FAM

Magazine del Festival dell'Architettura

ricerche e progetti sull'architettura e la città

research and projects on architecture and the city

71/ 72

Beyond School. Exploring Architectural Transmission

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For the purpose of the publication, the contributions sent to the editorial staff are evaluated with a double blind peer review procedure and the evaluations of the referees communicated anonymously to the proposer. To this end, FAMagazine has set up a special Register of reviewers who operate according to specific Guidelines for article reviewers.

The articles must be submitted according to the procedure described in the Online Proposals section.The magazine publishes its contents with open access, following the so-called gold road, ie making the articles available in both html and pdf versions.

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Two issues per year, out of the four expected, are built using call for papers that are usually announced in spring and autumn.

The call for papers provide authors with the possibility to choose between two types of essays:

a) short essays between 12,000 and 14,000 characters (including spaces), which will be submitted directly to the double blind peer review procedure;
b) long essays greater than 20,000 characters (including spaces) whose revision procedure is divided into two phases. The first phase involves sending an abstract of 5,000 characters (including spaces) of which the Direction will assess the relevance to the theme of the call. Subsequently, the authors of the selected abstracts will send the full paper which will be submitted to the double blind peer review procedure.

For the purposes of the assessment, the essays must be sent in Italian or English and the translation in the second language must be sent at the end of the assessment procedure.

In any case, for both types of essay, the evaluation by the experts is preceded by a minimum evaluation by the Direction and the Editorial Staff. This simply limits to verifying that the proposed work possesses the minimum requirements necessary for a publication like FAMagazine.

We also recall that, similarly to what happens in all international scientific journals, the opinion of the experts is fundamental but is of a consultative nature only and the publisher obviously assumes no formal obligation to accept the conclusions.

In addition to peer-reviewed essays, FAMagazine also accepts review proposals (scientific papers, exhibition catalogs, conference proceedings, etc., monographs, project collections, books on teaching, doctoral research, etc.). The reviews are not subject to peer review and are selected directly by the Management of the magazine that reserves the right to accept them or not and the possibility of suggesting any improvements.
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For the submission of a proposal it is necessary to strictly adhere to the FAMagazine Editorial Guidelines and submit the editorial proposal through the appropriate Template available on this page.

The procedure for submitting articles is explained on the SUBMISSIONS page

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NEXT ISSUE

no. 73, 2025.

The composition of others
edited by Elvio Manganaro e Ruzanna Meliksetyan

The aim of this issue is to enhance the scientific recognition, within the field of architecture, of a disciplinary position that places composition at its core. The underlying hypothesis is that such a repositioning can occur by restoring an alliance and fostering a dialogue not with the construction industry, but rather with the world of art, cinema, poetry, and music. The focus is not the traditional relationships between architecture and art. Rather, the issue seeks to provide a critical update on the compositional strategies that other disciplines adopt or have adopted within their own fields. In doing so, it aims to offer those engaged in architectural composition an opportunity to confront, reassess and refine their own disciplinary tools. Centered on diverse artistic practices, the contributions may, in some cases, draw connections with architecture's disciplinary repertoire. In other, architects themselves will examine processes and experiments developed in other fields. This exchange of perspectives seeks to avoid excessive self-referentiality and to foster a critical discussion among different artistic approaches. The collected reflections will take the form of essays, visual essays, interviews, and dialogues, all connected by a shared interest in, and language of, composition.

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Editorial

Enrico Prandi

Experimenting with the transmissibility of architecture beyond the School

The editorial addresses the problem of the transmissibility of architectural culture in the age of digital transformation, questioning what remains of disciplinary knowledge when it leaves the classroom and is conveyed through different media. By comparing the twentieth-century paradigm with the algorithmic logics of contemporary social networks, it argues that a change of medium is not neutral; rather, it affects the image of architecture, cultural authority, and the formation of taste. The pedagogical response must foster students' capacity for critical judgment as an act of resistance against algorithmic mediocracy. Within this context, structured digital publishing platforms, from the open-access scientific journal to the thematic portal, from the curated webzine to multimedia platforms such as LIA, represent a possible intermediate model: they preserve the editorial intentionality of educational television without its scarcity, while inhabiting the internet without surrendering to its simulated neutrality.

Keywords
Transmissibility — Pedagogy — Social Media — Mediocracy — Architectural Criticism

Transmission as a Disciplinary Problem

There is a question that runs silently through the entire history of modern architecture, and which is rarely posed directly: what survives transmission of the discipline? Not how architecture is taught, not through which channels its culture spreads, but what remains of the project, of critical thought, of disciplinary intention, when knowledge leaves the classroom and entrusts itself to a medium other than the lecture, the book, the hand drawing.

This question is more urgent today than ever, not because it is new – every generation has had to confront the transformation of its own communication tools – but because the speed and radical nature of the mutation underway are unprecedented. The data collected by Riccardo Rapparini (2024) state this with almost disarming clarity: 99% of Italian architecture students use the Internet to find information, 68% rely on social networks, while only 42% integrate printed materials such as books and journals. This is not a generational preference or a passing habit but, as has been observed, "a genuine anthropological mutation."

We might say that this issue of FAM is born directly from the classroom, from the dialogue and debate with the students to whom we have decided to hand down disciplinary knowledge as expressed in the ability to design. It therefore arises from the intention of fully understanding this mutation: not as nostalgic lament, nor as uncritical celebration of the new, but as the opening of a theoretical problem that directly affects the status of the architectural discipline. If the medium is the message, as Marshall McLuhan (1964) taught us, then radically changing the media through which architecture is transmitted means changing, at least in part, architecture itself. It

means modifying what is perceived as relevant, what is memorable, what builds cultural authority, what shapes the taste and imagination of those who design.
The call for papers that generated this issue asked for national and international experiences capable of transmitting design culture outside traditional academic channels, with the aim of constructing a geography. The contributions received responded with a variety and richness that confirmed, and in some cases exceeded, expectations. Leaving the detailed analysis of the individual contributions to Riccardo Rapparini's specific editorial, some cross-cutting considerations are summarised here.

Institutional Devices: Biennials, Triennials, Festivals, and the Question of Durability

Among the devices of extra-academic transmission, large events such as biennials, triennials and, more recently, festivals occupy a peculiar place. They are not schools in the proper sense, but events, with all that this word implies in terms of concentration, exceptionality, and the ritual construction of a collective occasion. Thus, more than twenty years ago, the Festival of Architecture of Parma – the first of its kind in Italy – arose from a precise intuition: that the university should not limit itself to producing knowledge for itself, but should become a protagonist of the cultural life of the city and territory in which it is rooted. Its intellectual genealogy is made explicit by the Rogersian model of the Utopia of Reality, the idea that university research must break down its own institutional boundaries in order to offer itself to verification in the field. It is no coincidence that the Festival was born within the walls of the University of Parma, yet from the outset took shape as an independent body, capable of collaborating with local institutions while maintaining its own programmatic autonomy. As an alternative to the system of Urban Centres – which have often paid the price of political subservience, becoming mere instruments of consensus – the Festival has, from its origin, represented an attempt to hold together critical rigour and openness to a non-specialist public.
What distinguishes the Festival of Architecture of Parma from many other similar events – and their proliferation in subsequent years has been considerable, up to the centralised institutionalisation carried out by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage – is the choice to build an integrated system over time, rather than limiting itself to a happening. Each edition has had a strong thematic identity and has been accompanied by publications (FAEdizioni), by a scientific journal (FAMagazine), and by international workshops and calls for papers. The event therefore does not exhaust itself in the moment but, on the contrary, generates an archive, produces knowledge, and builds community.
This distinction – between event and cultural project, between happening and system – is perhaps the most important to emerge from the contributions gathered in this issue. A festival that limits itself to celebration, however spectacular, transmits nothing durable: it produces emotion, perhaps recognisability, but does not sediment disciplinary culture. A festival conceived as a structured critical device – with its own editorial line, with a memory of previous editions, with the capacity to connect university research and a broader public – can become something different: a permanent laboratory for the elaboration and transmission of architectural knowledge.
The opposite risk is equally real: that of self-referentiality, of an event that speaks to insiders while pretending to address the city. The question

that the Parma Festival – like any analogous device – has had to confront continuously is whether its public was truly broad, or whether, beyond declarations of intent, it essentially reproduced academic circuits in a more theatrical form. There is no definitive answer to this question. But the very fact that the question remains open is a guarantee against complacency[1].

The Mutation: Fragmentation, Dispersion, Acceleration

Returning to the initial data, the numbers do not describe merely a change in cultural consumption habits but describe a transformation of the cognitive structure of learning, and, more deeply, a mutation in the very idea of what knowledge is and how it is acquired.

McLuhan observed that every medium does not simply transport content: it modifies the sensory and cognitive structure of those who use it, changing the relationship between figure and ground, between sequentiality and simultaneity, between depth and surface. Television, however different from the book, was still a linear, narrative medium, capable of sustaining complex arguments over time. By contrast, social networks are built on radically different logics, insofar as the algorithm rewards immediate engagement, fluency, visual recognisability, emotional simplification. For architecture, this transformation has specific and partly paradoxical consequences. On the one hand, never before have images of architecture been so accessible, so widespread, so globally shared. A project built in Porto or Seoul is immediately visible to a student in Parma. Digital historical archives have made accessible an amount of documentation that previous generations would have considered unthinkable.

On the other hand, however, this abundance comes with the loss of depth, of slowness, of the capacity to sustain complex arguments over time. The image of architecture on social media – inevitably decontextualised, extracted from its relationship with place, with time, with programme – tends to reduce the project to an object of visual consumption. The concrete risk is that deep scrolling replaces the project with its surface: that aesthetic recognisability takes the place of critical understanding. This is not a matter of demonising the tool, but of recognising its structural tendencies.

There is also a question of cultural authority. In the twentieth-century paradigm that I have summarised in the article "Multimedia Experiments in the Transmission of Architecture. Six Italian Television Programmes between Public Pedagogy and Disciplinary Culture" in this issue, criticism had a precise and important role, namely that of selecting, interpreting, hierarchising, insofar as its authors – Rogers, Zevi, Argan, Tafuri – built canons that were debatable, partial, even traversed by theoretical and political tensions if you will, but which existed as points of orientation (let us always remember Baudelaire's definition). The digital has dispersed that function into millions of micro-narratives, each with its own small audience, but none with the authority necessary to construct a shared horizon.

The Medium Without a Filter: From Educational Television to the Internet as a "Parallel School"

There is a structural difference, and not merely a quantitative one, between television in the 1960s and the internet as we know it today; a difference that affects not only the content transmitted, but the very nature of the relationship between medium, knowledge and recipient.

The television of Rogers', Zevi's, and Bakema's programmes was an intentional medium. Every piece of content was the result of a chain of

conscious editorial decisions: who speaks, to whom, with what objective, within which cultural frame. The scarcity of the medium – few channels, few hours of programming, a centralised editorial direction – imposed a selection. That selection was certainly debatable, certainly traversed by dynamics of cultural power and exclusion; but it had one precious consequence: content reached the public already filtered, already interpreted, already inserted into an explicit frame of reference. The viewer could disagree, could ignore it, could change channel. But could not confuse that content with the neutral, unmediated reality of things: they knew – or could know – that they were watching a point of view, a choice, a proposal.
The internet overturns this structure radically. It is not simply that there is more content, or that it is less selected: it is that the medium is architecturally constructed to simulate neutrality. The algorithmic feed does not present itself as an editorial proposal – it presents itself as the world. The platform has no signature, no editor-in-chief, no declared cultural line. What appears on the screen seems to emerge spontaneously from reality, as if reality itself were speaking, rather than an opaque system of selection and amplification driven by commercial logics. The result is paradoxical: a medium that produces enormously more content than 1960s television, but delivers it to the recipient devoid of the epistemic frame that would make critical evaluation possible.
For a general audience, this problem is serious. For architecture students, it is potentially devastating – and for reasons that concern the specificity of the discipline.
Architecture is, among the design disciplines, the one in which the relationship with the image is at once most constitutive and most ambiguous. Constitutive, because the project is thought through images (or rather, through "figures", Rella 2004), is communicated through images (Evans 1997), is evaluated through images (Colomina 1994). Ambiguous, because the architectural image is always a reduction: it extracts the building from its context, fixes it in a moment, privileges certain aspects (form, light, photographic staging) at the expense of others (matter, time, use, relationship with place). The great architectural photographers were aware that they were constructing an interpretation that relied on a representational and textual critical apparatus that completed the narrative. What happens today on social networks is structurally different: the architectural image published on Instagram or Pinterest is extracted from any critical apparatus, stripped of scale, of geographical context, of client, and above all, of relationship with place – that is, of critical depth. What remains is only the surface, often glossy: and that surface is of extraordinary photographic quality, which tends to obscure everything that is not visible in the image – which is, almost always, the most important part of architecture.
What is thus produced could be called an effect of disciplinary cultural flattening: architecture is progressively reduced to what is photographable, and photography becomes the implicit criterion for evaluating the project. A building that functions poorly but photographs well thrives in the digital ecosystem. A building that resolves a complex problem in an extraordinary way – in terms of relationship with context, management of uses, durability over time – but offers no spectacular images, tends to disappear. This is not a superficial aesthetic problem: it is an epistemic distortion that affects the formation of taste, the construction of the canon, and the very definition of what counts as quality architecture.

Cultural flattening is the offspring of mediocracy (Deneault 2015). The algorithm thus becomes the mediocratic machine par excellence, insofar as it selects not the best of architecture but the most recognisable, the most shareable, the most immediately pleasing. This is precisely mediocratic logic applied to visual culture – not the triumph of the ugly, but the triumph of the mediocre-beautiful, of the stylistically domesticated.

Education must function as an antidote to this. If mediocracy works through progressive conformism – through the slow erosion of the capacity for judgement – then the pedagogical response must be to build in students (the first interlocutors) the critical capacity to distinguish good from bad, beautiful from ugly, possible from impossible. This is exactly the opposite of mediocracy: it is the formation of judgement as an act of cultural resistance.

There is also a second level to the problem, concerning not only the reception of images but the construction of professional identity. The internet – and social networks in particular – has created the conditions for the circulation of architectural models at unprecedented speed and pervasiveness. Styles spread globally and become homologated. Successful formal solutions are replicated and amplified by the algorithm, which rewards recognisability. The result is a paradoxical global uniformity of the contemporary architectural landscape: never before have projects produced in profoundly different geographical and cultural contexts resembled one another so much, because all are nourished by the same feeds, look at the same images, are formed through the same digital references. Architecture – which is by its nature rooted in place, in time, in local culture – is subject to a pressure toward de-localisation, toward a sort of digital international style that does not even have the ideological coherence of the twentieth-century international style: it has only the logic of the algorithm.

Faced with this scenario, the most obvious pedagogical response – but perhaps also the most mistaken – is to return to the book and the frontal lecture as if the world had not changed: an understandable but ultimately useless response, because it leaves the student alone in front of a medium they will continue to frequent outside the university, without having provided them with the tools to navigate it critically.

The more difficult – and more necessary – response is instead of the opposite nature: to bring the internet into teaching, not to indulge its logics, but to make them visible and therefore open to criticism. It means building, as an explicit competence of architectural education, what could be called the capacity for critical judgement of the image: in other words, the capacity to ask, in front of any architectural image, whether it possesses that metaphorical depth, that virtual third dimension capable of placing it among the architectures worth attention.

This capacity is not innate, nor is it acquired through mere exposure. It is built through a deliberate and progressive exercise, whose fundamental tools are the comparison between images and reality (travel, direct visits to built architecture), the critical analysis of sources, the reading of texts not as an alternative to the image, but as its necessary counterpoint. And it requires that the School, understood in its full sense, as a place for the formation of judgement and not only for the transmission of techniques, take explicit responsibility for this task: helping students distinguish good from bad, beautiful from ugly, possible from impossible. Not in a dogmatic sense, as the imposition of a fixed canon, but as a continuous and argued exercise of critical judgement, which is, in the end, the fundamental competence of any mature intellectual practice.

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Fig. 1
LIA platform, Lezioni Italiane di Architettura, homepage.

In this sense, the question of the extra-academic transmissibility of architecture in the digital age cannot be separated from the question of academic education: the two dimensions condition each other reciprocally. A rich and critical extra-academic architectural culture – made up of festivals, journals, structured editorial platforms, more or less independent cultural centres – can offer students models alternative to the algorithmic drift of social networks, concrete examples of how disciplinary knowledge can be transmitted with both rigour and openness. But this offer can only be received and valued by students who have already developed, within the school, the capacity to distinguish a cultural project from a mere happening, an argued critique from an opinion, an interpreted image from a consumed image.
The medium, then, is not only the message: it is also – or perhaps above all, in the age of digital mutation – the stakes of a pedagogical battle that cannot be postponed.

New Forms: The Structured Cultural Project in the Digital

The distinction that emerges most clearly from the contributions gathered in this issue is not between analogue and digital, nor between traditional and innovative. It is between spontaneous production and structured cultural project. Between the instinctive reaction to the possibilities offered by a medium and the conscious construction of a device capable of lasting, of sedimenting, of building a critical community.
In the field of digital scientific journals, FAMagazine represents a case of particular interest precisely because its trajectory is inseparable from that of the Festival of Architecture of Parma, of which it is historically and programmatically the scientific organ. Born in 2010 as a tool for disseminating the Festival's contributions, the journal has progressively built its own autonomy in the direction of an international scientific standing, not without tensions – it has required an adaptation of contents and formats that has at times put pressure on its original critical vocation in the face of the demands of global academic canons – but this has allowed the journal to build a lasting and recognisable presence in the international landscape.
More recent, but equally significant, is the birth of the LIA Platform (Lezioni Italiane di Architettura): a digital tool designed to connect university research, architectural heritage and a broad public through thematic itiner-

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Fig. 2
LIA platform, Lezioni Italiane di Architettura, Lessons section.

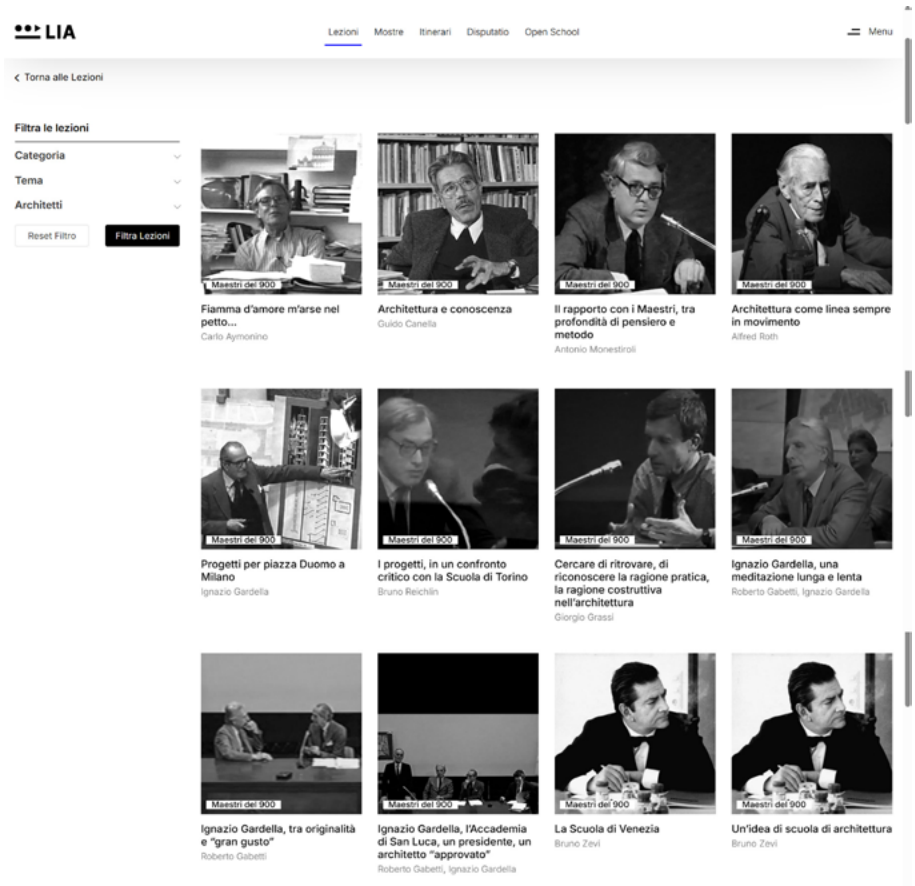
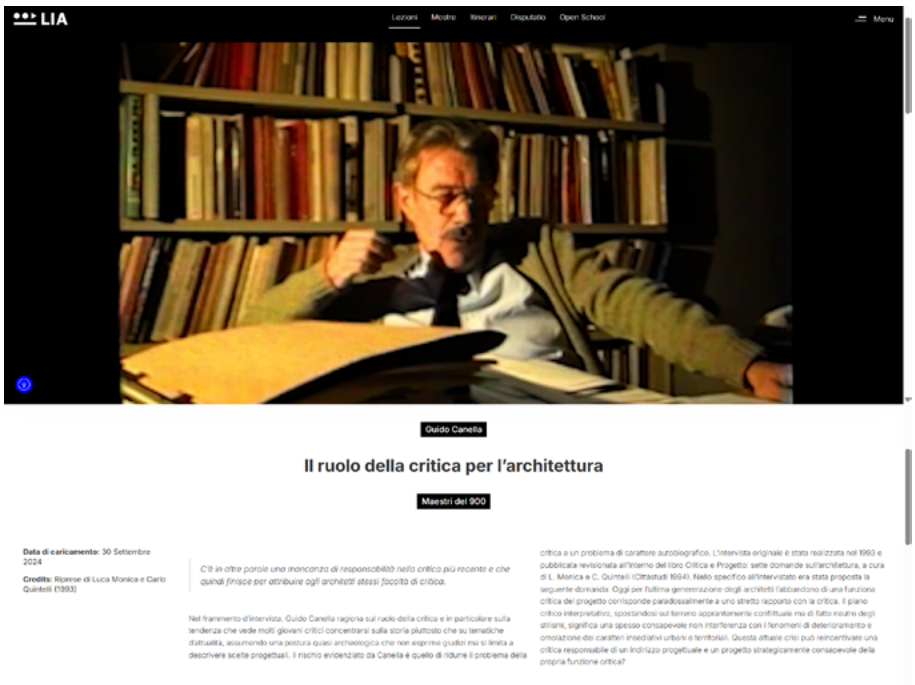


Fig. 3
LIA platform, Lezioni Italiane di Architettura, Lessons section.
In particular:
Il ruolo della critica a partire da Zevi e Persico di Guido Canella.
Available at: https://www.liaplatform.it/lezione/il-ruolo-della-critica-per-larchitettura/



aries. LIA is not a journal, not an archive, not a social networking platform, but a hybrid device that seeks to embody precisely that function of mediation between specialist knowledge and the general public which the twentieth-century paradigm entrusted to television and to large-scale events.

A Cross-Reading: Four Productive Tensions

Before presenting the individual contributions in their specificity, it is useful to identify some cross-cutting tensions that run through them and which constitute, in a sense, the true theoretical object of this issue. These are not contradictions to be resolved, but productive polarities to be held in tension.

Authority and democratisation. The first tension concerns the relationship between cultural authority and the democratisation of access. The twentieth-century television paradigm was strongly hierarchical: Rogers spoke while the public listened. This was not a flaw, but a necessary condition for the existence of a recognisable critical voice. The digital has dissolved that hierarchy, opening space to a plurality of voices that the previous system could never have accommodated. But it has also dissolved the possibility of a shared critical authority. The contributions on the use of Instagram in architectural pedagogy show with precision the costs of this democratisation: aesthetic recognisability as a surrogate for critical thought, algorithmic visibility as a measure of value.

Event and duration. The second tension concerns the relationship between the exceptionality of the event and the construction of something that lasts over time. Festivals are subject to a spectacular drift that can empty them of critical content, turning them into showcases. The question is not whether to hold events, but how to build events that sediment: that leave behind archives, publications, communities, practices. The model of the Festival of Architecture of Parma suggests that the answer lies in the construction of an integrated system, where the event is a moment within a longer process, not an end in itself.

Image and understanding. The third tension concerns the relationship between the architectural image and the critical understanding of the project. Many contributions – from those on social media to those on the history of television, from those on the use of cinema to those critiquing media stereotypes – converge on one point: the risk that the proliferation of architectural images produces not more knowledge but less, because the decontextualised image triggers recognition but inhibits understanding. The contribution on the use of artificial intelligence from a pedagogical perspective addresses this question directly: how to transform the "bulimic intake of naive images" into critical and "intentional" understanding. The proposal of a conscious use of AI and of open collaborative models – on the model of Wikipedia, which we initially accepted with reservations but which to this day proves superior to many other experiences – as tools for building shared architectural knowledge is one of the most stimulating hypotheses in this issue, precisely because it reverses the sign of technology: not a cause of dispersion, but a potential instrument of critical reorganisation.

Specialism and a broader public. The fourth tension concerns the relationship between the scientific rigour necessary to the discipline and the capacity to speak to a public still in training or non-specialist. This tension – which the historical contributions on RAI show was already present in the 1950s and 1960s, in the oscillation between domestic entertainment programmes and documentaries of civic engagement – reappears in new forms

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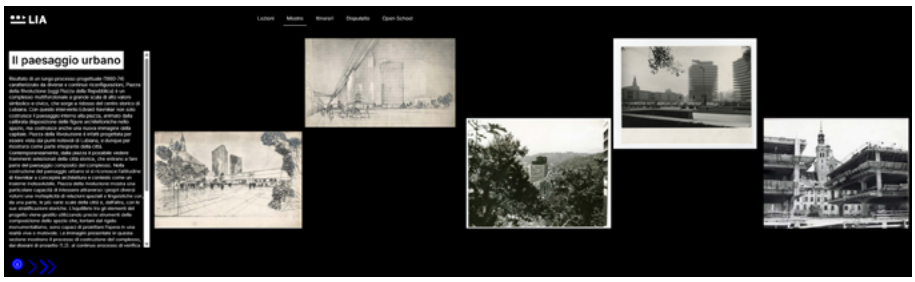


Fig. 4
LIA platform, Lezioni Italiane di Architettura, Exhibitions section.

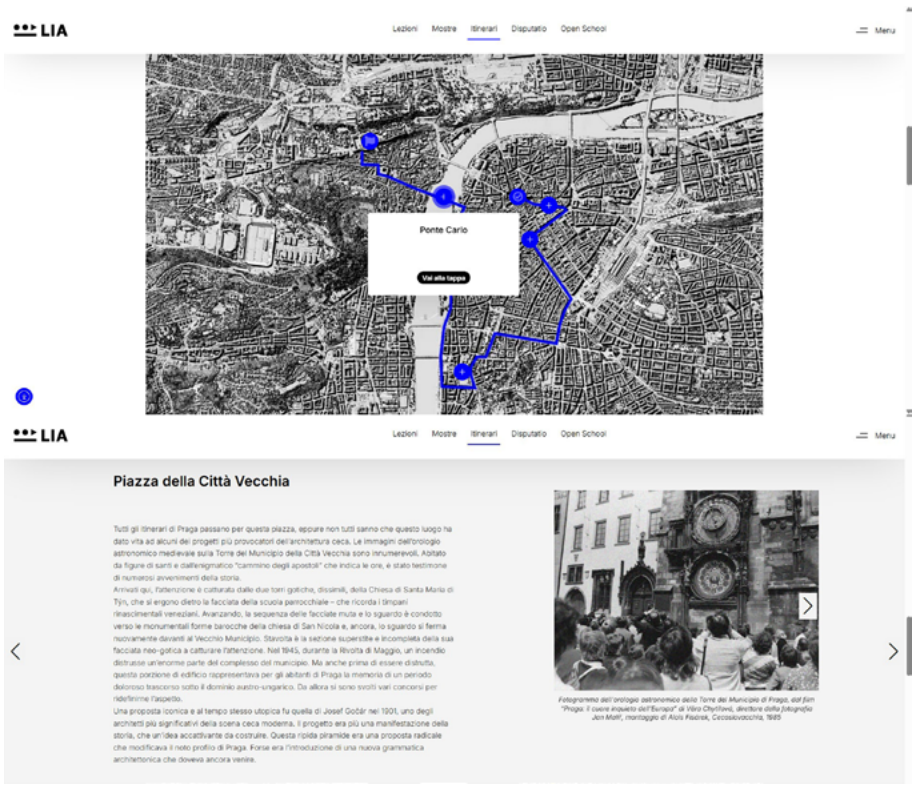


Fig. 5
LIA platform, Lezioni Italiane di Architettura, Itineraries section.

in the digital context. Specialist portals and webzines risk being accessible only to those already trained, while social networks are accessible to everyone but tend to simplify, trivialise, or worse, mystify. Between these two poles, there is space for devices capable of being rigorous and accessible at once, which however require a conscious work of translation – not simplification, but the organisation of knowledge as critical mediation.

Conclusion: An Open Tension

The transmissibility of architecture is today a field of forces in conflict, traversed by tensions that cannot be synthesised into a single formula. The medium has changed, or is changing, the message, even if we do not yet know precisely in which direction, nor at what speed.

What we do know, thanks to the contributions gathered here, is that the most interesting responses do not come from those who choose a single pole of the tension – neither from the nostalgic of the twentieth-century television paradigm, nor from the uncritical enthusiast of digital possibilities – but from those who accept to remain within the tension itself; from those who build structured cultural projects within the new media without giving up critical depth; from those who use the event (necessarily finite) to build duration; from those who translate specialist knowledge without trivialising it; from those who keep alive the question of cultural authority in an age that tends to dissolve every hierarchy.

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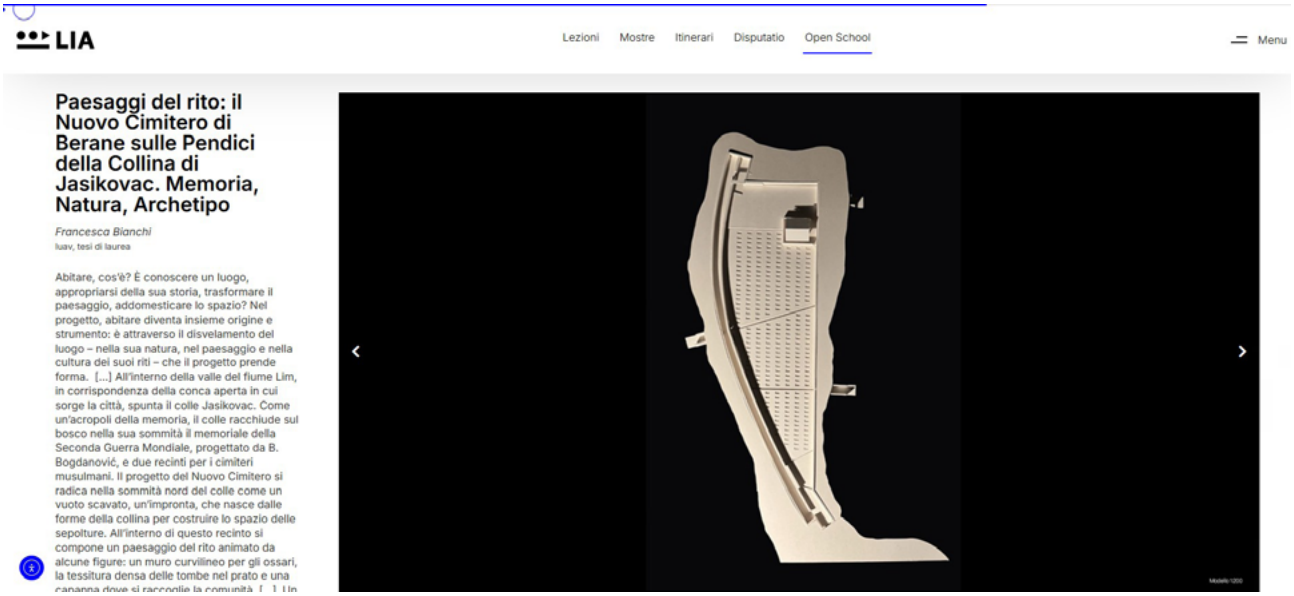


Fig. 4
LIA platform, Lezioni Italiane di Architettura, Open School section.

McLuhan indeed said that the medium is the message, but he also added that the critical response to the medium – the awareness of how it works, the capacity to use it without being used by it – is the only form of freedom available in the "electric age", to use McLuhan's own term. This freedom is never guaranteed but must be won every time, in every cultural project, in every editorial choice, in every festival, in every digital platform that decides to be something more than an aggregator of content.
Some contributions in this issue show that this achievement is possible – not easily, not without contradictions – but it is precisely this possibility that is worth defending.

Notes

[1] On the Parma Architecture Festival as an integrated system of research, teaching, and the transmission of the architectural project, see: E. Prandi, "Il Festival dell'Architettura di Parma come sistema integrato di ricerca, didattica e trasmissibilità del progetto di architettura", in Atti del III Forum ProArch, Turin, 2013.

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Editorial

Riccardo Rapparini

Ariadne's thread: knowledge transmission and srchitecture's vultural identity

Abstract
What are the spaces in which architecture constructs and transmits its culture beyond the boundaries of academia? Starting from this question, this issue of FAM reflects on forms of transmission as a central component in the definition of disciplinary identity. Festivals, radio, television, archives, and digital platforms contribute to outlining a geography of spaces and instruments through which architectural culture is produced and disseminated, making it possible to investigate the role they have played in shaping architecture's cultural identity. Within a landscape characterized by the growing complexity of digital media, the theme of knowledge transmission thus offers a valuable perspective from which to reflect on the relationship between architecture, knowledge, and culture.

Keywords
Knowledge Transmission — Media — Architectural Culture

The subtitle of this issue reads *Experiments in the knowledge transmission of architectural culture*, whereby *knowledge transmission* we mean a process of critical knowledge production and dissemination. Before examining the various spaces of transmission, it is useful to define, from the outset, one of the central concerns of this issue: addressing the question of knowledge transmission inevitably entails addressing a question of cultural identity, regardless of the context in which such transmission takes place. In other words, speaking of knowledge transmission means first and foremost interrogating the conditions through which a discipline constructs and continually redefines its own internal composition.
As the selected contributions seek to demonstrate, the mechanisms through which a body of knowledge is transmitted are never neutral. Rather, they contribute to determining which contents are considered relevant, which languages prove most effective, and, more broadly, which cultural position is ultimately adopted.
This clarification allows us to distinguish the notion of knowledge transmission from other concepts that are often conflated with it, such as dissemination, popularization, or communication.
Communication, in particular, deserves a brief digression, for which the reflections of Mario Perniola prove especially useful. In an essay published in 2004, the philosopher described communication as the opposite of knowledge, or as a magic wand capable of transforming «inconclusiveness, retraction and confusion from signs of weakness into demonstrations of strength» (tda) before ultimately dismissing it as «the enemy of ideas because its essential function is to dissolve content». More than twenty years after the publication of this pamphlet, it can be argued that Pernio-



Fig. 1
Cover of Mario Perniola's book *Contro la comunicazione*.

la's intuition has progressively established itself as a defining paradigm of a contemporary condition in which communication primarily evokes marketing, advertising, and promotion. This topic concerns architecture in a particularly urgent way. Over recent decades, the increasing mediatization of society and the growing centrality of communication processes have profoundly affected the architectural field. Visibility, image construction, and the ability to maintain a presence across multiple communication channels have become increasingly important components of professional practice, contributing to a redefinition of the disciplinary foundations that, until the end of the twentieth century, had largely sustained both architecture and its education. A recent master's programme promoted by a well-known educational institution is emblematic of this transformation. Significantly entitled *Marketing and Communication of Architecture: Strategies and Storytelling for a Successful Project*, its title alone is almost sufficient to demonstrate the extent of this shift.

Yet the etymology of the word *communication* points elsewhere. Its roots can be traced to the Greek *koinón*, that which is common or public, before passing into the Latin *cum*, from which terms such as *communitas*, *communico*, and *communicatio* derive. Within this genealogy, *communicatio* opens onto the idea of sharing goods and, above all, knowledge, suggesting a collective transmission of understanding. This semantic proximity has gradually weakened over time through use, following that process of linguistic deterioration that inevitably affects not only language itself but also the worlds it describes. This brief detour appears necessary, if only to clear the field of possible misunderstandings and allow us to examine the question of knowledge transmission and its educational vocation, particularly in light of a contemporary condition that is far more unbalanced toward communication and yet, perhaps for this very reason, especially worthy of careful dissection.

Let us now turn to the title: *Beyond School*. Here, "beyond" is not intended simply as a geographical displacement, but rather as an attempt to observe those spaces in which architecture has historically sought – and continues to seek – to construct paths of disciplinary inquiry outside the channels traditionally entrusted with its transmission.

In mapping this geography, it proved decisive to encounter a question posed almost incidentally by Guido Canella during a conference held at Politecnico di Milano in 1999. The question was as follows:

> Does one learn more from what is transmitted theoretically within the School, or from what can be acquired autodidactically outside it, through the direct observation of buildings and projects published in architectural magazines? (tda)

Without attempting to determine how measurable this *more* might be, what is significant here is the recognition that the problem of transmission is inseparable from a dialectic between what is taught within the school and what is learned independently beyond it.

Starting from these considerations, it seemed particularly meaningful to dedicate both the research project[1] within which this issue is situated and the issue itself to the extra-academic dimension, adopting it as a privileged perspective from which to interrogate the forms through which architectural culture is transmitted. This position derives above all from the conviction that it has been precisely this external sphere that has sought to raise its degree of experimentation, often entering tension with the normativity

of the school, which – except in rare cases – tends by its very nature to transmitt only that which has already been consolidated.

Chemical Compositions

It is precisely this sphere of learning that constitutes the starting point, and indeed the urgency, of the reflections proposed in this issue, especially if we consider that the world of magazines evoked above has today been transformed into a complex constellation of platforms, devices, and initiatives that gravitate increasingly away from the school and toward autonomous forms of knowledge production and circulation.
The issue may therefore be reformulated through a question suggested by Umberto Eco:

> The question that the scholar of communication must ask is this: is the chemical composition of every communicative act identical?[2] (Eco 1973) (tda)

Without claiming to address the problem from the perspective of communication studies, and at the risk of being immediately contradicted by Marshall McLuhan, as happens to the unfortunate professor of "TV, Media and Culture" at Columbia University in the famous scene from *Annie Hall*, the question nevertheless offers a useful point of departure for investigating the ways in which knowledge is transmitted.
What interests us is to adopt Eco's question to understand how the «chemical composition» of architecture's transmission changes as the instruments, media, and cultural contexts through which it operates are transformed. Rather than assuming a deterministic relationship between media and content, this issue seeks to investigate the relationships established among media, languages, audiences, and cultural projects, and above all the role these relationships play in the construction and transmission of architectural culture.
One might imagine that this was essentially the same question implicitly posed by figures such as Ernesto Nathan Rogers, Carlo Aymonino, Vittorio Gregotti, Carlo Mollino, Ludovico Quaroni, Luciano Semerani, and Bruno Zevi, to mention only some of the protagonists featured in this issue—each time they chose to entrust their ideas to a journal, a radio or television program, an exhibition, or a public lecture.
Historically, architecture has devoted particular attention to the forms through which it transmits itself, transforming them into a genuine experimental laboratory for theoretical construction and critical verification. Throughout the twentieth century, this landscape progressively expanded through a plurality of media. Alongside specialized publishing, represented by books and magazines, important experiments emerged through radio, television, and even cinema.
These media offered the possibility of reaching audiences far beyond the specialist sphere, responding to that aspiration toward the socialization of knowledge that animated a significant group of intellectuals who, in the post-war period, regarded participation in public debate as «a duty, closely connected to the conviction that the intellectual *koiné* should in some way serve as a guide, even a moral one, for the nation» (Del Vecchio 2010) (tda).
Without anticipating too extensively the themes that will be explored in the individual contributions, it is worth recalling some of the experiences that distinguished themselves through a particularly high degree of originality. Alongside numerous editorial initiatives, significant experiments

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Fig. 2
Frame from Annie Hall, directed by Woody Allen in 1977. Marshall McLuhan can be seen on the right.

were developed through less conventional media. Radio, television, and cinema offered alternative yet highly effective perspectives, as demonstrated by educational television programmes such as *La casa dell'uomo* by Ernesto Nathan Rogers, *L'insediamento urbano* by Carlo Aymonino, *L'uomo e la città* by Vittorio Gregotti, and *La tradizione ritrovata* by Aldo Grasso, Fulvio Irace, and Giampiero Viola, as well as productions with a more explicitly cinematic character, such as *Città nuova* by Éric Rohmer and *La forma della città* by Pier Paolo Pasolini. Similarly, in the international context, one might recall the radio programme *The Classical Language of Architecture*, produced by John Summerson for the BBC, and the broader project of the Open University, which introduced innovative educational models based on the integrated use of television, radio, and telephone. These experiments inspired Bruno Zevi with the idea of a "university of the air" (*università dell'aria*) (Zevi 1977), later translated into his experience with TeleRoma56. Alongside these initiatives stood a range of fundamental institutions and cultural platforms, from Biennales and Triennales to architecture festivals, archives, foundations, and cultural centres, which played a decisive role in the construction and dissemination of architectural culture.

A Flood of Information

Today, this system intersects with an extraordinarily diversified media ecosystem that has transformed not only languages but also the very forms through which knowledge is produced.

The implications of this transformation were already clearly perceptible at the beginning of the 2010s. In September 2010, for example, the first issue of *FAMagazine* was published. At that time, Nokia still dominated the mobile phone market, the iPhone had reached only its fourth generation, Facebook was gradually displacing MySpace as the leading social networking platform, while Twitter was beginning to establish itself as a tool for real-time journalism. Before long, Instagram would timidly begin to appear in the App Stores of the fortunate few who already owned a smartphone.

What was taking shape was the granular (Roncaglia 2023) and overexposed ecosystem that would come to characterize the decade that followed.

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Fig. 3
Open University student completing an exercise by telephone. From: Daniel Weinbren, *The Open University: A History* (2014).

Given the circumstances, one might travel back more than a century, to the moment when Georg Simmel reversed the famous Franciscan motto «Omnia habentes, nihil possidentes»[3] (Simmel 1911–1912) to describe the condition of those who, immersed in an overloaded culture, perceive themselves as having access to virtually unlimited knowledge while remaining unable to assimilate it into their inner lives.

More than a simple anticipation of contemporary information overload, Simmel's reflection identifies a tension that directly concerns the issue of transmission itself: the growing difficulty of transforming the availability of information into culturally meaningful knowledge.

Following the rapid development of mass media and, above all, the emergence of the web, this perception became deeply entrenched, contributing to a situation in which the flow of information transmitted through the multiple channels of contemporary society has become practically impossible to process in its entirety.

If this is the condition that characterizes today's informational ecosystem, it remains necessary to ask how it is experienced by younger generations and, more specifically, by students of architecture.

Within the framework of our research, we sought to investigate this issue through a survey conducted among architecture students[4]. The aim was to verify or challenge a series of assumptions that have gradually acquired the status of commonplaces: that young people no longer read, that book culture has disappeared, that attention has been replaced by scrolling, and so forth.

The results reveal a natural predominance of digital media in access to information: 99% of respondents use the Internet, 71% rely on online platforms, and 68% access information through social media, whereas only 42% regularly consult books and journals. This imbalance points to a profound transformation in the ways knowledge is acquired, one that some scholars have described as «a genuine anthropological mutation» (Valerii et al. 2015) (tda). Particularly interesting, however, is the contradiction that emerges when examining the levels of trust attributed to these various sources. While social media and digital platforms have become some of the primary channels through which information is accessed, only 18% of students consider social media to be reliable, compared to 90% for books and 67% for journals. This paradox, and the urgency it reveals, deserves careful reflection. It demonstrates that, despite their limited perceived reliability, most respondents continue to rely on tools that are more agile, immediate, and user-friendly. To this must be added another significant element. Many of the spaces that traditionally performed a function of cultural mediation throughout the twentieth century now appear increasingly marginal. Seventy percent of respondents report rarely visiting archives and research centres, while 64% demonstrate limited engagement with institutions such as the Biennale di Venezia or the Triennale di Milano.

The data, therefore, seem to confirm many of the transformations described thus far. At the same time, however, they raise a further question: what can educators, researchers, and cultural producers do to operate effectively within this landscape and through the channels currently available?

Inside the Labyrinth: A Journey There and Back

Perhaps what we need is a thread of Ariadne, a thread that allows us to navigate an increasingly complex and labyrinthine ecosystem without losing our way. A thread capable of helping us resist both the enthusiasm of those who uncritically embrace every model offered by the contemporary condition and the skepticism of those who reject them outright. A thread

that prevents us from reducing the question of media, tools, and spaces of transmission to a deterministic reading. Instead, it should enable us to continue asking what is being transmitted while everything else changes and, above all, what allows architecture to continue recognizing itself as an expression of culture. Once this journey beyond the school has come to an end, however, it will be necessary to follow the thread back and return to the classroom, bringing with us what has been discovered and placing it at the disposal of those who, more than anyone else, need reliable co-ordinates with which to orient themselves autonomously within this *mare magnum*, the students.
Invoking Umberto Eco one final time:

> If you prefer a less paradoxical formulation, I would say this: the battle for the survival of human beings as responsible subjects in the Age of Communication is not won where communication originates, but where it arrives. (Eco 1973) (tda)

But let us now turn to the contributions that substantiate the issues discussed thus far.
We considered it particularly valuable to address this theme through the format of a call for papers, with the aim of mapping a geography of experiences that extends from the post-war period, and especially from the experimental initiatives promoted by RAI to the present day. The resulting chronological span is undoubtedly broad, yet it provides an opportunity to observe, from an evolutionary perspective, several phenomena that run throughout the entire issue.
The contributions are organized around two broad areas. The first concerns the places of extra-academic transmission, such as festivals, public events, and cultural centres: places that have constructed autonomous spaces for the production and circulation of architectural culture. The second focuses on the instruments of transmission, ranging from traditional media to contemporary digital devices.
The issue opens with two contributions devoted precisely to the places. Carlo Quintelli republishes, more than twenty years after its original appearance and accompanied by updated notes, the introductory text to the first Festival of Architecture in Parma (2004), conceived as a «an attempt to bring out of the university the contents of scientific research to put them in reaction with an architectural and urban phenomenology» understood in its heterodoxy, composed of complementary arts and forms of knowledge. The Parmese experience emerges as an antidote to «the emerging drifts of an architecture conditioned by the needs of communication aimed at commercial and consumerist success», a theme already discussed in the preceding pages.
Not far away, both geographically and culturally, lies MantovArchitettura, an international architecture event that Elisa Boeri, Luca Cardani, and Claudia Tinazzi describe through its capacity to function not merely as a cultural container but as a genuine pedagogical device capable of adopting the city itself as a laboratory, according to a precise educational vision that combines «education, research, dissemination, and civic commitment».
Alongside these contributions are two very different experiences united by the central role assigned to the community as an active agent of transmission. From the Stazione Rogers in Trieste, described by Thomas Bisiani, emerges a conception of transmission as a critical and civic practice grounded in a

continuous interrogation of «meaning of things» and in an almost «anti-academic» position, understood as an «logical and methodological opposition to that cultural and pedagogical model which reserves exclusively for the university the production and transmission of knowledge».
Leaving Trieste behind, Aleksei Lashkov and Meri Pepanyan accompany us along the nearly three thousand kilometres separating the Friulian capital from Yerevan, Armenia, and more specifically to the Library for Architecture (LFA), a «hybrid educational machine», both physical and digital, founded upon people, conversations, and shared research. Through public programmes, exhibitions, workshops, collective translation experiments involving architectural texts, and encounters with practitioners, this Armenian initiative seeks to establish itself as «a support mechanism, a self-learning space that facilitates discussions and community-driven research».
The contribution by Enrique Encabo, Inmaculada Maluenda, and Íñigo Cobeta serves as a bridge toward the second section of the issue. Through the analysis of several key moments in the career of Rem Koolhaas, including his fascination with digital media during the 1980s and 1990s, the publication of the manifesto-like volume *S, M, L, XL*, and the first issue of *Domus d'Autore*, a relationship between architecture and communication emerges that prompts us to reflect on the very role of architecture and on its gradual transformation «from content support to content in its own right».
The question of devices inevitably introduces that of instruments. Let us begin with the traditional ones[5]. Through different trajectories and figures, the contributions by Michela Morgante, Riccarda Cantarelli, Enrico Prandi, and Alessandra Gabriele focus on the role of television. Initially at the centre of a debate concerning the «legittimità di un medium a vocazione popolare nel veicolare contenuti "alti"» (Prandi), television gradually evolved into a genuine instrument of knowledge transmission. It did not merely disseminate ideas developed elsewhere but participated directly in the construction of knowledge itself, helping to «elaborare in tempo reale ciò che il cantiere intellettuale stava ancora costruendo» (Prandi). From the programmes of Carlo Mollino to the experiments of Carlo Aymonino, passing through Rogers, Gregotti, Quaroni, Tafuri, and extending to the Dutch case of Jaap Bakema, television emerges as a medium capable of operating as a true pedagogical device, a site of theoretical construction and public debate. Reading these four contributions makes clear how television represented a space through which architecture sought to move beyond its disciplinary boundaries and engage with society, becoming a genuine «a place of collective literacy» (Cantarelli).
Before turning to digital media and the analysis of several significant experiences, it seemed useful to pause and reflect upon certain phenomena that characterize the contemporary media ecosystem, particularly in relation to images. This is an ecosystem marked by such a «media bombardment based on the quantity of images available on the Internet» (Zammerini) that it has begun to affect the very structure of images themselves, which «seems to lose a semantic structure in which to recognize a complex system of cultural codes and meanings» (Fabris). The crisis of images in the age of social media constitutes, in fact, a theme that will traverse all subsequent contributions at different levels.
It is precisely within these tensions that Enter_Vista, ArchiDIAP, and OnArchitecture are situated: three profoundly different experiences united by the attempt to construct cultural projects within digital environments. Enter_Vista was conceived as a tool for exploring new modes of architectural

narration and finds, among other formats, in the video interview a means of reflecting upon how the relationship between instruments and transmission «does not concern the medium alone but directly affects design culture and the ways in which architecture produces and transmits knowledge».
Interviewing Orazio Carpenzano and Fabio Balducci, founders of ArchiD-IAP, Alessandro Brunelli reminds us of the centrality, within educational experiences, of transmitting architecture not merely as a collection of data and images but as an «a poetic and cognitive experience capable of engaging people emotionally and intellectually, with the aim of sparking in users a desire for deeper understanding».
Finally, OnArchitecture, an audiovisual archive devoted to architecture, likewise employs video as its principal medium while affirming the centrality of authorship in the construction of an editorial project. This position is succinctly expressed in a statement by its founder Felipe de Ferrari, interviewed by Giulia Furlotti: «we are authors. We produce a grammar, a system for filming videos».
The final contributions push the reflection on the relationship between transmission and images even further by placing side by side two experiences that are diametrically opposed in the structure of the communicative act and, for precisely this reason, particularly fruitful when read in parallel. The first concerns the British podcast *Scaffold*, which, in the words of its founder Matthew Blunderfield, finds in the very renunciation of images a means of amplifying the spatial conditions of sound. This strategy compels listeners to shift their attention toward elements that normally remain at the margins of architectural experience: processes, biographies, sounds, and relationships that precede the completed work. The interview thus becomes a kind of interpretative scaffold, a temporary support that allows meaning to take shape without substituting itself for architecture.
The second is the reflection that Luigiemanuele Amabile, Marianna Ascolese, and Alberto Calderoni devote to Instagram through an analysis of some of its defining characteristics. If the previous case was characterized by the complete absence of images, here we encounter their overwhelming abundance. Within a context marked by a «flood of images», the logic of deep scrolling risks transforming the feed into a sequence incapable of constructing un sistema consapevole di rimandi, reducing it instead to an accumulazione visiva algoritmica. Yet within this scenario the authors present two Instagram pages, *Olgiati_and_ideas* and *Studio Sergison*, as genuine «visual microcosm» capable of partially resisting this dynamic through a curatorial approach that transforms the feed into a selective and legible sequence. In this way, the image ceases to be merely an object of consumption and instead attempts to become a pedagogical instrument for the construction and transmission of architectural projects.
Perhaps it is precisely this theme of curatorship, of the editorial project, that emerges as one of the most significant outcomes of the entire issue. More than the distinction between analogue and digital, what unites the most compelling experiences presented here is their ability to bend the potentialities of a medium toward the construction of a recognizable cultural trajectory, capable of selecting and producing content, or, in other words, culture.
From Rogers's presence on RAI during the early 1950s to the educational use of social media, this trajectory represents one of the many possible threads of Ariadne through which we might attempt to orient ourselves within that *beyond the School* that the contributions collected in this issue have sought to unravel. Enjoy the journey!

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Notes

[1] The theme of this call is situated within a line of research initiated by the doctoral dissertation *For a school Beyond the school: Phenomena, Tools, and Perspectives of Extra-Academic Transmissibility* (R. Rapparini, 2024, University of Parma, XXXVI Cycle) and is currently being further developed by the editors through the research project *The Transmissibility of the Architectural Project: Methodologies, Tools, and Digital Languages to Support the Development of an Experimental Prototype* (University of Parma).

[2] Umberto Eco delivered these remarks at the "Vision 67" conference, organized by the International Center for Communication, Art and Sciences and held in New York in October 1967.

[3] The issue of informational overexposure is crucial and, not coincidentally, connects directly to the reasons that led, among other things, to the founding of *FAMagazine* itself. In the editorial of its first issue, Enrico Prandi traced the origins of the magazine to the need to engage with a culture saturated by information and by recurring, reiterated, and standardized images. This condition made it necessary to establish a channel capable of selecting, organizing, and making available meaningful portions of knowledge—a role that, in all its urgency, is now assumed by numerous other initiatives as well.

The extended quotation from Simmel reproduced here is taken from Enrico Prandi's editorial *Architecture (and Culture) in Times of Crisis. The Reasons for a Magazine* (*FAMagazine*, no. 1, 2014):

« Thus emerges the characteristic dilemma of modern man: the feeling of being surrounded by an infinite number of elements of culture that are not insignificant, yet are not truly meaningful either [...]. This situation might be characterized by reversing the motto once used to describe the spiritual poverty of the early Franciscans: *nihil habentes, omnia possidentes*. In contrast, the people of all excessively abundant and overloaded cultures are *omnia habentes, nihil possidentes*» (Simmel, 1911–1912) (tda).

[4] For a more detailed discussion of the survey findings, readers may refer to the following contribution: R. Rapparini (2026), *"Architectural Discourse in Flux: Rethinking Knowledge Transmission"*, in *Research & Teaching Conference. Exploring Academia – From Practice to Publishing 2025*, AMPS Proceedings Journal Series.

