



Yona Friedman

## Roofs Local Materials, Simple Technology, Sophisticated Ideas

A cura di Andrea Bocco

Habitat

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### IL LIBRO

Written from the 1970s onwards, *Roofs* collects practical information (tested for UNESCO by the author himself) on the construction of roofs and shelters, which were intended to meet the material needs of the poor in the global South. It consists of manuals written independently of each other, and is happily representative of the maturity of Friedman, who in those years had already decided to focus his interventions on how to include the inhabitants in the design of their habitat, because “participation is not spontaneous and cannot be claimed out of the blue.” While *Utopies réalisables* (literally, “Achievable Utopias,” 1975 – no English edition to date) represents the theoretical summa of this intense period, the manuals are the main communicative tool the Franco-Hungarian architect created, which was aimed at making such utopias concrete.

The manuals are composed of essential “blackboard” sketches, which can also be read and interpreted by illiterate people – a feature that convinced Indira Gandhi to print a large number of copies, and also contributed to the establishment of the Museum of Simple Technology founded by Friedman in Madras (currently Chennai), in the mid-eighties. In *Roofs*, the author brings to the attention of his readers the fact that the various problems of modern cities are the result of irresponsible attitudes towards the Earth. This thesis was perfectly in line with the thinking of some architects (including Christopher Alexander, Enzo Mari, Victor Papanek and Bernard Rudofsky), who at the time, and each in his own way, expressed strong criticism of industrial society.

### L'AUTORE

Yona Friedman (1923-2020), architetto, si è formato assistendo, tra le altre, ad alcune importanti conferenze di Werner Heisenberg e Károly Kerényi. Dopo la seconda guerra mondiale, che lo vede attivo nella resistenza antinazista, si trasferisce e lavora per circa un decennio a Haifa, in Israele. Dal 1957 vive a Parigi. Ha insegnato in numerose università americane, e ha collaborato con l'Onu e l'Unesco. La sua intensa attività saggistica spazia dall'architettura alla fisica, dalla sociologia alla matematica. Negli ultimi anni Friedman è stato invitato alla undicesima edizione dei Documenta di Kassel e a diverse Biennali di Arti visive di Venezia. Alla sua opera è dedicato il volume: Yona Friedman, Manuel Orazi, *The Dilution of Architecture*, edited by Nader Seraj, Park Books, Zürich 2015.