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 È del poeta il fin, la meraviglia ...

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On browsing through the book *Giorgio Raineri 1927-2012* edited by Gentucca Canella and Paolo Mellano, right away we can see that it describes the work of an important Italian architect through an erudite and complex labour of research. Research on an architect, arguably not sufficiently well-known nor satisfactorily investigated by the history of architecture – monographic studies of Raineri’s work being few and far between, not even by those scholars who dedicated their words to celebrating some important works by other working architects. An architect who, to borrow the words of the editor, should be “in all respects revered among those Italian architects of the late twentieth century who fully matched up to the architecture of the time”. It comes as no surprise, then, that the work of this figure is part of the prestigious series *Italian Architects of the Twentieth Century*, which was launched in 2018, published by FrancoAngeli, and directed by Gentucca Canella, and which in recent years has published essays and conference proceedings on such important masters of Italian architecture as Ernesto N. Rogers, Guido Canella, Carlo De Carli, and Roberto Gabetti. This volume offers a compendium of scholars from different generations and different fields, ranging from design to the history of architecture, from restoration to occupational studies, who help to piece together a detailed exploration and comprehensive testimony on the work and personality of Giorgio Raineri. A wide-ranging discussion between scholars of different generations in the pages of this volume which mingles essays by some of the leading lights of Italian architecture with the reflections of scholars from the Polytechnic University of Turin and studies by young researchers. Raineri saw a number of projects brought to fruition, on different scales, which tackled many aspects of a civil and private nature. He belonged to the generation born in the second half of the 1920s, and participated in the construction of Italian architecture of the last century through works of an undeniably poetic value, working mainly in the Piedmont area and, remaining somewhat aloof from the academic environment and teaching, unflaggingly “working on the preparation of projects” for more than sixty years within the walls of his Turin studio in Via Sacchi.

The format of the book is significant, it is divided into four separate sections: a first entitled *Giorgio Raineri, his Friends and the Studio in Via Sacchi* which collects the writings of acquaintances who shared the studio,



Fig. 1

Aimaro Isola, Roberto Gabetti, Giorgio Raineri at the *Moda Stile Costume* exhibition, Italia '61, Turin, 1961.

Fig. 2

Giorgio Raineri, with Antonietta Roasio, Farmers' Cooperative building at Montalenghe, Turin, 1957-58. (Photo Riccardo Moncalvo, Giorgio Raineri Archive)



his life and professional experiences in collaborating with him, partaking in projects and stories of a life lived. One moving memory, for example, is that of Aimaro Isola, called to collaborate by the young Gabetti and Raineri in the competition subsequently won for the Turin Stock Exchange building who, citing Montale, Mallarmé and other great bards, remembers Raineri too as a poet.

A second part follows, entitled *Giorgio Raineri: his Thought and Works* consisting of writings by notable architects and scholars who delve into the life and work of this Piedmontese architect, describing his works of architecture, the contexts, and his ability to carry through a project from conception to execution through careful control of the material. For instance, Vittorio Gregotti remembers when he wrote his first important essay on Raineri's work for Rogers' journal "Casabella", and then there is Gianni Contessi, who expands the discourse to take in Piedmontese architecture, but also many others.

The third part, *A New Generation Encounters the Work of Giorgio Raineri* has the merit of broadening the debate by giving voice to young scholars, asked by the main Italian schools of architecture to study and investigate Raineri's work, some of them for the first time.

Finally, the fourth part collects and republishes in full the essays which appeared in April 1999 in issue 42 of the journal "Porti di Magnin", at the time directed by Carlo Pellegrino and, when it came to architecture, by Lorenzo Mamino, an issue devoted entirely to Raineri's fifty years of architecture. This chapter anticipates and completes the final part of the book, made up of materials which bring together, in addition to a complete bibliography on Raineri, precious reproductions of the main journals which published his works in the late twentieth century, from Gio Ponti's "Domus", to "Casabella-Continuità" directed by Ernesto N. Rogers with important articles written by the very young Vittorio Gregotti and Aldo Rossi, and also Portoghesi's "Controspazio" and Zevi's "L'architettura. Cronache e storia"; significant documentation which makes this volume complete in its intent to tell, document, and gather together the work of this Piedmontese architect.