[5] In media studies, a distinction is generally drawn between traditional media and new media, particularly with regard to the role individuals play within the communication process. Put simply, in traditional media the individual is primarily the recipient of communication and engages with content in a predominantly one-way and hierarchical manner. In new media, by contrast, the individual becomes an active participant, able to contribute interactively to the production and circulation of information. Traditional media therefore include print publications (books and journals), television, and radio, whereas new media encompass social media, online platforms, blogs, and similar digital environments.

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Carlo Quintelli

Festival dell'architettura di Parma: twenty years on

Abstract
The essay republishes the introductory text to the catalogue of the first edition of the *Festival dell'Architettura di Parma* (2004), accompanied by a retrospective reflection twenty years later. Quintelli reconstructs the Festival's founding rationale: rescuing architectural culture from its media-driven and narcissistic drift and restoring it to a critical, research-based process of knowledge production. The text diagnoses the crisis of traditional dissemination platforms – journals, the Biennale, and the Triennale – and the rise of an event-oriented architecture shaped by mass communication and iconic consensus. The Festival emerged as an alternative: a space of hetero-architecture, open to exchanges with the arts, forms of knowledge, and traditions, capable of bringing university research beyond academic boundaries and returning it to the city and society. The concluding remarks call for new forms of extra-moenia cultural dissemination

Keywords
Festival dell'Architettura — Architectural Dissemination — Eteroarchitettura — Architectural criticism — Parma

With the aim of investigating the training opportunities for architects outside the university today, the editor of this issue of FAM thought it useful to re-propose this introductory essay of mine to the catalogue of the first Festival of Architecture, an international event held in Italy from 2004 to 2012, in Parma a few years ago home to a new Faculty of Architecture and later in a polycentric key also in Reggio and Modena. The editorial choice is justified because even that festival, over twenty years ago in the first Italian season of cultural festivals, set itself the goal of promoting in-formative dissemination, but I would say first of all the perceptibility of a phenomenon, the architectural and urban one, which in Italy, despite everything, remained either within an academic debate or in the contingency of the news, both of a worldly nature with the mythologization of the architect artist and linked to catastrophic and in particular seismic events. A text that, reread today, already seems to me to be quite aware of the syndromes of an architecture marked by the break with the recent Italian tradition, the one that, if we understand it from the mid-twentieth century, has actually operated a continuous reinvention of tradition, in a climate where the laboratory of ideas was very differentiated but united by a common sense of critical role and intellectual honesty with respect to decisive issues for the city, from that of the home to that of public space in the reciprocity of the relationship between architecture and the city. The operation of the Festival, however, was not to detach itself from the university to look outside it for an alternative environment, rather it was an attempt to bring out of the university the contents of scientific research to put them in reaction with an architectural and urban phenomenology that we liked to grasp in its heterodoxy together with complementary arts and knowl-

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Fig. 1
Brochure and logo of the Festival dell'Architettura di Parma, no. 1, 2004.

edge. But above all, the reflections of the time sought to establish possible alternatives to the emerging drifts of an architecture conditioned by the needs of communication aimed at commercial and consumerist success from which a narcissistic model of architect derived. At the same time, the weakness of the cultural line of the public structures responsible for authentic promotion was noted, first of all on the critical level of architectural culture, the Biennale and Triennale above all, and therefore there was a need to create alternative spaces and tools supported from the bottom up of contexts, Italian and European but not only, fed by many scientific resources from time to time stimulated to make the festival its own stage of visibility and testing. Today the inflation of the many small festivals, to be clear those promoted by the MiC since 2019, seems to be following different paths, prevailing slogans, lines of consensus and distribution of resources with who knows with what legacy. Many tools of architectural and urban composition, those that are nourished through research, have largely returned to the university. This does not mean that, we hope one day, such research may find new means to escape again thus providing, *extra moenia,* increasingly diversified and authentic training opportunities.

Why an Architecture Festival? *

I had to hide my perplexity in front of Roberto Gabetti who, answering a question about how architecture was perceived today by public opinion, claimed to be positively surprised by how much people talked about it, and how architecture was much more present than it used to be in newspapers and *the media* in general. Considering the disenchantment of which Gabetti was capable in judging the things of architecture, and I believe in general of the world, I could not help but doubt at that point my excessive ideological zeal, to the point of prejudice, towards how the contemporary media mistreated the complexity and values of architecture. After a short time, after about seven years, I must also admit that that ideological prejudice (I prudently still prefer to consider it this way) is progressively reconstituting itself because in this very short period of time the intertwining between architecture and communication has been further accentuated, for how communication tools speak of architecture but also for how architecture takes on a prevalent communicative character. It seems appropriate to reconsider Gabetti's optimism with respect to a specific historical phase and to a perception perhaps still linked to the conditions of debate and dissemination of architecture prior to the eighties. Not that of dedicated magazines, of course, but that of the generalist media which, since the post-war

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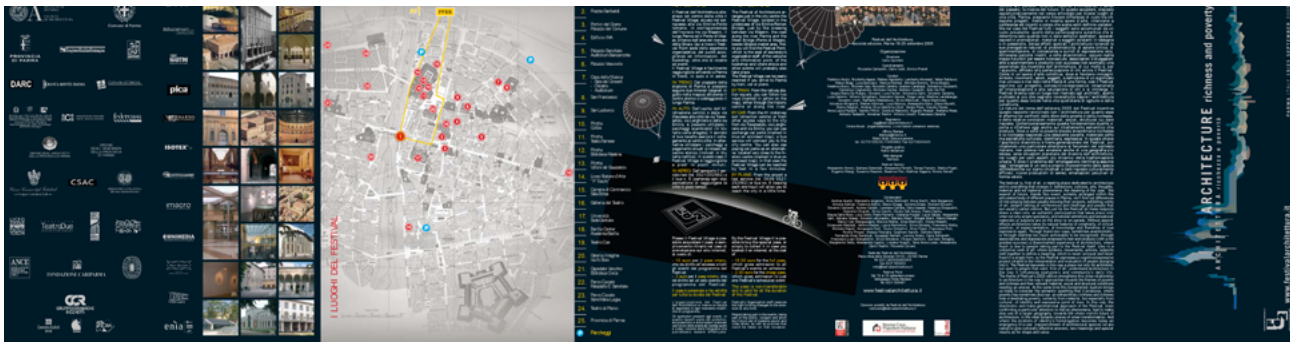


Fig. 2
Brochure of the Festival dell'Architettura di Parma, no. 2, 2005.

period, have only rarely dealt with architecture, unlike what magazines, newspapers and televisions do today, even indirectly, with the naturalness through which issues of customs and society such as fashion, rather than mass phenomena, have always been addressed. the song etc. Because, a sensibility that grew up between the seventies and eighties, like that of my generation, cannot escape a now significant rate of falsification which, so to speak, pollutes the media diffusion of architecture without which, on the other hand, any effective dissemination of the same is useless. But if we agree with Mario Perniola that *communication is the opposite of knowledge* since its efficiency is proportional to the simplification of the ideas it must transmit, the question of a virtuous relationship remains open where communication remains an instrumental means of widespread and not only elitist knowledge. The problem of how much is talked about compared to how it is talked about, and of the balance that should be sought to guarantee cognitive as well as informative purposes, cannot therefore fail to involve the issues of architecture as well. On the other hand, the two aspects are closely linked with respect to the effectiveness of the action because to make *beautiful architecture*, as Aymonino would say, it is necessary, but not sufficient, a good criticism (ours is extraordinary, from Zevi to Tafuri to De Fusco to Ciucci to Dal Co to Olmo to many other younger historians who deal with contemporary art, not to mention the critical substitution provided by many Italian designers (from Pagano to Rogers to Gregotti just to mention the Casabella supply chain). It is also necessary to know how to tell it, to make it understood and assimilated, to make it an indispensable companion of the design operation, of its interpretative and expressive tools, as well as of the intention (and action) of the client, the one who is in any case father or mother, however you want it, of any architectural construction. On the other hand, it is evident that the peculiarity of the Italian case remains that of an elitist educational action, linked to circles and rituals substantially separated from the main social phenomena that at most are received on the level of an inescapable complexity, and also, from some points of view, *voyeuristically* enhanced. Compared, for example, to what was the case in the Anglo-Saxon context, where the popularizing action of extraordinary historians such as Summerson and Pevser (as Michela Rosso reminds us well in *The Useful Story*) arrived in every home, through the BBC airwaves, as early as the thirties. A delay, the Italian one, that we find all the more so today given that mass journalism, bypassing (it seems obvious to me) the most qualified critical baggage, manages to grasp wide swathes of interest, demonstrating that it is still creating a *new market* of architecture but above all new strategies of consensus. From the vast and multifaceted media world that belongs to us, an extraordinary variety of architectural themes emerges, declined not only on design and

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Fig. 3
Brochure of the Festival dell'Architettura di Parma, no. 3, 2006.

furniture, which have always been the most communicated, but also, if not above all, on the city, its buildings, and the search for a fashionable identity that follows. If even the non-city (Tokyo) of Sofia Coppola's *Lost in translation* manages to be the real protagonist of the reverse shot of the identity bewilderment of a humanity that returns to cling to feelings, if the weekly inserts of the newspapers tell the condition of a Dutch neighborhood, of the last museum in London or Switzerland, as well as of course the house of the writer or scientist positioned on the *waterfront* or obtained in the *re-developed favela*, one cannot fail to draw an interesting consideration from it. Evidently, in this approach, everything tends to mix, and communication demands more and more icons, articulated concepts, material whose visibility/variety/intelligibility ensures the effectiveness of reception. This is how an uncontrolled flow is created within which *feng shui*, green building, the eco-monster, the Prada store also fall seamlessly and where the famous architect has no choice but to recite watchwords, for example mystifying praise of *lightness* or architecture *without right* angles. Apparently much ado about nothing, but which in reality produces the result of the sole recognition of a sign, an icon, and even more of a *brand* (instrumentally shared between architect and client), and therefore of the products connected to it. Architecture enters the grinder of mass communication, becoming an object of consensus and the consequent production of value.

How can we introduce into this condition components capable of filtering, ordering, distinguishing the architectural heterogeneous and at the same time making effective the potential of cognitive and informative communication? Certainly trying to get out of the conformism of aesthetic-simulacral techniques, of an architectural symbolism all aimed at the self-referentiality of one's own consumption, but perhaps it is not enough. In spite of ourselves, the comparison must still be supported with that mass taste which, as Guido Canella often observes, is increasingly conformed to television models, to their stereotyping, and we should add, to the consequent a-historical and de-contextualized dimension of the perception of the city's becoming. The obvious resistance to this condition is the intellectually elitist one, on the other hand increasingly irrelevant on the level of the becoming of phenomena. And that of even the best architecture magazines today appears as such. For over twenty years, and certainly since the Casabella of the Seventies, the in-formative action of magazines, with reference to specialized ones, has been declining. The architect referent, unable to assume a real cultural and professional leadership in the processes of transformation of the city, often finding himself in unrelevant decision-making positions, deprived of role and skills, no longer recognizes in these tools a formative contribution but also a support with respect to his cultural and professional legitimacy. The critical and non-fiction publishing landscape has also diminished its degree of influence. On the one hand for the bulimia that also distinguishes the architecture publishing sector, on the other for its bending to promotional strategies which, although understandable in terms of survival, in fact diminish its authority. Where then, moreover, it is now taken for granted how necessary but not enough a good book is to make a successful architect.

Between the tendential crisis of traditional public tools through which the comparison and affirmation of the values of architecture was once determined and the potential of generalist media, capable of determining the

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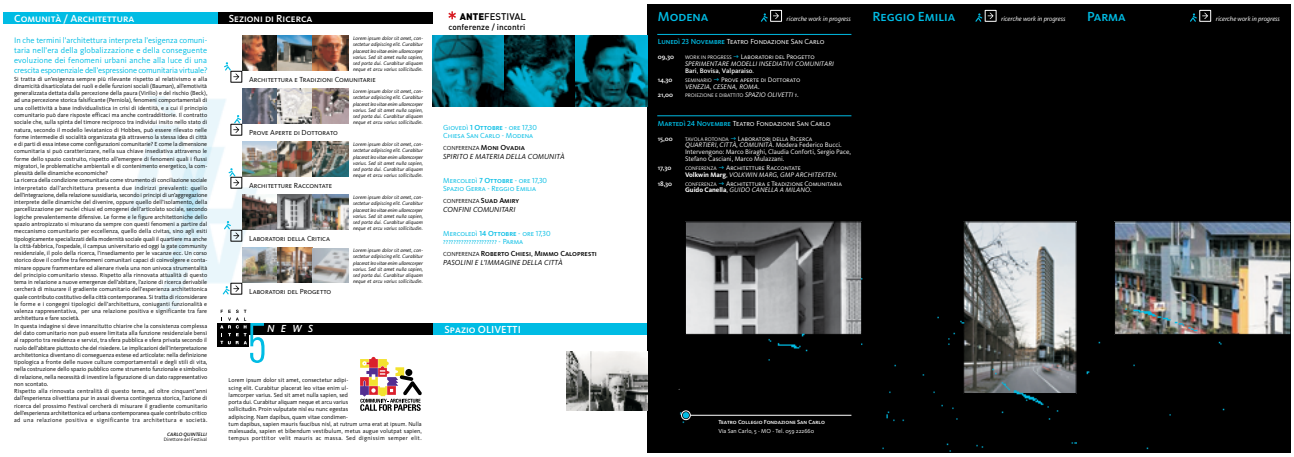


Fig. 4
Brochure of the Festival dell'Architettura di Parma, no. 4, 2007/2008.

Fig. 5
Brochure of the Festival dell'Architettura di Parma, no. 5, 2009/2010.

trends of mass taste, another component appears on the field of communication competition. That of events, certainly not new for architecture that we could consider in fact an event in itself, but today more than ever capable of entering into a logic instrumental to promotional strategies. The historical phenomenon of the universal exhibition, not surprisingly successfully resurrected today as in the striking case of Barcelona now reduced to an *expo-city*, makes use first of all of the representative architectural identity of the individual participating entity, at the beginning a nation even before being a state but now also a company, lobby and more, where the instrument of the pavilion, autonomous architecture, *objectified*, therefore capable of strong representative emanation and iconic symbolism, remains in fact the typology of reference for a city created through *event-architecture*. Even if *the architecture-event* of the pavilion, used on a pretext in building cities, is often reduced to a media and functional flop, from semantic scrapping in record time, as in the case of the *Millennium Dome*. The idea of an event is further articulated: the great competition, capable of highlighting the potential of a theme even before the solutions we will adopt to address it; the opening of a school, as a moment of subjects and expressions capable of evoking, even before producing, the need for a direction, a cultural challenge; or even the great exhibition, from the deep historical to the contemporary, in which it will be possible to highlight the project of a reading, of a vision of things, and therefore of the future of the same. But, more and more often, the types of events listed here, for times and methods obviously different corresponding to their nature, denounce the fatigue of obvious proposals and also of contents that no longer correspond to the expectations of the event itself. Even the occasion of the great exhi-

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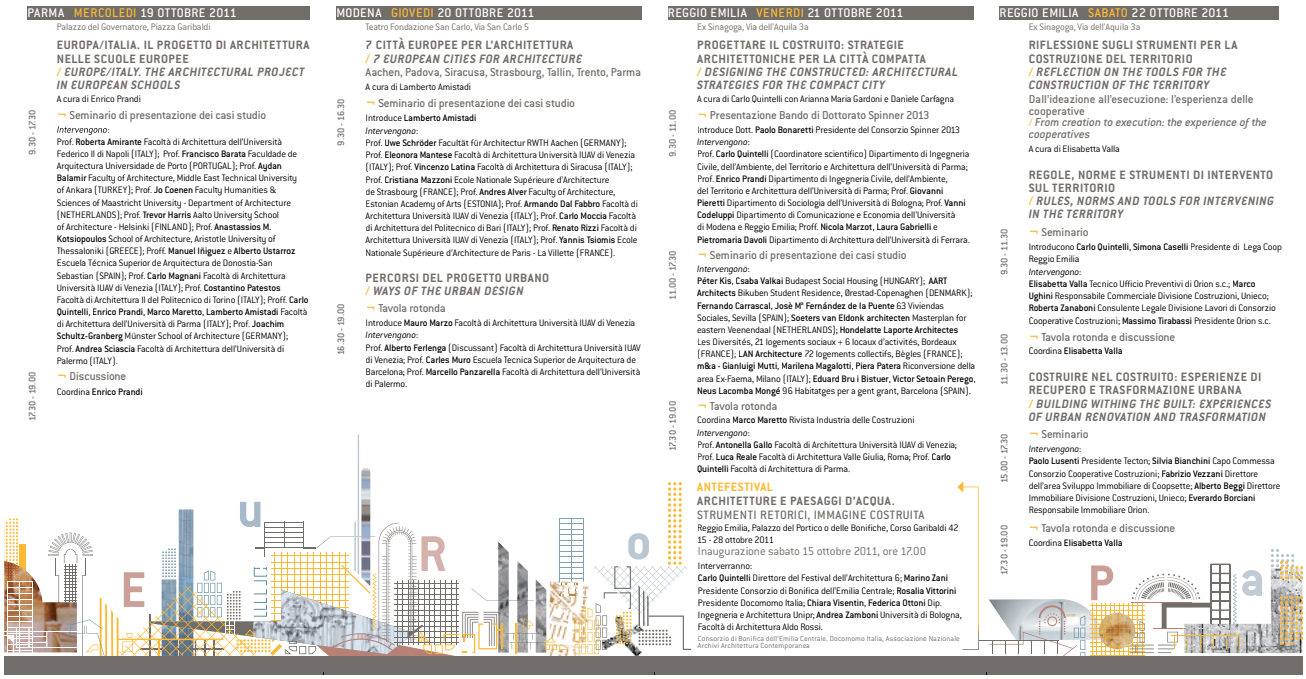


Fig. 6
Brochure of the Festival dell'Architettura di Parma, no. 6, 2011.

bition demonstrates the emptiness of this tool at a time when the meaning of the choices is not clear, the interpretation of a project that often no longer causes discussion because it does not pose any thesis to be discussed. The school, in other ways, can be perceived in the key of the event if its identity comes out of it and above all with respect to what, in a given relational context, it will be able to propose in terms of design culture, tools for change, involvement. Certainly not from the tourist-educational perspective of the study stay, of the façade excellence where prestigious signatures now conditioned by the banality of the repertoire of which they themselves are victims can pass. Even the competitions seem to veer more and more towards the level of the clash between big names, complete with a background of intrigue and the game of alliances, between personalities mainly capable of throwing on the plate of the proposal more the prestige of media fame than that of the substance of a detailed design interpretation, beyond a refined representative spectacularization, iconically seductive with respect to the eye of juries whose circuit correspondence with the designers themselves we detect, between relationships and symbolic areas of a sort of *architectural serial*. The rate of virtuality grows in terms inversely proportional to that of the concreteness of the problems from which the need to hold an event starts and in general the objective is grasped exclusively on the level of notoriety, of what is worth only as a recognizable icon.

But perhaps the most relevant phenomenon of a distorting instrumentality of the concept of event probably lies in the semantic synthesis between architectural work, author and context. This aspect is certainly inherent in the very idea of architecture as an event, if not even as an advent and perhaps *an apparition*, as Franco Purini told us in a now distant seminar in Parma (*La Città del Teatro*, 1987), but which today takes on the instrumental radicality, technically evolved as well as rationally piloted, of a *marketing* strategy whose *target* it is certainly not made up of those who live and appropriate that architecture in that particular context, but rather of that abstract and generalized human referent, easily adopted in the era of globalization, which through that constructive, expressive, functional

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Fig. 7
Brochure of the Festival dell'Architettura di Parma, no. 7, 2012

Fig. 8
Brochure of the Festival dell'Architettura di Parma, no. 8, 2013.

event should derive a generic and strong identifying denotation of modernity, rebirth, progress, etc., etc. The constitutive processuality of the architectural hyper-event, of which, in the post-ideological modernity of architecture, the contemporary archetype is realized with the Guggenheim in Bilbao, defines an obligatory cause-effect sequence that sees in the internationally renowned author the first communicative value, in architecture, obviously sensational in its spectacularity, the second value that becomes an immediate icon, in and of itself, and above all in a reproduced key, finally, at the third stage comes the context which, reverberated by author and authorial icon, identifies itself as a container of the event itself, transitively assuming the datum of visibility, attraction, consensus. Unlike archetypes from this point of view prehistoric such as the Beaubourg, the Bilbao variant is therefore innovative in that the sensational work, as much as it is extraneous to the story of the context, is associated with the author's signature factor and the identity factor of the context. The media energy of the Beaubourg was reduced to the fact of technological aestheticization, the seventies inertia of the nineteenth-century myth of the machine, beyond the rather unknown authors and the city, Paris, absolutely capable, due to the characteristics of its formation as a capital city, of making use of epiphenomena of architecture-spectacle. In Bilbao, on the other hand, the authoritative, as well as semantically solitary, action of the architectural work is recognizable as an iconic-authorial emblem, a fetish image of the designer's notoriety on which the character of the city is flattened, to the point that Bilbao itself is today, in widespread perception, the city of Gehry's Guggenheim. Returning to the effects of what we call an architectural *hyper-event*, the result is a capacity for transmission open to the general sensibility, not only of architects but also of users, towards any stardom, as well as in cinema or music of course, but also in figurative art, literature and now in architecture. Public and private clients, both of the large company that influences the destiny of entire parts of the city and of course of the city itself and of the territories, understood as configured administrative subjects, are subject to a strong role conditioning by this state of affairs, now increasingly involved in relaunching the degree of

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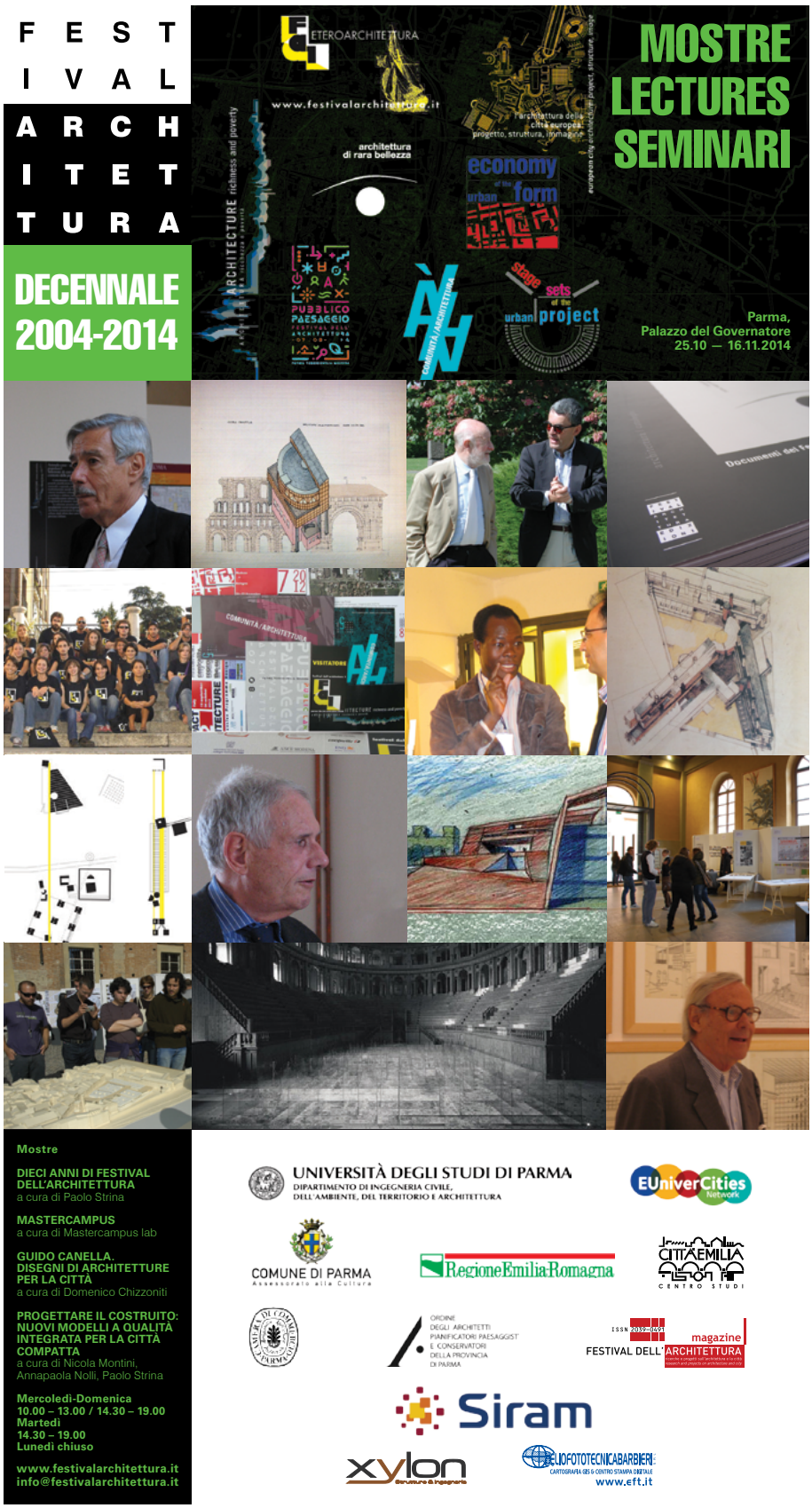


Fig. 9
Brochure of the Festival dell'Architettura di Parma, produced on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the first FA1, 2014.

exceptionality and therefore of media renown of an architecture that alone seems capable of restoring identity, It doesn't matter if virtual, in any case identity, to be used, exchanged, in essence to be sold on the market of recognizability. This trend concerns large but now also medium-small cities which, faced with the crisis of a transformation incapable of grasping the links of continuity within which to graft a peculiar innovation, limit themselves, simplistically, to the search for the event that returns an image that is presumptively modern as well as provincial until the caricatured outcome.

In the changed international context of the production of events that have architecture as a protagonist, the role of those public cultural institutions that are responsible for a careful knowledge of the becoming of architectural phenomena, of their being part of the more general processes of anthropic transformation, of the influence that they determine from the point of view of aesthetic as well as behavioral culture, is extremely important. social, collective. The Italian case is particularly privileged, from this point of view, as it makes use of an institution with a great cultural tradition, the Biennale, which since 1975 has been able to express its own autonomous section dedicated to architecture, whose scope, from a critical point of view, cultural orientations and visibility, is able to produce an extraordinary popular value. On the other hand, it is evident that we have to note how this tool of great potential, on the cognitive as well as demonstrative level, fails to correspond to an alternative of attention and critical work capable of escaping from that promotional manifold of architecture in which we are immersed. In particular, the last three editions of the Biennale seem to radicalize this trend. Starting from the edition edited by Massimiliano Fuksas where, to the semantic misunderstanding of the moralistic approach already present in the title, *Less Aesthetics, More Ethics*, in which components are contrasted that in reality the history of architecture shows us in innate reciprocity, is added the contradiction of the contents never as in that edition subject to an aestheticization of the virtual representation of architecture, to its self-referential abstraction up to the end of the ontological paradox of the dematerialization of architecture through the proliferation of digital-video-illusions of a virtual bewilderment. Certainly closer to the concreteness of the project, Deyan Sudjic's edition, however, fell back on the formula of the updated catalog (*Next*) of an exhibition-fair, within which the representatives of those who work in the field of major interventions were able to come to the attention of a qualified public. The pragmatic reaction to the baroque ambitions of the previous edition has therefore ended up sterilizing any contribution of architecture that was not in the sphere of technologically striking construction and efficient production from which only the need for a high rate of professionalism of the project seems to emerge. To confirm the trend briefly outlined here, the very title of this latest edition, edited by Kurt Forster, *Methamorph* (why not *metamorphosis*, perhaps more stimulating in literature, also for the rest of the world?) and the related results, make us think of a precise desire not to choose, not to thematize, to leave everything in the mystique of the flow of change, not to pose interpretative keys and knowledge of the concrete problems that architecture faces, hidden by the glittering clamor of an international representation that, without a given theme to interpret, is reduced to representing yet another Tower of Babel.

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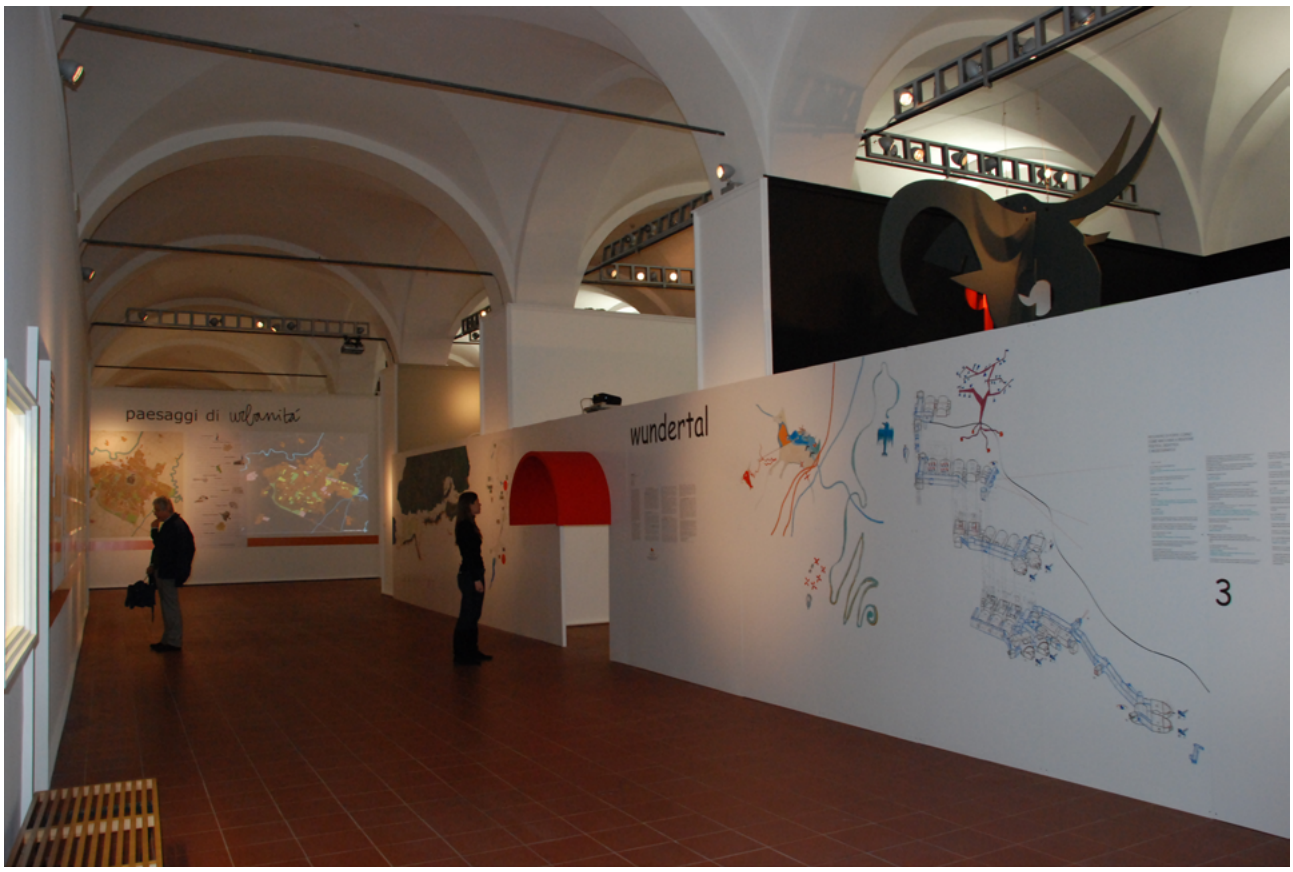


Fig. 10
Photographs taken during the Festival dell'Architettura di Parma, 2004–2014.

In this amusing panorama, as seductive as it is now often useless and redundant, certainly not entirely random with respect to precise strategies of dissimulation and distraction from the most central questions to which architecture would be called, the very relationship between arts and architecture becomes matter for a shift in interpretative planes, for a mixture where the relationship comes to operate through epidermal trespasses, gratuitous analogisms, role-playing games in which the parts exchange without adapting the tools and the meaning of their use. Is this not perhaps the moment in which the relationship between art and architecture, understood in particular the plastic, figurative and image ones, unlike the heroic phases of modernity, is no longer built on a reciprocity based on differences in role, techniques, interpretative and expressive statutes where the architect returns matter to the artist and this in turn provides further material to the architect? We are witnessing the absolute involvement, in reality not combinatorial, without any elective affinity, between arts and architecture which, it must be agreed with Gregotti, does not mutually benefit because it is not assumed in a process of confrontation but in the ambition of the substitution, exchange-like game, and therefore of weakening of the respective roles. Not only in the theoretical-demonstrative cuisine of schools, exhibitions, debate, but also in that of the assignments to which correspond precise thematic expectations (whether for the square, for the park or for the subway station assumed as a work of art to which the predestined artist awaits, we could say, *from the canvas to the city*). In the same way, the fashion architect will pursue the identity of artistic denotation to which consensus is sensitive, and the market of commissions, giving proof of visionary to the point of the puerile dimension of an architecture understood as a shapeless cloud, perhaps precisely where there is a city of marble, of geometric foundation, of volumetric plastic concreteness. Starting from here, perhaps, we can also imagine the inevitable decline of a Biennale at

this point justified in cutting the corporate branch of architecture to bring it back to the *core business* of art of which the potential audience is certainly larger (in terms of *audience* and visitors).
Also with respect to its belonging to the Milanese context, the Triennale itself, emblematic of the institutional role played by a foundation in which public and private components are intertwined, of industrial culture in the first place, also finds evident difficulties in proposing events capable of operating a strategy of critical in-depth analysis, precisely starting from the settlement and production culture of such an important context. This is a critical-propositional vocation that, without evoking the seasons of Persico or Bottoni in the post-war period, up to the poetic tendencies of Rossi and the search for identifying structures of Canella, between architecture and the city, in the seventies, today we can no longer find in any other form in the intermittent vastness of events, reviews and counter-events, a real great emporium of opportunities, although qualified, whose direction is evidently increasingly identifying itself in the *Triennale marketing logo* that opens the *informative news-letter* sent to all of us.

From this extraordinary organizational effervescence, of continuous production (and reproduction) of events, but above all of the great development of communication strategies, promotion, induction of the taste and values of architecture and the identity of architects, in the context of an international limelight increasingly high sensitivity and low cognition, arises the need for a place where we can reflect and restart the reasoning on the role and meaning of architecture, through those who design, build and enjoy it. Thus was born the first Italian Architecture Festival. Which will try to move, as indicated by the metaphorical sailing ship that accompanies the logo of the initiative, *towards archipelagos and unexplored depths, touching secondary ports and embarking crews of different origins, looking for the route between new geographies.* It is therefore not a question of a revival aimed at competing, in order to overcome it, the great clamor of contemporary architecture, through forms of *neo-neo-neo-avant-garde*, an attempt that is impossible without the exclusive weapons of the invincible army of communication. On the contrary, it is a matter of dealing with otherness that perhaps has little to do with mediatized architecture but has a lot of meaning and will still mean for the city and the architecture we live in, which we can discover as an integral part of our culture and identity, of which we build peculiarities of values and desiring visions. A *hetero-architecture*, hence the title of this first edition, which certainly does not want to contribute to the confusion of identities, to the exchange of roles, to the involuntary hybridization of interpretative and operational statutes, but certainly wants to bring true material back to the scrutiny of the critical, cognitive, expressive process that architecture, the best architecture, must demand also with respect to the responsibilities it assumes. A multiplicity of factors and protagonists that shuns simplification, schematisms, aesthetic ideologies *prêt-à-porter* and where the geographical and cultural places of architecture are at the center of attention as they are inextricably connected to it. The *heteroarchitecture* of the Festival is the field of problems and characters that come into contact with the knowledge of architecture, influence its statutory evolution and in turn change with respect to the answers that architecture can give. Powerful, decisive answers that affect the sphere of spaces, uses, behaviors, symbols. Architecture understood in the broad sense of the phenomena that determine the shape of places, cities,

the environment, and man-made space in general. Through a new way of addressing, discussing and above all making people think of architecture as something that involves us in every moment of our existence and through issues close to us. Gardella said: *one is born and dies in architecture*.

The Festival immediately posed the fundamental question of how architecture cannot but be *hetero-architecture*, that is to say a system open to interpretation and exchange with the world because it must build the world's house, the place, the city. And it begins to do so, in this first edition, starting from the relationship with the other arts, the other expressions, including music (contemporary music – Martino Traversa also through Bendini's painting), sculpture (Arnaldo Pomodoro), photography (Paolo Rosselli, Paola De Pietri), fashion (through the experimental experience of Nanni Strada), cinema (review on Kubrick and Bertolucci), literature (where Lucarelli, Barbolini, Biondillo, Varesi discuss the role of the city in the contemporary novel).
To support this broad involvement, the Festival also wants to encourage the continuous collaboration of publishing that talks about art, architecture, cities and their history. There can be no laboratory of knowledge and of the reproduction and dissemination of the same without the support of a publishing capable of doing so. On this role and on the planning of publishing houses, the series of meetings planned should help to outline new scenarios and trends capable of renewing their role.

The Festival is first and foremost exploration. But, certainly, exploratory action needs a direction, orientation tools. In the variety of *heteroarchitecture* , visual or instrumental navigation is adopted, depending on the case, aware, however, that *the orthodoxy of heterodoxy* can only be sustained within a complexity of knowledge where that of architecture, of architectural composition in particular, takes charge of the synthesis that will make the choices on the ways and characteristics of the transformation carried out through architecture itself. That compositional direction that, metaphorically, alluding to the cinematographic one, Aldo Rossi reminded us to be the first essence of the role of the architect. But which is then essentially interpretative direction, the ability to deploy the logical-poetic range through the open direction of knowledge, intuition, identity in the making rather than modeling conventions, which can only be easily consumed. This intent immediately translates into a procedural logic where, first of all, the principle of exclusion and zeroing of cultural memory is banished, strategically used to create the artificiality of value around a few selected fetish events-architectures-architects. On the contrary, the aim is to develop an action of revival of what has remained outside the media-promotional circus, and which has nevertheless contributed to the advancement of architecture in the recent past. Hence the retrospective attention of the Festival, abandoning the ambitions of the futuristic as well as the consolatory certainties of the remote past, is first of all aimed at the recent past, already in itself disadvantaged by not yet being under the scrutiny of historical criticism and at the same time sufficiently as apparently extraneous to the present to no longer have a grip on the work of contemporary journalism and the general attention that follows. From the recent tradition, starting with the Italian and European one, there is also a tendency to recover themes, personalities, phenomena incapable of emerging

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Fig. 11
Photographs taken during the Festival dell'Architettura di Parma, 2004–2014.

in the speculative context of events, sometimes forgotten or, very often, compared to the younger generations, never known. Having as a reference the background of the generation of masters directly involved in the search for an Italian peculiarity in comparison with the Modern Movement, from Rogers to Samonà, from Quaroni to Muratori, from Gardella to Ridolfi and others, we wanted to propose some significant traits of architects born at the turn of the thirties, of which we continue to recognize the merit of a consistent theoretical contribution to interpretation and systematization of tools of analysis and proposition, from which an original and multifaceted poetic expression will also arise. We refer to Carlo Aymonino, Guido Canella, Aimaro Isola, Roberto Gabetti, Aldo Rossi, Luciano Semerani, Giorgio Grassi, and others including Costantino Dardi as well as, albeit through different research coordinates, Alessandro Anselmi. This is a restitutive action that will continue in the next editions of the Festival, with different roles and stories, in terms of personalities, contexts and generations. Obviously, it is not a question of inventing a trendy signboard, much less a generational one, but rather of underlining the importance of recent architectural research that starts from the shape and characteristics of the Italian and European city, from the relationship with a historical narrative of urban and territorial development where innovation is always dialectically intertwined with the consolidated denotative of tradition, thus becoming itself a new tradition. In this intent, the construction of identities, multifaceted, for different interpretative and expressive paths as on the other hand requires a scientific approach that is not modeling, but still manages to keep the parts together. Architectural action, even in its autonomy and full responsibility, is aware that it always affects the part of a whole, called, depending on the case, city, territory, landscape, society.

The involvement in the Festival of an architect like Gottfried Böhm, interpreter of a continuity of modernity combined with the Gothic-expressionist tradition of construction of the northern European city, one of the most deserved Pritzker Prizes, serves on the other hand to demonstrate how this can be a path of research that can be reflected in Europe as well as in Italy. The Festival will once again invest in this direction, for conditions of settlement history and cultural complementarity, where, also through the cognitive, expressive and constructive action of architecture, the contexts

of the individual countries have an effective possibility of relationship and enrichment that can only arise in the maintenance and increase of those diversities that, as in the right vision of the *geopolitical* archipelago seem to be the only ones capable of keeping alive an idea of Europe as an aggregate economic-political-cultural and settlement system only because it is physiologically open and composite. This is to try to look for alternatives, with reference to Severino's concerns about a phenomenology of contemporary architecture as a symptom of a more general aesthetic and therefore socio-cultural degradation, with respect to the limit of an anti-humanistic, self-referential, decontextualized technicality that increasingly homogenizes, eliminating the heritage of its characters, the territories of architecture. The Festival carries out this action of recovery of cultural traditions to be summarized for the attention of the contemporary debate also through reference to the specificity of the modern Italian movement. Starting with Terragni, whose promotional means of the celebratory events underway in Como, as well as Libera and Moretti, of which two recent exhibitions are re-proposed. In addition, an attempt is made to identify, through an unprecedented action, eccentric personalities with respect to historical-critical attention but no less interesting from the point of view of an original and very current research, especially from an expressive point of view, such as that of Marcello D'Olivo dedicated to his projects for Baghdad, where the possible relationship between monumental poetics and the absence of rhetoric is demonstrated even if the work is commissioned by Saddam Hussein. In another direction, we look at the most recent generations who are still strongly engaged in the profession, teaching and research. As an anticipation of this area, within which future initiatives of knowledge and comparison are envisaged, the figure of Franco Purini has been taken as symptomatic of problems and lines of research that nevertheless pose the datum of a continuity, albeit between the crisis and recomposition of the disciplinary statutes of composition, of an architecture that is never extraneous to the contradictory with the city. In the same way, an attempt was made to solicit, through the evidentiary incident of the *analogous city*, a vision of synthesis of a transmissible architectural thought as it is perceived by thirty professors of *architectural and urban composition* of the Italian faculties of architecture, from which to draw a first geography of sensitivity and theoretical-interpretative tools of those involved in the responsibility of the architect's training.

But the role of the Festival is also to act as an area of active participation, we could say in the *unity of space and time*, where the confrontation takes place on the process of the project even before its outcome, and takes place in a living, direct form, while it is being carried out. Hence the need to organize a European workshop between schools of architecture, focused on the design solution of an area of the historical fabric of Parma, where every day the participants animate a scene, obviously open to the public, of the evolution of design forms and logics. And at the same time, we wanted to involve the world of university research, in this case doctorates and higher education through the POSTDOT/Compositions conference, which, in the intentions, should be able to open some windows on the future of research, on the problems of thematic orientation, on the relationships between different disciplinary strands and above all on the possibility of comparing the relative methodological approaches.

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Fig. 12
Photographs taken during the Festival dell'Architettura di Parma, 2004–2014.

The need to increase the participatory aspect as much as possible and at the same time to start an action of exploration and knowledge starting from the Italian and European context, moves further forms of initiative such as that of competitions of which the exhibitions, meetings and evaluations in which the public is involved are the fruitive outcome. In this first edition, Italian municipalities were invited to nominate those architectural achievements considered significant for the identity of the contexts to which they belong (*Forum of Cities*), those of Emilia Romagna in a special session (*Architecture-Quality Award of the Region E.R.*) in support of what the Region is trying to operate through various legislative and programming initiatives, and finally the young designers (*Under 33*) called to measure themselves on the theme of places of the night, and the playful, recreational but also behavioral dimension of youth phenomena. In other words, there is an attempt to rediscover an Italy of architecture (between schools, designers, public and private clients, administrations, construction and production companies) scarcely told through the media, much less the specialized ones, which evidently presents structural problems, conflicts and contradictions often capable of deeply undermining its intentions, but nevertheless responsible for the change that surrounds us extensively in the city and in the territory and which will produce the landscape in the near future.

If it is true that the identity of a festival is linked to the theme and the way in which it is addressed, equally decisive is the identity contamination that occurs between the place (in the case of the city of Parma) and the festival itself.
Parma is a city-festival par excellence, not only for the precedents of the University Theatre Festival and the International Festival of Teatro Due more recently, or for the one dedicated to Verdi or to contemporary music

of *Traiettorie*, but also for its position, size, articulation and denotation of the places and spaces it possesses. At the center of the Po Valley context and with easy access also from the Tyrrhenian side, Parma has the typical dimension of the city of art in the Italian province that allows it to adequately host even complex events but at the same time be completely involved, in its historic center, by the atmosphere of the Festival. In addition, Parma, the capital city of the Farnese and Bourbon families from 1525 to the Unification of Italy, is rich in architecturally significant places, monuments that become *ideal locations* for a significant and non-casual relationship with the contents of the Festival's events. The scene of the city is in itself congenial to an audience that crosses it and discovers it through participation in meetings, conferences, exhibitions, *happenings*. The Teatro Farnese stages four great Italian architects (Rossi, Canella, Aymonino, Isola) significantly displacing them in the different places of its structure interpreted as a great urban metaphor, the Gothic church of San Francesco opens the construction site for the exhibitions dedicated to Purini and the photographer De Pietri, the complex typological machine of Teatro Due, created inside a structure for the after-work club of the thirties, reveals itself through the exhibitions dedicated to architects of that period such as Moretti and Vaccaro, while Giorgio Grassi exhibits his drawings of the reconstruction of the Roman theater of Brescia inside the Archaeological Museum, among the marble finds of the theater of Parma and, again in Pilotta, Luciano Semerani will order writings and design sketches in the courtly gallery of the ancient Palatine Library, among the shelves designed by Petitot. The *Festival Village itself* , a place for meeting, information and accreditation as well as an exhibition, has been placed in an underpass of the Via Emilia, in the heart of the urban center, where the structure of a Roman bridge that from an archaeological point of view is second, in Emilia Romagna, only to that of Tiberius in Rimini, can be discovered and, hopefully, redeemed from degradation. Another example is that of the Ducal Park, carefully restored in its eighteenth-nineteenth-century features, where between the botanical greenhouses and the sixteenth-century Palazzetto Eucherio S. Vitale, a small, ephemeral (it lasts the week of the Festival) as well as intense architecture academy will live. Representatives of Italian and European schools participate, led by the French Fabre, the Belgian Terlinden, the Portuguese Barata, the German Schilling, between applied workshops, exhibitions, conferences, to recreate an enlightenment climate in which the park relives its historical dimension as a place of knowledge and art as well as a *delight*. From this point of view, it is necessary to adopt a directing action, *dramaturgically* as well as content-wise, capable of giving meaning to the occurrence of the events considered as a system of significant elements, in their contemporaneity in parallel as well as in the sequence measured within the day and the week. This is also part of what the Festival must design for an experience of its contents capable of stimulating critical and cognitive attention as well as emotional participation on the part of those who use and participate in it.

Another component that takes on an unconventional character is that of the public, which is not the public at the moment when we understand the enjoyment of the Festival as a moment of participation, certainly depending on the roles. The potential is that of sixty thousand researchers, teachers and students of architecture (Italian but also European already from this first edition) to which are added students from other faculties and schools

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Fig. 13
Photographs taken during the Festival dell'Architettura di Parma, 2004–2014.

(from those of artistic training to humanities faculties with a professional focus on cultural heritage, the arts but also the environment, etc.), of the more than one hundred and eleven thousand architects, of as many technicians, administrators, operators in the sector, stimulated to go beyond their *own routine* scope, of the many lovers of art in general (of which architecture is perhaps the one in the most rediscovered phase), of all those who have never been able to find the keys to appreciate a perspective or enjoy a space but who nevertheless live daily in architecture and who perhaps through just one of the scheduled events will be able to begin to look at (and judge) the forms of the city and one's own domestic environment in a different way. With respect to this action of approaching an audience, as things stand, still very far from architecture, the Festival promotes communication channels that also make use of playful instrumentality. For example, given the Parma context, with what can concern the world of cuisine, the form and structure of food (*Compositional alchemies – cuisine and architecture* with chef Michele Bottura of the Francescana di Modena and the critic Andrea Grignaffini, in collaboration with the *ALMA International School of Cuisine* and *the Academia Barilla*) or sport when, as in the case of *orienteering*, the urban orienteering race complete with its own Federation, a race is planned with the monuments of the city of Parma as the main points of reference.

The rich and articulated offer of the Festival encourages the public to make choices, to build their own itinerary, to associate some things with others, to intervene directly in the opportunities for meeting instead of expressing themselves in the evaluation of projects submitted to the judgment of visitors. Furthermore, with respect to a critical action increasingly denied by those communicative spheres whose prevailing attitude is to promote or remain silent, the Festival makes use of the formula of the *Disputatio*, in which two holders of opposing opinions on a specific theme and at the center of the debate challenge each other in arguing the reasons for their position, submitting themselves to the final judgment of the public (which is not necessarily legitimate but which nevertheless exists). The action of the Festival, predisposed to the involvement of the other, does not take on an exclusively contemporary character, but once again, extensively, places on the level of attention (and the critical elaboration that derives from it) phenomena, actors, knowledge, problems of a historical temporality assumed in its entirety from a contemporary perspective (the only possible one). Thus, to exemplify, the readings of passages by Alberti

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Fig. 14
Photographs taken during the Festival dell'Architettura di Parma, 2004–2014.

resonate in certain spaces of the city, while Fiore, Frommel and Calzona discuss modernity in public, and at the same time the theme of symbolic representation and its non-univocal meanings are investigated, according to a reading that is difficult to conclude, by Arturo Carlo Quintavalle in the case of the Baptistery of Parma, or finally precious treatises on architecture from the Palatine Library and drawings from the Academy of Parma, of which an important future exhibition is presented, become opportunities for reflection on the transmissibility of architecture and the educational role of schools. Many other contents of the Festival are demonstrative of this spatio-temporal extensiveness of exploration and research. Last but not least, the extraordinarily incisive one suggested by Salvatore Settis in his latest book *The Future of the 'Classic'* which even from the architect's point of view, well beyond the Portuguese misunderstanding, *would become what it has been on other occasions, the stimulus to a close comparison not only between the Ancients and the Moderns, but also between "our" and "other" cultures.*

Many other things could be said about the project and the developments of the Festival, but the curator of this catalogue, preventing me from doing so at this time for reasons of space (12/9/04 at 9 am), gives back to the reader, I hope also a participant in the Festival, the task of imagining and why not also giving a proactive contribution in this sense.
The Festival will therefore not chase Zaha Hadid instead of Rem Koohlaas or the more local Piano and Fuksas. The concrete, problematic and never predictable territory of architecture is where the Festival will instead trace its path. When Renato Nicolini asked me what we expected from his participation, I replied with a title: *what does the polis do for architecture*? And from there, through editorial revisions of a program with more than a hundred events, the order of factors came out printed, reversed: *what*

does architecture do for the polis? Well, in this perhaps casual and therefore even more symbolic exchange of actions and roles, in this absolutely necessary reciprocity, between polis and architecture, I believe that we can derive, if necessary, the deepest meaning of a Festival destined to seek architecture in the polis as much as the polis in architecture.

* Introductory essay to the catalogue of the Festival dell'Architettura 1 – 2004 entitled *Eteroarchitettura*, edited by Enrico Prandi, MUP, Parma 2004.

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Carlo Quintelli graduated from the Polytechnic of Milan with Guido Canella, and obtained a PhD in Architectural Composition from the IUAV, first cycle 1983-1985. Associate Professor at the Polytechnic of Turin, since 1998 he has promoted the birth of Architecture School in Parma of which he has been full professor since 2001. In 2004 he directed the first Architecture Festival in Italy. From 2013 to 2017 he was pro-Rector for UNIPR Building and Urban Development. Among the publications: *CittaEmilia: unique and multiple in linear urban form*, in AA.VV. *CittaEmilia – the Kent State Forum on the City*, Alinea Firenze 2012; *An urban gate for the University Campus in Parma's Oltretorrente District* in AA.VV. *IP Erasmus*, FAEdizioni Parma 2012; *The Abbey. An ar-chitectural project for the CSAC*, Il Poligrafo Padova 2018; *Ignazio Gardella. Other architectures*, with A. Lorenzi, Il Poligrafo Padova 2020, *The urban architectural design that structures the city*. In *The merged city* edited by P. Strina, Il Poligrafo, Padova 2023

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MANTOVARCHITETTURA. A Brief History of an International Architecture Festival1

Abstract
MANTOVARCHITETTURA, a cultural project of the Mantova Campus of the Politecnico di Milano, brings together history, design, and contemporary architecture in order to establish a dialogue between past and present. Since 2012, it has hosted internationally renowned architects and scholars, integrating teaching, research, and the University's "third mission" (public engagement and knowledge transfer). Through lectures and events, workshops, and an "Architectural Parade," it actively involves both students and citizens, transforming architectural education into a critical, participatory, experience-based practice.

Keywords
Architectural Festival — Pedagogy — Architectural criticism — Workshop

Between New Ideas and Reconsiderations: The Early Years of MantovArchitettura

As every poet, the architect must be prophet and interpreter of the society in which he lives: to forge a new artistic measure within the law imposed by history. (Rogers, 1958, p. 84)

With the epigraphic words to this text, delivered in Winterthur in June 1944, Ernesto Nathan Rogers (1909–1969) laid the foundations for a broader discourse in which history and design advance in a compact manner toward the construction of a shared theoretical framework.
Five years later, during a lecture at the Architectural Association School (October 1949), Rogers crystallized this premise, asserting that the innovative capacity of the design act «will be all the greater the more [the architect] has sought to consider the complexity of phenomena in their historical formation» (Rogers, 1958, p. 87).
Theoretical knowledge and "practical mastery" are therefore the two poles within which Rogers's pedagogical line moved - both in the classrooms of the Politecnico di Milano, where in 1952-53 he would be appointed to teach the course Caratteri stilistici e costruttivi dei monumenti (together with the attainment, in the same year, of libera docenza in architectural composition), and in the cultural training ground of Casabella-Continuità, the journal he directed from December 1953 to January 1965.
History and design, together with a sustained interest in contemporary architecture capable of engaging critically with its own past, became central to the initiative. This ambition, through the vision of Federico Bucci

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Fig. 1
Federico Bucci and Elisa Valero Ramos at the opening of the exhibition at Casa del Mantegna, 2023.

