

Francesco Primari  
**The notion of lucus and the architecture of Gianugo Polesello**

---

Author: *Ildebrando Clemente*

Title: *Lucus*

Subtitle: *Intorno al significato nell'architettura di Gianugo Polesello*

Book Series: *Saggi di architettura*

Language: *italian*

Publisher: *Aion, Florence*

Characteristic: *dimension 17x24 cm, 254 pages, paperback, color, b/w*

ISBN: *9788898262434*

Year: *2016*

---



This book deals with the forms and meaning in the architecture of Gianugo Polesello, from an apparently eccentric view of the discipline, but precisely because of this, determining a remoteness of vision that discerns fundamental issues and problems in architecture as a whole.

Not here will the reader find all-encompassing discursive narratives of the historiographical tale, nor a mere “pure visibility” reportage of the formal quality of the work of this architect from Friuli. On the contrary, the theoretical-formal node that the architecture of Polesello wove undergoes the scrutiny of an investigation that focuses on the reasons for its occurrence: firstly, by rescuing it from a reductionist interpretation of the role of abstraction in gestating the forms; the geometric beauty of pure volumes, the strict system of the vacuum and its urban spaces, the metric ostinato repeating figures already given, these are incidences identified as the opening moves in the jigsaw of the composition and the beginning of a game that carries us towards the mythical and emotional core of Polesello’s architecture. Thus, the story unfolds in a journey toward a possible prehistory of pure forms revoluted to archetypes; and it is precisely the archetype of the lucus, the grove/glade that the author identifies as a dialectical image through which volumes and spaces are removed from the blinding glare of laconic abstract poetics, and ascribed to the unutterable enigma of the symbolic sphere. The lucus therefore stands at the centre of this book and rightly gives it its name; the significance of this archetype proceeds from the image of the forest, which was already the origin of the city in Vitruvius, constituting the wellspring of urban space and the start of the potential of architectural forms; the impenetrable grove is therefore closely accompanied by the otherness of the glade, as an act of deforestation that conveys light into the inner recesses of the lucus. The symbolic space of the grove/glade is therefore the interpretative mirror of Polesello’s architecture.

Ildebrando Clemente explains this research hypothesis through a reasoned presentation that is far from Cartesian; the references to myth, the history of ideas, philosophy, etymological chains and the genealogy of forms advance hand in hand, stratifying without fearing any obscurity, and allowing some deliberate omissions; however, the enigma of pure forms in Polesello’s architecture, if not divulged, is undeniably brought to light in this way and swathed within a rich constellation of sense. Above all, the opening into the symbolic sphere which this study proposes is able to justify the intimate civil essence of his design approach. The original act of

space-making, which is the glade, and the beneficium in providing a habitable place for the life of man – finally protected from some harshnesses of nature – legibly latches onto the centrality of the order of the vacuum of his projects, of space-making as monuments. Consequently, also the importance and peculiarities of Polesello's experience within the great urban study season can be grasped, the ways in which he understood the possibility of recognizing and preserving a community; at the same time, in the sophisticated otherness of the geometric shapes with respect to the non-fabric of the suburbs, we catch a glimpse of a different possibility of land use. An ethical instance therefore goads the attempt to avoid a total reification of the earth as a pure object of consumption, to reconsecrate it to man.

These are some of the themes we seemed to discern in this book, which, as we press forward around the meaning in Polesello's work, open and raise still current questions on the founding conditions of architecture and cities. Is it possible to propose a design as an illusion of dominating reality even now? Or does the unquenchable implication with the sacred dimension that man-craftsman carries in himself not lead us back towards the fertile opening with the risk of an *indomitable space*?