dynamic, but also utopic images. As in the Archigram magazines, we also encounter utopic images on Instagram posts and accounts. But these images are usually photogenic and not necessarily based on a utopian imaginary. Rather, they are based on the Instagrammability of spaces and cities (Table 1).

Table 1: Instagram vs Archigram (created by the author).
This table can be improved by adding new concepts and images describing Instagram and Archigram as specific modes of media.

Archigram	Instagram
	
Printed media	Non-printed media
	 
Paper architecture	Screen architecture
	
Architectural imaginary	Architectural photography
	
Imaginal visionary	Instagram friendly
	
Blueprint	Screenprint
	
Architectural drawing	Architectural rendering
	
Utopia-in-architecture	Insta-architecture

Instagram and Archigram create different meanings in architecture by using different materials and technologies. The paper discusses these

differences by comparing the terminological and technological framework of Instagram and Archigram, such as "screen architecture" versus "paper architecture," "non-printed media" versus "printed media," "architectural photography" versus "architectural imaginary," "Instagram-friendly" versus "imaginal visionary," and "architectural rendering" versus "architectural drawing" (See Table 1). Nevertheless, Instagram and Archigram have similar aspects, as well as different characteristics. For example, they both promote popular culture by prioritizing images over objects in architecture. These images are popularized by media environments.

Therefore, the paper focuses on Instagram and Archigram to reveal the changing relationship between media and architecture. Throughout the paper, we understand that architecture exists not only on physical ground, but also on nonphysical ground, namely, media. The merge of nonphysical media and physical space enhance the state of in-betweenness regarding dichotomies such as natural-artificial, real-virtual and material-immaterial in architecture (Başarır & Demir, 2024). On the other hand, social media provides an emancipatory ground for architecture, leading us to question the limits of architectural photography and architectural criticism, which are supposed to be carried out only by professionals (Güzer, 2020). Nowadays, anyone can be a photographer or a critic on social media, so much so that we are now talking about “Insta-architecture”. But it is crucial to be able to distinguish between media platforms, as in the case of Instagram and Archigram, because they are the platforms that represent different realities about our everyday lives, social relationships, cities, spaces, and buildings.

7. CONCLUSION

Media and architecture have always had close relationships. In that, media determinates new styles, trends and materials in architecture. Architectural objects, if they are designed according to the new trends, are highlighted to such an extent that we are often exposed to images of these objects in printed and non-printed media. With advances in information and communication technologies, media is now expanding into non-printed media such as digital media and social media. Computer technology supports media to be re-generated in a new environment known as social media. Accordingly, the relationships

between media and architecture are changing in such a way that media also re-generates architecture.

In this context, the paper argues that Instagram, as one of the most popular social media platforms in the world, paves the way for architectural images to be flattened through the screens of phones and computers. It is a new way of generating architectural images in media. It is instant and interactive, meaning that these images are instantly shared with people all over the world, and they have the opportunity to “like” or “dislike” images that they see while browsing among millions of other images. It is also the new way of criticizing architecture in the world of the 21st century. Instagram leads us to criticize architectural objects through their “instant image effects”.

Architectural images published on Instagram do not usually inform us about the functions or the social, spatial and environmental relationships of buildings. Nevertheless, we see the exteriors or the interior images of buildings, and these images allow us to experience the buildings that they represent. This is why images shared on social media are beyond “architectural representations”. As the paper discusses, these are "architectural reproductions" that create a new reality, changing the way we see, perceive and experience architecture.

In the architecture of the 21st century, images are sometimes more real than objects because computers and, more recently, artificial intelligence technology are used to create photorealistic images. This reminds Virilio’s famous quote that “architecture will continue to exist, but in a state of virtual disappearance” (Virilio & Ruby, 1993). Before the advent of digital media and social media, architecture also represents itself in a virtual environment. Architectural images, whether they are photographs or not, are virtual images. For example, drawings, illustrations and collages published in the Archigram magazines are the virtual representations of the Archigram projects. However, the paper argues that Instagram (non-printed) and Archigram (printed) are different mediums through which different meanings are created in architecture. While the former (Instagram) blurs the boundaries between the real and the virtual, the latter (Archigram) creates the virtual as an alternative to the real.

Despite their differences, the paper discusses the similarities between Instagram and Archigram in that they both refer to "media architecture." That means architecture not only represents, but also realizes itself through media, without constructing buildings. Media provides an environment for architecture to construct images of buildings. This is discussed as “architecture without architecture” throughout the paper. The discussions in the paper will hopefully help us to see and understand the changing relationship between media and architecture. Instagram is not an alternative media platform to Archigram, but both of these platforms show us that images dominate text and objects in architecture. Although media is changing radically, architecture still represents and realizes itself in the media. So, it is crucial to understand the new dynamics and realities of media in order to understand the new reality of architecture.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The manuscript entitled “Media Architecture: Instagram versus Archigram” has not been published and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

AI Use Disclosure

The author declares that AI or AI-assisted tools were not used in the preparation of this manuscript.

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