Fig. 2
Inauguration of MantovArchitettura 2023 at Casa del Mantegna with an installation by Elisa Valero Ramos, 2023.

- Vice-Rector of the Mantova Campus from 2012 to 2023, and by the faculty involved in the campus's two degree programmes[2] - the driving force behind an extraordinary cultural operation: *MantovArchitettura*.
The official definition presents it as an international event devoted to architecture, urbanism, and landscape: a scientific and cultural project of the Mantova Campus of the Politecnico di Milano, developed since 2012 within the UNESCO Chair in Architectural Preservation and Planning in World Heritage Cities, and held every year in symbolic, historical sites across the city of Mantova. Unofficially, MantovArchitettura has been - and remains - a courageous experiment that has boldly integrated international culture, teaching, and an attempt to respond to issues perceived as urgent, both in theory and in practice.
Its objective, never concealed since the first edition, is «*to ensure that history can be revitalised through contemporary design*»[3]. Thus, year after year from 2012 onward, architects, historians, and theorists of the so-called "related disciplines" have taken turns on the MantovArchitettura stages - initially in the monumental setting of the Temple of San Sebastiano and later, with tenacity, in pursuit of consolidating the bond between the Politecnico and the city of Mantova, in the various venues that the Municipality, the Province, and Mantuan associations have made available to students, architects, and enthusiasts.
The first guests to cross the threshold of the Tempio Albertiano reaffirmed the event's intention to bring to Mantova the great names of architecture: Grafton Architects (25 September 2012), Peter Eisenman (27 September 2012), Antoine Picon (23 October 2012), and Gilles Clément (23 November 2012) sketched an initial abstract framework of the diversified interests - contemporary architecture, theory, criticism, and landscape - on which the first edition proposed to focus[4].
The following year the experiment was repeated, testing an extension of the event's timeframe between April and October 2013. In seven months, two Pritzker Prize laureates arrived in Mantova: the Japanese Tadao Ando (10 April 2013) and the Portuguese Eduardo Souto de Moura (10 October 2013), alongside Aurelio Galfetti (30 May 2013) and the Australian Sean Godsell (10 July 2013). This was the year in which MantovArchitettura consolidated its relationship with the magazine Casabella, sealed by a

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Fig. 3
Lecture by Kengo Kuma at Teatro Bibiena, 2018

lecture by its historical director Francesco Dal Co entitled "*Le Corbusier and…"* (15 May 2013), devoted to his years as a fellow at the *Fondation Le Corbusier* in Paris and to his personal rediscovery of the Swiss master. It was also the year that marked the beginning of an alliance with architect Eduardo Souto de Moura, who would become a central and charismatic figure of MantovArchitettura - able to interpret with precision that complex mechanism of theory, practice, and architectural criticism that underpins the festival's cultural project.

The subsequent year the festival "formula" was redefined, settling into a programme concentrated within a clearly delineated period - thirty-two events in the month of May alone - and an alliance with the Portuguese School that became increasingly solid. João Luís Carrilho da Graça (9 May 2014) and Gonzalo Byrne (29 May 2014) took part in this edition, together with architects of the calibre of Alberto Campo Baeza (15 May 2014) and the Swiss duo Miller & Maranta (22 May 2014).

Once stabilised in these modalities, MantovArchitettura soon became an annual gathering where architects, theorists, critics, faculty, and students reflect on the themes of design in historical contexts, on memory, and on the care of such memories. Between 2015 and 2025, MantovArchitettura hosted a steady flow of distinguished guests, many of whom became regular contributors. Alongside Eduardo Souto de Moura, figures such as Carrilho da Graça, João Mendes Ribeiro, Cristián Undurraga, Andrew Berman, Martin Corullon, Elisa Valero, Marcio and Gabriel Kogan, Paulo David, Ana Tostões, and Philippe Prost returned on multiple occasions, assuming a central role in the educational programme as visiting critics and visiting professors. In addition, over the years MantovArchitettura has featured Rafael Moneo, Anthony Vidler, Mario Botta, Mauro Galantino, Smiljan Radić, José Ignacio Linazasoro, Pierre-Louis Faloci, Liu Yuyang, Ricardo Bak Gordon, Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra, Diébédo Francis Kéré, Niall McLaughlin, and Anupama Kundoo, among many others. Together, these voices have shaped a programme that maps the rich landscape of an intellectually grounded contemporary architecture: one that continues to engage enduring, archetypal questions while remaining attentive to the constant oscillation between present, past, and future on which MantovArchitettura is founded.

As Federico Bucci, the project's originator and guiding figure, has often recalled, since 2012 each edition has been dedicated «to our finest masters, who taught us to listen to the 'subtle noise' of architecture, and to our

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Fig. 4
Eduardo Souto de Moura with students after his lecture at the Teatro Bibiena, 2015.

students, without whom preserving its memory and imagining its future would be meaningless» (Bucci, 2015, pp. 3-4)..

Teaching Beyond the Classroom: MantovArchitettura as an Integrated Pedagogical Device

First of all, let us open the gates a little and begin to imagine how to help the young to think […] we must enchant the young! […] Young people are eager to learn. One must know how to accompany them[5].

Over time, MantovArchitettura has progressively defined its role within the teaching carried out at the Mantua Campus. In doing so, it has reshaped - indeed, in certain respects reversed - the project's initial perspective. It is no longer conceived merely as a city-oriented festival that hosts and disseminates high-quality contemporary architecture to a broad and heterogeneous public. Rather, it has become an innovative, and at times non-conventional, pedagogical framework through which students learn architecture and further develop themes introduced in courses and design studios over the semester or academic year. In this way, the relationship between teaching and direct experience becomes increasingly robust, fostering meaningful and enduring learning processes. Here, "innovation" does not lie primarily in the medium, but in a critical rethinking of how architectural knowledge is produced and transmitted today.
This maturation of the format's primary objectives - shared by the faculty engaged in teaching at the Mantova Campus, who have always participated collectively in constructing the dense calendar of lectures/events - has enabled a subtle, silent yet substantial transformation from "cultural container" to a possible "integrated pedagogical device" capable of activating learning processes that, in the very etymology of the term[6], lead students

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Fig. 5
Rafael Moneo and Eduardo Souto de Moura during their critique of the projects by students in the "Final Worksho: Old and New", 2015.

to grasp the deeper meanings and values of making architecture, appropriating them - making them their own for the future. It is not, therefore, an

"extra" event experienced at the margins of curricular programmes; rather, it is a multidisciplinary programme conceived as an integral part of students' educational pathway. An experience that enriches and amplifies academic content. It thus fosters a productive coexistence between two core dimensions of academic life – teaching and the "third mission" – which are typically pursued within separate spheres but are here deliberately brought into dialogue and tested for their mutual complementarity.
The small, informal School of Architecture in Mantua has thus recognised in MantovArchitettura – thanks to sustained faculty commitment and to the successive editions that have progressively sharpened the initiative's self-awareness – a privileged arena in which to test the relevance of its teaching. Whether delivered through monographic courses or design studios, the curriculum is continually confronted with contemporary realities. This occurs within a productive interplay between the disciplinary foundations of architecture and its history and the direct encounter with leading protagonists of contemporary practice. It is also in this way that theory meets practice, giving rise to a form of active and participatory teaching in which knowledge becomes experience and experience becomes an instrument of understanding. It is a precise idea of pedagogy that unhesitatingly unites education, research, dissemination, and civic commitment, one that seeks to teach architecture through architecture, and in which young future architects are called to recognise the critical value of their educational path, becoming active participants in their cultural growth even before their professional growth.
The specific articulation of this educational idea has progressively engaged, with curatorial responsibility[7], faculty and researchers in proposing lectures, seminars, and study days capable of intercepting and substantiating themes consistent with their teaching programmes, by virtue of the necessary continuity that does not disorient but, on the contrary, consolidates in students the furrow already traced or the interest just instilled. The coherence pursued between academic contents and cultural proposals thus represents a strategic value within the educational process, generating fertile ground for critical thought and design awareness.
Conceived as a shared academic calendar, concentrated in May, at the end of the semester, the programme's encounters are framed as classrooms

open to the city. They have become fertile occasions for lively dialogue, sometimes building on long-standing personal and scholarly relationships and sometimes generating new connections that may become part of the School's future legacy. Throughout, the initiative aims to dismantle the distance often perceived - especially by students - in cultural programmes that rigidly separate the stage from the audience.
The desire to make students protagonists, enabling direct and dialogical contact with leading figures of international architectural culture, has guided modalities that often integrate more conventional lecture moments with discussions on ongoing design projects and educational research, enabling a concrete and continuous exchange between masters and students. Remembering E. N. Rogers's words:

> «I reject the idea of the lectern as a pulpit from which an authoritative truth is dispensed. I see my role, rather, as participating - responsibly and fully - in the life of the school, aligning myself with my assistants and with all students through an ongoing, reciprocal dialogue. […] This dialogue allows me to renew myself, in other words, to continue learning. And there is no sustenance more invigorating than that which comes from the young»[8].

Within this approach, knowledge is never unilateral; it is nourished by reciprocity and confrontation, within a profoundly collective idea of teaching. In this "Mantuan" formula, Politecnico faculty and guest architects from all over the world have often been able to share - side by side - with students in the Bachelor's degree in *Architectural Design* or in the Master in Architectural Design and History the animated worktables populated by drawings and models, during the customary end-of-semester "critiques."
In response to these genuine formative occasions, through a tailored approach, the teaching calendar, in this month dedicated to architecture, has developed the habit of "cutting to measure" intensive periods of studio-based teaching, in the shared idea of once again placing at the centre the everyday occasions of confrontation that foster students' growth.
What emerges, then, is a pedagogy in continual renewal: a mode of teaching that treats every occasion as a formative moment and that helps to build a strong, self-aware identity, firmly grounded in the culture of the project, while opening onto new and vast horizons: «The task of the School must be to indicate vast horizons and to show the many possible roads, not in an agnostic sense, but by fostering the responsibility of free choice, suited to each individual» (Rogers, 1964, p. 4).

Experimenting with Criticism in the Practice of the Design Workshop
Since 2023 the calendar of events has been enriched by the inclusion of the MantovArchitettura Workshop in the programme: a curricular teaching activity with an outward-facing outcome in the event of the Architectural Parade.
The meaning of this additional proposal is grounded in the festival's idea of completing, among themselves, the university's three missions -teaching, research, and third mission[9] – with a mix of actions whose outcome flows into public engagement, transferring knowledge toward society and thereby strengthening the University's civic role.
From a pedagogical standpoint, the workshop, addressed to students in the final year of the Bachelor's degree in *Architectural Design* at the Politecnico di Milano and recently opened to other universities as well[10], aims

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Fig. 6
The reference of the workshop and the Architectural Parade to Mantua's historical context. Drawing of the Grande et Maraviglioso Apparato De Fuochi Trionfali, created in the square of St. Peter in Mantua for the wedding of Eleonora Gonzaga and Emperor Ferdinand II of Austria, 1622.

to provide an ethical and aesthetic education in architecture and building, combining history, design, and criticism through the challenge of constructing a small theme-based work. The teaching activity focuses on the study, design, and construction of itinerant micro-architectures representative of the theme investigated each year by the MantovArchitettura edition, thus interpreting - through the project of an artwork - the meanings gathered and narrated by the lectures, exhibitions, and seminars that take place during the month of May.

These architectural objects appear in the festival's final event - the architectural parade - a theatrical action through the streets of Mantua's historic centre, where the micro-architectures, accompanied by a crowd, overlay the existing city through a paratactic and poly-scenic structure, constructing a series of places for an urban open theatre. The parade involves all members of the School in their diverse roles - above all students, but also teaching, technical, and administrative staff - to step outside the campus walls and present itself to the city, establishing a dialogue with society and urban places through the staging of a celebration of architecture and its teaching.Echoing the long Mantuan tradition of spectacular setups11, the experience of celebrating the festival thus becomes a ritual critical exercise that repeats itself while renewing and updating over time, through which to investigate the meanings of the city and to experience that relationship between architecture and life so powerfully expressed by the words of Aldo Rossi, one of the School of Mantua's "long distance" Masters, for whom: «Architecture is the fixed stage of human events; laden with the feelings of generations, with public events, with private tragedies, with new and ancient facts» (Rossi, 1966, p.11).

The workshop therefore sets itself the goal of developing, through the restitution of a work, the critical capacities of students first and of the citizens involved in the parade thereafter[12], relying on architecture's power to provoke emotions and sensations linked to the theme that substantiates architectural form. This pouring of the work into individuals thus produces a perturbing estrangement that activates: «all potentially critical roles, roles that arise from the clash between an un-codified and wandering subject and a rigorously defined context. […] starting from the partly casual and partly predetermined intersection of objects and subjects, obstinate provocative

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Fig. 7
The construction site of "L'Osservatore Silenzioso", the micro-architecture realized by the students of (Mantovarchitettura workshop 2024 – Architettura del Fare), within the spaces of the (Campus di Mantova), 2024.

agents of the urban unconscious» (Vidler, 1996, p. 230), quoting Anthony Vidler's words, one of MantovArchitettura's celebrated guests[13], to describe the vagabond architecture of John Hejduk's work, in which this experiment in architectural pedagogy finds historical and theoretical reference.
By undertaking to translate the festival's architectural themes into built and theatrical form, the workshop project and the parade thus attempt to represent the vital bond between architectural history and design, in the ancient and ever-new form of the rite of theatricalising the city, where the mirroring between architecture and citizens, objects and subjects, masks and characters forces everyone to "interpret" the fundamental role of the critic in the search for truth. If, therefore, MantovArchitettura is a container of experiences, readings, and architectural criticism between history and design, the eponymous workshop and its outcome in the "parade" represent an attempt to transfer criticism into the practice of architecture, producing forms that can once again interrogate us. In architecture, history and design are two sides of the same coin in the desire for form. By competing each other, they generate the work, which in turn provokes criticism, which, as Roland Barthes reminds us:

> «is only a moment within that history into which we enter and which leads us to unity, to truth» (Barthes, 1965, pp.63-64), such that: «The critic is nothing but a commentator, yet fully so (and that is sufficient to render his position dangerous): on the one hand, he is a transmitter, he leads back to a past matter […]; and on the other hand, he is an operator, he redistributes the elements of the work so as to give it a certain intelligibility, that is, a certain distance» (Barthes, 1965, pp.62-63).

Perhaps here lies the meaning that the MantovArchitettura cultural project has taken on over time, and the sense that it should continue to build, constantly reinventing itself while remaining the same but never identical to itself.

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Fig. 8
"L'Osservatore Silenzioso", the micro-architecture realized by the students of (Mantovarchitettura workshop 2024 – Architettura del Fare), for the "parata architettonica" in front of the Casa del Mercante in Piazza delle Erbe, 2024.



Fig. 9
"L'Osservatore Silenzioso", the micro-architecture realized by the students of (Mantovarchitettura workshop 2024 – Architettura del Fare), for the "parata architettonica" in front of the Casa del Mercante in Piazza Mantegna, 2024.

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Notes

[1] This text is the result of a collective effort by the authors, who share responsibility for its content, developed through a common discussion. The section "Between New Ideas and Reconsiderations: The Early Years of MantovArchitettura" was written by Elisa Boeri (Politecnico di Milano, DABC). The section "Teaching Beyond the Classroom: MantovArchitettura as an Integrated Pedagogical Device" was written by Claudia Tinazzi (Politecnico di Milano, DABC). The section "Experimenting with Criticism in the Practice of the Design Workshop" was written by Luca Cardani (Politecnico di Milano, DABC).

[2] The Mantova Territorial Campus hosts the Bachelor's Degree Programme in *Architectural Design* and the Second-Level Master's Programme in *Architectural Design and History*.

[3] The quotation is taken from a statement delivered by Vice-Rector Federico Bucci to the Order of Architects of Verona on 6 May 2017, on the occasion of the opening of MantovArchitettura's Verona programme.

[4] For an overview of the first three editions, see: Claudia Tinazzi, Massimo Ferrari (edited by), MANTOVARCHITETTURA/UNO, Ed. Corraini, Mantova 2015.

[5] Interview with Maestro Alberto Manzi on "active schooling," 15 November 1960.

[6] From the Latin verb *apprendere*, itself derived from *ad-prehendere*, composed of *ad* ("toward") and *prehendere* ("to grasp," "to seize"). Etymologically, therefore, *learning* denotes "the act of grasping or seizing something with the mind," that is, the acquisition of new knowledge or skills.

[7] From its very first edition, the curation of MantovArchitettura - while guided by Federico Bucci's clear direction - has been entrusted to the Mantua Campus of the Politecnico di Milano, and thus to the entire campus community of faculty members, researchers, doctoral candidates, and administrative and technical staff.

[8] Ernesto Nathan Rogers, *Elogio dell'architettura* (speech delivered at the Politecnico di Milano on 4 April 1963), in Marina Montuori (edited by), *10 maestri dell'architettura italiana. Lezioni di progettazione,* Electa, Milano 1994, p. 221.

[9] The "third mission" encompasses all activities through which the knowledge produced by universities is transformed and made accessible to society and to the economic system. The third mission includes the following activities, grouped, according to the indicators assessed by ANVUR, into: 1.1 Industrial property management; 1.2 Spin-off companies; 1.3 Third-party commissioned activities (contract research and services); 1.4 Intermediation structures; 1.5 Heritage management and cultural activities; 1.6 Public health activities; 1.7 Continuing education, lifelong learning, and open education; 1.8 Public engagement. The objectives of the third mission are identified within processes of innovation and growth, not only economic, but also social, civic, and cultural.

[10] In 2025, the University of Florence participated in the workshop through its Department of Architecture, designing and constructing a micro-architecture that was presented during the parade dedicated to the theme "Architecture and Conflict". The initiative was coordinated by Francesca Mugnai, Gabriele Bartocci, and Giuseppe Cosentino.

[11] Cfr. Gabriele Bertazzolo, *Breve descrittione dei fuochi trionfali fatti in Mantova per le nozze di Eleonora Gonzaga coll'imperatore Ferdinando II*, Mantova 1622; Gabriele Bertazzolo, *Breve descrittione della battaglia navale et del castello di fuochi trionfali fatti il dì 31 maggio 1608.* Federico Follino, *Compendio delle sontuose feste fatte l'anno MDCVIII nella città di Mantova per le nozze del Seren. Principe Francesco Gonzaga con la Seren. Infanta Margherita di Savoia*, Mantova 1608, pp. 10-13. Amedeo Belluzzi, *Carlo V a Mantova e Milano*, in M. Fagiolo dell'Arco (edited by), *La città effimera e l'universo artificiale del giardino. La Firenze dei Medici e l'Italia del '500*, Roma 1980, pp. 47-62.

[12] Étienne-Louis Boullée, *Architettura. Saggio sull'arte*, edited byAlberto Ferlenga, Einaudi, Torino, 2007, p. 29.

[13] Anthony Vidler's lecture delivered as part of the 2020 edition of MantovArchitettura (Monday, 29 June 2020) has since been published in *ADH Journal*: cfr. Anthony Vidler, *ARCHITECTURE AND REPRESENTATION ETCHING, ENGRAVING, PAINTING,* edited by Elena Fioretto, Fabio Marino, "ADH Journal", Heritage cities and destruction, n.1, May, 2024.

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Thomas Bisiani

Borderline experimentations. Stazione Rogers, dialogues between disciplines

Abstract
The contribution analyses the experience of Stazione Rogers, a cultural and dissemination centre born from the commitment of Luciano Semerani and Gigetta Tamaro and founded on dialogue between disciplines. The former service station designed by Ernesto Nathan Rogers is not a simple container or exhibition space, but presents itself as a place at the boundary between architecture, sciences, and humanistic forms of knowledge. Starting from the founding experiences of the Architecture Gallery of the Fondazione Masieri and of «Phalaris», and through an excursus of almost twenty years of activity, the distinctive characteristics of this reality are identified in the continuous tension aimed at overcoming disciplinary barriers and in the experimentation with non-conventional models of knowledge dissemination.

Keywords
Stazione Rogers — Experimentations — Borders — Dialogues — Disciplines

On 2 October 2008, the retrospective exhibition entitled *BluMare. Ernesto N. Rogers, architetto a Trieste* opens. An exploration of the projects developed by Rogers for his city between the 1930s and the 1960s. Displayed among transparent panels and cubic plinths – evoking the layout of the MASP in São Paulo – are objects, original drawings, unpublished documents, and a curious loan from the Civic Scientific Museums: the taxidermied body of a dolphin specimen (*Tursiops truncatus*) suspended from the ceiling. The exhibition layout also includes the reconstruction, through a series of models, of the III Mostra del Mare held in Trieste in 1935. Specially designed theatrical devices reproduce the environments and visions of the exhibition whose artistic direction Rogers himself had curated seventy years earlier, not far away, at the Maritime Station along the Rive. With this initiative, curated by Giovanni Fraziano and Luciano Semerani, Stazione Rogers is inaugurated.
The location is not incidental: Stazione Rogers itself constitutes an integral part of the exhibition. Described as a «small jewel of modern architecture» (Semerani 2017, p. 69) (TdA) and the result of a collective work by BBPR, it is a former service station designed between 1952 and 1953 for the Aquila refinery. After years of abandonment, in 2006 the Municipality of Trieste launched a call for tenders to assign its management. Luciano Semerani and Gigetta Tamaro, with their studio, emerged as the winners, proposing a restoration carried out with «affectionate respect for the formal conception of the work» (Semerani 2017, p. 69) (TdA) , but also a radically new destination for the former workshop spaces, intended to become a cultural and knowledge-dissemination centre.
The naming of the Station after Rogers is not intended solely as a tribute to

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Fig. 1
Semerani e Tamaro Architetti Associati, Stazione Rogers, Restoration and Repurposing of the Aquila Company Service Station, Riva Grumula, Trieste, 2007-2008.

the architect, the city's distinguished son and an internationally esteemed Master, but above all seeks to acknowledge the value of the intellectual, as well as the esteem and the bond he maintained with Trieste's cultural milieu. In this sense, Rogers represents a point of reference for a tradition of open thought: a mode of action grounded in the principles of a new humanism which, alongside *continuity* – understood as the vertical and transparent stratification of time, outside a linear becoming – pursues the *orthodoxy of heterodoxy*, a case-by-case approach characterised by great freedom in cultural references, yet also by *appropriateness* as a criterion of balance and a tool for controlling choices. Stazione Rogers operates in the same spirit, simultaneously as an architectural intervention on the material level and as a cultural initiative, chaired since 2008 by Gigetta Tamaro, with passion but also with «political intelligence» (Semerani 2023, p. 88) (TdA).

From a genealogical perspective, the initiative of Stazione Rogers contributes to composing an ideal triptych of experiences, promoted in particular by Luciano Semerani. This trajectory originates with the Architecture Gallery of the Fondazione Masieri, conceived as an example of a place devoted to the dissemination of architectural design through a programme of exhibitions that began in 1987. This was followed by a parallel editorial initiative, closely connected to the Gallery's exhibition activity yet autonomous in its contents: «Phalaris», a journal «invented» (Bocchi 1995, p. 111) (TdA) by Semerani himself, with Giovanni Fraziano serving as editor-in-chief. These precedents are significant not so much in order to certify the pedigree of Stazione Rogers, but rather to understand a cultural and scientific attitude toward the transmission of architecture, which can be distinguished into two branches.

On the one hand, Semerani asserts his opposition to an architecture that is

overly generic and to flattened cultural positions or those seeking convenient equilibria. This reflects an idea of cultural practice based on making selections, even positioning oneself in conflictual terms with the establishment and the star system, yet without slipping into doctrinal or ideological stances. Such reflection is pursued through a continuous questioning of the meaning of things, by means of forms of debate prompted by heterogeneous positions and polemical stimuli, whose objective and civic dimension are intended to be both dual and divergent, in the effort to foster a conscious public opinion and responsible schools of architecture.

On the other hand, in order to sustain these positions, it is indispensable to seek a form of autonomy. Evidence of this can be found in the *occupation* of the spaces of the Fondazione Masieri in Venice, which at the time were largely unused, and in the search for private funding that subsequently supported the publication and distribution of the twenty issues of «Phalaris». An experimental architecture magazine, therefore, transformed in form and substance into a *newspaper*, and an architecture gallery which, through its progressive accumulation of materials and models, would later constitute the original core of what is today the Projects Archive of the IUAV University of Venice.

Two critical and formative spaces that, through their respective forms, assume different characteristics. The first takes shape as an editorial space, strongly tied to contemporaneity, to the here and now, with a vocation for dissemination, offered in the ephemeral form of a newspaper published between 1989 and 1992, as a place of experimentation and originality, where one could freely take positions on issues of architecture and the city in an unencumbered manner and without excessive caution.

The second, by contrast, the space of the archive, is characterised by its intrinsic longevity. Founded in 1987, it today assumes the physical form of a significant institutional infrastructure[1] for research and scientific training, consisting of more than eighty archival fonds, collections and miscellanies, which sustain an ongoing exhibition activity and the promotion of conferences, lectures and publications. An archive understood as a form of knowledge and interpretation of the past, a presupposed and necessary act to nourish the architect's transformative capacity, in which critique and action are moments of the same act that leads to «a certain way of manipulating the materials of history within the creative process» (Marras 2018, p. 7) (TdA) .

From these two experiences, a set of typical characteristics can be identified, also recognisable in the Stazione Rogers project, linked on the one hand to the critical selection of contents, authors, and projects hosted in various forms, and on the other to the intention of establishing as direct and unmediated a relationship as possible between the public or visitors and the guests involved and the materials presented. What emerges is a tendency toward an anti-academic dimension, not so much as a rejection of the relationship with the university institution, but rather in logical and methodological opposition to that cultural and pedagogical model which reserves exclusively for the university the production and transmission of knowledge.

From this perspective, in 2008 Stazione Rogers assigns itself the mandate of bringing into play, «in a place not intended for this purpose, a former service station, the excellences that exist in Trieste in the scientific and literary fields together with the world of architecture and the arts» (Tamaro 2015, p. 11) (TdA) .

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Fig. 2
Stazione Rogers, Dante Hub – L'arte del desiderio, Porticciolo del Parco del Castello di Miramare, 10 giugno 2021.

An initial supporter of the proposal is the Chamber of Commerce, which in particular makes it possible to finance the restoration works on the building owned by the Municipality, which is made available under concession. The cultural project is also supported by the Faculty of Architecture, at the time of recent establishment (1998), and by the location of the Station, in close proximity to a ramified network of sites that constitute the *humanistic hub* of the University of Trieste.
The cultural objective is the creation of a place of encounter between different fields of knowledge – scientific, literary, architectural and artistic – by placing the disciplines in dialogue and enabling the overcoming of forms of isolation within their respective institutional frameworks.
Within this framework, however, Stazione Rogers also claims a peculiar and apparently contradictory role, identifying itself in particular as an initial point of contact and exchange between architecture and the sciences. A relationship certainly linked to a specific character of the place, to that Trieste as a *city of science*, built around institutions such as the International Centre for Theoretical Physics – ICTP, the International School for Advanced Studies – SISSA, or the Elettra Synchrotron research centre. Yet this relationship and interest reflect Stazione Rogers' orientation toward an unconventional science, manifested in a series of personal relationships, such as that between Semerani and the physicist Budinich, founder in 1964 of the ICTP, who maintained «the ambiguity of scientific language, the proceeding by leaps and flashes, by no means regular or sequential, let alone mechanical, of discoveries, intuitions and theories» (Semerani 1995, p. 29) (TdA) . This relationship exemplifies a way of understanding, for Stazione Rogers, scientific research and architecture as instruments for knowledge of the world, also reflected in the wording of the association founded by Semerani and Tamaro as early as 1999 and named after Ernesto Nathan Rogers «for the advancement of architecture and the sciences»[2] (TdA) .
It is therefore not surprising that the first cycle of these *Dialoghi tra le discipline* promoted by the Station was, in 2009, *Scienza che passione*, which brought together distinguished scientists and biologists such as Margherita Hack and Arturo Falaschi. With this format, a sort of cultural circle also emerged, capable of bringing together thoughts and approaches from different disciplinary fields, with the aim of enabling an advancement of knowledge starting from concrete experiences. An epistemology of practice linked to an ethics of making as a form of knowledge.

The cycle of the *incontri della passione*, which then continued in subsequent years as a recurring format (2009–2013), saw the participation of leading figures from the fields of culture, science and architecture. These were meetings in which space was deliberately given to passionate voices, driven by a strong sense of urgency concerning the fate of humanity and the planet.
Among the protagonists were the writer Paolo Rumiz, the astrophysicist Filippo Giorgi, the geneticist Mauro Giacca, as well as psychoanalysts and scholars engaged with issues concerning the human condition and the environment. Naturally, across the various cycles there were also representatives of Italian architectural culture, including Antonella Gallo, Benno Albrecht and Pippo Ciorra[3].
From the architectural point of view, particular attention was devoted to the unpublished outcomes of a series of research projects on the architectural compositions of figures such as the Americans Frank O. Gehry and Peter Eisenman, the Slovenian Jože Plečnik, the Serbian Bogdan Bogdanović, the Brazilian-born Lina Bo Bardi, and the Greek Dimitris Pikionis. These investigations testify to Stazione Rogers' interest in those figures, works and schools that distance themselves from the academic tradition, with specific reference to the years of Luciano Semerani's coordination of the Doctorate in Architectural Composition in Venice and to the research carried out, among others, by Susanna Pisciella, Andrea Iorio and Tommaso Brighenti[4].
Stazione Rogers has thus collaborated with significant cultural and academic institutions, including the University of Trieste, the Revoltella Museum, the Tartini Conservatory and the IUAV University of Venice. Exhibitions have been organised on architectural and artistic themes, such as those devoted to *Cubo-Futurismo russo*, to Miela Reina[5], to the unpublished drawings of Ernesto N. Rogers, and to those produced in the prisoner-of-war camp by Lodovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso. Likewise, a number of discussions have taken place involving figures such as the film director Giorgio Pressburger or the philosopher and pupil of Enzo Paci, Pier Aldo Rovatti.
In total, Stazione Rogers has proposed seven thematic cycles, in addition to *Scienza*, *Mano*, *Gioco*, *Dono*, *Cultura*, and *Gaia* (presented twice), each of which explored fundamental aspects of human experience, from the value of manual making to reflection on social relationships. Seven cycles which Gigetta Tamaro (2015, p. 11) symbolically associates with the seven basic emotional systems (seeking, desire, play, care, anger, fear, panic) identified by neurobiologists Lucy Biven and Jaak Panksepp, and which together represent an ideal *collective brain* at the service of the community.
Until her passing in 2016, Gigetta Tamaro was the soul of Stazione Rogers, a «distributor of culture» (Semerani 2017, p. 69) (TdA) , promoting in particular, in the final period, a series of meetings oriented toward investigating the relationship between architecture, culture, politics, science and economics, whose conclusion she would not live to see. This interdisciplinary approach recalls, by analogy, the «double central spread» (Fraziano 2022, p. 11) (TdA) of the issues of «Phalaris», populated in this case by unusual contributions from theatre, cinema, poetry and the arts.
From 2017, the presidency of Stazione Rogers passed to Giovanni Fraziano, who has continued its cultural activities with continuity, in keeping with the trajectory of dialogues between disciplines[6]. During this new phase, the relationship with the University of Trieste was consolidated, which became directly involved in the initiatives through an agreement identifying the Station as the university's centre for humanistic dissemination. New formats followed, such as the *Rogers Preview* and the *Rogers*

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Fig. 3
Stazione Rogers, Abitare Hub – Living, the Room of Architecture: Sentences on the House, 17 November 2023.

Shorts, short and nocturnal narratives scheduled on Tuesdays, strictly at 10 p.m., which distinguish themselves from conventional *ex cathedra* lectures, recalling instead the reasons for and the pleasure of storytelling.
Luciano Semerani has continued to participate as a central figure in the initiatives. Worth recalling is his intervention entitled *Chi è Giotto?!*, a polemical intervention at a distance addressing the exclusion of Rogers and the architects of his school from the exhibition on Bruno Zevi organised at the MAXXI in 2018, as well as the presentation of *Il ragazzo dell'IUAV*, a «not "scientific"» autobiography (Bordogna 2020, p. 107), which was the last event held at the Station before the lockdown. Likewise, the retrospective *Luciano Semerani: pitture*, curated by Francesco Semerani[7] and Giovanni Fraziano in the summer of 2021, during which Semerani announced the «sequel» (Fraziano 2022, p. 160) to his autobiography, later published posthumously under the title *Stupor Mundi*.
The dialogues of Stazione Rogers thus began to take on a new dimension when, in December 2018, under the label *Rogers Eventi*, *Le poème de l'angle droit – per voce e immagini* was presented. A project by Giuseppina Scavuzzo and Debora Antonini, which proposed as an autonomous work, through the reading of an actor and the images of a videomaker, the text by Le Corbusier, based on the principle that poetry, thanks to its capacity to resist the wear of time, clearly exemplifies how «nothing is transmissible but thought» (Le Corbusier 2008 [orig. ed. 1966], p. 9)[8] (TdA) .
In recent years, Stazione Rogers has therefore begun to develop new forms for its contents, which have found a particular synthesis in the annual thematic projects *Dante Hub* (2021), *Abitare Hub* (2022), *Community Hub* (2023) and *Inclusive Design Hub* (2024), conceived and realised under the scientific direction of Giovanni Fraziano.
The Hubs, like the *cicli della passione*, address the complexity of the phenomena posed by contemporaneity, but also set themselves the objective of offering an *experience*, that is, direct knowledge, through engaging contact

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Fig. 4
Bonawentrua in collaboration with Stazione Rogers, L'arte accade a teatro – Conversation on Adolf Loos, Teatro Miela, 6 September 2024.

with a specific portion of reality.
The elements of novelty characterising the Hubs are multiple and structural, beginning with the dislocation and the forms assumed by the events, which no longer take place solely at Stazione Rogers but are often held *extra moenia*. Adriano Venudo delivered a lecture-concert mixed with live musical performances in the park of the National Museum of Miramare Castle. Streaming events took place, between science and poetry, from the International Centre for Theoretical Physics – ICTP. A train journey, from Nova Gorica to Ljubljana via Jesenice, toward the "other modernity" of Jože Plečnik, featured lectures given in the carriages, including by the architect-artist Raj Pertot. A dialogue between a physicist and a lyric poet was held with the scholar of Russian language and literature Margherita De Michiel at the Center of Space Technologies Noordung in Vitanje, as well as a visit to the villa of Tito Macro, with tastings, in the UNESCO archaeological area of Aquileia.
A distinctive feature of many events has become the integration of theatrical performances, often authored and performed by Sara Alzetta[9]. This is the case with *Between the Wall of Science*, an attempt carried out in the classrooms of the International School for Advanced Studies – SISSA to break down the walls between scientific culture and humanistic culture. Likewise, the walks—understood as lessons *in situ*—aim to offer a direct and unmediated experience of authors and architectural works, in the very places where the meetings take place.
The major difference with respect to academic training lies both in Stazione Rogers' intention to offer a condition of a free zone located at the institutional boundaries of fields of knowledge, and in the proposal of lecture-performances in the here and now. This occurred, for example, during the press conference presenting the *Abitare Hub* project, when the actor Adriano Giraldi recited John Hejduk's *Sentenze sulla casa*. Or in *Metafisica di una pompa di benzina*, written and performed by Sara Alzetta, accompanied *by disturbance and stones* by the photographer Mario Sillani Djerrahian, which retraced the reasoned history of Stazione Rogers itself.
Explorations within the realm of dialogues between disciplines currently continue along different trajectories, such as *Dialoghi tra intelligenze artificiali e naturali*, conducted in a phygital format with several digital hu-

manists, including Lella Varesano and Giulio Lughi. Another example is the recent *Conversazione su Adolf Loos*, yet another dialogue by Giovanni Fraziano but «out of time and out of place» (Teatro Miela 2024) (TdA), which on this occasion assumed, on a stage, the scale of a full theatrical production within the framework of the programme *L'arte ac/cade a teatro*. Recently, Andreas Kofler[10] (2024, pp. 30–97) identified eight international examples of houses of architecture. Eight cases among which, alongside *Arc en rêve* in Bordeaux, the Teatro dell'architettura in Mendrisio and the Galerija Dessa in Ljubljana, Stazione Rogers is also included.

It may come as a surprise that such a small and, above all, liminal reality forms part of this shortlist; nevertheless, comparison with these prestigious institutions of architectural culture makes explicit at least two aspects that distinguish the profile of Stazione Rogers from other experiences.

The first concerns a pedagogical research pursued through the continuous experimentation of forms for the transmission of architecture, and more generally of thought, which are effective because they are engaging. These are forms that do not settle into the liturgy of the exhibition-conference, but instead tend to take shape as events or performances, whether theatrical, artistic, musical or multimedia. What emerges is a cultural experience capable of overcoming the model of the passive recipient and accessible to a broad category of the public.

The second aspect concerns the ongoing exploration of interaction between disciplines. This is an intention that Stazione Rogers has set for itself from the outset, and that it has been pursuing for almost twenty years[11]. Such an orientation may appear excessively broad and may seem to exceed the theme of the dissemination of architectural culture. In reality, through this choice Stazione Rogers takes on the responsibility of compensating for a structural weakness of the academic dimension. This dimension is characterised by a model based on the separation of fields of knowledge, which is a manifestation of a positivist ordering of knowledge and which today shows clear signs of obsolescence.

Within this framework, architecture is understood as the engine of an alternative scientific model to the dominant one, in accordance with the invitation that Ernesto Nathan Rogers addressed to his students when he told them that «one must translate every discipline into architecture» (Maffioletti 2009, p. 197) (TdA).

Notes

[1] At present, the scientific coordinator of the Projects Archive is Giovanni Marras.

[2] The wording appears not only in applications for contributions and funding submitted to public bodies and institutions, but also in the colophon of the volume L. Semerani (ed.), *Gli incontri di Gaia e gli altri incontri*. Stazione Rogers, Trieste.

[3] Antonella Gallo, Benno Albrecht and Pippo Ciorra took part in particular in the meetings of the two cycles *Gaia che passione*.

[4] Susanna Pisciella and Andrea Iorio participated in the meetings entitled *Architettura e identità culturali*, while Tommaso Brighenti took part in *Vie e territori. Percezione e interpretazioni*.

[5] Miela Reina is one of the most important figures of Triestine art of the second half of the twentieth century. Together with her, Gigetta Tamaro realised *Il concerto*, the exhibition design for the International Festival of Electronic Music at Palazzo Costanzi in Trieste in 1969.

[6] The activities of Stazione Rogers are also made possible thanks to the work of Laura Forcessini, who has played the important role of coordinator since the outset, and Gianni Peteani, who supports event logistics and communication.

[7] Francesco Semerani took part in the founding of Stazione Rogers as Works Su-

pervisor for the restoration. The project was a finalist for the Gold Medal for Italian Architecture 2009.

[8] «*Rien n'est transmissible que la pensée*», Le Corbusier, Messina B. (ed.) (2008), *Mise au point*, LetteraVentidue, Siracusa. Éditions Forces Vives (orig. ed. 1966).

[9] In the first chapter of Stupor Mundi (2023, p. 9), Luciano Semerani recalls Sara Alzetta and mentions her parents among the various figures hosted at the studio in Via San Giorgio in Trieste.

[10] Andreas Kofler is curator and deputy artistic director of the Swiss Architecture Museum – S AM in Basel.

[11] Subsequent to the drafting of this essay, on 10 October 2025, Giovanni Fraziano was appointed Honorary President of Stazione Rogers, and Giuseppina Scavuzzo, Adriano Venudo and Thomas Bisiani joined the Board of Directors, respectively in the roles of President, Vice President and Board Member.

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Aleksei Lashkov, Meri Pepanyan

Can It Be Tried in Yerevan?

Abstract
The title is a nod to Ettore Sottsass's 1973 article "Can It Be Tried Somewhere?", published in the same issue of Casabella that introduced Global Tools[1].That question, posed at a time of radical pedagogical experimentation, still resonates today. Can It Be Tried in Yerevan? explores the possibilities of architectural transmission beyond formal education through the case of the Library for Architecture (LFA) in Yerevan. Informed by the radical pedagogical spirit of Global Tools and Ivan Illich's deschooling theory, the library embraces self-learning, collaboration, and spatial experimentation. This text reflects on LFA not as a model, but as a lens to question how knowledge circulates, and what it means to learn architecture otherwise.

Keywords
Library for Architecture (LFA) — Architectural Education — Experimental Pedagogy — Self-Learning — Radical Pedagogy — Armenia

The title is a nod to Ettore Sottsass's 1973 article "Can It Be Tried Somewhere?", published in the same issue of Casabella that introduced Global Tools[1]. That question, posed at a time of radical pedagogical experimentation, still resonates today. This text extends it into a different geography and urgency, asking what such experimentation might look like in Yerevan. One of the ways we've tried to respond to this question is through the Library for Architecture (LFA)[2]. This text reflects on LFA not as a model, but as a lens to question how knowledge circulates, and what it means to learn architecture otherwise.

LFA was founded as a reaction to a desire for more open, collaborative, and process-driven ways of engaging with architecture. Instead of mimicking the form of a traditional school, it seeks to project its social core, its people, its networks, into a physical and virtual environment. It desires to operate as a hybrid educational machine: a physical and virtual space shaped by people, conversations, and self-learning. We want to activate it as a space that Leonardo Savioli and Adolfo Natalini describe as a «space of involvement, a continuous happening», a place where both presence and process, form and theory, cooperate. The important component for us is a network of people. The space itself is a projection of this network where books, conversations and workshops give a form to cultural processes. It is an interface of local and collective realities, shaped by a small but complex community. We saw the platform as a space of non-hierarchical transmission of knowledge, it is not a school in a conventional sense.

Library for Architecture (LFA) is situated in a yard in the centre of Yerevan, in the former house of the architects Freidun and Armen Aghalyan. The ground floor is open to the public: there is a library room with over

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Fig. 1
Mutual Interview, 12 month program, LFA, photo by Mitya Lyalin.

Fig. 2
Garage Modeling Workshop, photo by Anna Prilutskaya.

460 books, where various types of gatherings and discussions take place (fig. 1) and a kitchen space with all the basic facilities . On the same level is the garage modelling workshop (fig. 2), open to students and professionals who want to build models and learn about model making through the bi-weekly inductions held there. The garden also hosts various activities, from workshops with students to outdoor discussions when the weather allows it. (fig. 3, fig. 4)

The neighbourhood itself is lively, surrounded by cultural institutions. In the 1930–1970s it was almost entirely inhabited by architects, painters and culturalfigures. Freidun Aghalyan was involved in the land division of the area, which at the time was considered the periphery of Yerevan. Today it is the centre, and this is where LFA lives.

LFA has 12 co-founders, architectural studios currently active in Armenia[3]. In its first year, 2023, the idea was to make the library a centre for the architectural community. This led to the concept of a 12-month public program(fig. 5), where each month was curated by one co-founder. It became a key way to introduce the public to LFA.

This year, the objectives shifted. Students and professionals already know

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Fig. 3
Public talk “Method”, photo by Mitya Lyalin.



Fig. 4
1:1 workshop, LFA, photo by Mitya Lyalin

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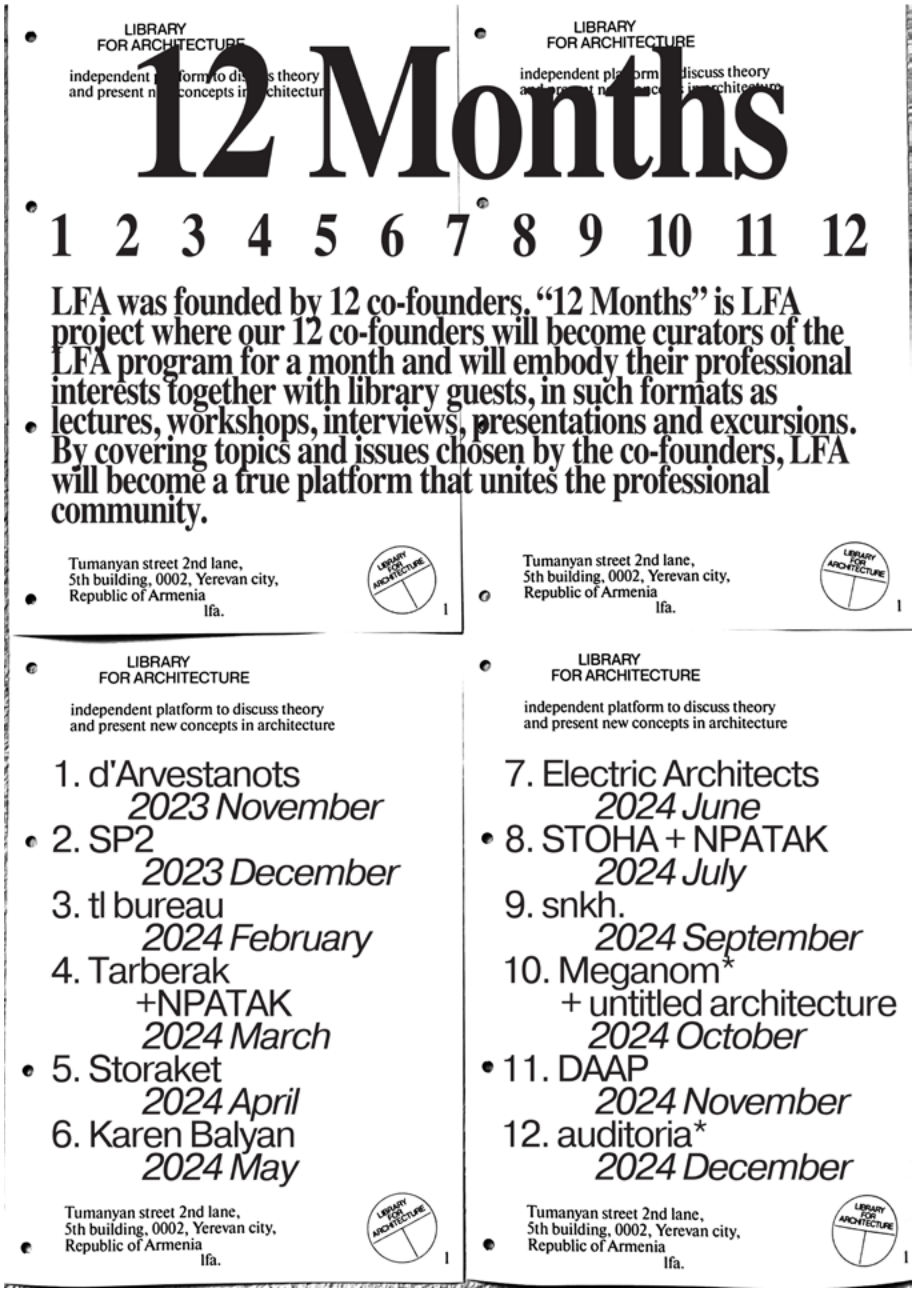


Fig. 5
LFA 12- month program poster by Dana Smagina

the library; every day groups of them come to work, read, and make coffee in the kitchen. So the focus moved toward enlarging the network and strengthening the research component. We kept the "12 months" format, but now each co-founder invites a collaborator to curate the month, with two public events and a theme. These themes explore different kinds of "shape", combining text and form, but above all reflect our interest in studying Armenian reality as it is now.

Through research, we wanted to take a screenshot of the present, what is happening, what is relevant, who is doing what. This intention shaped our projects and our wish to expand the community and understand who the Armenian architectural and urban community is.

The educational component of LFA is in the space itself, in the events and discussions. When students choose to learn and enter this environment of self-learning, they enter our carefully organized "trap" of emancipation, one that we continue to weave through topics, events and the network that grows around the library.

The simple question "what can we offer?" gave us a lot of food for thought

on architectural education in Armenia. It led into a deep and complex rabbit hole of various educational systems and theories. What began as an instinct gradually became an intention, as we started to study radical movements in pedagogy.

It is curious to study theories of the 1950s and 60s. A lot of historical shifts triggered those thoughts back then, and it is interesting how we keep coming back to them. The radical movement was a result of big transformations in the world. It was a period marked by shared resistance to institutional, bureaucratic and capitalist authority[4]. The main ideas circulating back then were the need for more open horizontal learning models, experimental approaches, and opposition to institutionalized systems. There were cases of alternative learning all around the world, some short lived, some longer. They are not nostalgic references, but rather reflect a growing urgency for experimental, open and non-hierarchical approaches to learning.

So we asked ourselves: why revisit those theories today, particularly in the Armenian context? Globally, these topics are again gaining relevance in the face of rapid technological transformations, especially in artificial intelligence, so the question «how can we proceed with education?» is part of the international discourse.

In Armenia, apart from technological shifts, there is a strong presence of geopolitical influences. Armenia was part of the Soviet Union for around seventy years. Architectural education was highly institutionalized and hierarchical, deeply patriarchal, with an individualistic approach to projects and a typological focus. After the collapse, the country seems caught in an inertia zone, where components of the Soviet system still remain, but without the system itself. Changes enter slowly. Institutions adapt slowly. And the geopolitical situation complicates everything further.

The architectural landscape mirrors these shifts. It is not unusual that various individuals and platforms raise the question of what can be different and how to proceed. We were curious to observe how learning scenes appear in other post-Soviet realities.

We see different manifestations of educational experimentation: Strelka, which suspended its activity due to the war; the Kharkiv School of Architecture, an independent school created in response to social and political shifts; the TUMO Center for Creative Technologies, a free program based on self-learning with hubs all over Armenia. Yet in architectural education inside institutions, the system remains technical, limited, and lacking collaborative or interdisciplinary learning. Critical discourse is scarce.

Armenian architectural education is mostly centered around the National University of Architecture. Structurally not much has changed since Soviet times. The system is still hierarchical and top down. There are three departments Architecture, Urbanism and Restoration, but even though they sit on the same floor they work separately and remain isolated. Student projects are not studio based but department based, and there is no clear link between the departments, which would have been valuable and highly educational. Many positive things depend on individual professors, but they also work inside boundaries.

This structure keeps the hierarchy intact and leaves little space for experimentation. The briefs stay typology driven and disconnected from real situations. What is missing is a shift toward reality, a more open environment where students can move more freely and are not shaped so strongly by rigid limits. A place where many voices coexist. A steady network, a public program that is also educational, screenings and discussions, and

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Fig. 6
LFA Collective reader process, Photo by Mitya Lyalin, taken during the BOOKUBORAN LitFest at Woods Center, 2025

a community that grows through this. Something that adds to the existing system and gives another way to learn.

One of the most interesting observations in the Armenian context aligns with what Paulo Freire described as the «banking system»[5]. Students are seen as passive recipients. There is little space for questioning. A lot of students who feel this gap look for postgraduate education abroad. There are exceptions, of course, and they are growing, but the structural issue remains.

This is where LFA becomes a small operator of change. The educational experimentation appears through projects like the Live Archive or the Collective Reader. The Collective Reader first appeared as an event inside the BOOKUBORAN litfest at WoodsCenter. Participants chose a book from the library, selected a fragment, and began translating it into Armenian. (fig. 6) Around thirty-five people contributed, translating passages from twenty different books. (fig. 7) It was a small experiment, but it showed

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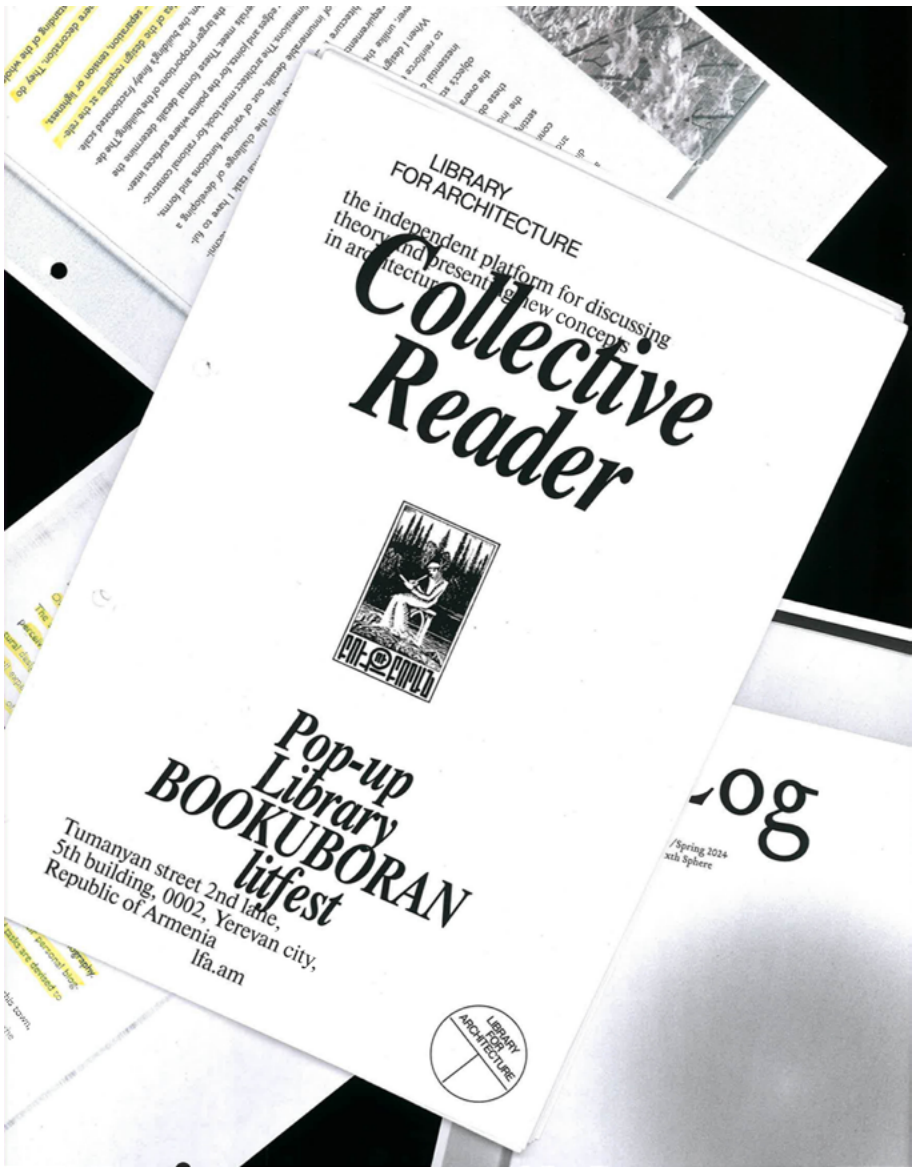


Fig. 7
LFA Collective reader, zine by Dana Smagina 2025.

something important. When the circumstances are right, people are eager to take part, to contribute, to bring their own voice into a shared process. It confirmed for us that learning can happen collectively and quietly, without instruction, simply through the act of doing something together. These small experiments show how knowledge can circulate differently, through presence, through curiosity, through doing.

