Magical thinking – monumental form. Aldo Rossi and the architecture of image

Monumental form’s great significance in legitimizing post-war architecture can possibly be defined most clearly by studying Aldo Rossi’s work. In his *L’architettura della città*, published in 1966, Rossi focuses on reconstructing architecture as a monumental body that is able to shape the image of a city above and beyond the mere moment. The main requirement here is the ability to understand the city as a work of art originating in subconscious life (*vita incosciente*) and thus withdrawing to the greatest possible extent from complying completely with all the laws applicable to it. Rossi avers that this is like looking at art: the city can be approached only on the plane of description and aesthetic experience, not on the plane of rational analysis. Starting from this the contribution tries to work out in what sense Rossi’s reflection on monumentality led to a new iconic understanding of architecture.