Last but not least, it is worth mentioning the abundant illustrations which accompany the writings, certainly not a secondary consideration for a book

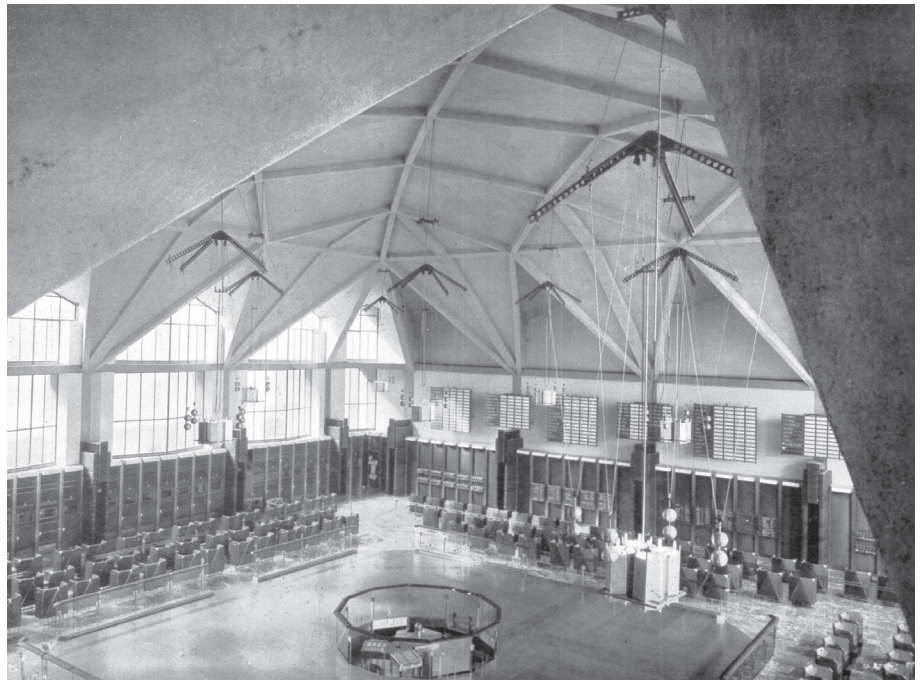


Fig. 3
Roberto Gabetti, Aimaro Isola,
Giorgio Raineri, Giuseppe Raineri,
Turin Stock Exchange building,
Turin, 1952-56. (Photo Riccardo
Moncalvo, Gabetti & Isola
Archive).

on architecture, and which make this volume a valuable critical insight into Raineri's figure and work capable of "passing his lesson and original vision of architecture on to the younger generations".

To conclude, I would like to touch on the main merit of this research which, as the series it belongs to shows, draws attention to how necessary it is to reflect on the knowledge, preservation and protection of creative architecture of the late twentieth century, too often prone to unconscionable adaptation, conservation, repurposing or sometimes even demolition, which compromise and alter the integrity of the work as a whole, along with its expressive form, language and figure.

For several years, the editors of this volume have been championing this line of research by organizing conferences, seminars and public debates, but above all by writing publications on the subject: see for example the book published in the same series *Il diritto alla tutela. Architettura d'autore del secondo Novecento* by Gentucca Canella and Paolo Mellano.

Collecting, documenting, and rediscovering the works of a certain segment of Italian architecture therefore becomes a key point with regard to an awareness-raising which concerns not only the academic milieu, but also professional and legislative circles.

This book has the great merit of pointing out that in the works of these authors (and all those of Raineri demonstrate this), is concentrated the entire patrimony of Italian architecture, correspondingly recognized and studied abroad for its "utility and beauty", a patrimony rendered such by meticulous, expert work done within "small professional studios" and thanks to "enlightened" clients.