The Live Archive is another ongoing initiative that launched publicly in December 2025 and shaped our understanding of learning. It collects research-based works on architecture and urban studies on Armenia, bringing together materials that are usually scattered across institutions, countries and languages. It became another way of creating a network, not through events but through the act of gathering. By placing these works side by side, we began to see connections, gaps and directions of thought. The archive showed us how much knowledge already exists, and how much can happen when it is made visible to a community.

Another experiment we carried out was linked to the idea of social architecture and took place in the context of the Triennale Milano. Within the theme of (ordinary) architecture, LFA initiated an open call for artists and architects, inviting them to represent an object that, in their view, reflects ordinary architecture in Yerevan today. The process opened many ques-

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Fig. 8
The National Pavilion of Armenia at Triennale Milano, Curatorial team: LFA, Meganom, and untitled architecture. Photo by Giovanni Galanello, 2025.

tions and perspectives on the city's architectural reality, and generated an ongoing discourse around what is usually taken for granted or remains unseen. For us, this process itself became an educational moment, being part of a shared reflection on real, current topics, and contributing to a collective understanding of the city. (fig. 8)

Can it be tried in Yerevan?

We think it can, but with a clear understanding of what "it" means. For us the key is the community, and working with it in all its layers, the architectural community, the students and the public. We want to become a place where all three meet. Our programs and projects support this. LFA cannot substitute a school and does not want to. It tries to become a support mechanism, a self-learning space that facilitates discussions and community-driven research. Our definition of it will likely evolve. For now we do not seek to oppose institutions, but to introduce alternative approaches and broaden the conversation inside the community.

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Notes

[1] See Borgonuovo V., Franceschini S. (2021) – "The Tools of a Possible School". In *Global Tools 1973–1975: When Education Coincides with Life*, edited by Franceschini S. and Borgonuovo V., NERO Editions, Rome, pp. 15–35.
[2] Library for Architecture (LFA) is an Armenian non-profit organisation founded in 2023.
[3] The twelve co-founders of the Library for Architecture are: d'Arvestanots, SP2, tl bureau, Tarberak, Storaket, Karen Balyan, Electric Architects, STOHA, snkh., Meganom*, DAAP, and auditoria.*
[4] See Colomina B., González Galán I., Kotsioris E., Meister A.-M. (2018) – *Towards a Radical Pedagogy*, no. 02, Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh.
[5] Freire P. (1970) – Pedagogy of the Oppressed, translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, Continuum, New York.

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Aleksei Lashkov is a researcher, producer, and pedagogue in the field of architecture. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Architecture from the Moscow Architectural Institute, with additional studies at Sapienza University of Rome. Since 2023, he has been the co-founder and program director of the Library for Architecture (LFA) in Yerevan. He also runs Auditoria's research and publishing programs. His experience includes work in the architectural studio Meganom, where he is a developing director of projects and research initiatives

Meri Pepanyan is an architect and a researcher with a Master's degree in Architecture and Urban Design from Politecnico di Milano (2023). Since September 2024, she has been a researcher at the Library for Architecture (LFA) in Yerevan, where she explores architectural and urban phenomena through research-based formats, including public programs and archival initiatives. Her experience includes participation in several international workshops and competitions, alongside work in architecture studios in Yerevan and Milan. In 2024, she assisted in citizen science workshops in rural Armenia within the TUMO Box network, which was initiated and organized by Hyphen4, an architectural and urban studio.

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Enrique Encabo, Inmaculada Maluenda, Íñigo Cobeta

From display to content
OMA, architecture and mass media, 1989-2006

Abstract
This text aims to analyze the evolution of OMA's image in three stages. The first addresses their fascination with digital media - even in built form, such as ZKM in Karlsruhe (1989) and Video Bus Stop in Groningen (1991) - and a first attempt of control in the coverage of Villa dall'Ava (1992). The second period covers the critical aftermath of *SMLXL* (1995) and Koolhaas' unease with his public image, until the release of *Content* (2004), the office last major monograph. Finally, the first issue of *Domus d'autore* in April 2006, edited by Koolhaas/AMO, signals an apparent transition to free his architecture from the dominance of the author and the media's gaze through collaborative internet tools and the user's voice.

Keywords
Rem Koolhaas — Digital image — Hans Werlemann

Architecture is, according to Renato de Fusco, a *logotechnics*, «a system composed of functions and signs that, in addition to fulfilling a specific purpose, also serves as a means of communication between social groups».[1] Enunciated more than fifty years ago at the height of the semiotic craze, today these words can be reinterpreted through the metamorphosis of the architectural work from content support to content in its own right. Thus, architecture conceived as a medium for communication systems, from Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown's decorated shed to multimedia screens, has modified its presence or simply been replaced by its own virtual image. This article seeks to analyse this hypothetical transition, using the example of OMA, Rem Koolhaas' office, showing how his initial interest in the actual medium of his buildings very gradually shifted towards a specific control of this communication and its formats. [2]

To this end, the study period chosen examines the works executed between 1989, a critical year, and the final major publication carried out by the studio itself: the *Domus d'autore*, «Post-Occupancy», guest edited by Koolhaas. The two decades since its publication in April 2006 help provide an understanding of the use of digital resources, from video photographs to internet image banks, seemingly casting aside any mediation over public self-presentation, a topic with which Koolhaas, as a former journalist, was obsessed. One obvious precedent is *Delirious New York* (1978). His fascination with postcards and memorabilia, as well as with the drawings by Madelon Vriesendorp, serves to disseminate a popular and unconventional image of architecture. This trajectory can therefore be structured as a series of clearly delineated stages: an initial stage linked to the work of 1989 and

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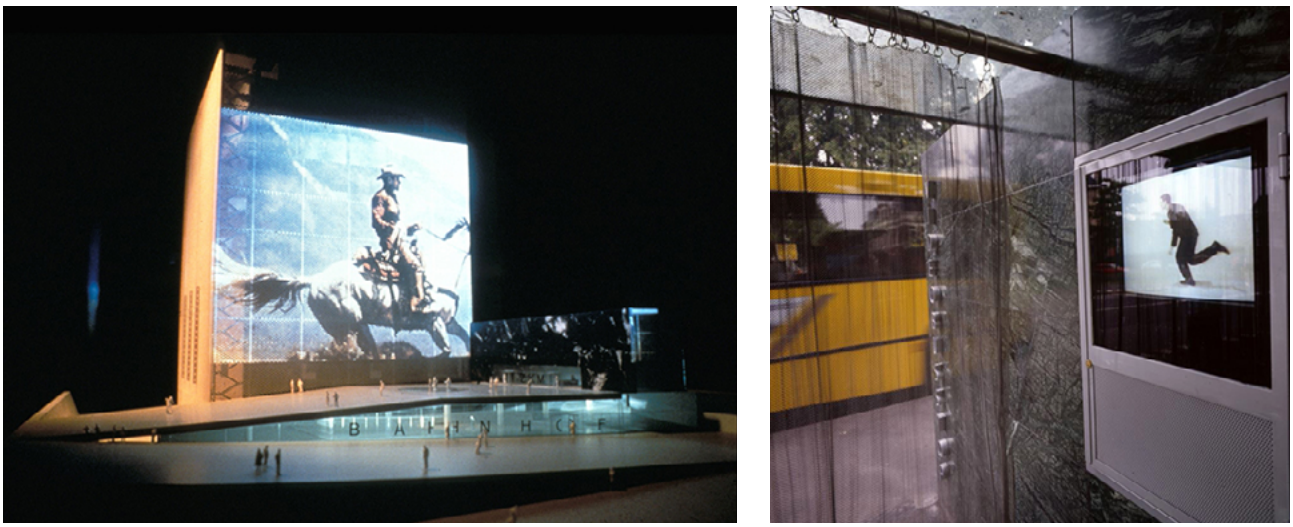


Fig. 1
Decorated sheds and screens. Left: Zentrum fur Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe. Competition Model, 1989. © OMA / Hans Werlemann. Right: Groningen Video Bus Stop, 1991 © OMA

the publication in 1992 of a specific project, Villa dall'Ava; an intermediate one providing an account of the consequences of the 1995 release of *S, M, L, XL*, which would derive in Content, a decade later; and a final phase in which Koolhaas, frustrated by the burden of his public image, decided to shun his starchitect status and conventional photographic resources for this special issue of *Domus*. In the «Preface», as in other works such as «The Generic City», Koolhaas omits references to the authorship, intentions and means of production: «With this issue we try to (re)present four recent buildings in a fresh, more complex way. We don't insist on the buildings' qualities, but monitor their effects on their respective hosts and users. There are no 'critics' —usually, best friends in drag— no intimidation» (Koolhaas 2006, unpaged). This disappearance of the figure of the critic ought to be seen as a final step in the progressive absorption of content and channels, one which had begun to take shape almost two decades earlier, in the summer of 1989.

Video screens and control, 1989-1995

1989 was a decisive year for OMA. While overseeing the works of the Kunsthal, Fukuoka, Euralille and Villa dall'Ava, in the summer they took part in the competitions of the Zeebrugge Sea Terminal, the Bibliothéque de France (or the Trés Grande Bibliothéque, TGB) in Paris and the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie in Karlsruhe (ZKM). These three projects were essential to the studio which, based on the culture of congestion of Delirious New York —the independence of the different layers of functions and the separation of external image and content (Lootsma and Van Stralen 1990)—, eventually brought about the «Bigness» manifesto of *S, M, L, XL*.[3]

In the last of these projects, the ZKM, the façade was transformed into an immense video screen display projected towards the urban space, with the indispensable collaboration of Hans Werlemann. With a background in commercial photography, Werlemann was a member of the Utopia art collective who began a working collaboration with OMA around 1982.[4] Along with his partner Claudi Cornaz,[5] he devised a laser projection system for Karlsruhe, which made it possible to create images matching the size of the façade, an ingenious technical solution which was studied to be later used in real life situations (Hall 2022). This animated billboard directly alluded to the public mediatic space, but around 1992 the cancellation

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Fig. 2
The reviews of Villa dall'Ava in order of appearance, from Le Moniteur (Feb. 1992) to Progressive Architecture (Apr. 1992). In English/American Magazines, Werlemann images were almost fully discarded. Image by the authors.

of the project put paid to any hopes of this becoming a reality. The idea ultimately took the form of the far more modest execution of the Video Bus Stop in Groningen, also proposed in 1989, but completed in 1991. This represents a dependency on the video image as a means of expression of the building which, from then on, was gradually removed from the work of OMA.[6] **(Fig. 1)**

In parallel with this fleeting preference for screens, OMA also showed an interest in communication regarding the projects mentioned earlier. The company even generated its own material which was independent from the architectural process. For the TGB in Paris, following the loss of the competition, new models were created and the competition's linear perspectives replaced with a series of computer-generated images.[7] In the case of Villa dall'Ava, as this was an already existing building, OMA devised an exceptional communication campaign with a painstaking control of the narrative. To do so, Werlemann developed a series of scenarios and happenings which ideally should have generated different sets of images for the different publications (Bart Lootsma 1993). This attempt at control was executed with the complicity of certain media. However, this was not

the case with all of them, as can be gleaned from the trajectory of the publications related to the project. (fig. 2)

From February 1992, publications began, with an initial appearance in *Le Moniteur Architecture* with a text by Jacques Lucan (later republished in Domus), as the client in the house was an executive working in this publishing group. Also dating from February, we find a feature in *Bauwelt*, with a text by Bart Lootsma. [8] In both, the descriptive photographs of the building—shown on a small scale in the French magazine and occupying a full page in the German one—were combined with Werlemann's visual planning, in which a giraffe, on loan from a circus, wandered through the garden.[9] The project was completed with a series of swimmers on the cover (*Bauwelt*), evoking the history of the swimming pool of *Delirious New York*, together with ideas such as that of a panther in the bedroom, which was never completed, and a nude in the shower which the owners did not authorize initially (Lootsma 1992).

This nude appeared in *Domus* (behind a translucent screen) the following month (p. 33). [10] In this case, the images chosen were mostly taken at night. Once again, shots from Werlemann's visuals appeared, with new photographs of the swimmers. In April, *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (pp. 10-19) used general descriptive images, avoiding, when possible, the repetition of previously published material, as seen in the photograph of the swimming pool, which differed only slightly from that featured on page 34 of *Le Moniteur*.

However, the English-language media shunned almost all Werlemann's material, instead choosing a feature shot by Peter Aaron, a student of Ezra Stoller's, as can be seen in *Architect's Journal* (March 1992, pp. 24-31), the US publication *Progressive Architecture* (April 1992, pp. 115-121; with text by Jean-Louis Cohen), and *House & Garden* (March 1992, pp. 158-165). [11] Aaron's nod to OMA in his feature included a night-time photograph with a female swimmer in a somewhat unlikely poise, about to dive perpendicularly to the long side of the pool.

Monograph publications, including GA houses (issue 36) and *El Croquis* (issue 53, March 1992), did not use the surrealist iconography supplied by OMA. They worked with their own photographers, Yukio Futagawa and Hisao Suzuki, respectively. Fernando Márquez, editor of *El Croquis*, remembers Koolhaas' presence in the session. Although his interventions were minimal, he insisted that the order of the feature should follow a structured sequence, following the route from start to finish, thus generating a pregnant structure, somewhat inherited from Koolhaas' past as a film scriptwriter.[12]

In fact, as emerged almost thirty years later, the origin of the images was indeed cinematographic. In 2020, Werlemann and Cornaz presented the documentary on the house, 2042: The Villa Dall'Ava (SToA) for the first time. Filmed in 1992, the photographer offered the following explanation for the film's delayed release: «The film was not presented because we never took the opportunity in it. The problem is, I recognize now, that the story about the giraffe got more important than the Villa».[13]

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Fig. 3
Video textures. Left: L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui 238. Cover photo by Hans Werlemann. / Center: ZKM video images by Hans Werlemann in SMXL, 1995 / Right: Gucci advertisement by Mario Testino, 1997-1998.

Iconoclastic identities, 1995-2004

Despite the discarding of the movie, other visual projects by Cornaz and Werlemann kept leaving a permanent imprint in the studio´s public image. Around 1985, Werlemann and Cornaz began to produce blurred photographs taken from television screens, a technique which set OMA apart from the conventional means of representation, as was soon noted by some critics (Stein 1992).[14]

The origins of this technique can be traced back to the cover of issue 238 of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* in 1985. Werlemann has always been adamant about the identity of this unique method to reflect the architecture of OMA: «There are films that have a very fine grain. I never use them. […] I sometimes take pictures on 8mm film. I can get a sort of a "dream effect" or "like a memory" — an effect of blurriness, like the one with the television screen (very low in pixels)» (Schurk 2022, 427). The influence of video images on the materials of *S, M, L, XL* is undeniable, as can be seen in the pages devoted to the installation of the Milan Triennial (pp .54-55, 60-61), the Netherlands Dance Theater (pp. 308-309, 311), the ZKM (pp .742-743, 744-745, 749, 756-757), and the illustrations of «The Generic City» (pp. 1238-1247) which could be seamlessly linked to the advertising textures of the time. (**Fig. 3)**

It is clearly not possible to expound here on the content and consequences of a book of such importance and relevance. However, it is possible to appreciate the critical effects of this predilection for new visual textures. Koolhaas considered *S, M, L, XL* to be a response to the tribulations of 1989 and certain failed expectations regarding the professional stability and status of OMA in the early 1990s (Zaera 1996, pp. 10-11), although heterogeneous multimedia images and the mix of graphic elements and words led to a considerable degree of confusion.[15] Perhaps spurred on by the author, in 1996 both Terence Riley and Jeffrey Kipnis, partners in crime mentioned in the Acknowledgements of the book (xxix) wrote articles in *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* and *El Croquis*. Part of the debate focused on the format: while Riley considered the book to be a reinvention of the media presence of architecture, Kipnis—who ironically referred to 'criti-

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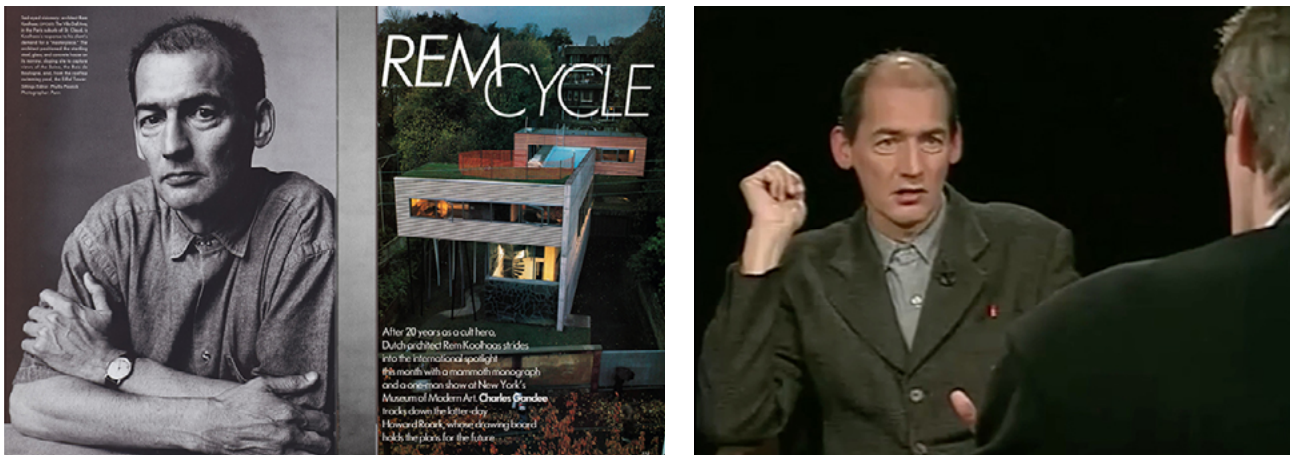


Fig. 4
«Do you view yourself as a celebrity?». Left: Koolhaas in Vogue, November 1994.
Right: With Charlie Rose, 1994.

cal ineptitude' (Kipnis 199, p. 26)[16] — explicitly defended the use of video tools as the only way to reflect human presence in architecture. It should be noted that the features of *S, M, L, XL*, such as that on the Kunsthal (by Werlemann) or Euralille (designed by Mark Schendel/OMA) provided a no-holds-barred depiction of this human presence.[17]

After the publication of *S, M, L, XL* AMO, the office's new think tank, was founded as an independent division of OMA.[18] Media presence was starting to be seen as an independent parallel discourse which brought about the emancipation of part of the office, which chose to distance itself from the tedious daily practice of architecture for producing a different type of spatial representations and broadening the professional spectrum. In fact, it was this tension between OMA and AMO which largely brought about the publication of *Content.*[19]

In contrast with the titanic effort to create new characteristic graphic languages from the perspective of the practice of architecture in *S, M, L, XL*, *Content* was closer to an intentionally popular mass communication (*Big Brother*, internet sales and video games) and resorted to an iconoclastic caricature to expose the instability of OMA, both in terms of professional practice, and from a global perspective. Neither a book nor a journal, published in a gossip magazine format, *Content* seemed to consolidate the idea that physical presence, which had been so important years earlier, was turning towards different ways of self-presentation, as Koolhaas had made clear in his 1999 conversation with Sarah Whiting on the pages of *Assemblage*:

For Prada and Seattle, we are working, for the first time, also on the electronic presence and architecture, which is visually interpreted as an entirely separate identity. Here we aim for mutual reinforcement. […] What is different from 1989 is that we are now also thinking of the building and its existence in virtual space, where it will be the emblem of the library headquarters. We're looking for a gestalt that is effective in actual and virtual space. (p. 50)

Back to the generic 2004-2006

In this final stage an experimental approach was taken to this orientation of the virtual presence of the building. In April 2006, Rem Koolhaas took over, together with AMO, the first (and to date, only) issue of *Domus d´autore*: «Post-Occupancy». Along with earlier efforts to present his work to

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Fig. 5
From model to building, presented in the same view. Left: S, M, L, XL,1995 / Right: The same resource in Domus, 2006.

the public through a painstaking exercise in iconoclasm (Colomina 2007, p. 368), Koolhaas was increasingly sceptical of the sway of his own public status. Paradoxically, his efforts to dismantle and dispel the myth of the work of the architect (Zaera 1996, p. 25) had in effect made him iconic, with appearances on the *Charlie Rose Programme* (1994 and 1996), in *Vogue*[20] and the *New York Times* (Luscombe, 1996), emphasizing for instance the Maserati he used for his visits to the Lille work sites as a juicy detail for characterization.[21] (Fig. 4)

As stated above, the interest in media overexposure had already been a feature for Koolhaas from the initial stages of OMA (Zaera 1992, p. 7),[22] and towards 2005 the architect specifically reflected on the issue in *Perspecta* (p. 103):

Q: So do you view yourself as a celebrity?

A: I see a very important distinction between fame, which I feel is related to work, and celebrity, which is related to the person. […] I would say that in the case of the Whitney Museum project, for instance, the reasons why we were chosen were probably more related to celebrity than to the work itself. And that also made it easier for them to reject the project ultimately, because they could spin it and use the preexisting typology of the celebrity - a person who won't listen, who refuses to compromise. So that was a very negative experience of celebrity culture.[23]

With this background, it is not far-fetched to see his «Preface» to the Domus d'autore as an attempt to counter this constant media presence:

[The starchitect is] a contemporary Faustus: drowning in attention, but not taken seriously. But Faust, at least, could make his own deals: his present, reduced embodiment is the creation of a thousand marketing strategies, borderline magazines, frantic part-timers, promiscuous freelancers, risk-averse political calculations, ultra-compressed TV spots, […] A combined process of corrosive adulation mercilessly registers such crucial details as hairstyles, labels, love lives, glasses, shoes, and other marks of architectural genius. (Koolhaas 2006; unpaged)

Compared to *Content*, *Domus* now constituted a veritable exercise in con-

tainment. Using a seemingly objective and balanced structure, four buildings were presented: the embassy of the Netherlands in Berlin, 1997-2003; Seattle Central Library, 1999-2004; the McCormick centre at Chicago IIT 1997-2003; and the Casa da Musica in Porto, 1999-2005.[24]

The presentation was systematic, with no graphic distinction between projects. Each was presented in a booklet with no page numbers, divided into 7 sections: aerial photography; news cuttings from the day, including the inauguration of each building; «Context», with images of the surroundings; «Users», with different ways of presenting the user experience, from the feature to the comparison of model/reality (Porto); «Visual Language», or meticulous photographs accompanied by a critical text; «CAD-Scan», an overlay of the CAD plans of the project and at the end, diagrams mentioning all types of data.[25] These booklets had interspersed leaflets showing different types of information, collecting all 4 buildings and representing the traditional media, public, critics, and finally, Big Brother, with juxtaposed security camera shots appearing on the openings.[26]

However, this proposal was less innovative than intended. Some of the substantial features of this «fresh, more complex way» championed by Koolhaas in his presentation can be identified in his earlier works. In terms of form, the video texture, found in the CCTV stills or news items, as a popularization of Werlemann's visual essays, has already been highlighted. Other resources such as the parallels between the model and the built work in Porto, had been tested at the presentation of the Lille Congrexpo in S, M, L, XL. Equally, the photographic sections of the Chicago building were reminiscent of Ed Ruscha, who had been featured when Koolhaas and Obrist had interviewed Venturi and Scott Brown for Content (Koolhaas, Obrist 2004, p. 154). (fig. 5)

As regards concept, the project cannot be considered as innovative as originally thought. Koolhaas concluded his presentation by stating: «We looked through the eyes of tourists and artists, trusted others to record. Away from the triumphalist or miserabilist glare of media, we wanted to see what happens in the absence of the author, to represent the realities we were complicit in creating, post-occupancy as facts, not feats».

In actual fact, this abandonment of representation in the hands of the user is rather reminiscent of the rhetoric seen in «The Generic City», the final text to appear in S, M, L, XL. The circle is closed: «What are the disadvantages of identity, and conversely, what are the advantages of blankness? What if this seemingly accidental-and usually regretted-homogenization were an intentional process, a conscious movement away from difference toward similarity? […] What is left after identity is stripped? The Generic?» (Koolhaas 1995, p. 1248).

According to this approach, the built project became the trial run for itself, legitimized by a community removed from the critics which was in charge of making it into a consumer project for mass communication. Just as in «Bigness» or «The Generic City» Koolhaas had spoken of operations escaping all control, in «Post-Occupancy» his editorial approach takes the form of an apparent sublimation of the inevitable (Zaera 1996, p.23), the assumption of an overwhelming ever expanding new virtual space where

trying to forge an identity and to control reproductions no longer makes sense on such a global scale.

The virtual presence of architecture, an essential part of the OMA project, was conspicuous in the pages of Domus, and was a constant reminder of his prophecies for the future of the city, «The Generic City is what is left after large sections of urban life crossed over to cyberspace» (Koolhaas 1995, p. 1250). This could also be said of the medium, which had finally been transformed from a complement to the substitute of tangible architecture.

This article presents some results from the research project: Conexiones de la arquitectura española con las Américas: academia, profesión y difusión (1976-2006). RETRANSLATES02. (I.P.1: Ana Esteban Maluenda; I.P.2: Marta García Carbonero; Ref.: PID2022-138760NB-C22).

Note

[1] De Fusco refers to the term coined by Roland Barthes.

[2] Both the book Project without Form - OMA, Rem Koolhaas and the Laboratory of 1989 by Holger Schurk and the publication by Christophe van Gerrewey, OMA / Rem Koolhaas, a critical reader, have been essential to the work developed in these pages.

[3] And, a few years after this, it led to the ironical copyrighting of universal modernization of Content. Both Zeebrugge and ZKM could be considered approximations to the duck and the decorated shed by Venturi and Scott Brown.

[4] After parting ways with Elia Zenghelis in 1987, Koolhaas understood the need to intensify collaborations (Zaera 1992, p. 9). The physical proximity of the OMA headquarters, in Boompjes at that point, and that of the Utopia collective, a water tower on the north bank of the river Meuse, facilitated intense collaboration. In order to date the collaborations of Werlemann, see credits in *S, M, L, XL*, p. 1272. The first project in which Werlemann is credited is Parc de la Villette. In his conversation with Holger Schurk (p. 426), he acknowledges that as the first project he worked in. Alongside Petra Blaisse, Werlemann took charge of one of the first retrospective exhibitions of the office, OMA -The First Decade (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 1989) which he personally considered a direct antecedent of *S, M, L, XL*: “The book would be the exhibition. That was the idea. But that was not the idea of Rem […] Later, he said: ‘Let’s make the book’” (Schurk 2022, p. 428).

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[5] Also a member of the Utopia group.

[6] Werlemann does not appear as a collaborator in this project or in that directly preceding it: the reinterpretation of the Barcelona Pavilion by Mies van der Rohe for the 1986 Milan Triennial. In keeping with this, a possible link, albeit with a looser connection, was the 1991 project for the Zac Danton Tower in la Défense, with a horizontal billboard-floor emitting situationist messages.

[7] According to Holger Schurk (p. 249), OMA created the famous models of voids and fillings in the library two years after the competition, in 1991. These materials replaced the more conventional linear perspectives of the third competition panel. Koolhaas had decided not to use them in the final presentation, but from that point on they replaced clear linear drawings. These computer-generated images were published as early as in Six Projets, the publication by the Institut Français d'Architecture on OMA, from 1990. In the case of computer-generated images, Art Zaaijer, in charge of the TBG project, stated (Schurk, p. 417): "The Glossiness of the renderings was totally new to us. It didn't have anything of the typical OMA-like, rough, impulsive, clear quality. The glossiness was new to us because we were not gloss at all".

[8] The *Bauwelt* feature was used again in *L'architettura, cronache e storia* (July-August 1992), 529-532.

[9] The significance of the giraffe is open to multiple interpretations. One of these, as recounted by Werlemann in SToA talks in Stuttgart (2020) suggests that it was a reference to Koolhaas' father, who had written some stories on animals.

[10] The idea eventually resurfaced, albeit in a different project: the first image of the Dutch house in *S, M, L, XL* (pp. 64-65) is a double spread picture of a female nude blurred behind a glass, taking a shower, which is also the last image in *El Croquis* 53 (p. 61).

[11] In *Architect's Journal* (p. 31) however, some of the few views of the main room of the house can be seen together with the detail of the curious peephole which allows onlookers to see into the pool.

[12] *El Croquis* incorporates a side photograph (p. 137) taken from the north side of the lot (the garage side) appearing in no other publication. In conversation with the authors, the editor, Fernando Márquez, recalls how the image was taken surreptitiously before the neighbours, with whom the homeowners were at odds, were alerted.

[13] Werlemann's words are heard around minute 58:45. The host, Stephan Trüby, mentions that Bart Lootsma wrote at the time that Rem Koolhaas had decided not to use that film.

[14] «As might be expected, the group has taken its experiment with technology one step beyond simply using the computer as an electronic pencil. For example, video cameras film rough study models, from which still shots are printed. The images, blurred and purposefully vague […] For in the end, OMA's art raises the thorny question of what a drawing means: is it an actual tool of design, or merely an edited representation of it?» It should be remembered that the Creative director in *I.D.* was none other than Bruce Mau.

[15] «It emerges as a kind of multimedia experiment trapped on too much paper, a rambling hypertext without a navigational device» (Novosedlik 1995). See also Brittain-Caitlin in *The Architectural Review*: «Not avoiding contradictions means resigning from the intellectual discipline which could have given so large a book great value. And this is an unnecessary problem: 50 pages of Hans Werlemann's photographs for each project, however small, could have resulted in a visual tour de force, […] but words spew everywhere. There are just too many of them […] The result is dangerous, visually, to the real subject».

[16] He jokingly included himself amongst the critics who could not grasp Koolhaas' architecture at first sight.

[17] Riley: «*S, M, L, XL* is not so much a book itself but a space in which the media creations of architecture —the book, the photograph, the film— collide, mutate and reinvent themselves».
See also Kipnis:
«An excursion through a century of published architectural photography finds an overwhelming preference for empty buildings. The canonic drawings of architectural design and representation -plan, section, elevation, axonometric and perspective- all are denuded of activity. In fact, there is no canonic representation of activity in the building other than the adjacency and circulation diagrams; none whatsoever exists for the more complex issue of event-structure. The only class of drawing that attempts to undertake such a representation is a collage, a prevalent but far from canonic technique. And is it an accident that the media best suited to represent activity, such as film and video, still have found no intrinsic role in architectural design technique or criticism?» (p. 36)

[18] Although a precedent could be seen in the form of the Groszstadt Foundation, which

promoted OMA research, publications and exhibitions, and was conceived following the preparation of *S, M, L, XL* and the exhibition organized by MoMA on the studio in November 1994, the foundation of AMO was formalized in 1995. (Archis [20]. #1, p.25).

[19] From the «Preface» by Rem Koolhaas: «*Content* documents a 'split' - a grand écart, the fiendishly difficult moment, immobile, on the ground in a classical ballet - the maximum stretch between two opposite forces, realization and speculation, performed by OMA and AMO».

[20] The cause of such presence was the opening of the exhibition *Thresholds/OMA* in the Museum of Modern Art, November 1994, and of course, the edition of *S, M, L, XL*. Two different versions of the book can be seen in the Charlie Rose interviews.

[21] In the interview with Charlie Rose (5:20), Koolhaas mentions the importance of screenwriting "in terms of the inner workings of the profession".

[22] «In the end, it was also the final installment of my transformation from a writer into a building architect, that began in the early 80s, I simply had to learn a vast part of the profession. It was ridiculous being already 'known' in the middle of such a process, happening all in the public eye».

[23] See also *AA Supercritical* (Steele 2006, p. 35):
«Audience member: …why you both try to deny the very spectacle that you inadvertently do so much to create?
PE: You better ask Rem first. [Laughter]
RK: I think neither of us is trying to deny this media condition. But it is obvious that this is an incredibly difficult situation, because there is a conflict between the extent to which it is imposed on you by expectation, and politically. […]»

[24] These had been compiled in Content as a wider sample which organized the projects from west to east, from the LACMA in Los Angeles to CCTV in Beijing.

[25] According to this section, the Berlin embassy cost the same as 300 kg of cocaine or 1 ton of caviar.

[26] These booklets contained: 1) Images from news programs; 2) Comments from the public on forums, seemingly unfiltered; 3) A vast corpus of critical commentary culminating in a succinct reconstruction of the profile of each individual project; 4) Security camera images from the individual buildings.

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Michela Morgante

Enabling people to watch architecture (from the living room). City, history and design in RAI programming 1954-1978

Abstract
This contribution traces the protagonists, approaches, and critical junctures in the architectural discourse in nearly three decades of RAI broadcasting. The initial phase is marked by a focus on domestic space and the influence of the Milanese avant-garde, mirroring the Northern-centric geography of television production. With the increasing centrality of Rome-based studios, greater prominence is given to roman masters, who conceptualized television as a medium for democratizing decisions regarding the built environment. A significant methodological innovation emerged from the educational programmes, shaped by Iuav's engaged research, with a strong focus on the city and its history. Experimentation with communicative formats reached its peak thanks to director Giulio Macchi, at a time of hightened visibility for design culture on television – an exposure that, however, seemed to fade by the late 1970s.

Keywords
Architectural history — Urban planning — Television — Communicating architecture

In the early days of television, space project topics were presented to younger viewers. This association is surprising, given that architecture was not yet part of the educational programming that was the backbone of the newly established state television network, but it was necessitated by a programming that was limited to a few time slots. «Easy and entertaining notions of architecture», a history of living in the form of entertainment, was the formula chosen by Carlo Mollino (*Dalla palafitta al grattacielo*, 1958). Mollino was the designer of the RAI auditorium in Turin and curator of a radio series on interior design for an adult audience (*La nostra casa si trasforma*, 1959). He was renowned for his usual refined irony: the series ended with Carlo Emilio Gadda's hilarious indictement of the flaws of modern construction, which later became a literary classic[1].

The original thematic matrix therefore pertained to the sphere of housing and interior design, seen as a way of approaching spatial issues. Incidentally, we are at a stage when television schedules are mostly produced in Milan[2], mainly in the luxurious centre of Corso Sempione designed by Giò Ponti for EIAR. The influence of the two main Italian magazines on the choice of experts involved was inevitable. At the start o the experimental broadcasts, Ernesto Nathan Rogers had already written a pilot episode of *La casa dell'uomo* (1953), devoted to the Unité d'habitation (Romere 2014, 82). From 1954 onwards, others followed, entrusted to Paolo Chessa and Carlo De Carli, on a varied range of topics[3].

Less ambitious, but still with a distinctly Milanese flavour, was the programme *Il piacere della casa* (1956-1963), edited by Paolo Tilche and Mario Tedeschi. Fifteen minutes in which educational dialogues alternated with on-location reports on interior solutions. The duo gradually broadened

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Fig. 1
Interiors by S. Asti and S. Favre, mentioned in the TV show "La nostra casa si trasforma" (Radiocorriere 10, 1959).

their spectrum, having to honour the recently deceased Wright (1959), and to cover the contents and display of the XII Triennale in 1960 – a choice that the *Corriere della sera* branded as too specialised for the national public TV (B. 1960, 6).

From the mid-1950s, even before architecture was promoted to the dinner hour slot, the modern city also appeared on screen. This was a topical issue with strong social relevance due to the national impact of urbanism, which was, therefore, unavoidablle in the TV programming, but nevertheless scheduled late in the evening. It was an important turning point: from this point onwards, the metropolis remains a strong focus of television attention, thanks to which – through the investigative and documentary format – a slow detachment from the conciliatory paternalism of the government-run RAI matures (Guglielmi 1968).

The problems of the rapidly growing Italian cities were initially addressed by "generalist" presenters and programmes focused on visually striking curiosities, such as the "skyscraper phenomenon", an icon of early television. Disciplinary urban planning was still an obscure subject for most people in Italian media culture. According to RAI it could be classified under the *Cronache del futuro* (1956)[4], to be conveyed through examples, rhetorical questions and forms of dramatisation. The task was undertaken by the most austere among our local planners, Giovanni Astengo**,** a member of Olivetti's circle, who was called upon to illustrate the importance of this "new" field of action – just as he did in the press for the voters of the Comunità party[5].

While the *Cronache* authored by Astengo were an innovative product also due to the presence of the first female director working at RAI, Alda Grimaldi, in terms of content, it was not until 1961 that a female expert was interviewed on television about architectural issues. We are in a transitional phase of the organisation, with management not yet centralised in the capital[6]. And the female primacy rightfully belongs to Giulia Veronesi from Milan, an art critic who the first in the post-war period to introduce Tony Garnier to italy, interpreted as a precursor of rationalism (Veronesi 1948). The occasion was the InArch exhibition dedicated to him in 1961

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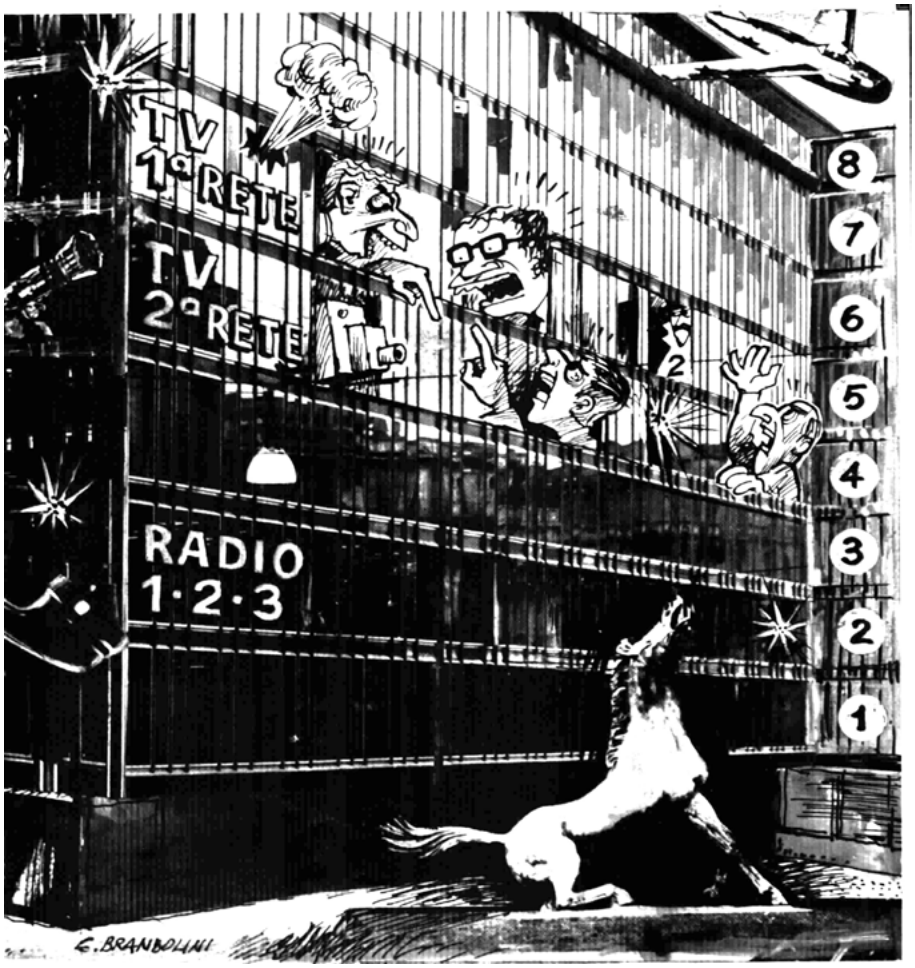


Fig. 2
Carlo Mollino, television programme "Dalla palafitta al grattacielo" (Radiocorriere 19, 1958)

Fig. 3
The RAI headquarters on viale Mazzini (F. Berarducci, A. Fioroni 1962-65), cartoon by G. Brandolini (Radiocorriere 48, 1977)

and the its RAI launch. The Persico's pupil, now in her mature years, stood in an informal setting (*Arti e scienze*, 1961)[7]: Veronesi walks through in the roman countryside, the environment of Garnier's training, in search of an unlikely Italian *imprint*.

Between activism and celebration

Few female specialists are involved in TV, and in any case, after the turning point of the youth protest, in a spirit of democratization of broadcasting totally anew. The popular awakening to the fate of the territory was close to the heart of Ludovico Quaroni, che who had already devoted a speech to it in 1962, at the conference of the Associazione dei radio-teleabbonati. The Roman maestro had been involved in radio for a decade, but here he insisted on the particular communicative value of the new *medium* for a democratic debate on technical choices: namely, with decision-makers called upon to argue publicly, in front of diagrams, models and images (Quaroni 1963).

His belief in television as a means of forming a national opinion in a civilised country set Quaroni, one of the most "television-oriented" italian architects, apart from his political party. For a long time, the left viewed the small screen with suspicion, seeing it as source of consumption and numbing of consciences, according to the well-knowed polarisation mocked by Umberto Eco in *Apocalittici e integrati* (1964). Another champion of visual literacy among Italians, also present at the conference of the television subscribers (about three millions of families), took a different stance. On that occasion, Bruno Zevi ironically made reference to the boredom of

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Fig. 4
Ludovico Quaroni with the director of a programme on the Bridge over the Strait of Messina (Radiocorriere 40, 1970).

Fig. 5
Illustration referring to the survey conducted on viewers of the TV investigation "Londra. Problemi di una metropoli", 1967 (Radiocorriere 45 1974).

«moving Alinari photographs» in TV documentaries focused on *landmark* (Zevi 1963) – converging with the statements of Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, another important theorist of the mediatisation of artistic phenomena (La Salvia 2010).

Although favourable to any new medium capable of capturing the temporality of spatial experience, Zevi initially favoured radio (*Architettura e urbanistica* 1956, *L'architettura di Biagio Rossetti* 1960), like his entire generation, due to its inherent cultural depth connected to a more mature audience. However, it was inevitable that, as a cultured yet *pop* provocateur, he would be involved in the television universe. One of Zevi's first and most odd television appearances coincided with lucklustre Bauhaus exhibition at the Galleria nazionale, where the critic dismissed the teaching method practised at the German school as outdated and e "formalist" (*Arti e scienze* 1961). The Roman interview with Gropius was assigned to another, more malleable, RAI anchorman[8].

Nevertheless, Zevi was consulted on a wide range of topics, including Richard Neutra's American phase (*Arti e scienze*, 1961), children and urban green areas (*Il cerchio magico*, 1962), and the fate of Rome's historic centre (*Libro bianco,* 1962). The latter interview was part of a wide-ranging investigation into urbanism in the capital at the time of the new town plan – a programme that included a long historical excursus by the emerging Italo Insolera[9]. A member of Italia Nostra since its inception, the architect proposed a critical view of post-unification speculation, the regime's demolition projects and the chaotic development of the post-war period. These themes obviously originated from his *Roma moderna*, then hot off the press, which was several times on RAI (*Roma capitale*, 1970).

Unexpectedly, we find Insolera in the role of consultant for *L'età del cemento armato* (1964), a prime-time documentary on the recently established second channel. It was the debut of a well-established series of programmes in which Italian engineering research was trivialised by emphasising its spectacular nature. Boldness and structural virtuosity were easily embodied in Nervi's works, starting with the Rome Olympics. The engineer, more than any other, was suited to television canonisation, having acquired international fame and special popular visibility linked to the venues of major sporting events[10]. The theme of creative genius generated

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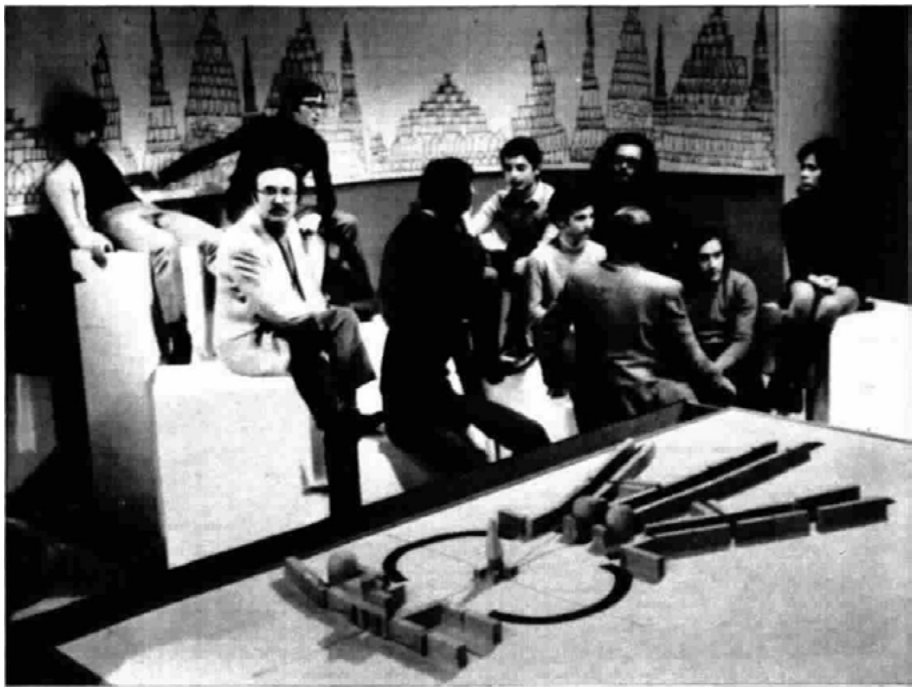


Fig. 6
Mario Manieri Elia leads the debate among young people in "Leggere la città" (Radiocorriere 7 1972).

an entire gallery of television portraits, where the triad of Modernism – Gropius, Le Corbusier and Wright – stands out for its recurrence in the decades under consideration.

Architecture in educational and school television

According to surveys in 1967, architecture was not popular among young people (G.L. 1967). Yet, that was the year in which architectural practice and history were included for the first time as an integral part of a national educational initiative broadcast on television. The subject was included in the morning slot "Art history for Secundary Schools'", for collective viewing in the classroom. Among those teaching the fundamentals of the subject was Quaroni, with his television lessons on the historical function of the architect (*Architettura e città*, 1967) and on the masters of modernism between the two wars (*Architettura Moderna*, 1968); on the other hand, Benevolo, explained once again – this time to students – *Che cos'è l'urbanistica* (1968). The scholar was the most sought-after expert on planning, both on *panels* and as a protagonist, thanks to his calm tone of argument – see his face-to-face with Portoghesi, moderated by Arbasino (*Match* 1978), on the disturbing urban development in Rome.

The new educational release also included a series documentaries on the evolution of fifteen Italian and foreign cities: a cospicuous series, broadcast between 1968 and 1969, which tells us, among other things, about the success of urban history in Italy at that time (Benevolo 1968, 49; Calabi 2003, 8–11). The authors of these documentaries were an interconnected group of avant-garde academics and professionals, the core group of the Iuav during that period[11].

The same Roman-Venetian climate of engagement gave rise to theree investigations into metropolitan issues, collectively edited by Tafuri, Stefano Ray and Giorgio Piccinato in 1967[12]. It was a proposal whose problematising tone probably aroused both expecteations and fears among RAI management: the first episode on London was subjected to an opinion poll, both in terms of comprehensibility andimpact on viewers. After watching the programme, the sample group agreed with the authors' arguments

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Fig. 7
Scenes from "Paese mio": Renzo Piano, Maurizio Vitale in front of the model of Créteil, the PCF headquarters by Niemeyer, Giulio Macchi among plans and guests (Radiocorriere 10 1974).

against low-density *sprawl* and in favour of compact suburbs (C. G. 1974). Also in 1967, state television launched socalled lifelong learning for adults, modelled on foreign precedents (Priulla 1977, 45). Knowledge of architecture was thus officially recognised as a subject of general culture. The programme – *Sapere* – was scheduled in the early evening, and consisted of about ten half-hour episodes on each discipline, from geophysics to law. It combined contributions from experts, on-site footage and practical simulations. These last «learning situations»[13] were built on the basis of a script. The old RAI theme of interiors (*La casa*, 1967), which had been firmly in the hands of Mario Tedeschi for a decade[14] was also reformulated. Provided with actors, mobile sets and animated graphics, the aforementioned *designer* put a stress on the transformability of home environments, the full use of usable space and flexibility of functions. The undeclared ojective was therefore to modernise the tastes of the petty bourgeoisie and spread *rational* lifestyles from northern Europe.

In terms of urban themes, the educational programming open up to content of high methodological value and equal level of insight. For adult education RAI broadcasts *L'uomo e la città* (1967), edited by Vittorio Gregotti**,** a ten-episodes reflection with a particular emphasis on regional spatial organisation and research on geographic scale design, which was the key-focus of his *Il territorio dell'architettura* (1966). Shortly afterwards, Carlo Aymonino (*L'insediamento urbano,* 1974) imparted the essence of his method of morpho-typological analysis to high school students (Aymonino 1969). The episodes conceived by the new Iuav director were systematically structured – house, «housing unit», school facilities, industrial locations, transport networks, territorial planning, utopias of continuous expansion, «settlement units» – highlighting critical issues and innovations directly from real cases[15].

The most explicit political content in RAI's educational programming came from the universe of post-Zevi reframing of architectural history, once again under the Iuav banner. Of Tafuri's circle, which was heavily involved in educational television, Stefano Ray was the most faithful follower of *Quaronian* thinking. The importance of widespread architec-

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Fig. 8
Young people interacting with a scale model of a Roman neighbourhood during an episode of Paese mio (from Radiocorriere, no. 17, 1974).

tural knowledge was constantly reiterated by *Sapere - Architettura*, 1970, with the message to viewers to take their own responsability and reject any technocratic delegation. Similar objectives were set by his colleague Manieri Elia, who leaded discussions on reinterpratating the urban phenomena with young people in dialogue, in the TV studios (*Leggere la città*, 1972). In another cycle (*Dentro l'architettura*, 1970-77*)*, Manieri provided an overview of universal construction*,* with a selection of paradigmatic works analysed in *non-cronological* order[16]. It was a deconstructed history of architecture, in a climate of structuralism, which aimed to dismantle traditional evolutionary genealogies, in order to reveal the design and power issues undelying the interventions.

The techno-ecological age

This highly political educational approach was also supported by Giulio Macchi, an innovative and prolific television writer. Macchi firmly embraced the path of science communication, being a committed intellectual who generally avoided a polemical stance. With him, the space reserved for architecture reached its peak in the programming schedules of the 1970s, for it reflected the social reality of the country and the spirit of time. The author also attracted various criticisms: too cautious on building speculation for *L'Unità*, lacking communicative *appeal* for *Casabella*, and an approach far removed from real life for *Radiocorriere*[17].
The title of his most successful programme, *Habitat*[18], plausibly derived from Safdie's work for Expo 67. The programme addressed the design themes within a "holistic" environmental continuum: the fruits of the best techno-ecological planning research were presented as a possible line of resistance against the visible excesses of progress (Agostini 1974). Given its stated perspective, the programme inevitably adopted an international scope (documenting works by Kahn, Scharoun, Frei Otto, Paul Rudolph,

Archigram, among others) and leaned towards utopia (the theme of mobile home, the *instant city*, the new Paris, participatory design). Macchi balanced the ferment in Italian universities with the voices of the masters (Quaroni, Zevi, Astengo, Benevolo, De Carlo). And in the last cycle, finally in colour he relied on the rising star Renzo Piano for a history of construction methods conveyed by the making of "live" models (*Cantiere aperto*, 1978) (Ciccarelli 2018), a hymn to poor materials and elementary structures.

After a period of intense experimentation, the director closed the chapter in the early 1980s with a bleak assessment of the current methods and means of television representation of design. However, Macchi remained hopeful about the potential of digital technology for the future dissemination of spatial concerns (Zevi 1982). Thus ended, somewhat ingloriously, two decades of passionate reflection on architecture, regarded as an immersive code in the context of a presumed collective semiological consciousness (Eco 1967). The leading experts in communication declared that architecture on video was still at ground zero. We were, actually, at the dawn of a new era, that of Milano2 and private broadcasters. The dazzling comic career of *designer* Marenco, who rarely appeared in public in his role as a professional (*L'uovo e il cubo*, 1977), can be taken as a symbol of this new era of disengagement.

Notes

[1] Episode *Il punto di vista di un inquilino*. Gadda C.E. (1959).

[2] In 1954 there were two television studios in Rome, five in Milan, two in Turin. Gagliardi C. (1984), Grasso A. (2000).

[3] Two more episodes are edited by Rogers (architectural magazines and "environmental preexistences"), two by Paolo Chessa (rationalism vs organic architecture and skyscrapers in Italian cities), one by Carlo De Carli (interior design) and one by Tito Varisco (soviet architecture).

[4] Episode of october 18.

[5] Astengo explains his profession for his Senate candidacy, "Galleria elettorale" (1958).

[6] In 1961 there were eleven television studios in Rome, seven in Milan, two in Turin and two in Naples. Gagliardi C. (1984).

[7] Episode *Tony Garnier: precursore dell'urbanistica*, november 2 1961.

[8] It was Emilio Garroni, professor of aesthetics at the time and very active in television cultural programming.

[9] *Libro bianco*, episode *Roma oggi e domani*, june 4 1962.

[10] G. C. (1957). G. C. (1960), programme *Ritratti contemporanei*, 1960 see Romere R. (2014), 210, programme *Incontri 1961* ibid., 239, programme *Orizzonti della scienza e della tecnica* see "Modelli e strutture" (1966), programme *Incontri 1969* see Del Bosco M. (1969), 27.

[11] Tommaso Giura Longo (*Amsterdam*), Benevolo (*Firenze*, *Mantova*, *Ferrara*), Insolera (*Parigi*), Manieri Elia (*Edimburgo*, *Palermo*), De Carlo (*Urbino*), Aymonino (*Verona*, *Bologna*), Massimo Teodori (*New York*), Sergio Bracco (*Brasilia*), Enzo Carli (*Pienza*), Egle Trincanato (*Venezia*) e Luisa Ferretti (*Stoccolma*, *Amburgo*). See *Educazione e scuola in TV* (1978), 135-36.

[12] They are: *Londra Problemi di una metropoli*, *Venezia Storia di una città*, *Rotterdam Immagini di una città contemporanea*, each lastinf 30 minutes, on the national channel.

[13] Priulla G. (1977), 45.

[14] See the TV programme *La casa dell'uomo* and the radio programme *Viaggio tra quattro pareti,* both aired in 1966.

[15] The following were analyzed: Tuscolano, Gallaratese, Firminy Vert, Spinaceto, the city centre of Bologna, schools in Ivrea, the campus of Pesaro, the industrial areas in Terni and Taranto, the business centres of Turin, Milan and Paris, the hinterland of Naples and Metaponto, Halle-Neustadt, the Barbican, the Brunswick centre.
[16] Each episode of the series focuses on one of the following: the Pyramids of Giza, the Brooklyn Bridge, the Guggenheim Museum in New York, Hagia Sophia in Costantinople, Versailles, the Karl Marx Hof, Bernini's colonnade, Palladio's Rotonda, the World Trade Center, and Brunelleschs dome.
[17] Criticism respectively from: Vice (1971), Il Lonfo (1972), Fratini G. (1978).
[18] *Habitat* aired on the second channel in 1970, 1972, and 1978. In 1974, it was renamed *Paese mio. L'uomo il territorio l'habitat*.

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Riccarda Cantarelli

The Urban Settlement
When Carlo Aymonino brought architectural research to TV

Abstract
More than 50 years have passed since *L'Insediamento Urbano* ("The Urban Settlement") was shown on Rai TV, in which Carlo Aymonino presented the research themes of the Venice Gruppo Architettura. Of the eight episodes aired, it has been possible to find only three, which nonetheless yield the general sense of this entire non-technical series about the city, from the existing situation to future prospects. Specifically, the relationship between work space and home was analysed: Aymonino began from unrealizable utopias, reported significant experiences of the European context, and then looked at Italy, showing worthwhile examples as well as poor urban development choices, tracing a fine line to be followed in order to build "more human cities", saving them from urban speculation and equipping them with all the amenities necessary to guarantee the supreme wellbeing of the inhabitants.

Keywords
Urban Architecture — Infrastructure — Industry

The year 1974 was to prove decisive for Carlo Aymonino: he took over the direction of the University Institute of Architecture in Venice, and in Pesaro he presented a Detailed Plan for the Old Town (1971-1974), a complex collective design which focused on the relationship between conservation and transformation in the context of ancient urban structures and housing, as an expression of architectural-urban unity. This plan was the most complete and mature manifesto of the research and implementation of the theories of the IUAV Gruppo Architettura, established in 1968-69, and dissolved by Aymonino in 1974 when he took office at the Institute.
As part of a literacy programme for Secondary Schools with specific state funding, Aymonino created a documentary television series for the Rai state broadcaster on the theme of URBAN SETTLEMENT, that is, the role of housing in the formation and development of the modern and contemporary city, a research topic presented by Aymonino himself in the *Introduction to the 1970-71 Academic Year Programme* of the University Institute of Architecture of Venice[1] which would be arranged to include experimental operational research, of the Gruppo Architettura, following different options, for at least a decade (even after its formal dissolution).
The meaning of this operation can be found in the vision of openness of the academic world to society that Carlo Aymonino explained at the end of his *Introduction*: "[...] It is necessary to transform the university from an island of semi-privileged people into a productive part of a different social order. Productive not in the purely instrumental sense [...], but in the scientific sense, [...] breaking the diaphragm that separates the university from society, which separates it from the forces that this society wishes to change. It means above all committing oneself to the problems that the ge-

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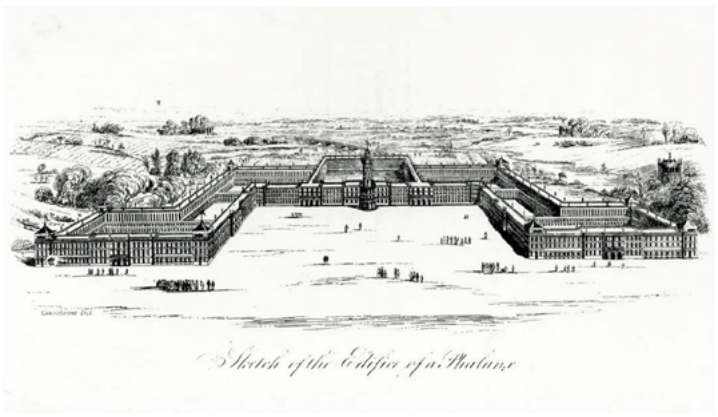


Fig. 1
Aldo Rossi in the 7th episode of the program L'insediamento urbano: Utopie e possibilità (4/6/1974) Rai Teche.

Fig. 2
Stills from the 7th episode of the series The Urban Settlement: Utopias and Possibilities (4/6/1974) Rai Teche.

opolitical place has to solve, without losing sight of the theoretical aspects that the problems themselves solicit and impose" (Gruppo Architettura 1971, pp. 5-6).

From April 1974 until June 6, 1974, 8 episodes were aired,[2] proper lessons in architecture that – with the use of accurate video images which showed shots of the cities described from above, specific works of architecture with interiors shot up close and varied urban contexts – proposed an original discourse on the city with a narrative that began from the existing situation and looked to the future. One thing worth noting was the choice to present the architectural projects featured in the programmes not through drawings, shown only in a few cases, but with the use of models which were instantly easier to understand for the viewer. So far, recovery of these precious videos has only allowed the retrieval of three episodes, including the two closing ones, which have revealed the significance of his work.

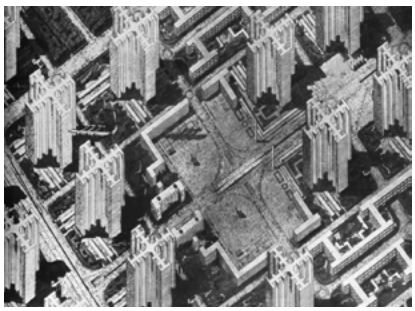
In those years, with the cities of the future in mind as per Le Corbusier, he had engaged with the urban peasants of Rome by designing the Tiburtino district (1950-1954); the workers of Milan with the Monte Amiata residential complex in Gallaratese (1967-1972), and had condensed socialism into one single district, the Spine Bianche in Matera.

It is no coincidence that one episode was dedicated to none other than Utopia, where social problems were translated into architectural solutions. From there the reconstruction carried out during the individual episodes began and returned later, each project dedicated to a theme with specific examples presented in Italy but also from the rest of Europe.

Developed in the early 19th century, through such figures as Owen and Fourier, utopia in architecture gave a progressive vision of the "mode of associated living". Unrealizable and technological Utopias are described as utopias which discard any relationship with history because they hypothesize a technological organization that ignores contemporary production relationships. The examples reported in the TV programme included *Walking Cities*, huge mobile machines equipped with every urban amenity and connected to each other by telescopic tubes, a response to the growing mobility of the population; the *Great Dome*, which could cover a third of Manhattan should ensure constant climatic conditions, avoiding the annoyances of natural weather; the *Floating City* whose inverted pyramids offer the possibility of unlimited growth; the *Cluster City*, based on "prefabricated housing cells made from plastic"; the *Crater City*, an "artificial ensemble that incorporates natural elements into its continuous structure"; the entirely mechanized *Pyramid City* for 3 million inhabitants; the *Linear Pyramid City* designed for the urban development of Siberia.

All utopias which are not only unrealizable, but do not even have a con-

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Figg. 3, 4, 5
Stills from the 7th episode of the series The Urban Settlement: Utopias and Possibilities (4/6/1974) Rai Teche.

crete character as compared with the modern city, explains a young Aldo Rossi interviewed as an authoritative voice in the first part of the episode. And yet the dilemma remains: the current trend of millions of inhabitants to be located on the Earth's surface. These problems are addressed by modern architecture through the personality of Le Corbusier, who presents a series of plans for urban transformations with a realist approach, that is, a progressive characteristic with respect to the history of architecture, just as he did in his *Plan Voisin* for the centre of Paris, or as was realized in the *Siedlungen*, new districts in German cities built around the 1930s. These were anticipations of a way of transforming the city that belonged to the field of the real or possible.

Another point addressed by Aymonino in his popular productions was the relationship between the home and the workplace, an issue inevitably addressed in almost all Italian cities in those early '70s, in particular when it comes to industrial estates. This episode focused on three specific exemplary case studies for the Italian context: Taranto with Italsider, Ivrea with Olivetti and Turin with Fiat.

Starting from the Taranto case, the first consideration concerned the contrast with the predominant national way of building factories far from urban structures, where land was cheaper, vehicular access was easier and where it was possible to join the railway network. This was how factories had become purely production places, islands excluded both culturally and physically from the life of the town. In Taranto it had not been like that. The Italsider plant, a large-scale steel processing facility, designed in 1963 and one of the largest such complexes in Europe, had heavily influenced the development of the city and its surroundings.

Aymonino analysed the political choices made in deciding the sites intended for the homes of employees, begging to differ with them. The most immediate solution was to build a new district near the factory, of almost 20,000 dwelling units, financed by Italsider, to which only 3% of the workers had actually been allocated, however. Due to the considerable dearth of services and infrastructures, it was not possible to reach the city from this area and this had determined its fate, ending up as a workers' ghetto. From there came so much urban development that Taranto became one of the most congested cities in Italy. A monotonous sequence of buildings built by a private speculative initiative, without services or amenities, where rents were higher than in any other Italian city, its traffic paralysed during rush hour, and travel times doubled. The province was gradually depopulating while the city was enduring huge congestion. On the contrary, the conditions for a more balanced development did exist; Aymonino speaks of three possible choices: in the inland residential centres, included within a commuting radius of 20-30 minutes; in areas decentralized from the city but close to the plant; in neighbouring villages that had existing and partially serviced urban facilities, connecting them to one another and to the



Fig. 6
Stills from the 7th episode of the series The Urban Settlement: Utopias and Possibilities (4/6/1974) Rai Teche.

industrial estate through a system of efficient and rapid traffic networks of a predominantly public nature. In general, such a development would have cost the community less and the majority of workers would have continued to live in their hometown without too much inconvenience.

Another example, this time in northern Italy, is the opposite model to the one adopted by the Apulian town: Ivrea, a city of 40,000 inhabitants in the 1970s, bordering the Aosta Valley. Since the beginning of the 20th century, it had more than doubled its population, transforming itself from a large agricultural centre in the Canavese area to an industrial city, conditioned by the existence of a single company, Olivetti. The greatest merit of this company has always been to maintain a point of balance between the Old Town and the industrial estate. One of the first nuclei was the Olivetti district, whose construction began in 1941 and was completed in 1954. The Bella Vista district was 2 km from the factory and was equipped with such public amenities as schools, kindergartens, clinics, social centre, and playgrounds for children. Subsequently, this development was extended to other areas of the Canavese: San Bernardo, Agliè and Caluso. In addition to this urban development plan, it was the associative and cooperative economic initiatives in the agricultural centres that decreed an "Ivrea experiment" in which the factory was not excluded from the city, i.e. the distance between the home and the workplace was solved by an efficient urban organizational system.

The third example addressed was the city of Turin, home to the only major international company existing in Italy at that time: Fiat, the driving force of industrialization, a symbol of progress and mass production, with such iconic models as the Fiat 127 and the 131 Mirafiori. In those years, the city was the scene of bitter workers' struggles for rights and working conditions, becoming a symbol of social conflict. With Fiat, the integration process saw the city become the property of the company, especially culturally. Production development had brought the population from 905,000 inhabitants in 1953 to 1,620,000 by the '70s. Of these, almost half were immigrants. The urban layout, the masterplan, the public housing programmes and those of Fiat had not been able to withstand that immigration flow. With the result that the city had become a huge ghetto, or rather a set of ghettos ringing the factory complex. In the Old Town, in the 31,000 houses (with at least 13,000 cases of cohabitation) people lived in precarious hygienic conditions, where there was only one bed, which was used for temporary rest dictated by factory shift schedules. In the belt, that is, those radial branches of the city along the access roads, the worker immigrants paid for the lowest cost of living with an absolute dearth of services and with living conditions reminiscent of those of the initial development of British capitalism.

Here was where Aymonino's approach and his ability to look to the future came into play. Architecture, while not resolving all social contradictions, can in its specific field of competence improve the material conditions of everyday life by indicating new solutions. The ultimate goal being to transform the urban settlement from a ghetto for the excluded to a part of a city for people with the same rights. This demands not only design and technology, but also "the backing and support of those directly involved" and a unified political vision that can trump administrative and financial fragmentation, all guidelines to be found in the Pesaro Plan (Municipality of Pesaro, 1974).

From Italy, Aymonino broadened his gaze to Europe, focusing on the im-

portance of public interventions and unitary planning to create integrated functional urban settlements, by defining a particular concept of "settlement units". In London, as early as 1944, an attempt had already been made to abolish the parcelling of land according to the regime of private property and allow a unitary design intervention. The aim was to apply design choices to real parts of the city, considering intended uses, traffic systems, and relations with the entire city as elements of a unitary architectural solution. The examples cited in the eighth and final episode showed the desire to overcome the parcelling and building types typical of Italy to create relationships between the various elements that make up an urban structure, including traffic systems, shopping malls, schools, different housing types, spaces for play and sport.

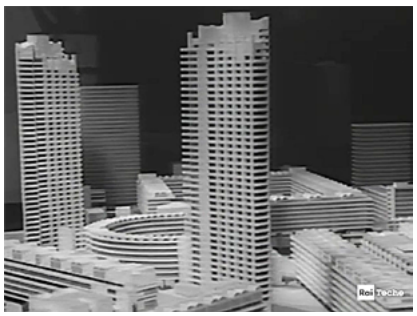
Among the cases analysed, we can mention: in London Thamesmead, the Brunswick Centre and the Barbican; in France the Firminy-Vert. The report followed this analysis procedure: "I think that the relationship between residences and community amenities (and even more so the relationship between residences and sources of work) should be discarded as a compositional antithesis (a reflection in turn of a sociological and economic antithesis) and should instead be taken as a structural relationship for the definition of more organizational and formal hypotheses of the contemporary city"[3] (Aymonino 1976, p. 276).

• Thamesmead (London): This project, in East London on an area reclaimed from former port infrastructures – which will now be partially demolished on the basis of a targeted regeneration plan – was the largest intervention planned and largely carried out as a public intervention, involving 60,000 inhabitants. The traffic systems, main amenities and different levels of schools, the types of housing, the spaces for play and sport and finally the relationship with the river, having a 4-km-long front on the Thames and several internal canals. The project aimed to reproduce the complexity of an urban area with a "different quality", absent in the 19th-century suburbs, ensuring an integration of functions and intended uses at affordable prices. It must be mentioned that one group of architects from London in those years came from Soviet bloc countries, others designed their buildings inspired by those of communist social housing in pursuit of a new collectivism.

• Barbican (London): Built on an area razed by bombing very close to the City of London, the Barbican had the ambition to become a proper entirely new part of the city, built to a unitary project that would allow amenities and housing to be integrated within a pedestrian zone. The development of the project, which began in 1955, envisaged recomposing the various numerous private properties into a single whole in the high building density proposed by the designers. Its centrality allowed the creation of numerous urban amenities (a city museum, schools, a theatre, and a school of music) intended not only for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

• Firminy-Vert (France): This affordable working-class housing district, in the industrial town of Firminy in central France, 50 km from Lyon, is an example of a "unitary design" aimed at guaranteeing new housing and the relocation of inhabitants from old working-class districts. The project is based around a central area with sports facilities, a cultural centre, a swimming pool, and houses that exploit the terrain in a way that guarantees fresh air and light. Le Corbusier's intervention, in particular with the Housing Unit and the House of Culture and Youth, emphasized the integration of essential services with the residences and the creation of a

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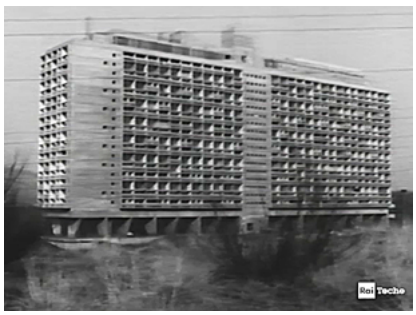


Fig. 7
Stills from the 8h episode of the series L'insediamento urbano: l'unità di insediamento (6/6/1974) Rai Teche.

Fig. 8
Carlo Aymonino in the 8th episode of the programma L'insediamento urbano: l'unità di insediamento (6/6/1974) Rai Teche.

Fig. 9
Stills from the 8h episode of the series L'insediamento urbano: l'unità di insediamento (6/6/1974) Rai Teche

cultural and social centre at the service of all citizens. Aymonino himself appeared in the video to highlight the problem of the "separation of funding" between the ministries, which had hindered the implementation of unitary programmes: in this case, it had not been possible to connect the House of Culture and the stadium architecturally because the funds had arrived at different times and been allocated according to the ministry of competence.

• Brunswick Centre (London): This complex testified how an analysis of the urban situation and the design of its transformation could lead to an exact dimension of needs and to a correct use of modern technology to the invention of new forms consistent with the problems to be solved. A single construction site allowed the location of 1,650 inhabitants, a shopping mall, numerous offices, restaurants, a cinema and a garage for 900 cars. All of this by connecting the different components in a compact architectural solution which guaranteed accessibility and individuality for the accommodation.

These restricted examples from abroad were for Aymonino a demonstration of how the relationship between housing, services and amenities could change, with meaningful collective advantages. Clearly, according to this vision, the modern city could be fully realized if private ownership of the land was annulled and there was a unitary plan of productive and social investments.

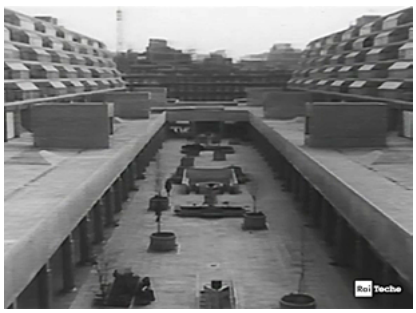
At this point the concept of utopia arrived which, for Aymonino, in a positive and progressive sense, must restore a concrete character to cities, saving the Old Towns with a perspective of a residential character and not of exploitation or destruction.

Therefore the city not only meant expansion, but also the possibility of re-equipping the already built over time following an investment plan. In the post-war years, speculative investments had taken place in the Old Towns of major cities that had expelled the inhabitants of the most popular private classes to make way for new privileged homes with sophisticated offices and shops. This operation, which began during the Fascist dictatorship, according to Aymonino, had destroyed symbols of the city in Rome, such as Piazza Augusto Imperatore which had become a huge parking lot around the ruins of Augustus' mausoleum with the illusion of the square as a place of meeting and life. The destination of the Colosseum had been little different, reduced to a huge roundabout for road traffic.

For Aymonino, an overall framework of political-social management of the city and political-technical control of urban investments could not ignore the Old Town. And the chimera in this sense was Bologna, where there was the ambitious goal of a public intervention aimed at ensuring the stabilization of the entire population, acting both in the renovation of homes and in the provision of basic amenities, affecting around 3,000 inhabitants. "Rotation" houses had even been built to house the inhabitants for the duration of the renovation and restoration works. Maintenance of

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Figg. 10, 11
Carlo Aymonino in the 8th episode of the programma L'insediamento urbano: l'unità di insediamento (6/6/1974) Rai Teche.

Fig. 12
Stills from the 8h episode of the series L'insediamento urbano: l'unità di insediamento (6/6/1974) Rai Teche

the architectural features of the buildings, the porticoes, roofs and windows and internal renovation had enabled better use of the existing interiors, to equip each apartment with its own toilet, and to allocate the ground floors to commercial and recreational activities.

Another profitable example was recorded in some new constructions. The Housing Cooperative Movement of Bologna aspired to build a "more Human city", removed from the building speculation that left urban settlements at the mercy of chaotic growth without brakes. This Movement, with more than 90 years of experience, drew wide participation, with hundreds of members. It was organized into a consortium for the technical part and an association for political choices, supported by Law No. 167 of 1962 (and later No. 865 of 1971) for social housing, which had allowed the acquisition of land at "prices significantly lower than those of the market" and the planning of primary urbanization works (roads, sewers, lighting, and greenery). And all of this at advantageous costs: for example, in 1968-'69 100 m² of housing cost around 7 million, while, in 1974, 10 million, about 50% less than private construction. Unlike other low-cost building interventions, the aim was to provide all the services right from the start: neighbourhood greenery, parks with children's play equipment; underground garages for each dwelling; collective amenities at the base of buildings: meeting rooms, gyms, libraries; integrated shopping malls; schools of various levels strategically located according to the radii of influence and integrated into the residential fabric. The Movement's goal was to encourage the participation of its members, to arrive at urban self-management.

An interview with the architects Masi and Morelli, and the engineer Tabanelli explained better how to carry all this out. Community facilities and integration with the existing fabric, an attempt to unite the new settlement with the previous construction while safeguarding historical buildings and affective environmental values of the past.

According to Aymonino, therefore, surpassing merely technological and unrealizable utopias was possible through a utopia "linked to the concrete possibilities that exist today".

Certainly his gaze was turned to the people seen as having personal needs and requirements, a holistic vision which took into account a wellbeing that was first and foremost mental and psychological, alleviating daily difficulties through targeted functional choices. Architecture at the service of the collective good, while encouraging experimentation: this was the path he travelled and the implicit message he launched to his viewers, arguably pursuing his own utopias.

The critical spirit and the models presented with detailed apparati of video images make these television reports valuable contributions to testify to an era that came to an end along with all of its social and anthropological implications. In whose traces, however, among the nooks and crannies of

such research and in the depths of a vision dictated by political conditioning and the prevailing social transformation underway, we can still find valid and valuable lessons for our present-day situation.

Carlo Aymonino's appearance on television marked a decisive step in the way architecture was described to the general public. His ability to transform a technical theme into an accessible story opened a season in which the urban project entered the homes of Italians, helping to form a new civic sensibility. In those years, television was a place of collective literacy: talking about the city meant talking about work, mobility, and quality of life. Aymonino did so with a clear language, showing models, interiors, streets, and neighbourhoods. This decision communicated a precise idea: architecture is a common good, it concerns everyone, it must be understood by everyone.

This experience left a profound cultural legacy. He taught that the project is not merely design but an interpretation of the present, interpreting needs, and able to steer social development. The episodes on television represented a precious opportunity in which for the first time the city was shown as a complex organism and not the usual background to everyday life. It was in this dialogue between research and society that Aymonino's work found its deepest meaning.

Today the role that belonged to television in the 1970s is being played by new tools. Digital languages allow for a widespread and immediate dissemination, capable of overcoming the technical barriers that often make architecture a field reserved for specialists. The social networks, if used with awareness, can become places of critical confrontation: short videos, animated maps, images of construction sites, essential explanations on the relationship between spaces and collective behaviour allow the city to be brought back into the public debate. We can show processes, not just results, and make the reasons for the choices understandable. Many architects are already experimenting with these forms of storytelling: they explain the logic of a section, the value of a pedestrian street, the meaning of a recovery intervention. They reach students, citizens, and administrators alike, creating a shared culture of space. An ideal continuity with Aymonino's insight: knowledge as a tool for emancipation.

Notes

[1] "The choice of the theme is directly related to our previous research, both as regards the formation and development of the modern and contemporary city, and the theses we formulated on architectural design in relation to urban structures." The text follows with an indication of the research on which the theme was based. (Gruppo Architettura 1971).

[2] The titles of the eight episodes with the dates of the broadcast are shown below: *The urban settlement: The house* (6/4/1974); *The urban settlement: The housing unit* (20/04/1974); *The urban settlement: Education and housing* (2/05/1974); *The urban settlement: The house and the sources of work* (9/5/1974); *The urban settlement: The house and transport* (16/05/1974); *The urban settlement: The territorial planning* (30/05/1974); *The urban settlement: Utopias and possibilities* (4/6/1974); *The urban settlement: the settlement unit* (6/6/1974). These videos are kept at the RAI Teche archive.

[3] This statement was accompanied, in the same episode, by a representation of the Barbican complex from 1959 for 6,500 inhabitants (architects Chamberlin, Powell and Moya) compared to the residential complex of Gallaratese in Milan designed by Aymonino himself in 1970 for 2,500 inhabitants. The projects were documented graphically and placed side by side (Aymonino 1976).

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Riccarda Cantarelli, PhD, architect, associate professor in Architectural and Urban Composition at the IUAV University of Venice, teaches Architectural Design in the Department of Project Cultures and is a member of the curriculum council of Architectural Composition at the IUAV Doctoral School. She began her research work under Prof. Antonio Acuto at the Faculty of Architecture of the Polytechnic University of Milan, and then moved to Venice, where, starting from the lessons of such masters as Carlo Aymonino and Raffaele Panella (with whom she also collaborated) she embarked on a path which seeks to establish an urban design theory, as well as techniques to recover the consolidated city that include solicitations of current situations while stressing the need for compositional tools which can embrace tradition, invention, and technical innovation. Her studies on architecture and design include: *Luoghi Comunitari. Spazio e società* (2010), *Raffaele Panella. L'università di Bologna al Navile e altri progetti emiliani* (2010), *L'Architettura dell'edificio Mercato* (2012), *Raffaele Panella. L'architettura del molteplice* (2012), *Fornovo di Taro. Piano strategico del territorio* (2012), *Venezia dall'alto* (2014, translated into French and German), *Palmanova forma spazio architettura* (2019). *Gianugo Polesello was one of the editors of this volume . Un maestro del Novecento* (2019).

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Enrico Prandi

Multimedia Experiments in the Transmission of Architecture. Six Italian Television Programmes between Public Pedagogy and Disciplinary Culture.

Abstract
This paper reconstructs six RAI television programmes dedicated to architecture and the city, broadcast between 1954 and 1985: *La casa dell'uomo* (1954) by Ernesto N. Rogers; *L'uomo e la città* (1968) by Vittorio Gregotti; *Dentro l'architettura* (1974) by Mario Manieri Elia; *L'insediamento urbano* (1974) by Carlo Aymonino; *La tradizione ritrovata* (1983–84) by Aldo Grasso, Fulvio Irace and Giampiero Viola; *L'utopia urbana* (1984–85) by Carlo Doglio. To these is added the experience of *Teleroma56*, a television broadcaster founded by Bruno Zevi in 1976 as part of his concept of the University of the Air. Through a systematic analysis of the episodes and a comparison with the concurrent theoretical writings of their respective authors, the article offers a comparative reading of the programmes as indicators of distinct seasons of Italian architectural culture and television history. What emerges is that television was never, for these protagonists, an alternative medium to the journal or the book, but rather a space for real-time public elaboration of the same themes they were simultaneously systematising in their written work.

Keywords
Architecure & television — Public pedagogy — University of the Air



Fig. 1
Cover of the first issue of the "Radiocorriere". 1, 1954, 3-9 january week.

One might feel somewhat disoriented to encounter names such as Ernesto Rogers, Ludovico Quaroni, Giuseppe Samonà, Carlo Aymonino, Costantino Dardi, Manfredo Tafuri, to name but a few, among the pages of a weekly magazine. And yet the *Radiocorriere* – the weekly guide to RAI programmes – hosted architecture columns, musical concerts and current affairs with equal ease. In other words, there was a time when television was a – or perhaps the – medium of cultural transmission, including for architecture. The theoretical reflection on television as a cultural medium spans almost a century of scholarship, weaving together disciplines such as philosophy of communication, media history and cultural criticism. The unavoidable starting point remains Marshall McLuhan's thought, who in *Understanding Media* (1964) overturned conventional wisdom about television by arguing that it is not the content transmitted that defines the impact of a medium, but its very communicative structure. For McLuhan every medium must be studied according to the structural criteria by which it organises communication, since it is precisely this structure that renders it non-neutral, capable of producing specific behaviours and modes of thinking in its users. Television, in this perspective, is not simply a container for programmes, but an environment that transforms the modes of collective perception. On this foundation a critical tradition subsequently developed that, in the second half of the twentieth century, progressively claimed for television a full cultural status, freeing it from purely ideological readings or elitist condemnation. In Italy, this operation was conducted with rigour and continuity above all by Aldo Grasso, who established a television historiography capable of engaging with *Kulturkritik* without abandoning textual analysis (Grasso 2013). Through the history of its programmes,

news broadcasts, variety shows, sporting events, fiction series, and talk shows, television tells the story of over seventy years of the country and of the Italians who watched, commented on and lived through them (Grasso, Barra, Penati 2019). It is in this perspective that we wish to reflect on architecture on television, conscious of the fact that the latter is not a passive mirror of society, but rather an active agent in its construction. Alongside Grasso, Peppino Ortoleva (1989) has explored the historical and systemic dimension of the medium, showing how television almost immediately became a central component of the media system – capable, thanks to its omnivorous capacity for absorption, of engaging even pre-school children and of socialising individuals into the various forms of communication. It is this totalising vocation that made television, for decades, the principal channel for the transmission of culture outside the traditional academic and institutional circuits.

From 3 January 1954, the day of RAI's first broadcasts, television grappled with the fundamental question of the legitimacy of a popular medium in conveying "high" cultural content, confronting the scepticism – not to say ostracism – of a substantial portion of critics and intellectuals. This tension – between dissemination and disciplinary culture, between accessibility and depth – constitutes the structural constant around which every television discourse of cultural ambition organises itself, and it is within this tension that the architecture programmes examined in this essay are situated.

Naturally, as with all media that first constituted a revolution, television too subsequently underwent an evolution – or perhaps an involution – until it was progressively overtaken by new forms of audiovisual consumption. It is Umberto Eco (1983) who provides the first critical map of this transformation: with the term "neo-television" he captures the shift towards a television that «speaks less and less of the external world» and instead «speaks of itself and of the contact it is establishing with its own audience», seeking to retain the viewer not through content but through its own self-referential presence. The distinction between "paleo-television" – that of the origins, with its pedagogical vocation and its explicit public service remit – and the commercial, generalist "neo-television" marks a first, decisive fracture. A third phase, the so-called "post-television" (Missika 2007), emerges from 2007 with the advent of digital platforms (Netflix, 2007 in the USA and 2012 in Europe), when the flow television typical of neo-television fragments into a myriad of personalised streams.

In any case, speaking of the "end of television" (Missika 2007) would be premature: for while it is true that the medium is going through a phase of redefinition, seeking to integrate with the digital and with new modes of consumption, it is equally evident that the need for cultural transmission which paleo-television had assumed as its institutional mission has not dissolved along with it, but still awaits an adequate response. In this framework the question of cultural transmission reasserts itself with urgency: if paleo-television – the early RAI that concerns us here – had an explicit editorial project, founded on a shared and elevated idea of public culture, its progressive hollowing-out towards commercial entertainment first, and towards digital fragmentation thereafter, opens a gap that is difficult to fill. The corpus of architecture programmes analysed in this study belongs entirely to that first season: an unrepeatable experience of disciplinary cultural transmission that deserves to be recognised and studied in its historical specificity.

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22.30 RAITRE

Delta speciali

Giorgio Ciucci intervista l'architetto Ludovico Quaroni (foto) che da cinquant'anni opera in Italia e all'estero. Quaroni parla della sua ricerca di un costante rapporto fra architettura e urbanistica nella realizzazione dei grandi complessi urbani: un rapporto che è applicazione delle regole del costruire architettonico desunte dalla storia stessa delle città; l'esempio di Roma e di Tunisi.

Fig. 2
Ludovico Quaroni interviewed by Giorgio Ciucci, Wednesday 12 June 1985 (Radiocorriere).

6 programmes + 1 television network

Over the course of thirty years, from January 1954 to January 1985, Italian public broadcasting hosted at least six programmes entirely dedicated to architecture and the city. This does not mean that architecture was confined to these isolated experiences: on the contrary, searching the indices of the Radiocorriere (our principal source of information) by keyword – with the ease that databases now afford – one can register a presence far more pervasive than one might suppose. Names such as Ludovico Quaroni[1], Giuseppe Samonà[2], Giancarlo De Carlo[3], Paolo Portoghesi[4], Renzo Piano[5], Manfredo Tafuri[6], Carlo Scarpa[7], Bruno Zevi[8], to name but a few, appear with surprising regularity even in non-specialist features, as guests on individual episodes or as protagonists of conversations of considerable length – emblematic in this regard being the exchange between Giuseppe Samonà and Leonardo Benevolo on the occasion of the publication of one of the former's books. Nor is it without significance that there existed review columns of substantial duration (up to 45 minutes) through which all the most important books of the period passed: from *L'urbanistica e l'avvenire delle città negli stati europei* to *Teorie e storia dell'architettura*. In short, architecture was present in abundance, both as a discipline capable of addressing questions of the built environment and as a cultural phenomenon – to the extent that the architect, as intellectual and man of culture, was called upon to express opinions well beyond his specific field of competence. This invites reflection in relation to a present in which architecture no longer manages to occupy that role within civil society (and not only on television). Marco Biraghi (2019) has diagnosed this involution with precision: from a figure capable of offering a comprehensive and critical vision of the city and of society, the architect has become primarily an executor of projects, losing that capacity for «interpretation of the world» which had made him, from Alberti to Rossi, a fully fledged public intellectual. The selection proposed here is more restrictive, and for that reason more significant. The six experiences examined are the only ones that, by virtue of their weight and continuity – not isolated episodes, but genuine series structured across multiple instalments – offer the basis for an analytical account of the use of television as an instrument for the dissemination of architecture.

Tab. 1
The six architecture programmes analysed

Anno	Titolo	Curatori	Rete	n.
1954	La casa dell'uomo	E.N. Rogers + collaboratori	RAI (unico canale)	9
1968	L'uomo e la città	Vittorio Gregotti, Emilio Battisti	RAI (unico canale), Sapere	10
1974	Dentro l'architettura	Mario Manieri Elia	RAI Primo canale, scolastiche	10
1974	L'insediamento urbano	Carlo Aymonino	RAI Primo canale, scolastiche	9
1983–84	La tradizione ritrovata	Aldo Grasso, Fulvio Irace	RAI Tre	6
1984–85	L'utopia urbana	Carlo Doglio e Centro OIKOS	RAI Tre	10

The study considers a number of significant cultural programme experiences: *La casa dell'uomo* by Ernesto N. Rogers, 9 episodes broadcast between January and July 1954; *L'uomo e la città* by Vittorio Gregotti, 10 episodes broadcast between February and April 1968; *Dentro l'architettura* by Mario Manieri Elia, 10 episodes broadcast between January and April 1974; *L'insediamento urbano* by Carlo Aymonino, 8 episodes broadcast between April and June 1974; *La tradizione ritrovata* by Aldo Grasso and Fulvio Irace, 6 episodes broadcast between December 1983 and January 1984; and *L'utopia urbana* by Carlo Doglio, 10 episodes broadcast between No-

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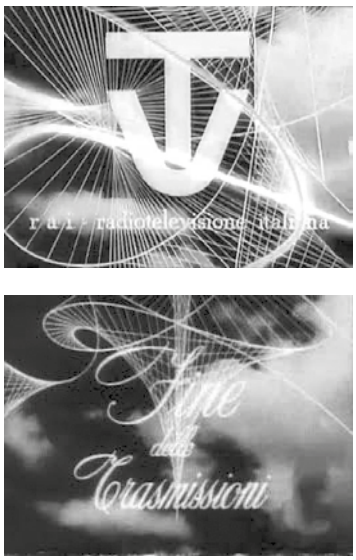


Fig. 3-4
Tito Varisco, in collaboration with Erberto Carboni, Composition of Projective Geometries in Free Form, 1954.



TV TELEVISIONE TV

17.30 **Visita allo Zoo di Roma**
20.45 **Telegiornale**
21 — **Una risposta per voi**
Colloqui di Alessandro Cutolo con gli spettatori
21.20 **PASSO D'ADDIO**
Con la partecipazione della compagnia di rivista della TV
Orchestra diretta da Giampiero Boneschi
Regia di Mario Landi

Per essere esatti si sarebbe dovuto dire «passo d'arrivederci», ma la formula è quella e va rispettata. Passo d'addio, dunque, di coloro che per tante settimane hanno dato vita agli spettacoli di rivista alla televisione portando musica e buonumore nelle vostre case. Passo d'addio, ma arrivederci presto.

22.30 **La casa dell'uomo**
I grattacieli
A cura dell'architetto Paolo Antonio Chessa

L'argomento è di vivissima attualità. In molte città italiane le snelle sagome dei grattacieli stanno al centro di discussioni animate dalle due «fazioni»: i fautori del verticale ed i sostenitori del tradizionale. L'architetto Chessa farà il punto della situazione.

22.50 **Replica Telegiornale**

(Foto Cali)
Uno dei grattacieli di via Dante a Genova. Il problema dei grattacieli costruiti in varie città italiane è presentato nella trasmissione delle ore 22.30

Fig. 5
La casa dell'uomo, curated by Ernesto Rogers, 1954. Episode: "I grattacieli" curated by Paolo Antonio Chessa (Radiocorriere).

vember 1984 and January 1985. To these – all broadcast by RAI – must be added an altogether singular experience: the founding and direction by Bruno Zevi of *TeleRoma56*, a private independent broadcaster that from 1976 frequently transmitted content on architecture, albeit without a fixed or today verifiable schedule. In order to assess the disseminatory aims of these broadcasts, the study will examine their characteristics and internal articulation, while also producing a critical analysis that brings the television contents into relation with the relevant theoretical writings of their respective editors.

La casa dell'uomo (1954)

On 17 January 1954, fourteen days after the launch of RAI's regular television broadcasts, the first episode of *La casa dell'uomo*, edited by Ernesto N. Rogers, goes on air. The title clearly establishes an explicit continuity with Rogers's direction of the journal «Domus», which he undertook in 1946–47. The series runs for nine documented episodes, with a collective editorial structure: in addition to Rogers himself (17 January and 27 April), episodes are edited by Tito Varisco (21 February), Carlo De Carli (14 March) and Paolo Antonio Chessa (27 May and 29 July). It is worth understanding who the other contributors to the series were. Tito Bassanesi Varisco (1915–1998) was a Milanese architect active within the orbit of Milanese architectural culture, author of the winning design for the headquarters of the Fascist neighbourhood group "Crespi" on Corso Sempione, and co-designer of the INA-Casa housing estates of Harar-Dessié (1951–55), Forlanini (1956–62) and Feltre (1957–61). Two elements place him precisely within the context of the episodes: the first is his membership of the Movimento Arte Concreta (MAC), alongside Mariani, Menghi, Paccagnini, Perogalli, Ravegnani, Viganò, Zanuso – a movement that championed a drive towards renewal capable of transcending the monopoly of rationalism-functionalism in favour of a more dialectical synthesis of the arts, whose influence is clearly visible in Varisco's own designs for the apartment block on Viale Molise and the garage on Via De Amicis; the second is the graphic sequence that opened the television broadcasts, produced expressly by Tito Varisco in collaboration with Erberto Carboni for RAI (the "Composition of projective geometries in free form", set against a backdrop of clouds and accompanied by the music of Rossini's Guillaume Tell). In other words, Varisco is the author of RAI's opening title sequence, the image

Tab. 2
The 9 episodes of *La casa dell'uomo* (RAI single channel, 1954). Source: Radiocorriere nn. 3, 8, 11, 17, 21, 23, 25, 27, 30/1954.

N.	Data	Titolo puntata	Curatore
1ª	Dom. 17 gen 1954, 19.00	Antico e moderno	Ernesto N. Rogers
2ª	Dom. 21 feb 1954, 18.50	Evoluzione dell'architettura in Russia	Tito Varisco
3ª	Dom. 14 mar 1954, 17.00	L'arredamento della casa	Carlo De Carli
4ª	Mar. 27 apr 1954, 17.30	Alcune riviste di architettura in Italia	Nathan Rogers
5ª	Gio. 27 mag 1954, 18.00	Architettura razionale / Architettura organica	Paolo A. Chessa
6ª	Mar. 8 giu 1954, 18.10	(titolo non indicato) solo "La Casa dell'uomo" (nda)	—
7ª	Lun. 21 giu 1954, 22.30	Sopravvivranno le nostre città?	—
8ª	Gio. 8 lug 1954, 22.20	(titolo non indicato)	—
9ª	Gio. 29 lug 1954, 22.30	I grattacieli	Paolo A. Chessa

with which Italian television began its broadcasts every day. That it was he who edited the second episode of *La casa dell'uomo* is no coincidence, but rather a further confirmation of the cultural density of Rogers's project. Carlo De Carli (1910–1999) was a Milanese architect and designer, who graduated from the Politecnico di Milano in 1934 and from 1948 began collaborating on the courses in Interior Architecture, Furnishing and Decoration taught by Gio Ponti at that institution. In 1954 he won the first Compasso d'Oro in history with the "683 chair" produced by Cassina, and in the same year also received the Good Design award from MoMA in New York. In that same year De Carli was also a member of the Executive Committee of the X Triennale di Milano, a role that would also earn him participation in a specific television broadcast.[9] The episode *L'arredamento della casa* should not be understood as a concession to popular audiences on a Sunday afternoon, but as the moment in which Rogers brings to television the theme that was dividing and redefining Italian architectural culture: the boundary (or continuity) between architecture, furnishing and the object of everyday use. De Carli was the ideal figure at that moment for that theme. In other words, television was publicly elaborating, in real time, a disciplinary debate that was taking shape in the journals and cultural institutions of Milan, and Rogers called him to television in the year when De Carli was at the peak of his disciplinary visibility. Paolo Antonio Chessa (1922–1981) belonged to the generation immediately following Rogers – he was thirty-two years old when he edited the two television episodes of 1954. In 1946, together with Vico Magistretti and Mario Tedeschi, he participated in the national competition for housing for veterans from Africa in the nascent QT8 district of Milan, designing solutions that experimented with new typologies in the spirit of the CIAM debates on rational housing of the 1930s. He was thus, from the outset, a professional embedded in the milieu of Milanese reconstruction and in the Rogersian network. His international visibility is moreover attested by a profile in the American journal Interiors, which described several of his architectural works, interiors and furnishings, as well as his 1950 project for the extension of the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa (Fiske 1952). Appearing in an American journal in 1952 – two years before the television episodes – testifies to a figure already recognised beyond Italian borders, and his having been called upon by Rogers for no fewer than two episodes confirms his standing in the debate of the moment. The two episodes entrusted to Chessa are the most theoretically charged in the entire series. *Architettura razionale / Architettura organica* (27 May) stages the major post-war disciplinary fracture in Italy:

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Fig. 6
L'ormeggio al continente, episode of Habitat dedicated to the Competition for the Permanent Crossing of the Strait of Messina, Friday 27 November 1970 (Radiocorriere n. 47, pp. 112-114). With Ludovico Quaroni and Pier Luigi Nervi.

that between the rationalist tradition – with its references to Gropius, Mies, Le Corbusier – and the organic movement of Bruno Zevi, who from 1945, with the founding of the APAO and with *Verso un'architettura organica*, had opened a fiercely polemical front against orthodox rationalism. In 1954 that dispute was far from resolved: Rogers was managing it in the pages of Casabella-Continuità through his inclusive editorial policy, and to entrust the theme to a younger figure such as Chessa – not one of the founding masters but an interlocutor from the following generation – was an editorially precise gesture. *I grattacieli* (29 July) is equally freighted with contingent significance. In 1954 the executive design of Gio Ponti's Pirelli Tower was under way, and between 1952 and 1955 the definitive design of the BBPR's Torre Velasca was being completed. The episode on skyscrapers aired in July 1954, precisely at the moment when Milan was deciding its future vertical profile, with two radically different proposals – Ponti's internationalist "skyscraper" and Rogers's contextual "tower" of the Velasca – embodying the same tensions as the rational/organic debate of the preceding episode. No information has been found for three episodes: those of Tuesday 8 June 1954 (18.00), Monday 21 June 1954 (22.30) and Thursday 8 July 1954 (22.20). The first is listed only under the general series title La casa dell'uomo, with no episode title or editor, and was probably an introductory episode; the second carries only the title *Sopravvivranno le nostre città?* without an editor, while the third has no reference at all. It should be noted that at the time of broadcast Rogers had only recently assumed the directorship of «Casabella-continuità» (with issue 199 of December 1953–January 1954), the journal he refounded and rebuilt with contributions from multiple authors. It is plausible that this approach led him to conceive the television programme with a methodological and thematic overlap: a multi-voiced television column, much like Casabella. A comparison between the television themes and Rogers's contemporary writings reveals a systematic correspondence. The episode *Antico e moderno* of 17 January 1954 is contemporaneous with the editorial Continuità (Casabella n. 199, January 1954) and anticipates by thirteen months the founding text *Le preesistenze ambientali e i temi pratici contemporanei* (Casabella n. 204, February–March 1955). Just as the opening of «Casabella-continuità», the television series begins with Rogers's dearest theme:

the relationship between old and new. This is followed by the episode *Evoluzione dell'architettura in Russia* of 21 February 1954, which fits into a precise cultural trajectory running through the entire Rogersian and Milanese circle of the 1950s. Interest in the USSR at that moment was not merely architectural but politico-cultural, at a time when the Italian PCI and left-wing intellectuals were looking to post-Stalinist USSR with reformist hope. That Rogers should insert this theme in the very first weeks of Italian television's existence, and of his own directorship of Casabella, is a culturally loaded and deliberate gesture. The third episode is again edited by Rogers himself and concerns *Alcune riviste di architettura in Italia* (27 April 1954), a topic in which Rogers was the foremost living protagonist, as director of «Casabella-continuità», former director of «Domus», and direct acquaintance with «Architectural Review», «Architectural Forum » and «L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui». To bring this theme to television in 1954 means making television itself a kind of meta-journal: a space in which disciplinary culture reflects on its own instruments of transmission. This hypothesis is further corroborated by Rogers's consistent interest in reflecting on the transmission of architectural culture through the channels of criticism and thus of journals. The most fitting analogy is perhaps the article *Pretesti per una critica non formalistica*, published in «Casabella-Continuità» n. 200, Feb.–Mar. 1954, and later included in *Esperienza dell'architettura* under the title *Tradizione e talento individuale*, in which Rogers explicitly reflects on the role of journals as instruments of formation and debate. The episode *Sopravvivranno le nostre città?* appears to be precisely the television transposition of the theme of CIAM IV of 1933, the Congress of the "functional city" held aboard the motor vessel Patris between Marseille and Athens, of which Sert published *Can Our Cities Survive?* in 1942 under the Harvard University Press imprint – the Anglo-American version of the Athens Charter, parallel to Le Corbusier's version (La Charte d'Athènes, also published in 1942–43 in Paris). During the broadcast period Rogers and Sert were preparing the collective volume *Il cuore della città* (1955), documenting CIAM VIII held at Hoddesdon in England in 1951. The Radiocorriere published, approximately a year after the series began, an editorial article that assessed it favourably: «La casa dell'uomo has also passed the test, bringing television viewers into contact with the most progressive scholars, and the most successful creators with the most celebrated and most debated works.»[10]

L'uomo e la città (1968)

In February 1968 Vittorio Gregotti launches the second cycle of the *Sapere* column (RAI national channel) with the series *L'uomo e la città*, in collaboration with Emilio Battisti and with direction by Antonio Moretti. The series comprises ten episodes broadcast on Wednesday evenings at 19.15–19.30, with repeats on Monday at midday.[11] Silvano Giannelli (1968), coordinator of the *Sapere* column, presents the second cycle of the series, specifying that

> it is addressed to a broad popular audience composed above all of adults, that is, an audience whose level of education corresponds to full civic and psychological maturity, and that the column had already recorded «an average approval rating of around 70, with frequent peaks of 80».

Gregotti is assisted by Emilio Battisti, an architect who had studied under

Gregotti and was at the time of the broadcast a permanent assistant at the Politecnico di Milano. Unlike Rogers's 1954 broadcasts, the Radiocorriere gives no titles to the individual episodes of the series, which is conceived as a single progressive argument in ten instalments, rather than a sequence of autonomous themes. Pending a more detailed study of the episodes themselves, one may suppose that this is consistent with the structure of *Il territorio dell'architettura* [The Territory of Architecture], the text that Gregotti had published two years earlier and which the series may have brought to television. If that were the case, the television series would be the channel for the popular dissemination of a theory elaborated in the book. The absence of titles for individual episodes is itself an interpretive datum: Gregotti does not conceive the series as a succession of autonomous topics, but as a single progressive argument – exactly as *Il territorio dell'architettura* is a single essay divided into chapters.

Dentro l'architettura (1974)

In January 1974 *Dentro l'architettura* goes on air, a programme by Mario Manieri Elia and Giuseppe Miano, edited by Anna Amendola, with the collaboration of Mariella Serafini and direction by Maurizio Cascavilla. It is a series of ten episodes aimed at secondary school students, within the framework of the afternoon educational broadcasts (16.40). It is the only programme among those examined that is explicitly historical in approach, operating at the scale of the individual monument – as the title itself, in its almost didactic precision, already announces. The approach is that of the "exceptional monument" on a world scale (the Pyramids of Giza, Brooklyn Bridge, Wright's Guggenheim, Hagia Sophia, Versailles, Bernini's colonnade at St Peter's, Palladio's Villa Rotonda, the World Trade Center), privileging iconic uniqueness and immediate legibility for a general television audience, with no ambitions of typological or urban analysis, though with a number of precisely placed topical insertions prompted in certain cases by contemporary contingency: the *Karl Marx Hof in Vienna* (7 March), the only episode dedicated to twentieth-century social housing, solicited by the climate of interest that the Marxist criticism of those years reserved for the symbol of Red Vienna's housing policy; *Wright's Guggenheim*, which introduces the theme of contemporary American architecture; and *the World Trade Center in New York*, barely inaugurated in 1972–73 and almost a piece of live reporting on the present. All of this reflects precisely the profile of its authors: Manieri Elia (1929–2011) was a historian of architecture with a training strongly oriented towards the history of the city and of international architecture – his books on Sullivan, Burnham, Morris and the post-war USA are all works of architectural hi-

Tab. 3
The 10 episodes of the programme Dentro l'architettura (RAI First Channel, educational broadcasts), by Mario Manieri Elia and Giuseppe Miano, curated by Anna Amendola, with the collaboration of Mariella Serafini and directed by Maurizio Cascavilla. Source: Radiocorriere nn. 14-23.

N.	Data	Titolo
1ª	Gio 24 gennaio 1974, 16.40	Le Piramidi di Gizah presso il Cairo
2ª	Gio 31 gennaio 1974, 16.40	Il Ponte di Brooklin a New York
3ª	Gio 7 febbraio 1974, 16.40	Il Museo Solomon R. Guggenheim di New York
4ª	Gio 14 febbraio 1974, 16.40	La chiesa di Santa Sophia a Costantinopoli
5ª	Gio 21 febbraio 1974, 16.40	La reggia di Versailles presso Parigi
6ª	Gio 2 marzo 1974, 16.40	Il colonnato di Piazza San Pietro in Roma
7ª	Gio 7 marzo 1974, 16.40	Complesso di abitazioni operaie Karl Marx Hof a Vienna
8ª	Gio 14 marzo 1974, 16.40	La Rotonda palladiana a Vicenza
9ª	Gio 21 marzo 1974, 16.40	Il World Trade Center di New York
10ª	Gio 28 marzo 1974, 16.40	Conclusione

story on a world scale. Where Rogers reasoned by themes and Gregotti by territorial categories, Manieri Elia enters the architectural object through the instrument of history: a different critical posture, reflecting a different idea of cultural transmission.

L'insediamento urbano (1974)

In the same year, between April and June 1974, Carlo Aymonino presents for RAI a series of eight episodes, also aimed at secondary school students within the framework of the afternoon educational broadcasts (16.40). The series is edited by Anna Amendola and Giorgio Belardelli, with the collaboration of Rosemarie Courvoisier, direction by Cesare Giannotti and scientific consultancy by Paolo Leon. To understand the significance of this television presence, it must be situated in the precise moment at which it is produced. In 1974 Aymonino is at the peak of his theoretical season: *Il significato della città* (Laterza, 1975) and *Lo studio dei fenomeni urbani* (Officina, 1977) are in preparation; the Gallaratese residential complex in Milan (1967–74, with Aldo Rossi) has just been completed. The correspondence between the television themes and the concurrent theoretical output is – as already in Rogers and probably in Gregotti – systematic and deliberate: television, therefore, does not disseminate what the book has already said, but elaborates in real time what the intellectual workshop is still building. The structure of the episodes reveals this tension with particular clarity. The series begins with the dwelling unit – the house, the unité d'habitation – with case studies that the school-age viewer could recognise: Spinaceto, the Gallaratese. It then moves towards broader and more politically charged scales: the house-work relationship (with the cases of Taranto, Turin, Ivrea), urban development and agriculture, the relations between urban area and territory, with explicit attention to the South. The penultimate documented episode – *Utopie e possibilità* – confronts utopias with concrete realisations: Bologna, Ivrea. And here the presence of Aldo Rossi is not coincidental: the Gallaratese, completed in 1974, is the place where the theoretical collaboration between Aymonino and Rossi is given architectural form, and to bring it into the classroom – through the television screen – means making the intellectual workshop into a pedagogical act. Educational television does not simplify but translates, carrying disciplinary elaboration to the scale of an audience that does not yet have the tools to access it independently. It should be noted that this presence inscribes itself within a well-established tradition of collaboration between RAI and the Ministry of Public Education with deep roots. From 1958 onwards, with *Telescuola* – the first European experiment in distance learning, conceived by Maria Grazia Puglisi – Italian television had taken on the task of compensating for the absence of secondary schools in the most remote and impoverished parts of the country. This experience was complemented from 1960 by Alberto Manzi's Non è mai troppo tardi, which over more than four hundred episodes helped almost one and a half million adult illi-

Tab. 4
The 8 episodes of the programme L'insediamento urbano (RAI First Channel, educational broadcasts), written by Carlo Aymonino, curated by Anna Amendola and Giorgio Belardelli, directed by Cesare Giannotti, with the collaboration of Rosmarie Courvoisier. Source: Radiocorriere nn. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

N.	Data	Titolo
1ª	mer. 6 novembre 1974, 16.40	La casa
2ª	ven. 8 novembre 1974, 16.40	L'unità di abitazione
3ª	mer. 13 novembre 1974, 16.40	Istruzione e abitazione
4ª	ven. 15 novembre 1974, 16.40	La casa e le fonti di lavoro
5ª	mer. 20 novembre 1974, 16.40	La casa e i trasporti
6ª	ven. 22 novembre 1974, 16.40	L'assetto territoriale
7ª	mer. 27 novembre 1974, 16.40	Utopie e possibilità
8ª	gio. 6 giugno 1974, 16.00	L'unità di insediamento

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terates to obtain their primary school certificate. The educational function of RAI did not end with basic literacy: throughout the 1960s and 1970s an articulated system of supplementary and alternative broadcasts developed, culminating in 1975 with the establishment of a specific *Department of School Education* and later in the thematic channel *Rai Scuola*. It is within this tradition that L'insediamento urbano acquires its fullest meaning: not a niche programme, but a conscious act of disciplinary cultural transmission through the medium with the greatest social penetration in the country. Aymonino uses educational television to disseminate the concepts he is elaborating in *Il significato della città* – almost a preview of university-level studies, constructed as a television curriculum that analyses housing, school, work and territory as political categories before they are architectural ones. Finally, it is worth noting a dichotomy that reveals how RAI was not a monolithic institution but a space traversed by different and sometimes opposing architectural cultures. In the same year 1974, on the same RAI, two diametrically opposed approaches coexist: that of Manieri Elia with *Dentro l'architettura* – a history of architecture as a great international canon, encyclopaedic and broadly accessible in register, anchored to exceptional monuments – and on the opposite bank that of Aymonino with L'insediamento urbano, namely a critical analysis of the contemporary Italian city with an explicit disciplinary and political agenda.



Fig. 7-8
La tradizione ritrovata. Passato e presente della nuova architettura italiana, edited by Aldo Grasso, Fulvio Irace and Giampiero Viola. ©RAI Teche.

La tradizione ritrovata (1983-84)

In December 1983 Rai Tre broadcasts *La tradizione ritrovata. Passato e presente della nuova architettura italiana*, a cycle of six episodes edited by Aldo Grasso, Fulvio Irace and Giampiero Viola (director), a production of the RAI Lombardy regional office. Fulvio Irace is the author of the texts that alternate with the direct responses of the six protagonists: Paolo Portoghesi, Carlo Aymonino, Aldo Rossi, Vittorio Gregotti, Roberto Gabetti and Aimaro Isola, Guido Canella. Whereas Rogers had posed the relationship between old and new as an open, unresolved, generative problem, thirty years later tradition is declared «rediscovered»: no longer a tension to be managed, but a heritage to be celebrated. In addition to a biographical profile and a survey of each protagonist's principal works, Irace asks each of his interlocutors to define tradition, explaining also in what sense they understand it to have been rediscovered. Portoghesi sees tradition as an indispensable instrument for communicating and giving meaning to architecture. He rejects the modern tabula rasa and proposes the "past as friend": historical memory allows the project to be rooted in place, in nature and in collective culture. Aymonino understands tradition as a necessary root, but one to be freely reinterpreted. Studying the city and history serves to enrich the design imagination, but without determinism: tradition is typological and urban continuity, not copying. For Rossi, tradition is not the recovery of styles but the historical continuity of architecture. Past and present are part of a single process: the city is the place where this continuity manifests itself. Tradition is therefore collec-

Tab. 5
The 6 episodes of *La tradizione ritrovata* (Rai Tre, 1983–84) edited by Aldo Grasso and Fulvio Irace. Source: Radiocorriere nn. 51–52/1983, nn. 1–4/1984.

N.	Protagonista	Data	Fonte RC
1ª	Paolo Portoghesi	Dom. 18 dic. 1983, 21,30	n. 51/1983, p. 45
2ª	Carlo Aymonino	Dom. 25 dic. 1983, 21,30	n. 52/1983, p. 43
3ª	Aldo Rossi	Dom. 1° gen. 1984, 21,30	n. 1/1984
4ª	Vittorio Gregotti	Dom. 8 gen. 1984, 21,30	n. 2/1984, p. 29
5ª	Roberto Gabetti e Aimaro Isola	Dom. 15 gen. 1984, 21,30	n. 3/1984, p. 29
6ª	Guido Canella	Dom. 22 gen. 1984, 21,30	n. 4/1984, p. 27

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Figg. 9-14
La tradizione ritrovata. Passato e presente della nuova architettura italiana, edited by Aldo Grasso, Fulvio Irace and Giampiero Viola (director). ©RAI Teche.

tive memory, the permanence of forms and archetypes, not formal quotation. For Gregotti, tradition is a critical instrument, not a formal repertoire. It serves to read history (including that of the modern) and above all the territory: the project is born from the interpretation of the historical and geographical structure of places, without imitation. For Gabetti and Isola, tradition is concrete and operative: a lived history of places, of crafts and of the real city. It is neither theoretical nor programmatic, but arises from a direct relationship with the urban and social context, avoiding both modernist rupture and mimesis. For Canella, tradition is a critical rediscovery of historical and local identities, against the abstraction of the modern. It is a dialectical continuity between past and present, above all in the urban dimension: the city is a complex historical system to be reinterpreted. The monographic structure – one master per episode – reflects with precision the critical culture of the 1980s, in that architecture's problems are not debated but personalities are consecrated. This is a paradigm shift worth reading critically, without thereby diminishing the value of the operation. The publications of the period capture the climate well. *L'Unità* introduces the broadcast thus:

«Do people also live badly in “ugly” cities? Is it true that people no longer love the place where they live? Is it true that anonymous or repetitive architecture contributes to definitively damaging the relationship between the metropolis and its inhabitants? These and other questions are answered by six protagonists of architecture in La tradizione ritrovata on Raitre at 21.30.»

The broadcast must be contextualised within a broader cultural operation that in those years was unfolding on multiple fronts. The Galleria Civica di Modena, from the summer of 1983, hosted at the Palazzina dei Giardini a sequence of monographic exhibitions: first *Aldo Rossi. Opere recenti* (with drawings, oils and watercolours linked in particular to the competition for the New Cemetery of San Cataldo in Modena, won by Rossi and Gianni Braghieri in 1971), then *Guido Canella, Opere recenti* (1984), *Paolo Portoghesi. Opere* (1985), *Carlo Aymonino. Architetture* (1991). Moreover,

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Tab. 6
The 10 episodes of *L'utopia urbana* (Rai Tre, 1983–84) edited by Carlo Doglio and Centro OIKOS. Source: Radiocorriere nn. 51–52/1983, nn. 1–4/1984.

N.	Titolo	Intervistato	Data	Fonte RC
1ª	(titolo non indicato)	—	Ven. 2 nov. 1984	n. 44/'84, p. 53
2ª	La città tra progetto e partecipazione	Vittorio Gregotti e Giancarlo De Carlo	Ven. 9 nov. 1984	n. 45/'84, p. 53
3ª	La città dell'uomo	Percy Johnson Marshall	Ven. 16 nov. 1984	n. 46/'84, p. 53
4ª	Verso la città territorio	Derek Wood	Ven. 23 nov. 1984	n. 47/'84, p. 53
5ª	Per una città autogestita	John Turner	Ven. 30 nov. 1984	n. 48/'84, p. 53
6ª	La città come immagine	Henri Chombart de Lauwe	Ven. 14 dic. 1984	n. 50/'84, p. 71
7ª	Una città per vivere	Maurice Culot	Ven. 21 dic. 1984	n. 51/'84, p. 71
8ª	La città come ecosistema	John Celecia	Ven. 28 dic. 1984	n. 52/'84, p. 67
9ª	La macchina dell'architettura	Nicholas Negroponte	Mer. 9 gen. 1985	n. 1/'85, p. 59
10ª	Pianificare il futuro	Boleslaw Malisz	Ven. 18 gen. 1985	n. 2/'85, p. 67

the same cultural nucleus of architects (excluding Gregotti) would in the 2000s be the subject of a travelling exhibition, *Disegni di architettura. Cinque Storie Italiane – Aymonino, Canella, Isola, Portoghesi, Rossi* – with the production of as many critical catalogues. Lombard television and the Emilian museum system move in synchrony, together constructing a narrative of Italian tradition whose founding moment had been the 1980 Venice Biennale – with *the Strada Novissima* and the international consecration of Postmodernism. It is no coincidence, in my view, that this cultural project took shape precisely in that geographical area and in that network of institutions spanning Lombardy and the Veneto. The mixed curatorial team – a television critic such as Grasso, an architectural historian such as Irace, a director such as Viola – signals a design ambition that goes well beyond simple dissemination: it is a conscious critical act, in which the television form is bent to a precise cultural project, and in which regional production (Rai Lombardia) becomes an intellectual laboratory of national reach. The Third Channel – which would later become Rai3 – was born with an explicitly educational and territorial vocation, almost the institutional heir of pedagogical paleo-television; and it is significant that it is precisely this channel that would host, a few months later, the subsequent series as well, one of a very different character.[12]



Fig. 15
Paolo Portoghesi, editorial consultant of *"La parola e l'immagine"*, 1982. ©Radiocorriere n.18, p. 71.

L'utopia urbana (1984-85)

In autumn 1984 Rai Tre broadcasts *L'utopia urbana*, a series produced by the Centro OIKOS and edited by Carlo Doglio. The series comprises ten episodes broadcast between 2 November 1984 and 18 January 1985, all in a late-night slot (after 23.00), with a format based on a single interview with an international expert. Three elements distinguish this series from all its predecessors, and each merits independent consideration. The first is the producing subject: the Centro OIKOS – Centro internazionale di studio, ricerca e documentazione dell'abitare, founded and directed in Bologna by Giorgio Trebbi, chaired by the politician Beniamino Andreatta, and housed in the Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau by Le Corbusier, reconstructed by Giuliano Gresleri – introduces the model of co-production between a research institution and public television. It is not RAI that produces architectural culture but an external institution that uses RAI as its transmission channel. A reversal of perspective that is by no means trivial. The second

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element is the time slot: after 23.00. This is not a residual placement but a declaration of audience. Those who follow *L'utopia urbana* in the late-night slot on Rai Tre in 1984 are neither the broad public of Sunday paleo-television, nor the secondary school student of the afternoon educational broadcasts: they are a self-aware niche, seeking in the television medium something that specialist journals reach only partially. The third element – perhaps the most culturally significant – is the systematic internationalism of the interlocutors. Vittorio Gregotti and Giancarlo De Carlo, Percy Johnson Marshall, Derek Wood, John Turner, Henri Chombart de Lauwe, Maurice Culot, John Celecia, Nicholas Negroponte, Boleslaw Malisz: France, Belgium, Great Britain, the USA, Poland. Italian television opens to global thinking on the contemporary city, from participation (Turner) to urban ecology (Celecia) to applied computing (Negroponte) – a thematic arc that Italian specialist journals of the period struggled to cover with the same breadth and the same simultaneity. This approach was inherent to the figure of Carlo Doglio, editor of the series: anarchist urban planner, friend of Elio Vittorini, Aldo Capitini and Giancarlo De Carlo, inspired by Kropotkin, Geddes and Mumford, advocate of a "bottom-up" urban planning founded on participation and self-management – values that are reflected with precision in the choice of interviewees. The international approach was moreover a constant of his work, including in his direction of the journal «Parametro». Carlo Doglio had already established ties with RAI in 1977, when he had edited, together with Giuseppe Samonà, a series of episodes entitled *La città*[13]: *L'utopia urbana* is therefore both a return and a deepening. The episode of 9 January 1985 with Nicholas Negroponte – *La macchina dell'architettura* – deserves separate mention: Negroponte was at that time elaborating the ideas that would lead to *Being Digital* (1995) and to the founding of the MIT Media Lab (1985, the same year as the broadcast). To bring this thinking to Italian television in a late-night slot is an act of cultural anticipation: five years before the web, ten before its mass diffusion, Italian public television was hosting the thought of the man who was reshaping the relationship between architecture, computing and inhabited space.



Fig. 16
Bruno Zevi and Leonardo Benevolo discuss Urban Planning with Fiorentino Sullo (Radiocorriere n. 47, pp. 87, 1981)

Bruno Zevi, RAI and *TeleRoma56*

Bruno Zevi deserves specific treatment within this study for his commitment to the dissemination – we might say today multimedia or multichannel – of architectural themes. By virtue of this vocation he is among the architects most frequently present in RAI schedules, as an expert with international experience, as editor of regular features and as a cultural commentator. Even before television, Zevi begins his experience on radio: from January to July 1956 on the Third Programme (Radio), within the container programme *La Rassegna* edited by Marziano Bernardi, Bruno Zevi presents a weekly column entitled *Architettura e urbanistica*. This consists of seven episodes addressing diversified themes but traceable to the same problematic axes as the journal «L'Architettura. Cronache e storia», which he had founded the previous year: updating on the international front, the Italian urban planning question, the construction of a national critical genealogy. A systematic comparison between the radio schedule and the indices of «L'Architettura» for the same period reveals a substantial coincidence of agenda, with the journal anticipating and the radio amplifying, according to a multimedia logic ante litteram that makes Zevi the first Italian critic to practise consciously

Tab.7
The 7 radio episodes of Architettura e urbanistica (Radio Tre, 1956), curated by Bruno Zevi. Source: Radiocorriere nn. 51–52/1983, nn. 1–4/1984.

N.	Data	Titolo
1ª	Lunedì 23 gennaio ore 19.30	L'ultima opera di Le Corbusier
2ª	Lunedì 27 febbraio, ore 19.30	L'architettura americana oggi
3ª	Lunedì 26 marzo, ore 19.30	Un monumento a Paisiello
4ª	Lunedì 23 aprile, ore 19.30	L'urbanistica italiana in moto
5ª	Lunedì 25 giugno, ore 19.30	Tributo a Biagio Rossetti
6ª	Lunedì 28 maggio, ore 19.30	Quartieri coordinati
7ª	Lunedì 23 luglio, ore 19.30	Il piano regolatore di Bologna

the diversification of channels as a strategy of cultural hegemony. The first episode is dedicated to *L'ultima opera di Le Corbusier*. It should be said that «L'Architettura» had been systematically following Le Corbusier's projects from the very first issue. *Ronchamp* (1955) had just ignited the international debate, and Zevi himself held ambivalent positions, simultaneously fascinated and wary of that plastic turn. Witnesses to this ambivalence are Giuseppe Samonà's *Lettura della Cappella di Ronchamp* and Giulio Carlo Argan's *Contro Ronchamp*, which together with the radio episode of January 1956 are probably faces of the same critical operation. Regarding the second episode, one may say that for Zevi America was the terrain of legitimation of organicism against European dogmatic rationalism. Indeed, the journal in 1956 devoted ample space to American developments – Wright above all, but also the Miesian Chicago school, the early works of SOM and Saarinen, often commented on by Frederick Gutheim, the journal's principal American correspondent, whom Zevi himself cites as an authoritative source on American architecture. The third episode is perhaps the most representative in underscoring how Zevi felt it important to draw attention even to minor architectural questions. It relates to the competition for the monument to Giovanni Paisiello which, in 1956, was won by a maquette by Nino Franchina, subsequently never realised due to political-cultural interference. Zevi intervenes in an attempt to defend Franchina's abstract art against traditional figurative canons and above all against that part of the local left-wing political establishment which contested the commission's choice on the grounds that the work was «incomprehensible» to the public and unsuitable for a symbolic urban space such as the area of the Castello Aragonese. The fifth episode concerns Biagio Rossetti, whom Zevi had already valorised in his *Storia dell'architettura moderna* (1950) as a forerunner of organic planning, and who had above all been the subject of the monograph *L'architettura di Biagio Rossetti*, which Zevi would present on radio in the programme Il libro della settimana, edited by Goffredo Bellonci. The fourth, sixth and seventh episodes concern certain urban planning themes that Zevi was also addressing in the journal «L'architettura»: in addition to the numerous master plans presented and the new orientations discussed, there is the exact coincidence between the title of the sixth episode, *Quartieri coordinati*, and the editorial of issue n. 8 of 1956. In the case of Zevi's radio series, there is an almost total overlap between the themes of the journal and those of the broadcasts. Zevi's transition from radio to television broadcasts occurs in 1962, when with «L'architettura» secondo Bruno Zevi he appears among the protagonists of the cultural column *Settimo giorno*, edited by Francesca Sanvitale and Enzo Siciliano. Subsequently, on the occasion of the publication of his book (Zevi 1973), in October 1974 a series of three episodes entitled *Paese mio* – «Linguaggio moderno dell'architettura» is broadcast. Zevi was disseminating his project of «operative criticism» – militant and therefore

useful to design practice – through all available channels, television included. It should be noted that this is perfectly consistent with his entire figure as a public intellectual who conceives criticism as a simultaneously political and pedagogical act.

Bruno Zevi is one of our most polemical and anti-traditionalist architects and architectural theorists. His conversations at the seminars on operative criticism of architecture are so many attacks on classicism understood as a constraint and impediment to the creative and experiential freedom of the building and the city. These conversations, which have been collected in a genuine pamphlet, return in the column Paese mio to their original nature as spoken demonstration, divided into three groups corresponding to three episodes. In this first episode Zevi will illustrate, in a polemical and apparently paradoxical manner, what he himself calls the principles of the «list» (a different distribution of architectural elements on the basis of contents rather than forms) and of the validity of asymmetry.

And again, on another occasion the Radiocorriere writes:

The broadcasts are drawn from a «polemical booklet» collecting Zevi's conversations at the seminars on operative criticism of architecture, «so many attacks on classicism understood as a constraint and impediment to the creative and experiential freedom of the city». 1st episode (Thursday 10 October): The principles of the «list» and the validity of asymmetry. Zevi illustrates in a polemical and paradoxical manner the principles of his theory: distribution of architectural elements on the basis of contents rather than forms; validity of asymmetry. 2nd episode (Thursday 17 October): second part of the cycle (title not specified, ed.). 3rd episode (Thursday 24 October): Temporality of space; reintegration of building, city and territory. Conclusion with a photographic and filmed panorama of recent modern architecture.

Finally, on the occasion of the last episode a very significant brief notice appears:

This is the last of the three episodes dedicated to the Linguaggio moderno dell'architettura, based on the lectures of Bruno Zevi. The sections of the episode, corresponding to those of the polemical booklet in which the conversations have been collected, will be dedicated in particular to the «temporality of space» (the time dimension must be incorporated into the spatiality of the building and the city) and to the «reintegration of building, city and territory». The episode concludes with a panorama illustrated by Zevi with photographic and filmed examples of the most recent modern architecture that, until a few years ago and before the break effected by pop art, would not even have been admitted into the register of true architecture. (RC Thursday, 24 October 1974, 22.10 – Radiocorriere n. 43, p. 93.V;)

From this point onwards Bruno Zevi's appearances on RAI are linked to interventions in the capacity of expert, as in the episode on Brunelleschi (1976), as a guest in a confrontation between *Musica e architettura nell'estate acquilana* (1980), or in the role of interviewee in the documentary on *L'Urbanistica assassinata* by Roberto Guiducci (1981). In subsequent years his television and radio presence shifts progressively towards the register of the public intellectual: interviewed on «the battles of an engaged intellectual and militant critic» on Giornale Radio Tre (1987), guest on *Una sera, un libro* to comment on Benedetto Croce's «La Poesia» on Raitre (1988), up to the curious appearance on the talk show *ArsAmanda* on RaiDue (1989), where he is questioned – as a «famous critic» – on love and eroticism by the host Amanda Lear. The only experience outside state television worth mentioning is that of *TeleRoma56*, a television network (Rome's first over-the-air broadcaster) founded in 1976 by Bruno Zevi

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Fig. 17
Giuseppe Bocconetti, Alle radici di un male antico, article published on the occasion of the programme Nascita della metropoli, by Franco Damato, Paolo Melis, Maurizio Rotundi (director), with urban planning consultancy by Elio Piroddi (Radiocorriere no. 41, pp. 31-32). The 3 episodes London (30 September 1973, Second Channel), Paris (7 October 1973, 7 pm, Second Channel), Berlin: due metropoli dalle macerie (14 October 1973, 7 pm, Second Channel) analyse some urban transformations from city to metropolis through the voices of various scholars: John Summerson, Ralph Samuels and Lewis Mumford (London), Pierre Lavedan, Robert Auzelle and Françoise Choay (Paris), Werner Duttmann (Berlin).

himself together with Guglielmo Arcieri, professor of neuropsychiatry at La Sapienza. The broadcaster in fact originated the previous year as *Teleromacavo*, in Zevi's villa at Via Nomentana 150, on the initiative of Zevi and Arcieri, in meetings that also involved Elsa De Giorgi, muse of Italo Calvino. The cultural project was explicit: programming was dictated by the idea shared by Arcieri and Zevi of creating «a bridge between the university and the city», with the involvement of many Roman intellectuals and the experimental realisation of live university lectures (Grisanti, s.d.). Bruno Zevi, through his critical and disseminatory activity – today we would say multimedia – was among the most assiduous and resolute defenders of plurality. His critical activity was conveyed through various instruments: from university lecture halls to journals (first «Metron» from 1945 and then «L'Architettura cronache e storia» from 1955), to cultural weeklies (such as his architecture column in «L'Espresso», maintained without interruption from 1954 to 2000), to radio and broadcasting with *TeleRoma56*. All of this was perfectly consistent with his thinking on the Università dell'Aria: the conviction that the mass university required an innovative pedagogical approach aimed at democratising the teaching of architecture and culture. For this reason he advocated the use of mass media (television, radio, press) to overcome traditional academic elitism, aiming at a diffuse, transversal and accessible form of learning that anticipated the concept of distance education (Lazier 2020). Zevi writes that after reading the specialist literature on the «television message» – which prescribed maximum attention spans of 10 minutes, spectacularisation and a frenetic pace – he and his associates deliberately decided to do the opposite: cultural programmes of 60 or 90 minutes, with no concessions to entertainment. And he concludes: «Result: despite RAI-TV's hibernation, Italians are not idiots, culture has a market even in the mass media. Objective: to make Teleroma56 the launch pad for a University of the Air.» (Zevi 1993, p. 124).

What did he mean, concretely? The idea was at once simple and radical: to use free television – not RAI, not the State, not academic institutions – to provide genuine university teaching for anyone with a television set. Not simplified dissemination, not cultural entertainment, but real lessons. The model was already being enacted on *Teleroma56* in its very first months: Professor Aurelio Roncaglia, a Romance philologist from La Sapienza, was giving chalk-and-board lectures on the channel in the afternoon slot. The political point – for in Zevi everything had a political dimension – was twofold. On one hand, the now openly declared distrust of the institutional university: after 1968, Zevi had concluded that university reform would not come, that the academy was a closed and self-referential system, and in 1979 he would leave his chair definitively (his famous «Me ne vado per pessimismo» [I'm leaving out of pessimism]). On the other, the conviction that the television audience was not the stupid and passive entity that mass communication theorists described. Italians, he maintained, were capable of sustaining an hour and a half of architectural criticism or philology if the content was honest and profound. The "aria" [air] of the title is of course the ether – the signal travelling by radio waves, liberalised by the Constitutional Court ruling of March 1976. It is also a wordplay on a tradition, since in the immediate post-war period people already spoke of a «university of the radio» as an instrument of popular education. Zevi transfers that model to private television, which in the summer of 1976 was a barely opened frontier, with all the sense of urgency and of hard-won freedom that he himself describes – «in these times, one must conquer every square centimetre of freedom». In essence: the «Università dell'Aria» was the bet that free television could do what the university was no longer able to do – transmit serious culture, outside institutional walls, for anyone. Teaching without enrolment, without examinations, without academic hierarchy. In other words, the city as classroom. These are long and carefully crafted political and cultural programmes, in which Zevi intends to defeat not only the enemies of liberal democracy and organic architecture, but also the idea that a culturally accurate and profound message cannot pass through television.

Models Compared

The comparative reading of the six programmes – and of Zevi's *TeleRoma56* experience – reveals a recurring and significant character: television is never, for these protagonists, an alternative medium to the journal or the book; on the contrary, it is supplementary and simultaneous. One might say that in each of these cases television functions as an amplifier and translator of disciplinary thought: it does not necessarily simplify it, but brings it to a different scale and circulates it in different environments. The formats, however, are far from homogeneous, and the differences are revealing. In summary: Rogers constructs a themed column with multiple editors – the editorial team model, drawn directly from «Casabella». There is no need for him to modify the thematic and narrative structure, since he elaborates on television the same themes he is systematising in the journal, with an occasionally monthly coincidence between broadcast and article. Gregotti instead adopts the auteur documentary: a single progressive argument in ten episodes, with no titles for individual instalments, replicating the essayistic structure of *Il territorio dell'architettura* – a text, not a manual. Aymonino constructs a curricular educational course, in which the thematic progression – from the house to the housing unit,

from the house-work relationship to territorial organisation – replicates the logic of a university programme compressed into eight afternoon episodes. Grasso, Irace and Viola construct the monographic portrait of the master in a format that reflects the critical culture of the 1980s, more attentive to personalities. OIKOS constructs international dialogue through a series of interviews with diverse voices, united by the theme of the city but not by a single perspective, drawing on a pluralism that faithfully mirrors Doglio's participatory and anarchist urban planning. The imagined audiences too are different, and their placement in the schedule reveals this with the same transparency as a written document. Rogers addresses the broad public of Sunday paleo-television: a single channel, few hours per day, every hour of broadcasting carrying the specific weight of an event. Gregotti addresses the cultivated audience of *Sapere*, which the Radiocorriere describes as «adult, with full civic and psychological maturity» – an already formed audience, offered not literacy but deepening. Aymonino addresses secondary school students: an institutional captive audience, for whom television is not a choice but a curricular integration. Grasso, Irace and Viola address the specialised audience of Rai Tre, in Sunday prime time, in the postmodern climate of the early 1980s. OIKOS addresses the late-night niche of enthusiasts and professionals, with the awareness – declared by the time slot itself – of not seeking the broad public but of constructing a precise argument for those who already know how to seek it out. The themes, finally, reflect with precision the seasons of Italian architectural culture. In 1954 Rogers addresses the relationship between the modern and the historical context, in coincidence with the launch of «Casabella-Continuità». In 1968 Gregotti addresses the territorial scale, in coincidence with *Il territorio dell'architettura*. In 1974 Aymonino addresses the city as a social and productive fact, in the midst of the season of urban reformism. In 1983–84 Grasso and Irace celebrate the masters of the Tendenza, following the 1980 Venice Biennale. In 1984–85 the Centro OIKOS opens to international thought on the city, at a moment of crisis in established disciplinary paradigms and of openness towards new knowledges. Six seasons, six orientations, six different inflections of the relationship between architecture and media. But one constant: public television as a space for the elaboration and transmission of disciplinary thought, supplementary and simultaneous with respect to the journal and the book.

Beyond the School: Architecture as Public Pedagogy

The six programmes – and Zevi's experience alongside them – share a common ambition: to bring architecture out of the institutional channels of the school and the specialist journal, towards a wider audience. This ambition – criticism as public pedagogy – unites them and renders them relevant to a reflection on the relationship between disciplinary formation and the public sphere that, forty years on, has lost none of its urgency. In this sense, the six programmes trace a genealogy of the public communication of architecture in Italy that precedes by decades the contemporary debate on new media. The question of how the discipline transmits itself outside its own institutional channels has a thirty-year history, beginning with Rogers in front of a RAI camera just born in January 1954 – fourteen days after the launch of regular broadcasts – and closing, at least in this first season, with Negroponte speaking of «machines of architecture» in late-night programming on Rai Tre in January 1985. Between these two moments, Italian public television hosted a reflection on architecture and

the city of extraordinary density and variety, not despite its structural limits, but – in many cases – precisely through them.

Conclusions

The reconstruction of the experiences analysed allows us to trace an unprecedented history articulated in as many seasons, each with a distinct format, audience and theoretical orientation. Six different models – seven, counting Zevi – six different conceptions of the audience, six different inflections of the relationship between architecture and media. But one important constant: public television as a space for the elaboration and transmission of disciplinary thought, supplementary and simultaneous with respect to the journal and the book. Outside this system, Zevi constructs with *TeleRoma56* something different and perhaps more radical: not the dissemination of disciplinary thought, but its direct transmission, without institutional mediation, as a political as well as cultural act – readable as a lucid resistance, however brief, against the drift already underway. There is a datum that the reconstruction conducted thus far causes to emerge with the same evidence as a document: the progressive marginalisation of architecture – and of culture in the broad sense – within the Italian television schedule. The trajectory is already legible from the mere time-slot placement of the programmes examined. Rogers broadcasts on Sunday afternoons in 1954, in a single-channel system in which every hour of programming carries the specific weight of an event. Gregotti occupies Wednesday evenings in 1968, still a noble and intentional slot. Aymonino slips to the educational afternoon of 1974 – an institutional slot, certainly, but already lateral with respect to the broad public. Grasso and Irace recover Sunday prime time in 1983–84, but on Rai Tre, a niche channel by definition. Doglio and the Centro OIKOS, in 1984–85, broadcast after 23.00: a placement that is already, in effect, a declaration of surrender vis-à-vis the mainstream schedule. The movement is unequivocal: architecture – and with it serious disciplinary culture – is progressively confined to the temporal margins of programming, ceding the central slots to what Umberto Eco, in a 1983 essay almost contemporaneous with the last transmissions examined, would call neo-television – a television that, unlike pedagogical paleo-television, no longer speaks to the public with a formative authority, but speaks about itself, becomes self-referential, and dissolves the distinction between information, culture and entertainment (Eco 1983). It is no coincidence that Eco's diagnosis falls exactly in the years in which the season analysed here closes: 1985 is not only the date of the last episode of *L'utopia urbana*, it is also the threshold beyond which Italian television – including RAI – chooses a different path. The consequences of this drift have been analysed from multiple perspectives and with different instruments. Giovanni Sartori, in *Homo videns* (1997), diagnosed in the primacy of the image over the word a structural impoverishment of political and civic thought: the television viewer is no longer a citizen who informs themselves, but a consumer of images who reacts emotionally. Vincenzo Trione, from the front of art history, observed how even the most complex visual languages – art, architecture – are progressively domesticated by generalist television until they lose their critical charge, reduced to spectacle or decorative frame (Grasso, Trione 2014). But it is perhaps Gianni Canova – film critic, former rector of IULM, one of the sharpest voices in Italian cultural debate – who provides the most incisive synthesis: in his Ignorantocrazia (2019) he describes a country that is «culturally anorexic», in which «when ignorance spreads and becomes systemic, it becomes ignorantocracy» – generating distorted forms of consensus that call into question the very foundations of cultural democracy. Television is not

the sole accused, but it is certainly among the principal vectors of this drift. And yet – and this is the point I am most concerned to underline in closing – the history reconstructed here demonstrates that this was not always so. Rogers, Gregotti, Aymonino, Zevi were not marginal figures forced to the edges of the system but were, on the contrary, in their time, at the centre of Italian disciplinary and cultural debate, and public television hosted them precisely by virtue of their calibre. The question about the present that this brief history leaves open can be summarised thus: what remains, in contemporary media, of that capacity to make cultural transmission a political act? And above all: who, today, takes up that wager? If flow television – according to the definition that Raymond Williams elaborates in 1974, almost simultaneously with the transmissions of Aymonino and Manieri Elia – has progressively eroded the qualitative distinction between contents, dissolving disciplinary culture in the undifferentiated continuum of the mainstream schedule, on-demand platforms today draw a structurally different scenario: they restore to the audience the choice of what and when, and with it the possibility of an intentional attention that flow television had rendered systematically impossible. It is in this space – not nostalgic, but technically new – that experiences such as *LIA, Lezioni Italiane di Architettura* [Italian Architecture Lectures], find their deepest reason: not the repetition of Rogers's pedagogical paleo-television or Zevi's audacious bet on *TeleRoma56*, but their conscious heir, which entrusts to the digital platform that same trust in the public – «Italians are not idiots», Zevi wrote apropos *TeleRoma56* – that generalist television has progressively ceased to have. If this history begins behind a television screen with Rogers in January 1954 and closes, at least in its first season, with Negroponte in late-night programming on Rai Tre in 1985, perhaps it is not too bold to hypothesise that its second season is beginning now and that it is beginning elsewhere, still behind a screen that is no longer a television set but digital: for transmission – in the most ancient and most noble sense of the term, the sense that Rogers already intuited in 1954, according to a coincidence between content and the mode of its dissemination – has not halted with the end of paleo-television, but is simply changing its channel.

Notes

* This history has been reconstructed from a primary source (the periodical Radiocorriere) made available in digital format for the entire period 1925–1995 through the RAI Teche portal (radiocorriere.teche.rai.it). It records the complete television schedule and in-depth articles related to the programmes. For some programmes it has not been possible to view individual episodes, as the RAI Archive is progressively cataloguing and transferring episodes to digital formats. This initial study is intended as a stimulus for subsequent, more detailed research on the theme of transmissibility through the television medium, a field that remains largely unexplored and undeciphered.

[1] Ludovico Quaroni appears in RAI schedules in connection with his publications on the city of Rome, and also features in the episode of *Habitat* dedicated to the Messina Strait Bridge. Thursday 19 December 1974, 21.00, Second Programme – *In difesa di… – Ludovico Quaroni e il Tridente di Piazza del Popolo*, a programme by Anna Zanoli. Quaroni illustrates the serious urban planning situation of the Tridente, the sector of Rome's historic centre running from the Mausoleum of Augustus to Piazza del Popolo; Tuesday 2 April 1968, 12.00 – Television, Upper Secondary School, Tuesday 11.30 History of Art – «L'architettura moderna», Prof. Ludovico Quaroni; Friday 15 December 1967, 11.30 – Television, Upper Secondary School, Friday 11.30 History of Art – «Architettura e città», Prof. Ludovico Quaroni; 18 February 1962, 19.45 – Radio, Third Programme, *Le nostre città crescono in fretta – Ludovico Quaroni: Roads, traffic and parking*; Monday 3 October 1955, 21.20 – Radio, Third Programme, *L'ora delle opinioni – Aspetti e problemi dell'urbanistica*, with Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, Ludovico Quaroni, Luigi Piccinato, Leonardo Benevolo, Leone Catta-

neo, Laura Fasolo, Plinio Marconi, edited by Paolo Portoghesi; Sunday 7 July 1968, 18.45, Third Channel, *La lanterna*, weekly culture and society programme edited by Leonardo Sinisgalli, *Ludovico Quaroni o del costruire insieme*; Friday 27 November 1970, 22.05, Second Television Channel – *Habitat*: Quaroni is a studio guest. The Radiocorriere also carries the article *L'ormeggio al continente – Ponte sullo Stretto di Messina*, in which Quaroni is cited as the author of the urban planning section of the Quaroni-Musmeci project; Thursday 30 March 1972, 18.45 – Radio, Second Programme, Pagina aperta – «Quindicinale di attualità culturale» – *Roma ieri e domani: distruggere per conservare?*, with Leonardo Benevolo and Ludovico Quaroni; Wednesday 12 June 1985, 22.30, Rai Tre – Giorgio Ciucci interviews Ludovico Quaroni.

[2] Giuseppe Samonà appears in RAI schedules in connection with his knowledge of Le Corbusier and his publications on urban planning issues. *Ritratto di Charles E. Le Corbusier*, edited by Giuseppe Samonà, 1964 – Radiocorriere n. 44, p. 39; Novità librarie: *L'urbanistica e l'avvenire delle città negli stati europei* by Giuseppe Samonà, edited by Leonardo Benevolo, Monday 1 February 1960, 18.00 (duration 45 minutes); *Le nostre città crescono in fretta*. Giuseppe Samonà: Decentralisation of offices and improvement of public services, 25 February 1962, 19.15 – Radiocorriere n. 9, p. 23.

[3] Giancarlo De Carlo appears in connection with his project for Urbino. *Alloggi per gli studenti d'Urbino realizzati da Giancarlo De Carlo*. Guest of the programme is architect Mario Marengo. 1980 – Radiocorriere n. 9, p. 123.

[4] Paolo Portoghesi is the most frequently present in RAI programmes, both as architect and historian of the city of Rome and its protagonists, and by virtue of his role as Director of the Venice Biennale. Wednesday 27 January 1954, 21.20, Radio, Third Programme, *La Cibernetica* – edited by Enzo Cambi – *Paolo Portoghesi: Idea e mito dell'automa*; Monday 3 October 1955, 21.20, Radio, Third Programme, *L'ora delle opinioni – Aspetti e problemi dell'urbanistica*, edited by Paolo Portoghesi, with Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, Ludovico Quaroni, Luigi Piccinato, Leonardo Benevolo, Leone Cattaneo, Laura Fasolo, Plinio Marconi; Monday 10 July 1961, 21.45, Radio, Third Programme, *Il Rinascimento in Italia*. *Casa, palazzo, città*, edited by Paolo Portoghesi; Wednesday 17 February 1965, 19.00, Radio, Third Programme, *Novità librarie – «Borromini nella cultura europea»*, presentation of the book by Paolo Portoghesi; Thursday 25 February 1965, 22.45, Radio, Third Programme, *Testimoni e interpreti del nostro tempo – F.L. Wright*, with Antonio Bandera, Enrico Crispolti and Paolo Portoghesi; Thursday 16 September 1965, 22.45, Radio, Third Programme, *Testimoni e interpreti del nostro tempo – Le Corbusier*, with Antonio Bandera, Enrico Crispolti and Paolo Portoghesi; Friday 10 June 1966, 22.45, Radio, Third Programme, *Testimoni e interpreti del nostro tempo – Pier Luigi Nervi,* fasc. 23, with Antonio Bandera, Leonardo Benevolo, Luigi Pellegrin and Paolo Portoghesi; Tuesday 12 December 1967, 22.30 – Television, Second Programme, *Francesco Borromini 1599–1667*, text by Paolo Portoghesi, directed by Stefano Roncoroni; Monday 13 October 1975, 19.00 – Radio, Third Programme, *Dicaia – Ipotesi di una città per vivere*, from an idea by architect Paolo Portoghesi, with Domenico de Masi, Domenico Majone, Paolo Portoghesi and others; Sunday 3 October 1965, 21.20 – Television, Third Programme, *L'ora delle opinioni – Aspetti e problemi dell'urbanistica*, edited by Paolo Portoghesi, with Ragghianti, Quaroni, Piccinato, Benevolo and others; Tuesday 30 January 1968, 21.00 – Television, Second Programme, XX Secolo – Roma barocca (first episode), edited by Paolo Portoghesi, with Antonio Bandera; Tuesday 20 February 1968, 21.00 – Television, Second Programme, XX Secolo – Roma barocca (second episode); Monday 13 December 1976, 21.50 – Television, Rete 2, *Uomini della scienza – «L'inabitabile abitato»*, debate with Paolo Portoghesi, former dean of the Faculty of Architecture in Milan, Giuseppe Campos Venuti and Piero Moroni; Thursday 11 May c. 1978, 19.25 – Television, Swiss TV, *Incontri G – Fatti e personaggi del nostro tempo: Paolo Portoghesi*; Wednesday 21 December 1977, 22.45 – Television, Rete 2, *Match. Domande incrociate tra protagonisti – «Architettura e Roma dell'800»*, with Paolo Portoghesi and Leonardo Benevolo; Monday 8 December 1980, 22.10 – Television, TV3, *Venezia Biennale – «La presenza del passato»*, text by Paolo Portoghesi, directed by Maurizio Cascavilla; Thursday 3 November 1977, 22.00 – Television, Rete 2, *Dal Museo della Scienza e della Tecnica di Milano* – live debate with the audience, with Costantino Anzi Maria Grazia, Luigi Rutgiu, Paolo Portoghesi, Giovan Battista Zorzoli, presented by Lucio Lombardo Radice; Saturday 8 May 1982, 21.40 – Television, TV3, *La parola e l'immagine* (weekly cultural column): Portoghesi is

one of the three permanent consultants, alongside historian Gabriele De Rosa and literary critic Enrico Filippini; Monday 6 December 1982, 20.40 – Television, TV3, *Festa barocca* – 1st episode: *«L'uomo in rappresentazione»*, by Folco Quilici and Jean Antoine, scientific direction by Paolo Portoghesi, consultants Pierre Chaunu, Robert Wangermée, Damian Bajon, RAI/Antenne 2/France Polytel International/Hamburg co-production; Monday 13 December 1982, 20.40 – *Festa barocca* – 2nd episode: *«Gli stregoni della meraviglia»*; Monday 20 December 1982, 20.40 – 3rd episode: *«Il lungo confine del Nord»*; Monday 27 December 1982, 20.40 – 4th episode: *«L'impero barocco»*; Sunday 3 April 1983, 20.40 – 5th episode: *«Barocco e brume»*; Monday 10 January 1983, 20.30 – 6th and final episode: *«Il barocco degli estremi»*; Thursday 24 October 1985, 20.30 – Television, Raitre, *La grande époque* – 3rd episode: *«Art Nouveau»*, by Folco Quilici, with consultancy by Paolo Portoghesi; Tuesday 5 August 1986, 22.25 – Television, Raidue, *Il linguaggio dei luoghi* – 1st episode, a programme by Paolo Portoghesi, filmed by Folco Quilici, series in seven episodes, beginning with the «Romantischestrasse», the great German road of castles and wine; Tuesday 12 August 1986, 22.15 – *Il linguaggio dei luoghi* – 2nd episode, by Paolo Portoghesi, filmed by Folco Quilici; Tuesday 9 September 1986, 22.45 – 6th episode; Tuesday 16 September 1986, 23.05 – 7th and final episode; Monday 4 February 1985, 22.35 – Television, Raitre, *Paolo Portoghesi architetto*, directed by Impero Sugaroni; Friday 29 July 1988, 23.30 – Television, Raitre, *Una sera, un libro – Paolo Portoghesi and I Promessi Sposi* by Alessandro Manzoni.

[5] Renzo Piano's presence is above all due to the Beaubourg and his consultancy on the *Habitat* programme by Giulio Macchi: Tuesday 4 October 1977, 12.30 – Rete 1, *«Habitat» Una macchina per la cultura. Il Centro Nazionale d'arte e cultura a Parigi*, by Renzo Piano with the collaboration of Luigi Fantoni, directed by Luciano Arancio (Educational Department); 1978, various episodes – «Habitat»: Renzo Piano is consultant to the programme presented by Giulio Macchi; Sunday 26 June 1983, 21.30 – TV3, *L'architetto e...: Renzo Piano*, interview by Elisabetta Barsantini, directed by Maria Gazzo, a programme of the Regional Office for Tuscany; Wednesday 7 November 1984, 19.35, RaiTre – *«Fatti di famiglia»*: Are career and family irreconcilable? What weight do professional choices carry in family life? An actress, Marisa Fabbri, and an architect, Renzo Piano, answer questions drawing on their own personal experiences.

[6] Manfredo Tafuri appears in schedules in connection with historical-critical studies. Rassegne culturali. *I luoghi dell'architettura*. Interview with Manfredo Tafuri by Luca Zevi, 1980 – Radiocorriere n. 33, p. 115; *Un architetto italiano nella Russia settecentesca*, conversation with Manfredo Tafuri, Monday 18 December 1967, 22.00 – Radiocorriere n. 51, p. 62; *Venezia, storia di una città*, a programme by Giorgio Piccinato, Manfredo Tafuri and Stefano Ray; Manfredo Tafuri, *Teoria e storia dell'architettura*, conversation by Costantino Dardi, 1969 – Radiocorriere n. 6, p. 58.

[7] Carlo Scarpa appears in a 1972 broadcast: Incontri 1972: *Un'ora con Carlo Scarpa,* 13 November 1972, 21.15 – Radiocorriere n. 46, p. 73.

[8] Bruno Zevi is among the most frequently present, as the animator of the country's architectural scene and of his role in political engagement. Beyond the radio series, his television presence dates to 1962: Sunday, 22.10, 1962, Second Programme (TV), *Settimo giorno*. Zevi is cited among the protagonists of the cultural column Settimo giorno, edited by Francesca Sanvitale and Enzo Siciliano, in the article celebrating its first year of broadcasts (around January 1975). The column features *«l'architettura secondo Bruno Zevi»* as one of its fifty-three themes for the season. October 1974, Second Programme (TV), *Paese mio – «Linguaggio moderno dell'architettura»*: Thursday 10 October, 22.15; Thursday 17 October, 22.10; Thursday 24 October, 22.15 – a three-episode cycle. 1974–1975, Sunday, 22.10, Second Programme (TV), *Settimo giorno*, weekly cultural current affairs column edited by Francesca Sanvitale and Enzo Siciliano: Zevi is guest/protagonist of one or more episodes dedicated to architecture (the column reached up to seven million viewers in the late-evening slot); Sunday 1 September, 22.10, *Settimo giorno – «Studiare, e dopo?»*, Second Programme (TV), editors Lorenzo Mondo (studio) and Ezio Raimondi (University of Bologna); 1976 – *Il miracolo del Brunelleschi*, Rete 2 (TV), 22.00: fifty minutes of images and live encounters from the dome of Florence Cathedral, on the occasion of the sixth centenary of the birth of Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446); Zevi is among the specialists and art historians interviewed, alongside Ludwig Heydenreich, Giulio Carlo Argan, Eugenio Battisti, Howard Saalman and Salvatore Di Pasquale; 1980 –

RAI regional programming: a) Abruzzo – *Musica e architettura nell'Estate aquilana*, by Francesco Sanvitale and Giorgio Patrizi: the collaboration between Roman Vlad and Bruno Zevi gives rise to a confrontation between music and architecture within the framework of the L'Aquila summer events; b) *Molise – A Termoli parlando di architettura*, by Filippo Massari: summary of the Termoli conference on the relations between architecture and culture, featuring Samonè, Ricci, Pesce, Mauri and Bruno Zevi; 1981 – *L'usignolo dell'imperatore / E il caos ebbe la meglio* – episode *L'urbanistica assassinata*, Rete 2 (TV), Tuesday 24 November, 22.35, documentary/interview, author Roberto Guiducci: Zevi is interviewed alongside Leonardo Benevolo as an intellectual involved in the urban planning reform project; Thursday 18 August 1988, 23.10, Raitre (TV), Una sera, un libro: Bruno Zevi and *«La Poesia»* by Benedetto Croce; Monday 11 December 1989, 21.45, RaiDue (TV), *ArsAmanda*: Zevi is a guest on the talk show («The famous architecture critic, also known for his tireless publishing activity. He too faces questions on love and eroticism»); Sunday 22 February 1987, 9.35, Giornale Radio Tre – Weekly of politics and culture: interview with «the current architectural historian Bruno Zevi on the battles of an engaged intellectual and militant critic».

[9] *Urbanistica e Industrial Design alla X Triennale di Milano*. Review edited by Carlo De Carli and Marco Zanuso. Monday 13 September 1954, 18.15 – fasc. 37, p. 21.

[10] Radiocorriere n. 3, 1954, p. 14. Digital archive: radiocorriere.teche.rai.it (accessed March 2026).

[11] The ten episodes of *L'uomo e la città* aired every Wednesday evening between 21 February and 24 April 1968. The series is documented in the following issues of the Radiocorriere: 1st episode, fasc. 8 (21 Feb.); 2nd episode, fasc. 9 (28 Feb., p. 56); 3rd episode, fasc. 10 (6 Mar.); 4th episode, fasc. 11 (12 Mar.); 5th episode, fasc. 12 (19 Mar., p. 68); 6th episode, fasc. 13 (26 Mar., p. 84); 7th episode, fasc. 14 (3 Apr.); 8th episode, fasc. 15 (10 Apr.); 9th episode, fasc. 16 (17 Apr., p. 84); 10th and final episode, fasc. 17 (24 Apr., p. 82). The Radiocorriere gives no titles to individual episodes, indicating only the general series title and the progressive episode number.

[12] Radiocorriere nn. 51–52/1983 and nn. 1–4/1984. The 2nd episode (25 December 1983) reads: «A six-part cycle on architecture documented by as many conceptions of celebrated authors. The series illustrates each architect's relationship with the city and in particular their “philosophy” for improving the relationship between old and new.»

[13] Carlo Doglio and Giuseppe Samonà edited for the educational department four episodes entitled *La Città*, broadcast on Wednesday 7 September 1977, 18.35 (first episode); Wednesday 14 September 1977, 18.35 (second episode); Wednesday 21 September, 18.35 (third episode); Wednesday 28 September, 18.35 (fourth and final episode) – Radiocorriere 36, 37, 38, 39, 1977.

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Alessandra Gabriele

Van Stoel tot Stad
The Television Program of Jaap Bakema

Abstract
The article analyses the television programme Van Stoel tot Stad (From Chair to City), conceived and hosted by Jaap Bakema in post-war Holland, as an example of architectural outreach aimed at a general audience. Through plain language and effective metaphors supported by quick, precise blackboard drawings, Bakema communicates complex themes related to built space in an accessible way, raising public awareness of citizens' rights to housing. The contribution examines this television experiment in depth, highlighting Bakema's communicative skills and the continuing relevance of his thought in relation to the urgent need to foster adequate spatial awareness in civil society.

Keywords
Jaap Bakema — Spatial Education — Communicating architecture

It is 21 October 1961. It is Sunday evening. Dutch television broadcasts a single channel, in black and white. The young broadcaster AVRO (*Algemene Vereniging Radio Omroep*), the first Dutch public broadcaster, has been in existence for only ten years.
Wearing a jacket and tie, his left hand in his pocket and his right hand holding a piece of chalk, facing the camera with his back to the blackboard, Jaap Bakema enters the homes of all Dutch viewers.
What appears before families is the figure of a teacher rather than that of an architect; yet the Rotterdam-based firm Van den Broek–Bakema is one of the largest architectural practices in Europe, with numerous projects to its name and hundreds of collaborators.
At the opening of the programme, the camera frames a chair and a handwritten chalk inscription, in cursive script: *Van Stoel tot Stad* (*From Chair to City*). After a few seconds, the shot cuts to a medium close-up of Bakema, wearing a wry smile, with a series of sketches on the blackboard behind him. In his hand, a piece of chalk with which he continues to fidget:

> Ladies and gentlemen, the story of the chair and the city is a difficult one. Difficult because, in fact, I do not intend to speak about chairs or cities, but rather about the space in which both are situatedited by [...] I want to speak about a love for space: you will surely understand how difficult this subject is, especially on a Sunday evening. Still, I believe it is worth addressing. And I will gladly do so. I have the feeling that we are living in a historical moment in which love for space is lacking [1].

These are the introductory words of Jaap Bakema: the program *Van Stoel tot Stad* was broadcast in two episodes between 1961 and 1962[2], and was

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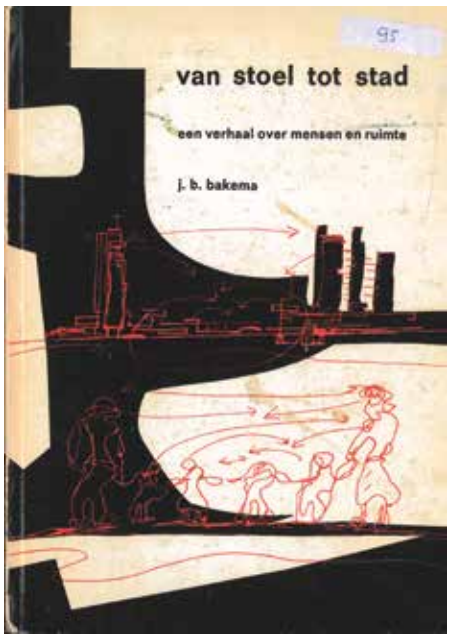


Fig. 1
Jaap Bakema, *Van Stoel tot stat. Een verhaal over menser en ruimte*, (English translation. From the Chair to the City. A Story of People and Space), W. De Haan N.V. Zeist, Anversa 1964. Cover.

directed by Leen Timp for a liberal, non-leftist channel, AVRO. As Dirk van den Heuvel notes[3], Timp was, at the time, one of the leading Dutch directors and was married to one of the most popular television presenters, Mies Bouwman. Bakema designed a single-family house (which was never built) for the couple and also planned a center for disabled people, which was constructed thanks to a televised fundraising campaign promoted and hosted by Mies Bouwman in 1962[4].

These facts attest to Bakema's position within the postwar Dutch establishment: a membership which, combined with his talent as a skilled communicator, enabled him to utilize various media to disseminate spatial themes, especially to non-specialist audiences. Indeed, Bakema proved capable of employing both specialized journals and general newspapers, television, exhibitions, lectures, workshops, and video recordings to share urban planning and architectural decisions with civil society, all according to a particular democratic vision of society.

Total Space and *Open Society* According to Jaap Bakema

As Francis Strauven (1992, p. 48) points out, the work and thought of Jaap Bakema are closely linked to the principles and characteristics of Dutch society: «a society with a strong sense of the common good and a tradition of social cooperation rooted in Calvinist ethics; a country largely reclaimed from the sea and traditionally ruled by a strict geometric order, dictated by the requirements of drainage engineering».

It is precisely in the Netherlands, in the northern Groningen region where he was born and raised, that Bakema finds his theoretical references in his wife's family: a family of doctors, teachers, and clergy through whom he was introduced to Krishnamurti's theosophy and the anarchist ideas of Domela Nieuwenhuis (Strauven 1998, p. 215).

Inspired by these currents of thought, Bakema conceived of the world as a space full of energy. From this pantheistic and theosophical view of life and space, the architect emerges as a figure tasked with mediating and facilitating the public's understanding and use of space within a democratic and just society – an *open society.*

For Bakema the idea of the open society evolved around the relationship of the individual toward the larger whole, be it the neighborhood, the city, society itself,

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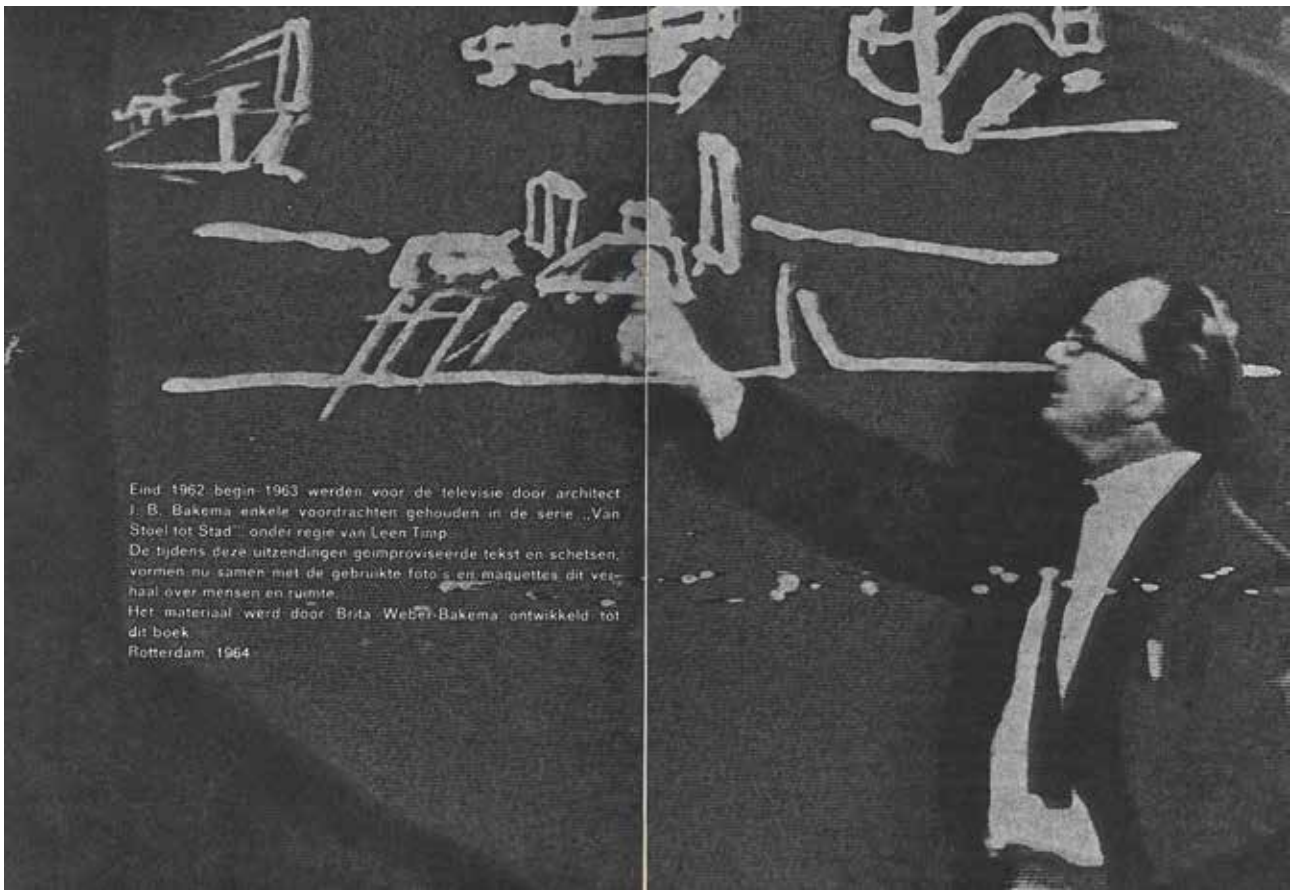


Fig. 2
Jaap Bakema, *Van Stoel tot stat. Een verhaal over menser en ruimte*, (English translation. From the Chair to the City. A Story of People and Space), W. De Haan N.V. Zeist, Anversa 1964. Opening Pages.

or what he called 'total space'. Architecture then was to enable the individual to become aware of his or her relationship to this larger whole, while the open society should be so generous and tolerant as to allow for the individual's self-realization (van den Heuvel 2014).
Therefore, for society to be truly democratic, it is necessary that citizens become more aware both of their own housing needs and of the possibilities offered by construction and building practices. Television, in this case, is a useful tool for Bakema to share architectural issues.

The Television Program, the Set, and Its Content

In 1964, the content of the television broadcast was transcribed by Bakema's daughter, Brita Bakema, into the eponymous book *Van Stoel tot Stad* (*From Chair to City*). The subtitle chosen for the publication is emblematic: *A Story of People and Space*[5].
It is of people, of space, of ancestral spatial actions, of construction techniques, and much more that Bakema speaks on television, addressing a general audience with direct language and easily understandable metaphors. And he does so by drawing. During the afternoon, he prepares a sort of conceptual map – an early prototype of what would now be considered such – outlining the evening's lecture: on the blackboard behind him appears a series of sketches and drawings. A remarkable visual journey that synthesizes his discourse through graphic symbols, especially, as he notes, to prevent a potential hazard: «otherwise they fear I might speak for too long».
The use of a conceptual map – even in its embryonic form – as a quintessential educational tool, designed to facilitate understanding and retention of knowledge, is an expression of Bakema's maieutic abilities. The architect frequently employs drawings, sketches, and diagrams to

communicate a project after it has been realized: the Bakema Archive at the *Nieuwe Instituut* in Rotterdam contains numerous drawings produced retrospectively, not only for clients but often for ordinary citizens as well. Dirk van den Heuvel refers to these as apocryphal drawings[6].

> Bakema drew less to design than to explain. Many of his drawings were not personal annotations but attempts to convey a message. They usually appeared in series and, in their explicit and narrative nature – often combining images and text – they recall the language of comics. (Baeten 1995, p. 3)

The practice of drawing as an explanatory and narrative tool is closely linked to Bakema's teaching activities, which from the 1950s accompanied his professional work with an intensive pedagogical practice (Heuvel 2022, p. 225). In seminars conducted as a visiting professor at numerous U.S. universities, and later as a professor at the Technische Universiteit Delft from 1963 onward, drawing, diagramming, and projection of images and films were employed as pedagogical instruments to make complex spatial relationships and architectural processes intelligible, rather than to define formal outcomes.

> The preferred format for these academic engagements was the workshop or design seminar – one that enabled intense study and exchange in a relatively short period of time. The preferred topic was always a local issue related to the modernization of the city, its public spaces, and infrastructure. For instance, at Washington University, where Bakema was a visiting professor in 1959, the design project involved "The Humane Core: A Civic Center for St. Louis". (van den Heuvel 2022, p. 227)

In this light, *Van Stoel tot Stad* can be understood as a televisual translation of an already established teaching practice: the blackboard, chalk, and progressive construction of the visual discourse reproduce the seminar setting, extending it to a non-specialist audience.
Bakema's narration on Dutch television, broadcast on Sunday evenings during prime time, was divided into two parts: the first concerning the history of human transformations of space over the centuries; the second updating these same transformative actions and construction techniques according to a *persistence of images* informed by Warburgian memory.
The story told by Bakema is «a story that began a long time ago, which we still know today: I recall it to encourage reflection», he says. It is a story that stretches from the chair to the city: from the act of sitting as an ancestral gesture of spatial appropriation to the shaping of natural and urban landscapes. Space and humanity are intimately connected through reciprocal relationships: environmental quality depends on how we inhabit and appropriate space, Bakema affirms.
«We do not build only to shelter ourselves from nature, but also to seek a relationship with it». Digging a circular pit to be used as a seat, planting a tree, constructing a church – these are actions that humans have repeated for millennia, shaping the environment and seeking a connection with it, especially when that environment is the flat Dutch landscape.
The blackboard representations are not only perspective and axonometric drawings – three-dimensional depictions of space easily understood by all – but also two-dimensional abstractions such as plans and schematic sections. Quick yet legible strokes. And then the glance at the camera, maintaining visual contact with the viewer and transforming communication into a

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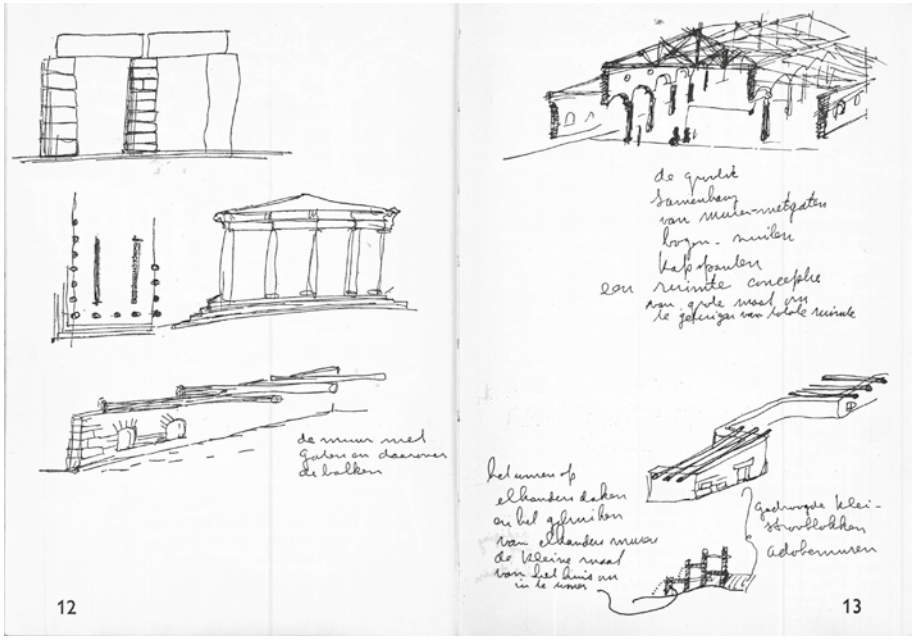


Fig. 3
Jaap Bakema, *Van Stoel tot stat. Een verhaal over menser en ruimte*, (English translation. From the Chair to the City. A Story of People and Space), W. De Haan N.V. Zeist, Anversa 1964. Interior Pages: evolution of the constructive systems drawn by Bakema on the blackboard.

challenging monologue.
What may seem self-evident to a specialist audience is not so for a general audience. Bakema understood this, and using simple vocabulary and metaphors, he conveyed these concepts on television. Comparisons with contemporary experience are frequent, making the discourse more relatable: the Gothic system of column-arch-buttress allows for large spans comparable to those of a modern airplane hangar. Similarly, the Greek trilitic system is the same system employed in the construction of our houses: columns and walls carry the weight of beams and floors and transfer it to the ground. Thus, transformative and inhabiting actions in space, along with their associated construction systems, persist through time, albeit naturally updatedited by
Bakema was well aware of the potential of a powerful, far-reaching medium like television in the early 1960s, and he naturally addressed themes emerging from discussions within Team 10, of which he was a member. On an autumn Sunday evening, Dutch households were thus introduced to issues such as public space, threshold space, and the space between objects, accompanied by a critique of «dehumanizing spaces designed for the anonymous user».
In this context, Bakema's thought is closely intertwined with that of Aldo van Eyck, co-founder of Team 10, who, drawing on Buber's philosophy, developed the idea of "space between" and defined the *In-between Realm* as a place of encounter, of relation, and of mediation between opposites. A space that is neither private nor public, neither inside nor outside, neither closed nor open: a relational condition made concrete through architectural form.
In the third issue of *Forum* in 1960, the famous issue dedicated to threshold space as the space of the in-between, Bakema defines architecture as «three-dimensional expression of human behavior», emphasizing that «the fact that walls, windows, front gap, door, floor, roofs, stairs are primary means of making living an experience of space has simply become unintelligible» (Bakema 1960, p. 122).
To communicate on television the value of the space between things as a space for human relations, Bakema uses a metaphor, whose graphic

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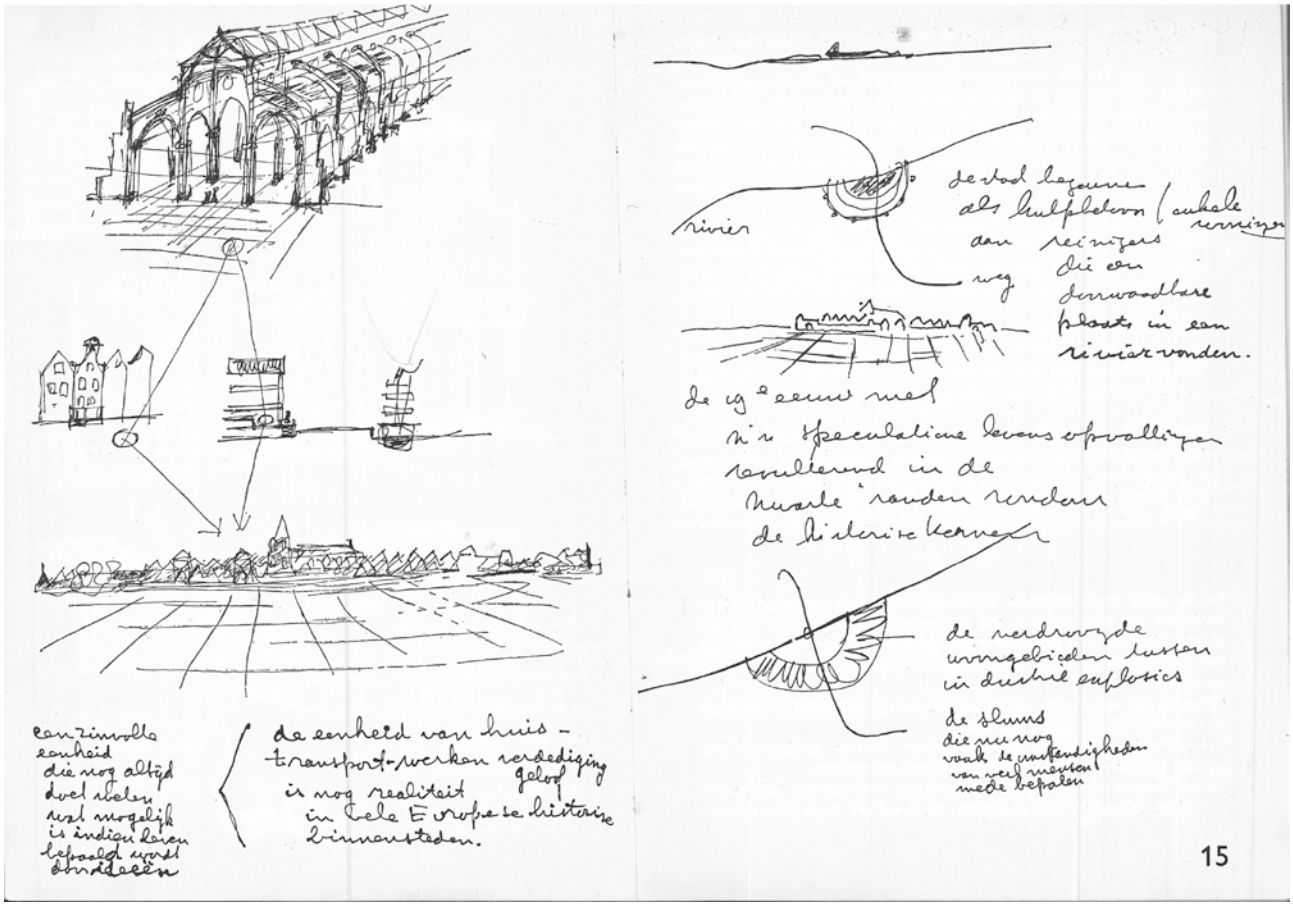


Fig. 4
Jaap Bakema, *Van Stoel tot stat. Een verhaal over menser en ruimte*, (English translation. From the Chair to the City. A Story of People and Space), W. De Haan N.V. Zeist, Anversa 1964. Interior Pages: evolution of the constructive systems drawn by Bakema on the blackboard..

representation became emblematic and was later used on the cover of the book containing the program's transcription.
Bakema states (1964, pp. 48-50): «buildings could become friends again, as sometimes happens among people through their children or animals. [...] Buildings could, in a sense, reach out to each other again, and the same could happen with the two sides of a street».
Bakema thus produces two drawings on the blackboard and relates them to one another. The first depicts an urban profile in which tall lateral buildings define a central courtyard-like space, protected and human-scaledited by To this drawing he associates a second: a group of people, two adults at the sides and four children in the center. Through the energetic and positive push of the central children, the adults re-establish human, relational contact, just as the courtyard space resonates with the taller surrounding buildings.
Public space is not only a transitional or passage space; it is the vital space of communal life. As Bakema affirms «the relationship between individual space and public (total) space must result from a design action that simultaneously considers individuality and collectivity» (Bakema 1964, p. 21).

Knowing in Order to Care for Space: The Contemporary Relevance of Bakema's Thought

The image of Bakema at the blackboard, drawing and explaining architectural issues, is that of a teacher rather than a solipsistic architect. It bears little resemblance to the contemporary television appearances of architects such as Le Corbusier and Wright, or later to those of Rem Koolhaas or Jean Nouvel. As Sophie Suma argues in her research:

«paradoxically, when architecture is presented on television by architects, it is no longer a popular subject!» (Suma 2021, p. 9).
The image of the architect conveyed by the media is often stereotypical: a man, extremely erudite, a solitary creator whose references are frequently drawn from philosophy, art, and music.
For Bakema, by contrast, the architect's task is to involve and raise awareness within post-war civil society about the processes of territorial transformation. It is therefore necessary to promote communicative and educational actions devoted to architecture. In contemporary society, he writes, decisions in the architectural field are taken by a small circle of professionals, while the majority of citizens lack specific knowledge in this domain.

> What does the average user know about our new buildings and cities, about the greater or lesser comfort that different spatial layouts can offer to the miracle that allows them to exist? It is indeed true that in this case, the concept of space is of fundamental importance. (Bakema 1964, p. 91)

Bakema's television program *Van Stoel tot Stad* was broadcast in only two episodes, making it difficult to argue that it had a significant impact on post-war Dutch civil society. Alongside this initiative, however, Bakema engaged in numerous other forms of public dissemination aimed at facilitating the understanding of spatial notions. In addition to his involvement in editing the Dutch magazine "Forum" between 1959 and 1963, Bakema designed and realized several exhibitions – powerful communicative devices with strong educational value[7].
In 1970, the firm van den Broek en Bakema, in collaboration with Carel Weeber, designed the Dutch Pavilion for the Osaka World Expo as a gigantic communicative display. Directors, filmmakers, graphic designers, and artists collaborated on the project, which engaged a broad public – thousands of visitors per day – also with architectural themes[8].
Alongside television, magazines, and exhibitions, Bakema also made use of the cinematic medium. As early as the mid-1950s, shortly after movie cameras became commercially available, Bakema owned a Bell & Howell camera that accompanied him on all his travels, with which he produced hours of footage, including recordings of the final CIAM meetings and Team 10 gatherings. These films were later screened during his lectures.
Only at a later stage, in the mid-1960s, did Bakema set up a film laboratory in his studio in order to produce explanatory films of his projects: true documentaries, precursors to contemporary 3D videos, created by moving the camera through physical models and used to explain his designs to citizens and clients.
Television, newspapers, exhibitions, and projections were instruments superbly employed by Bakema who, as a gifted communicator, mediated spatial and architectural knowledge to society at large. Knowledge, he argued, is the only way to care for space. This position appears particularly significant when read in light of the poor quality of many contemporary urban spaces, which makes evident the urgency of widespread educational and communicative action in the field of architecture.
The choice to use television to discuss the city, housing, spatial quality, and citizens' rights is not merely a communicative gesture, but a form of cultural militancy – a way of bringing architecture out of professional circles and into the civic debate. Bakema was able to place at the center

of public discourse issues such as the quality of living spaces and the importance and value of public and relational spaces: themes that in the 1960s risked being overshadowed by the grand narratives of modernist planning, and that today have returned to the core of urgent debates on spatial justice, access to housing, and the right to the city.
It is necessary today, as it was then, to reflect on the sharing of architectural culture, to work on the effectiveness of communication between specialists and users, and on the mediation of content and issues pertaining to the field of architecture.

> The care of space can achieve results provided that it is a total care. [...] A care that must also be exercised through economic, political, socio-technical, and cultural disciplines. Culture as a balance between use and care! (Bakema in Gubitosi, Izzo, 1972 p. 20)

Notes

[1] The two episodes of the program are preserved in the archives of the Dutch Institute for Sound and Vision (*Beeld & Geluid*). The first part of the program is freely available at the following YouTube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPYRgLSYt6E, accessed March 2025.
[2] The dates of the program are not unanimous: Bakema reports in the book, based on the program's transcript, the dates 1962–63, whereas the Dutch Institute for Sound and Vision records the dates as 1961 and 1962.
[3] See Dirk van den Heuvel, Arjen Oosterman, Brendan Cormier (eds.), *Open: A Bakema Celebration*, Die Keure, Brugge 2014.
Dirk van den Heuvel, a faculty member at the TU Delft Architecture Department, is the founder and director of the Jaap Bakema Study Centre at the Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam. He was co-curator of the Dutch Pavilion at the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale, dedicated to the Dutch architect.
[4] The television program *Open het Dorp* (Open the Village) raised the necessary funds for the construction of the Het Dorp center for disabled people, designed by the Van den Broek & Bakema office, aimed at accommodating disabled individuals (Dirk van den Heuvel, 2014).
[5] Jaap Bakema, *Van Stoel tot stat. Een verhaal over menser en ruimte*, (translated as *From Chair to City. A Story of People and Space*), W. De Haan N.V. Zeist, Anversa 1964.
[6] Dirk van den Heuvel indeed writes: "Notably too, many of the sketches in the archive are apocryphal, made after the projects were realized in order to explain the basic design concept and how it fit his larger view on the discipline as a whole and architecture's role in society," in Dirk van den Heuvel, *The elusive bigness of Bakema*, in Dirk van den Heuvel (ed.), *Bakema and the open society*, Archis, Amsterdam 2018, p. 21.
[7] The exhibition *Building for an Open Society*, held in 1962 at the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam, guided visitors through a sequence composed not only of drawings but also of photographs of the studio's projects displayed at human height. By contrast, the exhibition *Cityplan Eindhoven*, held at the Van Abbemuseum in 1969, allowed citizens to move freely within a scale model of the urban intervention proposed by the van den Broek en Bakema office for the city center. The model was built at a 1:20 scale and positioned at eye level, so that the spatial experience would be more realistic and immersive. In an adjacent room, an interactive model enabled visitors to touch, move, and manipulate the buildings, almost as if they were Lego blocks.
[8] Jorrit Sipkes, *Communication Machine*, in D. van den Heuvel (ed.), *Bakema and the Open Society*, cit., pp. 224–231.

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Massimo Zammerini

The transmissibility of Architecture beyond the stereotype

Abstract
Brady Corbet's *The Brutalist* (2024) sparked a debate that revealed how communication on architectural themes and the roles of the architect is marked by misunderstandings both within and outside the discipline. The Industrial Revolution established a before and after, and public judgment on architecture has led the majority of opinion to the equation: old=beautiful, modern=ugly. The separation between building and architecture has further narrowed critical interest to exceptional episodes, while cities continue to grow according to unpopular models. The transmissibility of architecture must contend with the interpretive tools available to the general public. Television and the internet penetrate every layer of society. The stereotypes proposed by television, social media, and advertising have shaped taste, undermining at its very roots even the relationship between architect and client.

Keywords
Architecture — Stereotype — Communication — Advertising — Education

Introduction

In 1974, at the age of twelve, I visited for the first time what was then called the Gallery of Modern Art in Rome, now GNAMC. Beyond the columns of the entrance hall was a large rectangular room overlooking the internal garden, furnished for exhibition with shiny tubular metal furniture supporting strips of leather, canvas, and pony skin, swivel chairs, and single-leg tables, white and very slender, with stools in natural wood with eye-catching connections between the legs and the seat. I learned that they were pieces by Le Corbusier, Marcel Breuer, Eero Saarinen, and Alvar Aalto. Almost no one knew them, only architects and a few admirers. They had been put into production, with the courage and foresight of Italian and foreign entrepreneurs in the 1960s, by Amedeo Cassina, Dino Gavina, Knoll International, and a few others, and were not yet called "design classics." I never stopped redrawing them in my notebooks or on the blackboard, and one Sunday morning in the summer, on the No. 30 tram, I took a small group of school friends from Monteverde to Parioli to admire these objects, which I have never stopped loving and collecting, so much so that fifty years later, I brought them into the classroom at Valle Giulia, a few meters from the Gallery, from my home, so that the students could observe, measure, and redraw them from life, which they greatly appreciated (Fig. 1).

Palma Bucarelli, superintendent of the Gallery from 1945 to 1975, had realized since the late 1940s that good modern architecture was also a legitimate form of artistic expression. In 1987, Daniela Fonti interviewed Bucarelli[1]:



Fig. 1
Second-year students in the Design Laboratory at the Faculty of Architecture study from life and redraw the details of certain modern pieces of furniture of particular historical significance, brought into the classroom by their teacher, who in turn had encountered them as a boy, fifty years earlier at the Gallery of Modern Art in Rome, one of the many institutional places "beyond school" dedicated to the dissemination of art and architecture culture. Direct, personal experience guarantees a form of knowledge that is sheltered from passive and impersonal reception and helps to observe things beyond stereotypes. Photo M. Zammerini 2023.

«[...] since 1945, having found an audience completely unaware of developments in modern art, I devised and carried out an annual program of activities that I called educational (at the time, the initiative caused a scandal), accompanied by a leaflet that was sent in thousands of copies especially to schools, with my personal letter to the principals recommending that they distribute it, and to museums and cultural institutions around the world so that they would be promptly informed of the annual calendar, from June to October, divided into: conferences with color projections on Sunday mornings, alternating with art documentaries and films by artists; exhibitions of large color reproductions of major artists and movements accompanied by biographical, historical, and critical writings; what I called the "Work of the Day," an important work placed in particular evidence in its hall and also accompanied by biographical, historical, and critical writings; evening lectures (I did this as an experiment, thinking that no Romans would come, but instead I had the pleasure of seeing the room always full, so much so that I had to install loudspeakers in the adjacent rooms)».

And to the question [If you were to return to direct the Gallery, what would you do?] she replied, to my satisfaction, «In the educational sector, in addition to resuming all the events I mentioned, I would rearrange the beautiful large educational exhibition on the history of modern architecture, consisting of large photographs and illustrative writings, as well as models of the most famous buildings and examples of industrial design such as the tables and chairs by Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and Alvar Aalto». I believe that the presence of these pieces of furniture served as a link between high-quality modern architecture, which was not so well known, and everyday objects, which, although "different," established a familiar relationship with visitors, and in any case aroused curiosity that soon turned into admiration and appreciation. The secret of this success, which exploded in the following decades with the phenomenon of cheaper "fakes" (once the rights expired after fifty years, as happened with fashion brands), makes us reflect on the potential that cultural institutions possess. The Gallery"s educational vocation is still reaffirmed today under the direction of Renata Cristina Mazzantini, an architect, with initiatives that open the doors to the city, triggering a process of involvement extended to the general public, including on architectural issues and through direct



Fig. 2
Andrea Palladio"s Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza, with its fixed stage design by Vincenzo Scamozzi, is a piece of architecture that can itself be a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge, the perfect place to recognize the ideal communion between community, institutions, and architecture. Photo A. Capanna 2025.

contact with the artist, who approaches people and tells his story.

The experience of architecture, theater, ritual, and the negativity of immersive situations.

I wanted to introduce my reflections with a reference to a personal experience because I believe that the dissemination of architecture involves a reciprocal relationship between institutions and citizens and is fundamentally based on personal knowledge of the works and their creators. This statement is consciously counter to the media bombardment based on the quantity of images available on the Internet, which is finally beginning to be viewed with growing detachment and concern. The reasons are well known and it would be redundant to repeat them, but I would like to refer once again to a personal case where the relationship between "inside and outside school" acts as a "hinge". During a lesson at the Piazza Borghese campus, I projected a photograph of Via Fontanella Borghese taken in the early afternoon with the slanting light emphasizing the reliefs of the facades in perspective towards Trinità dei Monti, and I asked the students to observe this single photograph for two hours and do whatever they thought was most appropriate: a drawing, a piece of writing, or just observing. I knew that when they left the faculty, they would only have to take a few steps to find that vantage point. The students" reaction was initially one of bewilderment, followed by silence and intense concentration. I had never seen them so interested, and once outside, they were all there to see for themselves what they had been fantasizing about. Above all, for two hours, they had devoted themselves to one thing and were, I think, focused. Finally, having closed Pinterest, which takes you around the world in eighty seconds, they had "seen" the beauty in those projecting cornices, those windows surmounted by protruding gables with the sharp shadows of a beautiful sunny day. They had finally noticed what they had always had before their eyes, every day.



Fig. 3
The expressive power of the fusion between architecture and fresco painting offers the faithful a form of learning mediated by art. Collegiate Church of St. John the Baptist in Morbegno, dating back to the mid-17th century, with rich paintings by Pietro Ligari and liturgical adaptation proposed for the national competition, finalist project by Massimo Zammerini, Liturgist Don Mauro Dibenedetto, Collaborators J. Di Criscio, G. Feliziani, J. G. Simion, 2023.

Fig. 4
A technological transposition of the idea of a fresco, where the temporary subjects are photographic shots depicting major themes of suffering on a global scale, projected as in a 360-degree cinema onto the ceiling. The declared artifice removes the design idea from an "immersive" characterization, which is rejected as ambiguous and incongruous. The observer remains fully aware of their "distance" from the dramatic events depicted. Project by Massimo Zammerini for the Vicariate of Rome"s invitation-only competition for the Church of San Carlo Borromeo in Via Amaldi, Rome, 2005.

If real life is more beautiful than virtual life, an architect"s creativity feeds on reality but also on dreams, projections, and intangible culture. And if Rome, an open-air stage, teaches us the "theatricality" of architecture, theater is an art form where architecture also enters as an intrinsic element of the narrative, with the dimensions of space and time subjected to daring manipulations, and has always been the place designated for the transmission of knowledge (Fig. 2). The coexistence of a real and virtual dimension, typical of theatrical representation, expresses precisely the magnificent richness of architecture, which responds both to man"s practical needs and to his aspiration to access the deeper meanings of existence. This is also found in the reason for the construction of religious buildings, which provide food for thought starting from the narrative tradition of frescoes, one of the most powerful means of communication and teaching in history, which, however, has nothing to do with the "immersive" character that is so celebrated today (Fig. 3, 4). It is sometimes said, with a certain smugness, that modern life is immersed in another world thanks to technology, but even a cultural activity such as a virtual tour of a building, not to mention exhibitions where you can "enter" Van Gogh"s paintings, to cite one example, express that intransitive character which, in our view, is the source of many evils. The idea of immersiveness shifts the focus from the object to the subject, culminating in the most devastating manifestation of our age: the selfie. The direct relationship with works of art, like leafing through an architecture book, are transitive operations that allow us to step outside ourselves and go out to meet others. Without encounter, there is no teaching and there is no life, because life is the product of encounter. The shift of attention to the virtual environment causes growing disinterest, especially among the younger generations which includes the built environment as well as nature, and the results are a rejection of care for the real context and interpersonal relationships, with all the harm that ensues. It is very difficult to sow seeds in this arid soil, and until we manage to find the right balance, the effects of knowledge dissemination will continue to be lukewarm, despite the great resources available, which are extremely useful but need to be managed. I believe that we need to work hard on education in the early years of an individual"s life, continuously stimulating love and interest in what is immediately around them and what



Fig. 5
One of the principles for establishing a relationship with reality, and with the architecture that surrounds us, is a transitive attitude towards objects outside oneself. In this 1966 photo, a kindergarten child points out the fish in a fountain in the school garden to his classmates. This action reflects the attitude of sharing the pleasure of knowledge with others, a basic principle in educational processes that is not so obvious today, partly inhibited by the narcissism induced by the abuse of cell phones and social media, which tend to shift attention towards oneself and not towards the outside world, especially thanks to "selfies." Photo by M.P. Zammerini, 1966.

can be experienced without the mediation of technology (fig. 5). In this sense, beyond school" encompasses a broader dimension of the concept of school, where all manifestations of life, in some way, teach.

Art house cinema and architecture.
Art house cinema is a form of expression that often includes architecture as a distinctive backdrop and has an impact on the viewer"s memory, who will remember the scenes that struck their imagination for a long time to come. Modern American villas, including those designed by Bruce Goff and chosen by set designer Ken Adam for the James Bond series, have remained etched in the memory of the general public, who have become familiar with Wrightian aesthetics through houses "similar" to those of the master of organic architecture. The narrative requirements of a screenplay lead to the need to set the events according to certain choices. The director, set designer, and director of photography research the locations they deem appropriate, supplemented by sets created for the occasion. Many directors have had a particular sensitivity to architecture, and each has sometimes had precise ideas about the role that sets should play in relation to the narrative. Michelangelo Antonioni captured the anxieties of affluent Italian society, for example against the backdrop of the cold, newly built apartment blocks in the semi-deserted EUR district of the 1960s in *L"eclisse* in 1962. Luchino Visconti captured the drama of architecture, a silent witness to our lives that flow within it, always well anchored in the choice of locations or in studio reconstructions of the climate of each era, thanks to a cultured research into pictorial references, always evident, with the Macchiaioli for *Senso* (1954), in the popular and geometric dwellings of Albini chosen for *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* in 1960, with the appropriate opulence of *Il Gattopardo* in 1963. An interesting portrait of the complex relationships between architect, client, and civil society, also with regard to resistance to innovation and the difficulties of asserting one"s ideas, appears as a theme in several films, including *The Fountainhead* (1949) (Fig. 6), then the great visionaries such as Peter Greenaway, from *The Draughtsman"s Contract* in 1982 to *The Belly of an Architect* in 1987, or films directly dedicated to architects, from Sidney Pollack"s *Frank Gehry: The Dream Maker* in 2005 to Wim Wenders" extensive filmography, in which architecture



Fig. 6
Gary Cooper plays architect Howard Roark in "The Fountainhead" (1949), Turner Entertainment, in: Film Architecture, From Metropolis to Blade Runner, edited by Dietrich Neumann, Prestel Munich New York, 1996, pp. 129–133.

always plays a leading role. Art cinema, as Jean Nouvel points out, is also an effective vehicle for disseminating architecture and raising awareness of the art of seeing and framing reality.

The dual function of framing: design act and vehicle of communication.
Photography presupposes the choice of a subject to portray, a point of view, and the definition of a frame. The use of cell phones has exponentially multiplied the abuse of photography as the main tool for impersonal memory and dissemination. Associated with the Internet and social media, photography has lost its direct relationship with its author. The depersonalization of photography, acquired from social media or various websites dedicated to architecture, amputates the formative experience of the architect, who does not personally create the frame, but undergoes it uncritically or, at best, chooses it. The loss of authorship of the shot favors the stereotypical dimension of photography, already introduced in some way with the transition from analog to digital. Once again, we insist on the loss of the transitive dimension between subject and object, which is the basis of any reasoning on the very concept of dissemination.
But framing is also a real design tool, it is pure intention, and guides the fundamental choices of the project, in the dual and reciprocal relationship between interior and exterior, or rather exteriors, between buildings and contexts, in the layout of floor plans, in the design of sequences, passageways, and entrances. A good example of this is the Renaissance and Baroque enfilade of doors in rhythmic sequence adjacent to windows. The art of framing, with its rules and rituals, is a powerful means of transmitting the most solid regulatory principles of architecture. It can be



Fig. 7
The enfilade of doors as a framing device for sequences is a recurring spatial theme in the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Eighteenth-century interiors of the Villa della Regina in Turin and projection of Filippo Juvarra"s frescoes in the new entrance hall intended for activities related to the historic villa. Competition for the New Reception Wing of the Villa della Regina in Turin, designed by M. Zammerini, 2010.

practiced anywhere, and there is a mutual transfer in the act of design, as the use of perspective has demonstrated over the centuries (fig. 7).

TV and the full affirmation of stereotypes

TV is an exceptional communication tool, including for culture. We are reminded of this by the many initiatives of Rai, starting with the idea of mass literacy curated by Alberto Manzi in the program *Non è mai troppo tardi*, broadcast from 1960 to 1968 and then exported to 72 foreign countries, to programs dedicated to art and architecture, including the light-hearted variety shows of the 1960s, often produced with tasteful sets and carefully studied characters designed to have a strong impact on the audience (Fig. 8), and even commercials, among which we remember a particular series of "Caroselli Barilla" from the late 1950s, entrusted to Oscar-winning architect and set designer Pietro Gherardi, who worked on many of Federico Fellini"s films. In these commercials, Mina sings, dressed in phantasmagorical costumes designed by Gherardi himself, against the backdrop of locations that are nothing short of ingenious, perfect for the black and white of the time and just right for the lyrics of the songs: the "Colosseo quadrato", the mirror maze at Luna Park, the roofs of Morandi"s railway station, a veil of fringed curtains moved by fans on curved tracks reminiscent of a Mies van der Rohe installation, a building site under construction, and a small scenographic cameo by Mario Ceroli with wooden silhouettes of enigmatic faces.

Television could have been an extraordinary vehicle for education, but this has only been partially true, especially since the advent of commercial TV. The need to sell products to a vast audience has led to the development of easily understandable languages, and this is how stereotypes are born, an ambiguous link between the message and its immediate understanding by the viewer-buyer. Television commercials require backgrounds for the

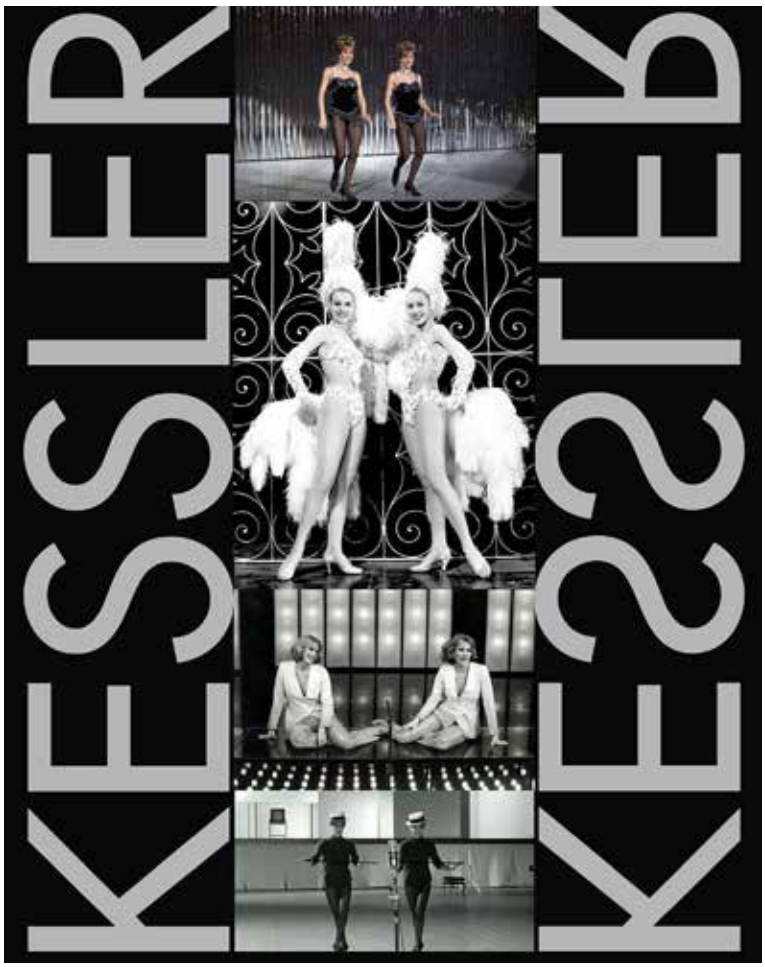


Fig. 8
Graphic illustration by the author on the theme of "symmetrical twins" proposed by Rai with Alice and Ellen Kessler, television variety dancers in the 1960s. During these years, black and white television identified certain types of shows that would have an enormous influence on public taste. The linear sets of these years then gave way to a profound gradual degeneration, made even more evident with the arrival of color. The medium of broadcasting became increasingly pervasive, entering every home on a daily basis, but the models proposed became flattened in order to appeal to the masses, implying that the general public was not sufficiently intelligent.

actions, external and internal settings that are not random but appropriately frame the message. These backgrounds help to reinforce the mood of the commercial and make it more appealing to the viewer. The criteria that guide the choice of locations for fiction are not very different, so much so that location managers have actual illustrated catalogs divided by type to show to directors and set designers. In addition to providing logistical information, these catalogs contain a sort of score for each location that includes the audience rating index. It is no better for sets created for the occasion: the ugly wooden villa in *Medico in famiglia*, built only for exteriors at Cinecittà, with its interiors in a sound stage, was so popular that it became a model to be copied. The television era has led to a symmetrical relationship between fiction and reality, where one copies the other in the name of fully affirming stereotypes: the villa with a lawn and barbecue for the family, the "New York" apartment for the intellectual or the ambitious single person, from Woody Allen to *Sex and the City* (two examples that also pay great attention to the architectural settings of interiors and exteriors). The dynamic open-plan workplace, from *Three Days of the Condor* to *Working Girl*, the countless "emergency rooms", prisons (incidentally, in fiction they are always the same with minor changes), the loft, now obsolete, a conformist symbol of an unconventional life, but above all the opulent and tacky Californian villas of the most watched soap operas in television history, from *Dallas* to *Dynasty* to *The Bold and the Beautiful*. How are these houses designed by communication experts? They appeal to the growing desire for individualism. We are in the 1980s, at the height of Reaganite hedonism, and they will find enormous public approval, so much so that they will become models to be replicated in real life. Institutions

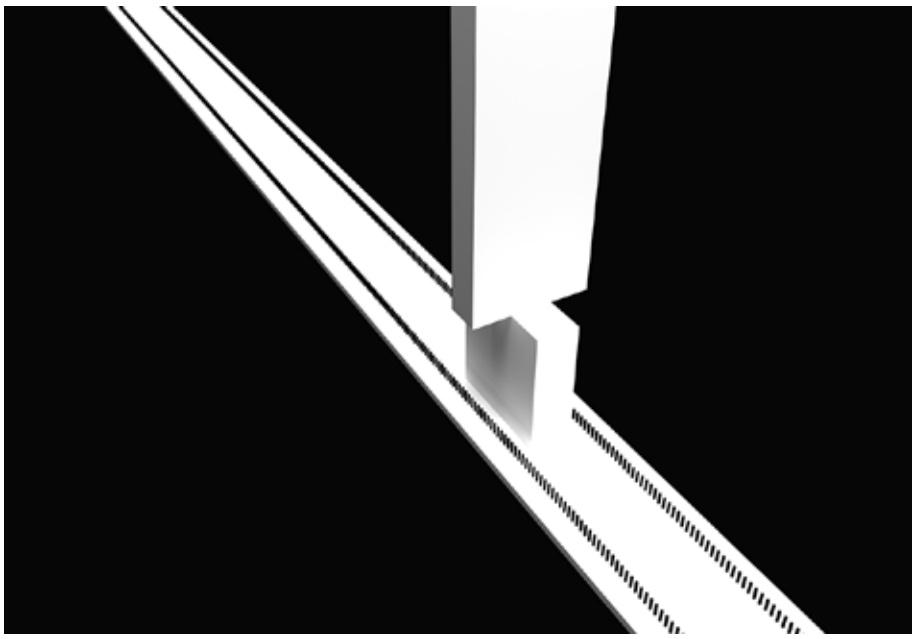


Fig. 9
"Smooth as rails on the black sea, the door is still open."
"The infinite pier and the monument to PASSAGES visualize the extreme and precarious condition of migrants. Just press the button to activate the hinge and the monolith reassembles itself. No passage, no hope, the rail breaks. But fortunately, the obelisks are heavy and no longer move."
Massimo Zammerini, still image from the video "PASSAGGI," "19th Venice Architecture Biennale" curated by Carlo Ratti, Arsenale Italian Pavilion, curator Guendalina Salimei, session "Social Activation and Participation," May 10/November 23, 2025.

involved in architecture underestimate the phenomenon, observing it with condescension, but the world does not look to universities and does not listen to our conferences.
Television in those years, and today especially the Internet, are the most powerful tools for disseminating all kinds of content, as the numbers show. Therefore, schools, universities, and cultural institutions will have to find a way to influence programming schedules and content. The creators of programs dedicated primarily to the history of architecture have tried and succeeded, even if the price to pay is the trivialization of 3D reconstructions where the Colosseum looks like a suburban outlet mall, but better than nothing, for now.

Beyond stereotypes, what are the most appropriate means?
Conveying the culture of modern architecture beyond stereotypes is no easy task. The cultural and technical revolution at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries also affected architecture. The advent of reinforced concrete has made possible, for better or worse, a profound transformation of the face of entire cities. Zoning urban planning has left indelible marks on a global scale, and Italian legislation has allowed professionals who are less culturally prepared than architects to build (up to three stories) the widespread, mediocre buildings that characterize all neighborhoods built after the 1950s, made up of fake curtain walls, cantilevered balconies with uncertain designs and railings, and buildings with layouts that are completely out of alignment with the cityscape that had been scrupulously preserved until the early 20th century. All this certainly did not contribute to a positive assessment of the very concept of modernity in architecture and produced a mass addiction to an idea of architecture and the city that has no basis in history. For every beautiful modern building by Moretti, there are thousands of others that have sprung up without any architectural culture. So what should be conveyed, even outside of school, if not rare examples of good architectural practices, and which institutions can promote experimentation in our sector? Certainly international architecture exhibitions which, as in the case of the Venice Biennale, systematically address contemporary issues from a broad perspective that encompasses global scenarios and problems, including dramatic ones (Fig. 9), or local



Fig. 10
"Roma come stai?" Three evenings in Piazza Borghese in Rome to promote architectural culture. First edition 2017. Curated by Orazio Carpenzano, Stefano Catucci, Fabrizio Toppetti, Massimo Zammerini, Fabio Balducci, Federico Di Cosmo, DiAP Department, Sapienza University of Rome. Photo M. Zammerini 2017.

initiatives supported by institutions that leave their buildings to meet citizens and raise their awareness of urban and architectural issues, such as, to give an example that is familiar to me, *Roma come stai?* (Rome, how are you?), which was created with the idea of bringing the contents of university research activities out of the school gates and into the streets[2] (Fig. 10). Then there are the many well-known initiatives, from Open House to associations that promote guided tours, to the FAI, thanks to which anyone can access the country"s many architectural sites, and many other organizations linked to the dissemination of architectural heritage in particular. Last but not least, one of the essential vehicles for experiencing architecture firsthand is travel, which has always been an opportunity for discovery, sharing, and growth.

Notes

[1] The story of thirty years, from 1945 to 1975, of the work of the Superintendent of the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome. From "Giornale dell"Arte" no. 48, August 1987.

[2] An initiative of the Department of Architecture and Design of Sapienza University of Rome, launched in 2017 by Orazio Carpenzano, Stefano Catucci, Fabrizio Toppetti, Massimo Zammerini, Fabio Balducci, Federico Di Cosmo and, since 2023, also by Giulia Ghia, Maria Chiara Ghia and Luca Porqueddu.

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Anna Fabris

The digital iconic process. Critical decoding and ingenuous image conversion methods

Abstract
In the age of the commodification of ideas and architectural creation, one wonders what the only transdisciplinary and transmedia strongpoint capable of disseminating meaningful content might be.
We therefore arrive at the archetypal role of the image: in today's bulimic assumption of content, what remains of the original assumption of the image? Can it still constitute, despite mass dissemination, a meaningful entity, or has it emptied itself of the semantic value that Samonà attributed to it as early as the 1960s?
The digital transmissibility of architectural culture will be ensured by a conscious and integrated use of artificial intelligence, which will tend to play a supporting role in the participatory process of decoding the ingenuous image into an intended image.

Keywords
Architectural Language — Semiotics — Icon — Image — Iconic Code

In the current landscape, dominated by digital platforms and algorithmic visual distribution systems, defined by an intricate and heterogeneous media ecosystem that highlights the growing dominance of digital technology in the acquisition of information, most content is subject to the logic of instant and consumerist use. In this context, the image, understood as the most effective product of immediate consumption, seems to lose a semantic structure in which to recognize a complex system of cultural codes and meanings, limiting itself instead to a mere object of partial understanding. This process is closely linked to the commodification of ideas, where the sign becomes an autonomous vehicle, detached from its content. However, despite this progressive semantic desertification, the question remains open as to the possibility of regenerating the role of the image as a device that is offered to a subject destined to interpret it, endowed with its own direction and interpretative awareness.
Before turning to the semiological studies conducted in the 1960s across various disciplinary fields, identifying them as the most suitable theoretical terrain for this consideration of the image as a vehicle for messages, it seems necessary to intercept a theoretical reference framework, which certainly has its roots in the methods of structural linguistics that can be traced back to Ferdinand de Saussure, whose focus is on identifying what is essential in the functioning of language. According to this configuration, language is first and foremost form, since it is constituted primarily by totally arbitrary signs.
The arbitrariness of the sign allows us to understand why only social reality can create a linguistic system: the community is necessary to establish values, whose only reason for being lies in their use and mutual

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Fig. 1
Canaletto, Capriccio with Palladian Buildings, after 1744 – before 1758. Oil on canvas (58x82) cm. National Gallery of Parma

understanding within a social context.
The semiological studies conducted in the 1960s played an essential leading role in the acquisition of deep-rooted awareness of the nature of images and icons as semantic derivatives:

> Significant signs are iconic, that is, they are images. Images are the visual result of the perception of objects that fall under our eyes. The immediate image-form is ingenuous and of simple resemblance: each part of the object finds in the image a copy of itself that is more or less conforming, with more or less vague contours, depending on the attention and sensitivity of the person looking at the object [...]. (Samonà 1970s)

If the ingenuous image is merely an instinctive perception, the icon represents the contraction of an intentional and meaningful image[1], the apex of a climax of critical understanding that starts from the ingenuous image and is sublimated in the icon.
The transition of the intended image into an icon means that the latter, as a set of signs and codes aimed at a certain number of subjects towards whom understanding is oriented, extends to a wider audience, taking on a universal meaning.
The image, a vehicle for noble or irreverent meanings, has always been subject to the service of meaning, being itself significant in establishing itself as an icon and representing the outcome of a cultural process of semantic attribution: «We can therefore refer to the ICONIC CODE as the system that matches a system of graphic vehicles with coded perceptual and cultural units [...]» (Eco 1975).
Assuming that images remain the main vehicle of architectural language, a synthesis of a complex system of signs, what are the margins of vulnerability for a cultural device that only takes shape thanks to the value

code it meets, which is currently so heterogeneous in a digital dimension of common ownership? Who has the right to give intentions to the images? The concept of digital ownership and stakeholder involvement has its semantic roots in the field of participatory design: a virtuous international example is the Oregon Experiment[2], promoted in the 1970s at the University of Oregon campus by mathematician, architect, and activist Christopher Alexander, who was commissioned to present a participatory design model that would not only be articulated through a master plan, but would also take on a mathematical and grammatical *pattern language*. The *pattern*, taken as «any type of general planning principle capable, at the same time, of identifying a recurring problem in an environment, establishing the contexts in which it will arise, and offering general guidelines for its solution» (1975), builds a cross-cutting compositional vocabulary shared by administrators, students, and designers, guaranteeing design freedom based on common and circumscribed principles, a sort of "riverbank against chaos" (1975).

According to Alexander, the armored system of pre-established models should have guaranteed a system of collective control and defense, as well as a high degree of flexibility. Instead, Giancarlo De Carlo's prediction from a few decades earlier seemed to come true: «Collective participation introduces a plurality of objectives and actions whose results are unpredictable» (1972).

The participatory design experiment died out two decades later, due to negligence and general indifference on the part of students, factors that Alexander had not considered as possible causes of self-destruction[3].

This experiment took on an archetypal role in terms of participatory design, not because of the concrete attempts at implementation, which ultimately failed, but because it brought principles of sharing that became pioneering in the digital field: faced with the general apathy of those who were supposed to be the main authors of the design process, Nicholas Negroponte and the Soft Architecture Machine Group at MIT tried to translate participation into software. Although architecture and *computer science* were still distant disciplines at the time, a new idea of digital design was born, based on Herbert Simon's definition: «a body of notions about the design process that are intellectually demanding, analytical, partially formalizable, partially empirical, and capable of being taught» (1969). The attempt at digital transition focused on isolating input and output, thus avoiding the disorganized tangle of the community mindset.

This new methodology owes its development to the years immediately following World War II, when a series of data generated by the war effort made a new paradigm of "systemic thinking" necessary.

> The idea of operating in terms of networks of interrelated contingencies quickly spread to architecture and was the subject of various texts, design activities, and academic conferences.
> In its broadest sense, it was a new science linked to the exchange of knowledge through the nodes of a cybernetic system, and its insights could be applied to any discipline and any problem. In the field of architecture, systematizing collaborative design with the support of new computational technologies seemed an infallible solution. (Ratti 2025)

In this case too, the specific experiment proved unsuccessful, because systematizing a multitude of variations and prerequisites in terms of design

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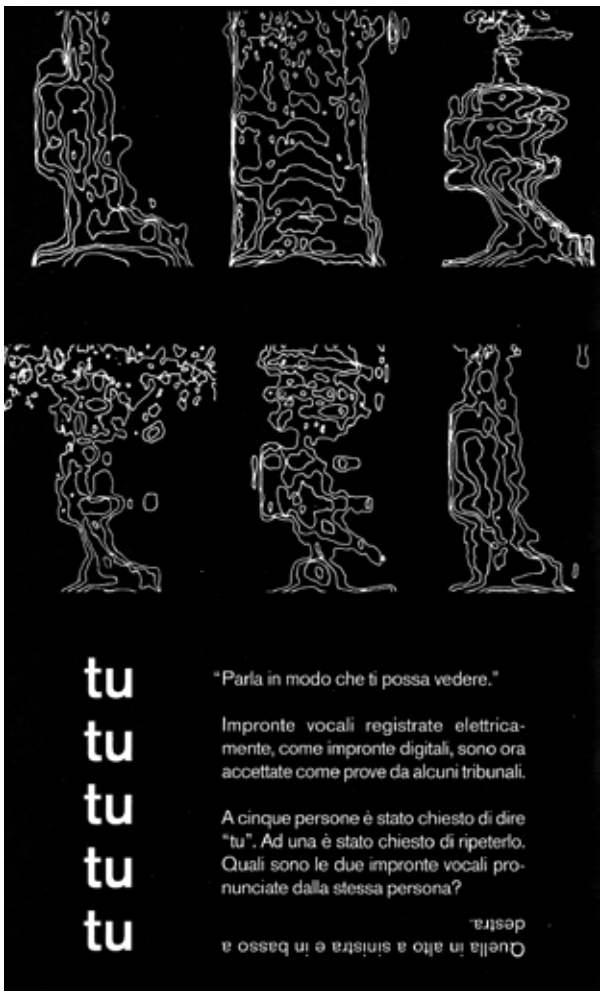


Fig. 2
Electrically recorded voiceprints, analogous to fingerprints. From McLuhan, M., Fiore, Q., The Medium Is the Massage, Corraini Edizioni, Mantova, 2011. An intentional iconographic transposition of a naïve gesture.

proved short-sighted compared to the harmonious approach of a single-purpose design imposed from above. Above all, however, the designers themselves showed that they wanted to jealously guard the design decisions that fell within their remit.

How should this new environment be programmed, now that we are so involved with each other; now that we have all become the unwitting workforce for social change? What is this buzzzzzzzz? (McLuhan, Q. Fiore 1967)

While in the architectural landscape, in the face of such experiments, attempts at participatory design have proved unsuccessful, both in concrete terms and in digital terms, in the field of networking there are participatory paradigms that have become predominant in the field of information and software. A virtuous example is the Linux operating system, originally created by a computer science student at the University of Helsinki, Linus Torvalds, who developed it in 1991 and released the code the following year, allowing the system to be modified, developed, and implemented by anyone with access to the network: «This software was created by an open and widespread group of developers... And it works. Torvalds is convinced that 'open source is the only way to make software'» (Ratti 2025).
This is a completely new type of design, defined by sociologist and academic Richard Sennett as a "public artifact" (2009), in which *maintainers*, including the creator himself, constantly receive thousands of requests for collaboration and integration of the system, thus benefiting from the widespread intelligence of thousands of users.

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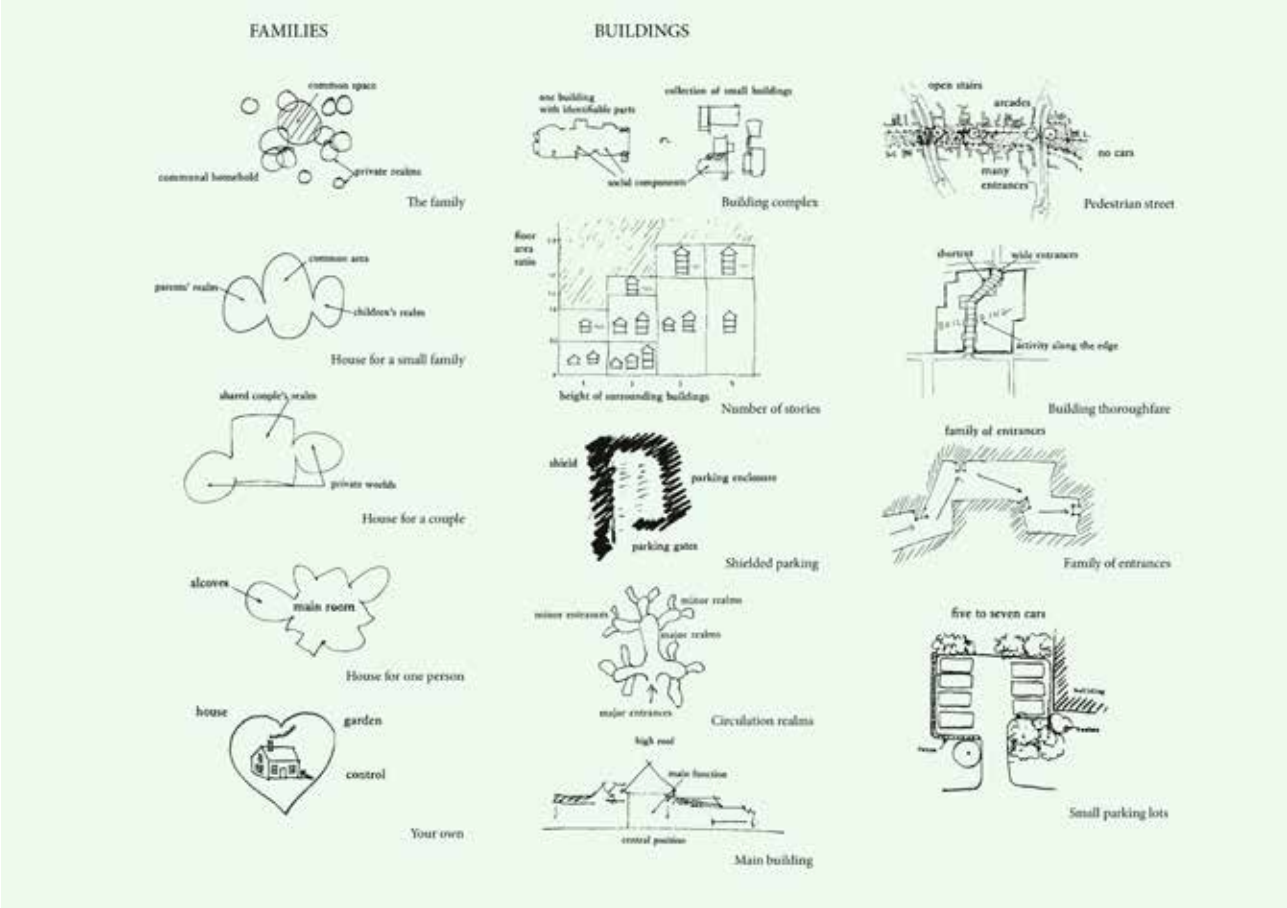


Fig. 3
Collage of typological and iconographic diagrams drawn from Alexander's A Pattern Language, a design methodology and typological atlas that deconstructs the design process into a sequence of discrete components.

But as McLuhan has repeatedly stated[4], the real anthropological revolution affecting our century is based on connectivity and participation, rather than on the amount of content acquired: for this very reason, form is subordinate to image, or consumerist contraction.
Linux, the product of participatory design, represents the virtuous outcome of two phenomena: *open source*, a new collective economy that is not monetary but cultural, supported equally by the ideological and democratic contribution of professionals and students, united for the final result; and *crowd sourcing*, the practice of involving the public in the creation of an open project, contributing free content in the form of ideas, actions, and thoughts.
The intercontinental project that best embodies this phenomenological synthesis is Wikipedia, "the free encyclopedia", or rather the largest repository of digital information, subject to continuous revisions and modifications by a multitude of authors who act for the sake of a reputation economy, free of charge.

> To describe all this, we must necessarily talk about a radical change in the way people interact and socialize, which has affected almost all cultural spheres except architecture. Why can't open source, a methodology that offers almost unlimited potential in the digital world and has always existed in non-digital form throughout the history of architecture, have the same transformative effect on contemporary design and construction practices? [...] The world of architecture revolves around its well-established orbit, seemingly immune to the gravitational pull of online participation. Can architecture really stand aside? (Ratti 2025)

Although the architectural discipline strives strenuously to maintain the impregnability of the design territory, the great digital transformation

is gradually tending to engulf the architect's centralizing attitude and demolish the traditional division between designer and user, democratizing the compositional process and converting it into *open source*.
In this sense, it is worth mentioning Cameron Sinclair's digital project, the OAN, Open Architecture Network, an *open source* platform designed to welcome the design contributions of a community of "socially responsible designers" (2006).
Among the various principles underlying the transdisciplinary and cross-cutting platform are not only the sharing of projects, mutual review of solutions, and multidisciplinary exchange with professionals from other sectors, but also a system for protecting intellectual property rights and the direct involvement of end users, who are entitled to influence design decisions.
Carlo Ratti, in an entertaining flight of fancy, uses a culinary metaphor to reinforce his position on participatory digital and compositional design, which, like the art of cooking, should make use of peer review, which should then be incorporated into the changes to the project-recipe between one phase and another, after being shared, eaten, and then modified the next time with the addition of other ingredients (2025).
This evolution of the design process, as well as its unfiltered openness to a hybrid community of experts and laymen, will inevitably bring advantages in terms of sustainable economics, based once again on exclusively reputational principles, but at the same time it will undermine the overall sensitivity that allows design to be conceived as a "human activity"[5].

> This lack of a unified conception of architecture and design as the construction of a 'structure', an integrated system, an organism in which the components, Vitruvius' triad of utilitas, firmitas, and venustas, are not only present but necessarily fused, resolved, and dissolved in the resolution of 'architecture'. (Quaroni 1977)

As early as 1977, in his book *Progettare un edificio, Otto lezioni di architettura*, Ludovico Quaroni denounced the presence of a deep crisis, a disorientation due mainly to methodological pluralism and the lack of an overall vision, which would gradually lead to a civilization of disharmony. Inexorably, the hyper-sectoralism and fragmentation already scrutinized and predicted by Quaroni have reached a progressive extreme, including fragmentation and the consequent redistribution of roles through *open source* systems. While this approach still raises many concerns in terms of design, it seems interesting to transfer the same dynamic to the level of transmissibility and participatory training, using digital archiving platforms and integrated artificial intelligence systems.
The growing dominance of digital technology in the acquisition of architectural information attests to the now undisputed supremacy of social media, web portals, and online platforms over more traditional information vehicles, guaranteeing the image, in its various forms, exclusivity in terms of immediacy.
And it is precisely by questioning the significant role of form and its contemporary derivatives of rapid consumption that we arrive at the archetypal role of the image: whether it is the bearer of a symbolic load, the programmatic manifesto of a current, or a pure commercial product, it does not lose its primacy as a catalyst for thought and a vehicle of meaning in the digital age, where the space-time dimension is nullified by the consumption of fast, fragmented, and approximate content, often

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Fig. 4
M. D'Olivo, *Lignano Pineta, iThe Dolphin*, 1953-56.

Fig. 5
M. D'Olivo, *Lignano Pineta, Spiral roadway layout*, 1953-56.

Fig. 6
M. D'Olivo, *Lignano Pineta, Aerial view of the Spiral*, 1953-56.

(from D'Olivo M., *Discorso per un'altra architettura*, 2: 1948-71,cit.).

From formal prefiguration, a purely expressive zoomorphic gesture, to the definition of an urban layout, and ultimately to the tracing of a spiral within the pine forest: a concrete example of the intentionalization process of the naïve image.

administered without adequate awareness.
The issue becomes even more urgent when considering the growing role of artificial intelligence technologies in the processes of image production and interpretation. Generative AI platforms, such as LIA, Midjourney, or DALL·E, do not merely reproduce visual forms, but actively participate in the construction of meaning, proposing images that are already the result of interpretative pre-processing. This raises profound questions: can AI generate icons, images that are not merely similarities but intentional outcomes of a semantic project? And again: who determines the intentionality of the image produced by a machine? The prompt, the dataset, the algorithm, or the interaction between these factors?
But if AI imagines intentional and therefore autonomous images, disconnected from an original model, perhaps, as Jean-Luc Nancy argues, we live in a world of new operational realities: but in their continuous surrender to consumption, when and how are they true?

> The image touches on this ambivalence whereby meaning (or truth) is constantly distinguished from the network of meanings, which it nevertheless continues to touch upon: every sentence formed, every gesture made, every intention, every thought brings into play the meaning of the absolute (or truth itself), which nevertheless never ceases to distance itself and withdraw from every meaning. Indeed, every established meaning (for example, this sentence and this entire speech) constitutes in itself a distinctive sign of the threshold, beyond which meaning (truth) is absent. It is not elsewhere, in fact, that meaning is absent, but right here.
> This is why art is necessary, and not a diversion. Art highlights the distinctive features of that absence that makes truth absolutely truth. But precisely for this reason, it is disturbing and can be threatening: both because it removes its very being from meaning and definition, and because it can threaten itself and destroy within itself the images that have been deposited in a meaningful code and in a certain beauty. (Nancy 2002)

It is not a question of succumbing to a deterministic view of technology, nor of demonizing its use, but of understanding how the digital image can still be a vehicle of meaning, but only if accompanied by critical awareness. In this sense, text – verbal, critical, contextual – once again becomes fundamental: images need to be interpreted, but also contextualized, anchored to a thought, made part of a network of meanings that transcend them. Only in this way can we move from ingenuous images to intentional images: through a process of conscious semantic attribution that involves both the production and reception of content.
In truth, the challenge of the present lies not in the quantity of images produced, but in the value of their intentionality. In this continuous dynamic of production-transmission and reception, new means of communication have exponentially accelerated processes and reduced the emotional impact of the content offered to the user, largely returning ingenuous images. In this scenario, the attribution of a critical and conscious meaning that each socio-cultural context generates in its own time, using a multifaceted system of content, takes on even greater value: the question then arises as to when future media, supported by the new frontiers of artificial intelligence, will be able to return intentional and non-ingenuous images, providing an interpretative and structured decoding, using the support of multimedia platforms such as LIA. Combining the potential of *open source*, and therefore participatory design, with the potential of artificial intelligence and databases of material already archived and present on

academic training platforms, would allow us to acquire 'cyber-awareness', or rather an intentional use of content through a preliminary interaction with AI. A good practice in the use of digital resources could involve formative and preparatory control, through a series of questions posed by artificial intelligence to the user, based on the interest they show in a piece of content on the platform through a given input. In this way, the new form of participation between the user and artificial intelligence, or what could be called a digital 'intentional' process, would lead to a conscious consultation of content – already present on the LIA platform, mainly images and drawings – guided by the AI filter. To date, the numerous supports that artificial intelligence already provides, such as requesting an image from channels such as ChatGPT, respond with a variety of content, both specific and reference, but there remains a large gap in terms of protecting the corresponding level of user awareness. At the same time, the intentional image – an image that conveys meaning – remains the last bastion against the dissolution of meaning in the infinite surface of images responding to any and all potential outputs. In the digital age, therefore, it is not a question of opposing the image, but of regaining its power: restoring its depth, direction, and language. Only in this way the image could return to be not just an object to look at, but a subject to understand.

Note

[1] Giuseppe Samonà, in *Lettere su Palermo di Giuseppe Samonà e Giancarlo De Carlo per il Piano Programma del Centro Storico, 1979-1982*, cit., p. 81.
[2] Christopher Alexander, *The Oregon Experiment*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1975, p.45
[3] For a more detailed treatment, see: Carlo Ratti, *Architettura Open Source reloaded*, Cit., pp. 42-63
[4] Letter to Harold Adam Innis, March 14, 1951, quoted in E. McLuhan and F. Zingrone (eds.), *Essential McLuhan*, Anansi, Toronto, 1995, p.73
[5] Ludovico Quaroni, *Progettare un edificio. Otto lezioni di architettura*, Gangemi Editore, Roma, 1977, p.17

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VALVASON A. (2025) – *Segni, spazio, figure. Giuseppe Samonà: le icone dello Stretto.* Doctoral Thesis in Architectural Composition, XXXVII cycle, Università Iuav di Venezia

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Ludovico Romagni

Simultaneity
The Static, Dynamic, and Narrative Perception of Architecture. Ten Years of *Enter_Vista*

Abstract
The editorial project Enter_Vista, a digital journal of the UNICAM School of Architecture and Design, stems from the need to re–establish a connection – now increasingly rare – between architectural theory and practice. Through video interviews conducted within completed architectural works, the journal conveys the interplay between theoretical reflection and the design process, while exploring innovative forms of communication in the transition from print to digital media. The visual experience, complemented by critical texts, enables an immediate and essential narrative of contemporary architecture, aiming to ground theory in the concreteness of making.

Keywords
Video — Theory — Psycho accreditation

"E' per rimettere in moto la mia fabbrica di parole che
devo estrarre nuovo combustibile del mondo non scritto"
Italo Calvino[1]

Aleatory Foci

In Italy, for several years now, we have been witnessing a split between theoretical thought and architectural design practice. This is a notion repeated to the point of exhaustion in every arena of disciplinary debate, in every painful moment of awareness of the increasingly evident dynamics through which architecture is excluded from the transformative processes of territory, city, and the built environment. We are confronted with a veritable mantra: it is becoming ever more difficult to find built projects in which one can even vaguely trace the rootedness of an author's theoretical thought.

It is evident that current theoretical and critical production – both Italian and international – struggles to identify a guiding thread capable of gathering and ordering the diverse theoretical and design research currently underway in our country. While until the 1980s Italian architectural production held a significant position within the international panorama, under present conditions it has become difficult to recognize a distinctive character or a coherent identity.

Nevertheless, within our territory there exist forms of excellence which, caught in the vortex of the pluriverse, the network society, and «liquid modernity», struggle to coherently situate their projects either within their own theoretical trajectory or within a virtuous field of comparison where embryonic theoretical formulations might emerge.

Immersed in this varied and multiple world, torn apart by the many shrewd and continuous initiations of knowledge that afflict a discipline grappling with every imaginable form of transition – digital, ecological, heritage sacralization, social drama, seismic, flood–related, and drought–related – around ten years ago I began reflecting, together with Cristiano Toraldo di Francia and Anna Rita Emili, on what new modes of architectural narration might be capable of responding coherently to the pressing demand for open consultation on the web. We held to one guiding principle: to differentiate ourselves as much as possible from the printed replica.

Simple Digital Opportunities

But what were, we might say "at that time"– considering the speed at which everything evolves – the technical possibilities that digital media made available to us? From the outset, we found a clear point of shared agreement: to begin narrating architecture starting from its built reality. That is, from conceived space, tangible elements, perceptible relationships, constructional aspects, and the materials employed. And what better way than through its dynamic perception?

At first glance, this did not appear to be a particularly innovative approach. Architecture has always played a leading role in the world of video, both directly and indirectly: as background, conscious scenography, an ideal setting for cinematic narration, and much more (Troiani, Campbell 2020). In our case, however, the aim was to grasp and enhance a specific expressive potential.

Following our initial experience –and not without reason – others also began to recognize this opportunity: *The Architects Series* by *The Plan*, the *Conversazioni d'architettura* promoted by *Isplora* or *Yacademy*, among others.

We found it fascinating and engaging to attempt to "lay bare" the author in front of his or her architecture, compelling them to remain within the project itself, seeking to unite design reflections with theoretical convictions by capturing them directly through the perception of space, the architectural element, the relationships among parts and with the site, and form. The intention was to keep the author as far as possible from secondary texts and layers of meaning, perhaps elaborated by others.

Through the progression of the moving image – traversing space and overlaying, in a subtly stroboscopic manner, the static vision of a targeted photograph, a study sketch, the image of a previous or unrealized project, a technical drawing, and even a sustainability device or a keyword – we believed it was possible to truly enter both the architecture and the thought that generated it. A narrative of simultaneity between moving and static images, between the idea and its construction, between the author's account and the immediacy of realization and spatial perception, between concept and development, between citation and its concrete suggestion.

It was precisely with Cristiano that we began producing video interviews filmed inside completed works together with their designers, capturing a consciously investigated progression of aspects: the author's personal trajectory – from education to "foundational" encounters – their projects, their idea of synthesis between theoretical thought/production and concrete work, the detailed account of the building's story, the acquisition of the commission, the idea, the difficulties, the actors involved, the construction, its details, and even its errors.

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Ferments of Narrative Transition

The initial idea was to create a website; a "free space", distant from systems of classification and accreditation that were ill–suited to recognizing the scientific value of anything diverging from the "normal assay." A place in which, starting from the video interview, anyone could express their own view in the form of a comment. This would, in any case, have been an unusual and unpopular choice, given the lack of scientific recognition of such contributions and the consequent difficulty of finding individuals willing to generously invest their time without receiving any form of acknowledgment.

There are, however, some virtuous examples that coexist with this difficulty: *Città Bene Comune*, promoted by the historic *Casa della Cultura* founded by A. Banfi in 1946, initiates a dialogue starting from the publication of a text and activates a discussion through a series of "free" reflections. Yet it is precisely its director, Renzo Riboldazzi, who points out the limited number of comments and in–depth contributions produced in relation to the quantity of texts published on the website, and more generally overall – a number that is partial, scant, not to say infinitesimal. Despite this difficulty, there remains the necessity to «sift what truly has value and deserves to be disseminated – because it is capable of generating new reflections, revealing some form of reality, opening up new concrete perspectives – from what appears insignificant or negligible»[2].

In our case, the inevitable coordination or filtering of the debate generated by the publication of a video interview evoked the danger of having to rely on a potential moderator: a figure with a "high profile", assertive, an aspiring "messiah" immersed in the multiverse of our disciplinary relativism. This prospect filled us with a certain sense of dread, and we therefore sought alternative paths.

In particular, our attention was drawn to the website sfuitaliadesign.com, created by young researchers from different countries. A group of architecture and design students/researchers travelled the world interviewing architects within their studios, selecting them on the basis of thorough online research. They met Anna Rita Emili in her Rome studio, *altro–studio*, and the publication of the video interview – in which research themes, study models, and several iconic drawings clearly emerged – struck us deeply. It was a website also highly refined in graphic terms, with no written content at[3].

We thus began, in turn, to produce videos in which an author narrated their work in relation to their research. The first featured Cristiano Toraldo di Francia and was entitled «Da Quaderna alle dodici città ideali». We met him in his studio here at the School of Architecture and Design of the University of Camerino in Ascoli Piceno, where some models and drawings by *Superstudio* were preserved in a chaotic manner, alongside traces of didactic experimentation, posters, and manifestos from all over the world[4].

I soon realized that the undertaking was extremely demanding and began to look around for some "measured" funding to support the initiative and expand the team. I managed to obtain a modest sum (made available by the University of Camerino), almost entirely allocated to the purchase of equipment for video production – cameras, microphones, and so forth. At that point, I believe I made a mistake: I persuaded Anna Rita Emili to create a "proper" open–access digital journal that would experiment with and hybridize architectural narrative forms, with ambitions – perhaps even "for ANVUR" – of scientific accreditation. *Enter_Vista* was thus born.

The focus was precise: to intercept the difficulty of Italian theoretical and critical production in defining a line capable of gathering and ordering the theoretical and design research currently underway in our country. We therefore began meeting "good" architects within one of their completed works, where we believed their theoretical thought had taken root.

But Which Theory?

It is not easy to identify effective ways to communicate that inseparable – and often consolatory – binomial that pervades every context of disciplinary debate: the relationship between theory and design. Perhaps it is precisely at this junction that the true focus of our initiative is rooted. What characteristics should a contemporary architectural theory assume? What relationship can we establish, operationally and conceptually, between saying and doing, between thought and action, or in other words, between theory and practice?

With a certain melancholy, every morning upon waking, I recall – or try to recall – that architecture is an operational profession, whose meaning is realized in the qualitative transformation of landscape, city, and built space. Despite the historical dualisms of Zevi and Tafuri, I believe that every architect – even the most theoretical, even the academic "excluded" from practice – retains, in their inner convictions, the belief that theoretical thought cannot be separated from a vision of making. Indeed, theory must be investigated and articulated through the act of doing.

Our editorial initiative is founded precisely on this conviction: theory emerges and takes shape from concrete experience. Not as abstract elaboration, but as the definition of the reasons, conditions, and operational modalities of the discipline. In this sense, we hold that a genuinely architectural theory can only derive from a plurality of real experiences. As Giancarlo De Carlo aptly observed «Rarely have my reflections been theoretical. Rather, I have sought to extract fragments of theory from the experimentation I conducted while designing» (De Carlo, Buncuga 2001). In light of this perspective, our response to the question of how to make theory effective is clear: theory must derive from practice, not vice versa.

Federico Bilò reflects on how, in discussing architecture, we can distinguish an operational and a discursive dimension «Within the discursive dimension, we can further distinguish: there is poetics, there is criticism, there is historiography, and there is also theory […] etymologically, we all know that theory is vision, is looking, seeing; it seems to me, however, that theory is significant in our profession if, and only if, it is aimed at doing. Theory, then, as a vision of doing, or as the definition of the reasons and methods of the operational side of the discipline» (Bilò 2021, pp. 45–48).

A powerful image that has accompanied us over time is that proposed by Carlos Martí Arís: the centering – a temporary structure that supports the arch during construction – as a metaphor for theory. Invisible in the finished work, yet essential for its realization. Without theory, the work cannot stand. But once the work is completed, theory withdraws, leaving space for the built environment (Martí Arís 2007).

We are also convinced that the theoretical void has, at times, paved the way for superficial deviations. Architecture in the 1980s, for example, was often marked by excessive free rein, a creative impulse unmoored, as Francesco Remotti observes «the absence of robust and well–considered theorization is the factor that most opens the door to trends» (Remotti 2014).

Thus, we began to seek projects in which we believed the author had suc-

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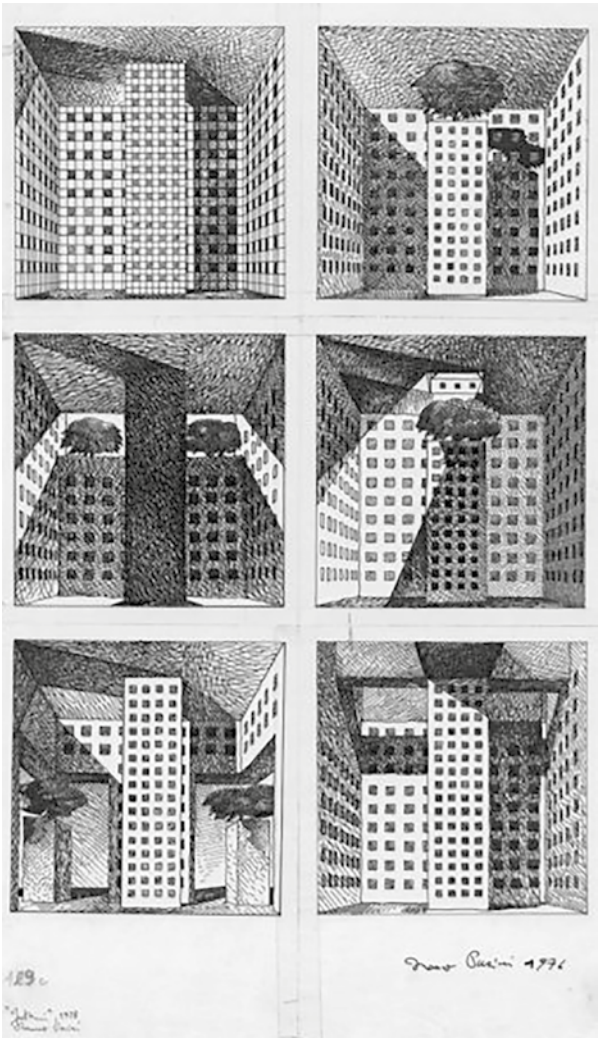


Fig. 1
Franco Purini, 1976, Interior, ink on tracing paper.

cessfully rooted their thought. The selected projects are not flashy or dazzling, but in our view they identify the architect's production along a coherent trajectory.

By the time we reached the eighth issue, having met some of the most important masters of Italian architecture – some recently deceased – as well as the emerging "post–young" generation, I might venture a personal observation: in the narration of their projects, with few exceptions, theoretical anchors rarely overshadowed the aspects of constructive concreteness. Architects such as Camillo Botticini, Enrico Molteni, or more recently Giovanni Vaccarini, oriented their reflection toward operational reality: formal research, design constraints, and the most appreciated improvements resulting from adjustments during construction.

Some expressed a distance, a need to escape, from an anti–constructive academic inclination. They felt compelled to seek elsewhere the means to enter the architecture itself, to grasp at the root the constructive aspect, the details, the definition of architecture through its specific characteristics, the definition of its constituent elements, and the relationships among them. In all cases, the importance of formative completion through experience abroad emerges – particularly in countries less affected by the theory/construction, research/production divide, especially Spain. Alternatively, they recall privileged relationships with exceptionally talented professionals in both Architecture and Design.

Paolo Desideri, describing the *Florence Opera House*, also reaffirms the central role of form in resolving design problems. He seems to distance

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Figg. 2, 3
Ludovico Romagni, Enter_Vista photographs.

himself from the compositional complexity with which he educated the – so dear to me – "generation of phenomena" in Pescara. Reality, Desideri states, simplifies; constructive complexity demands clarity and lucidity. His true masters, he confesses, were Sergio Musmeci and Pier Luigi Nervi, whose experimental legacy remains extraordinarily relevant today.

With Franco Purini and Paolo Portoghesi, the relationship between theory and design practice emerges with even greater incisiveness. For Purini, the *Eurosky Tower* in Rome represents the evolution of long–standing collaborations, particularly with Maurizio Sacripanti, in which a resemblance can be seen to some extraordinary drawings from 1964 that characterized his research: *interni* from '76 (Fig. 1), *Torri* also from '76. He speaks of the dual soul of complexity: on one hand, explicit complexity manifested in the articulation of forms and materials; on the other – referring to Ungers' architecture – an apparent simplicity concealing a kind of "second text" that must be unveiled and discerned.

Similarly, the need to anchor architecture to the "earth," as evoked by Paolo Portoghesi, frees it from ideological and globalizing visions (Por-

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Fig. 4
Website Homepage entervista.unicam.it.

toghesi 2005). In his works, such as the church in Calcata where we met him, he continues to seek symbolic geometries and musical proportions even within the concreteness of the prefabricated construction system used for the "dome" petals.
Moreover, Pepe Barbieri's attempt to create an "urban island in nature" at the Chieti Campus experiments with the themes of "small metropolises": land, dispersion, new relationships (Barbieri 2016) (Fig. 2/3).
I felt the need to retrace, in a synthetic and kaleidoscopic manner, the substantial work carried out so far in the progression of encounters, to reaffirm how, in the face of the realized work, reflective depth, anchors of meaning, and underlying significance simplify, lose intensity, and detach from the need for triangulations or attestations of reflexive methodologies. They pursue instead a neo–perceptive virginity, where the narrative becomes simple, where form resolves, where functional purpose dialogues with aesthetic sense and cultural linearity, and where the weight of secondary, tertiary, or quaternary meanings is lightened, sometimes nullified, surprising or even disappointing.
Unexpected descriptive clarity and the complex simplicity of the narrative, in my view, represent the most vivid testimony that the authors offer to the journal[5].

ENTER_VISTA

Enter_Vista is a multimedia electronic journal, published semiannually by the University of Camerino, School of Architecture and Design (ISSN 2612–0534). https://entervista.unicam.it/ (Fig. 4)
Alongside the digital version, a print edition is available, containing all the texts produced for each issue, including the complete transcription of the interviews, published by *Plug_in* in a "pocket" format (Fig. 5).
The journal's contribution lies in identifying certain peculiarities of Italian architecture through a series of video interviews with architects who have demonstrated – through their projects – a strong grounding in theoretical thought. The audiovisual medium, still rarely used in academia, can document an architect's work, formative theoretical journey, and research more directly and comprehensibly than traditional interviews. More broadly, the editorial project aims to develop an audiovisual product, accompanied

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by images and critical texts, to circulate online – within the portal of the School of Architecture and Design in Ascoli Piceno, UNICAM – capable of providing significant Italian contributions, also addressing an international audience.

In the proliferation of digital publications, video offers the opportunity to reflect on the relationship between architectural design and modes of communication in the transition from print to the web. Today, this system intersects with an extremely diversified media multiverse that has transformed both language and content. Recent surveys show that among architecture students, the use of digital media as a source of information acquisition is becoming predominant, almost exclusive.

Despite numerous proposals for hybridizing forms of architectural communication, existing online journals almost always replicate the structure of print publications, publishing articles solely in PDF format, often accompanied by a selected collection of images. In reality, they seem to forego the exploration of the potentially infinite forms of communicative contamination. While this choice may, superficially, reflect an ethical or environmental principle related to reducing paper consumption, these journals are also constrained by accreditation criteria at various levels of scientific rigor, which do not favor "arrogant deviations".

Enter_Vista, which assumes an overall monographic character, enables – through the simultaneity of reasoning and visual perception, keywords related to images, and the interplay between theoretical reference and construction – a virtuous and exhaustive relationship between the new "medium" and the "end" of representing the fragile and uncertain certainties of the discipline. The video interviews, titled "10 domande a…" with English

subtitles, constitute an authentic testimony of the architect from their formative years to the current state of their research. Each interview is conducted within a significant work by the featured architect. The selection of participants, agreed upon and approved by the journal's scientific committee, depends on their relevance both in terms of design and theory, as well as their level of recognition within the profession. The journal primarily targets the academic community but, thanks to its distinctive editorial format, can also reach a broader audience.

How is *Enter_Vista* structured? It follows two parallel channels of engagement, operating at different speeds: one audiovisual and one textual. In the video interviews, the discourse on architecture is captured within the architectural space itself. Physical immersion in the work represents the most direct attempt to convey the theoretical reflection underpinning the project in a less constructed, more immediate and simple manner. The video operates on the simultaneity of dialogue and extraction of key words, the static perception of photographic images and the dynamic experience of traversing space, initial sketches and architectural drawings, representation and physical space. The narrative is neither progressive nor strictly coherent; it does not aim to prove anything. Rather, it seeks to capture a form of neo–innocence, a drying out of reasoning, the essentiality of thought, immediacy and concreteness, a foundational restart free from superstructures. It aims to capture, in the words of the interviewees, the authentic meaning of choices, the essence.

Accompanying the video is a kind of "second text": a collection of essays by selected authors, tasked with amplifying the meaning of the work, highlighting the more complex structures of theoretical thought and the cultural and aesthetic relationships. This is perhaps the most traditional aspect, entrusted – sometimes reluctantly – to the rigid ANVUR–style rules and regulations, which do not consider the scientific value of video.

A "web of links" allows readers to access curricular information on all individuals participating in a specific issue, as well as the overall scientific and organizational structure, and to consult references for critical or bibliographic selection.

Conclusions: Scientific Rigor vs. Communication

From the outset, *Enter_Vista* has confronted a central issue in contemporary disciplinary communication: the tension between extended, well–argued scientific reflection and the immediacy, brevity, and fragmentation imposed by digital media. The issue does not concern the medium alone but directly affects design culture and the ways in which architecture produces and transmits knowledge.

As Manfredo Tafuri repeatedly emphasized, the tools of representation and critical discourse are never neutral; they influence the forms of thought and the methods by which architectural knowledge is constructed (Tafuri 1968; 1980). The use of audiovisual languages, if adopted uncritically, can generate simplifications, spectacle, and a loss of depth; yet, when consciously governed, they can activate new forms of access to design and reconnect theory with practice.

In this sense, *Enter_Vista's* experimentation has been structured around two complementary speeds: the audiovisual and the written. The ambition has been to engage both the "distracted" attention of a broad audience – clients, professionals, administrators, students – and the focused attention of researchers. The early issues, which prioritized high–speed communica-

tion with extremely concise texts supporting the videos, revealed the limits of excessive compression, showing the risk of superficial interpretation. Hence, the conscious decision to increase the distance between the two narrative levels, not to force them into a single synthesis, but to preserve their critical autonomy.

On one hand, there is the concreteness of the realized work, conveyed through physical immersion in built space, addressing real problems and "emptying" the author of a pre–existing theoretical scaffold; on the other, there is the deepening provided by so–called "second texts," capable of delving into the architect's thinking through an external perspective, reconstructing their cultural and theoretical genealogy. This operational mode echoes the idea of theory as a temporary structure, necessary for the construction of a work but destined to withdraw once the architecture manifests itself in its concreteness.

More generally, experiences such as *Enter_Vista* demonstrate the possibility of building broad cultural projects not through the assertion of a unified paradigm, but through the critical accumulation of cases, positions, and practices. The monographic structure and the careful selection of works allow, through progressive focus, the delineation of a field of tensions in which the project once again becomes a tool of knowledge, confirming De Carlo's idea that architectural theory does not precede the project but derives from it as a critical extraction from practice.

Finally, the relationship with academic training represents one of the most significant outcomes of these experiences. The integrated use of audiovisual languages and critical texts proposes a complementary and experimental pathway to traditional educational models, fostering a form of learning that intertwines perception, narration, and reflection. Theory acquires meaning when it is configured as a vision of doing: immersion in the work, direct listening to the author, and subsequent critical discussion contribute to forming a design awareness that is less abstract and more rooted in experience. In this framework, *Enter_Vista* does not stand in opposition to academic research and teaching, but as a device capable of reactivating some of their foundational instances, experimenting with new ways of transmitting architectural knowledge in the transition from print to digital.

Notes

[1] Calvino I. (2002) - *Mondo scritto e mondo non scritto,* Mondadori, Milano

[2] Renzo Riboldazzi, as the director of the website *casadellacultura.it*, reflects on the difficulties of coordinating and fostering a constructive discussion around a book in a thoughtful editorial that outlines the objectives of the publication. Riboldazzi R. (2018) – *Che cos'è città bene comune. Ambiti, potenzialità e limiti di un'attività culturale*, https://www.casadellacultura.it/707/che–cose–citta–bene–comune (accessed May 27, 2025).

[3] The interview with Anna Rita Emili (2012) can be accessed on the website http://2012.sfuitaliadesign.com/interviews/altro–studio/ (accessed May 24, 2025).

[4] The interview with Cristiano Toraldo di Francia was conducted by Ludovico Romagni and Anna Rita Emili for Enter_Vista in 2016. https://entervista.unicam.it/archivio/superstudio–da–quaderna–alle–dodici–citt%C3%A0–ideali (accessed May 31, 2025)

[5] The dialogues and videos with C. Toraldo di Francia, F. Purini, P. Desideri, P. Barbieri, E. Molteni, P. Portoghesi, C. Botticini, and G. Vaccarini, produced by Ludovico Romagni and Anna Rita Emili for *En-*

ter_Vista, can be accessed on the website https://entervista.unicam.it/. For each meeting, a "pocket–sized" monograph published by Plug–in was produced, containing the full interview transcript, a project sheet, and several critical essays written by different authors on the work and the architect.

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Alessandro Brunelli

In the academy, beyond the academy. ArchiDiAP: Ten Questions for the Founders

Abstract
ArchiDiAP is a web portal created in 2012 within the Department of Architecture and Design at Sapienza University of Rome. The platform serves as a vehicle for communicating architectural culture, fuelled by the academic community that develops and validates the published content. An interview with the founders, Orazio Carpenzano and Fabio Balducci, traces the origins of its creation and addresses the issue of the transmissibility of architectural culture via the web, while reflecting on the platform's future. With an average of four hundred daily visits, ArchiDiAP is one of the leading portals for architectural communication in Italy: a democratic platform born from academia and aimed at civil society as a whole.

Keywords
ArchiDiAP — Sharing — Transmissibility

ALESSANDRO BRUNELLI: In the book *Arte contemporanea. Da Cézanne alle ultime tendenze*, Renato Barilli cites Marshall McLuhan's theory on the technological medium, linking Gutenberg's printing press and the discovery of electricity to changes in the arts[1]. Using McLuhan's parallelism (paraphrased by Barilli), one could argue that the technological medium underlying ArchiDiAP is Information Technology. What was the starting point, or the insight that linked the medium of Information Technology with the transmission of design culture?

ORAZIO CARPENZANO: ArchiDiAP is a digital platform created to share and promote architectural culture by fostering cultural cooperation among all members of the university. The portal is an open-source space that offers high-quality content through contributions curated by an editorial team that selects which projects to publish. ArchiDiAP was conceived when, together with Fabio Balducci, we realized that searching for architectural works online was often limited to Wikipedia alone. We therefore felt it was necessary to build a project portal with a historical-critical focus, with the support of the academic community. The idea behind ArchiDiAP is to democratize architectural knowledge by disseminating content capable of nurturing and connecting the academic community with the professional one. The platform was created with the ambition of serving as a theoretical and educational experimental laboratory capable of testing new technological methods of learning and knowledge transmission.
Digital technology allows for a series of implicit references, like Chinese nesting dolls, that facilitate expansion from both a logical and a perceptual perspective. One can start with a map, identify a building, and expand

one's knowledge to include archival drawings, photographs, and even the finest details. The learning process can therefore be likened to a chain of associations in which a project is interconnected across multiple levels of depth.
Another fundamental component of ArchiDiAP is undoubtedly its interdisciplinary nature: the platform promotes dialogue with other arts, urban planning, and technology. The portal allows everyone free access to the content, even those who cannot afford to buy books or invest in a trip to explore architecture. The platform's aim is to offer users content capable of stimulating social intelligence: it is a sort of Peripatetic path, like that of the ancient Greeks.

AB: Fabio, you're now in charge of editorial and publishing coordination as well as graphic design , a task that's certainly not insignificant in today's image-driven society. What was your initial contribution to the platform?

FABIO BALDUCCI: While I was doing my architectural apprenticeship, I remember reading a book – by Bruno Zevi, if I'm not mistaken – that dealt with the integration of video as an educational and disseminating tool for architecture[2]. The book sparked a discussion with Orazio about the dissemination of architecture via the web; specifically, a format not limited exclusively to photography but incorporating simultaneous content. In this regard, we created a think tank for the development of ArchiDiAP, aiming to bridge the gap between scientific and sector-specific architectural communication directed at a limited audience. The aim was to find a middle ground by scientifically disseminating the works through drawings, bibliographies, geolocations, and finally themes. One of the portal's first initiatives was *Roma 500 Architetture,*[3] linked to QART: the laboratory for the study of contemporary Rome directed by Piero Ostilio Rossi within the Department. The intention was to enrich the portal starting from a specific location, Rome.
Regarding the role of the portal's visual design, it is important to emphasize that ArchiDiAP is not a site cantered on the persuasive power of images, as its intent is to maintain an academic character through its analytical profiles. The current graphic design is the result of a competition we held among all students of Italian architecture schools; the competition was won by Simona Piccato of the Polytechnic University of Turin. The competition prize did not include a cash reward but rather the implementation of the most deserving graphic design. All competition entries were displayed in an exhibition at the *Casa dell'Architettura* in Rome, the headquarters of the Chamber of architects, which, together with IN/ARCH, contributed to the launch of the platform. The site therefore strives to maintain a simple graphic design, more akin to Wikipedia, seeking to avoid falling into current trends that instead focus on eye-catching and immediate visuals. ArchiDiAP does not prioritize speed, as the platform's time must be that of slow learning tied to the study of the works.

AB: The keyword of the ArchiDiAP portal is "sharing", a term that the Treccani dictionary defines in the context of information technology as referring to the simultaneous access and use of shared resources by different users. In ArchiDiAP, sharing is not merely an IT concept; rather,

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Fig. 1
ArchiDiAP homepage



it intersects with the act of communicating with the community. In an age of constant and immediate persuasion, in which communication has become the antithesis of knowledge (to paraphrase Mario Perniola), must ArchiDiAP become more persuasive in order to survive?

OC: One of the main challenges facing collaborative platforms is ensuring the continuous updating of content and, consequently, the active participation of the community. To maintain consistent engagement, it is certainly necessary to be appealing without diluting the content by showcasing only architectural images. Many portals share only images without addressing the various levels of knowledge and depth of analysis. On ArchiDiAP, all content is equally essential – including floor plans, sections, elevations, text, the relationship between the building and its context, the setting, the architect's personality, and so on. Of course, users can explore the materials at varying levels of depth, but the platform's aim is to ensure a rigorous selection process for everyone through editorial validation of contributions. Finally, there is the matter of how to communicate architecture; ArchiDiAP seeks to address a various audience (students, professionals, citizens) at different levels, without oversimplifying the content. The issue of communication in architecture is central because communicating means, first and foremost, going beyond the purely technical information of the discipline; for me, this must apply both within and outside the school. I have always sought to highlight the poetic and evocative dimension of architecture, which is the true core of the transmissibility of architectural culture. Passing on the poetic dimension of a project means telling people how a work has been able to move and inspire through its built space. We cannot, therefore, overlook the analysis of the compositional sphere that originates from a distinctive poetic dimension. All of this may seem like a minor aspect, often overshadowed by technology, but this is my vision: the enhancement of architecture's humanistic dimension. This does not mean rejecting technology *tout court*; on the contrary, I view new technologies with great interest because, when I was young, I had the good fortune to work with motion capture and motion graphics. I have always been fascinated by anything that expands my capabilities. The challenge, therefore, is to exert intellectual control over new technologies so as not to lose any capabilities but, rather, to acquire new ones. Artificial intelligence, for example, must be challenged with the right questions to generate meaningful dialogue. In some cases, this dialogue can become a game – always a conscious one, of course – navigating between *irony and harshness*, terms I've used as the title of my upcoming book, which emphasizes the humanistic dimension of architecture. In the contemporary context, in fact, our discipline risks being crushed between certain communication slogans such as *energy efficiency*, *sustainability*, *parametric architecture*, and *urban regeneration*. Slogans cause us to lose sight of the complexity of the architectural work – that is, its poetic, humanistic, and polysemic dimension – whereby things can have meanings other than those conveyed by a single word alone.

AB: Do you think it's necessary to launch a social media campaign to promote ArchiDiAP among younger generations, or do we risk getting caught up in a pointless competition with other architecture portals that are undoubtedly less scholarly? I'm thinking of Divisare, Archiportale, and Archilovers – platforms that share projects without references or

bibliographies and function as communication channels of a different nature[4].

FB: Establishing effective communication through social networks requires diligent and constant work. But ArchiDiAP is essentially based on a working group that changes depending on the academic careers of its individual members. Compared to other portals, ArchiDiAP offers the opportunity to explore works in greater depth through drawings, text, geolocation, site references, and bibliographies from a multimedia and hypertextual perspective. The critical text is essential content for delving into the architectural work, as the writing describes the architect's poetics, the historical period, and may refer to other textual works.
Returning to social media, I believe there are some pages – such as *The Beauty of Plan* on Instagram – that present floor plans of certain works in an appealing way, but without a scientific basis. ArchiDiAP certainly should not be confused with such content, as it originates within the academic sphere.

AB: In the current educational landscape, characterized by the integration of institutional channels and informal, web-mediated learning methods, a significant question arises: to what extent does academic education continue to be central to the acquisition of design culture? In this context, do digital platforms dedicated to architecture (such as ArchiDiAP) represent a genuine opportunity for the dissemination and sharing of knowledge, or do they risk, due to their visual immediacy, weakening the critical dimension of traditional classroom instruction?

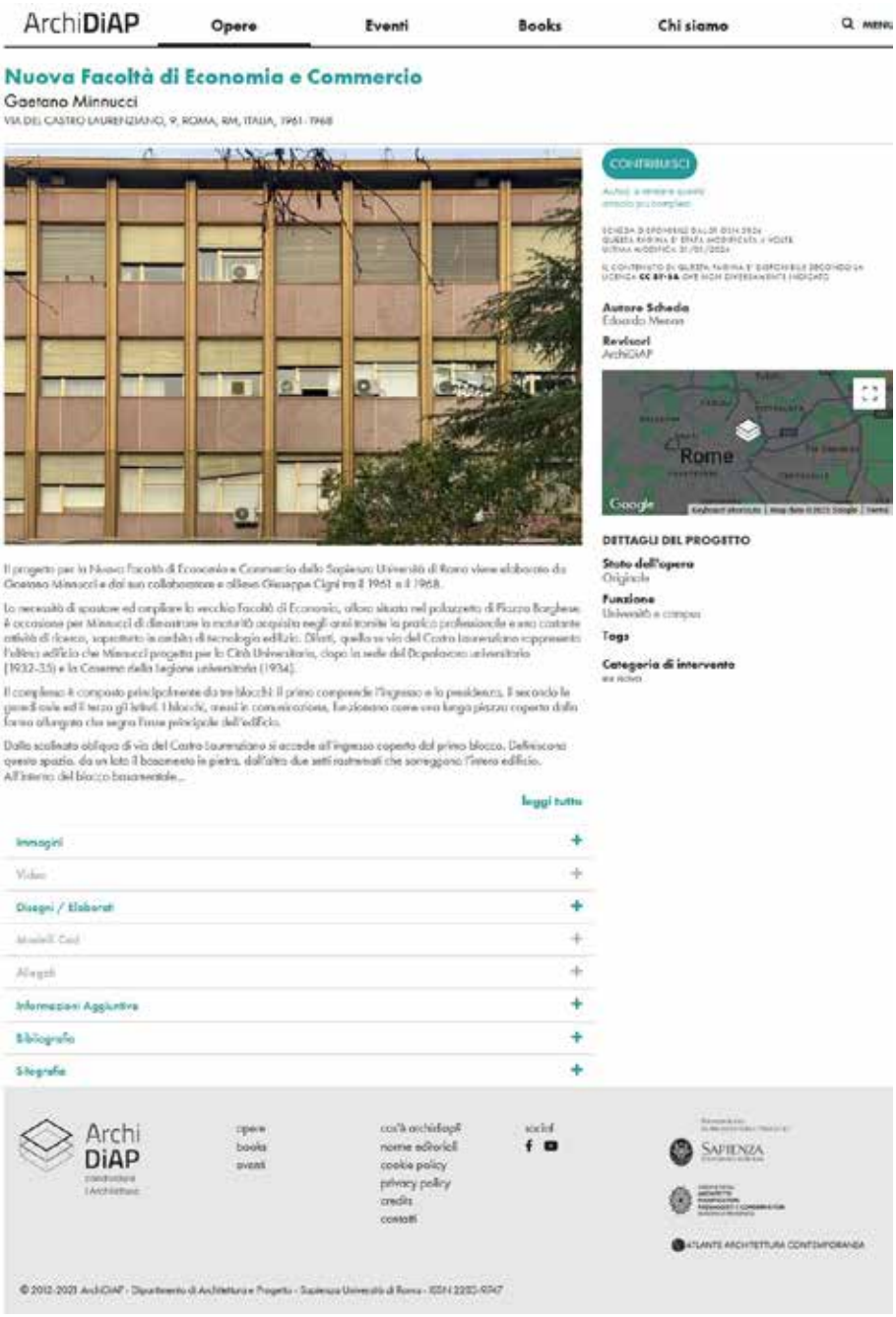
OC: The challenge of making the discipline accessible is of the utmost importance, and as the dean of an architecture school, I strive to give my all to this task. ArchiDiAP is by no means intended to be an alternative to traditional university lectures; rather, it is a tool, a resource that seeks to address the challenges of contemporary architectural communication in terms of accessibility and depth of content. As I have already stated, the challenge is to communicate architecture not merely as a collection of data and images but as a poetic and cognitive experience capable of engaging people emotionally and intellectually, with the aim of sparking in users a desire for deeper understanding. What does it mean to communicate architecture today? It means striking a balance between technique and its evocative power, its poetic complexity. Only in these terms can architecture once again become indispensable in contemporary society.
The transmission of poetic quality certainly cannot occur through the independent study of a student using a platform on their own. Complexity is learned within universities, which are the places of questions, research, study, and experimentation.

AB: Returning to the question posed to Orazio Carpenzano regarding the learning of the discipline, it is possible to say that ArchiDiAP belongs to the realm of self-directed learning outside of school. In this regard, have you had the opportunity to test the platform's effectiveness in student training?

FB: I have only been able to partially verify the effectiveness of ArchiDiAP, specifically when students were involved as authors in drafting some of the analytical profiles. We have certainly received positive feedback from

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Fig. 2
Record of a work catalogued in ArchiDiAP.
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doctoral students and researchers who use the platform as a research tool to explore modern and contemporary architecture in Rome. In this regard, we consistently receive a great deal of appreciation from various institu tions, including those abroad, that use the portal as a research resource. Speaking of research, it is important to mention the relationship between ArchiDiAP and certain seminars at the doctoral school, whose insights have been incorporated into the portal. A prime example is the study on *"Recinti"* published by Quodlibet[5]. Finally, the recent celebration of the portal's tenth anniversary was further proof of the fruitful relationship between the platform and the community of doctoral students, who have become the authors of the architectural profiles for Rome's University City. Thanks to university funding for the "third mission", the buildings on the Sapienza campus have been equipped with QR code plaques that link to the portal's profiles and allow for in-depth exploration of the constructed works.

AB: ArchiDiAP functions as a dual educational tool: on the one hand, it is a cultural repository from which students draw knowledge; on the other, it is a participatory editorial workshop that sustains itself through the academic community, which identifies and reworks the materials to be published. When the building profiles are curated by students, the editorial board (composed of researchers, faculty members, and doctoral students) validates the content. Is it possible to extend this participatory workshop to other universities, or must the editorial content originate exclusively from the Department of Architecture Theory and Design?

OC: The idea of expanding the workshop to other universities could be feasible, but it should certainly be limited to the production of the fact sheets, since the editorial team must necessarily remain a single entity to ensure the quality of the content. Opening up to other universities would be very interesting; in general, I believe that engaging in dialogue with other institutions is always productive.

AB: The ArchiDiap platform is therefore an editorial workshop but also an educational tool capable of extending beyond the web through the creation of events and books. The *ArchiDiAP meets* events are a valuable opportunity to bring academia closer to the world of critics and professional firms of national and international renown, such as Juan Navarro Baldeweg, Giancarlo Mazzanti, Jean-Luis Cohen, and Vincenzo Latina. Do you think these events bridging the gap between the school and the outside world can be implemented? Why not introduce study trips where students visit design studios or architecture exhibitions, practicing what Samonà called "spiritual gymnastics of the imagination" (Samonà 1945, 9)?

FB: On the topic of travel, it's worth mentioning the app we're developing with Open City Roma; the idea is to create an app for self-guided scientific itineraries within the city. As for study trips, I believe the first in the series could be the current Venice Biennale, considering that ArchiDiAP is included in the cultural program of the Italian Pavilion curated by Guendalina Salimei.

AB: What future do you foresee for the platform? Could artificial intelligence help the portal grow, or does ArchiDiAP run the risk of being

swallowed up by new tools like ChatGPT? I'm thinking of future freshmen – digital natives – who will seek answers to design problems directly, without going through a process of data analysis (data increasingly sourced from the web and certainly less from journals and books). Isn't there a risk that students will start directly with generative AI rather than with the accumulated body of design knowledge preserved and scientifically catalogued by ArchiDiAP?

OC: I don't believe the platform should compete with the web's artificial intelligence; rather, I believe it should identify key objectives for strengthening its role in relation to the academic community and external stakeholders. We are currently working on *ArchiDiAP Plus*, an application that integrates with our database for architectural recognition. In the future, I believe ArchiDiAP will continue to develop in line with emerging trends in the cultural heritage and digital architecture sectors, such as those pioneered, for example, by Arthemisia. To enhance content engagement, ArchiDiAP could evolve toward more interactive and personalized systems capable of fully leveraging AI technologies and implementing the interface on mobile devices. In conclusion, on the one hand there is a need for dialogue with new technologies, and on the other, an urgent need to collaborate with research organizations, universities, cultural institutions, and international partners. Undoubtedly, the internationalization of the platform could strengthen ArchiDiAP's role as a meeting point between research, education, culture, and society.

AB: In a recent study conducted as part of a doctoral program at the University of Architecture in Parma, focusing on the phenomena, tools, and prospects of extra-academic knowledge transfer, Riccardo Rapparini reports on a survey administered to architecture students, which reveals that 71% of respondents use websites and online platforms as a source for acquiring information related to architectural design culture[6]. In light of new IT tools, such as ChatGPT, is it possible to forge an alliance with artificial intelligence for the development of the platform?

FB: The web is a far more pervasive and fascinating universe than the printed pages of a book or magazine. The key is to learn how to navigate this vast sea, that is to develop a critical eye capable of selecting the content to be incorporated when drafting an architectural project. The development of critical judgment is the responsibility of teachers, who must teach students how to see architecture. Regarding artificial intelligence, I believe it is essential to find ways to forge an alliance with this new tool or rather, with this alien form of intellect. I'm not sure if ArchiDiAP, in its current form, can already be integrated with AI; that is strictly a matter of computer science. Artificial intelligence can certainly be used as a disciplinary learning tool, that is as a selective filter based on comparative mechanisms grounded in analogy or imitation, according to a definition by Mario Carpo. In this sense, an extensive archive on very specific themes, such as the one ArchiDiAP can offer, is undoubtedly fundamental for identifying recurring characteristics in certain architectural works. ArchiDiAP will certainly evolve in the future, but without losing its intermediate nature between mass dissemination and scientific communication the starting essence of its being.

Sharing and communicating beyond the school

When users type the name of a building or an architect into any search engine, they often end up on the ArchiDiAP website, where they frequently find exactly what they were looking for: a floor plan, a detail, a photo, or the history of an architectural structure. But who is the web user who lands on ArchiDiAP? It is a multifaceted individual who can be identified as a scholar (of any level), a graduate student, a researcher, a professor, or simply a curious, non-expert enthusiast of the discipline. Founded in 2012 within the academic community, ArchiDiAP is an architecture platform born from the collaborative sharing of architectural knowledge (similar to Wikipedia), with the goal of reaching beyond academia to engage the broader online community. As stated on the site:

> ArchiDiAP combines the advantages of a huge user base which simultaneously becomes a co-author of the content […], with the quality control […] guaranteed by the Editorial Board […], in order to offer a product […] useful […] for teaching and research […], as well as an effective means of dissemination to a non-specialized public.[7]

Free from any market logic, the platform is a tool for disseminating architectural culture but at the same time serves as an effective dual-purpose educational resource: on the one hand, the portal functions as a cultural repository from which students draw knowledge, while on the other, it serves as a participatory research laboratory for the Department of Architecture and Design (Sapienza University of Rome). The platform is self-sustaining, in fact, through the academic community (including doctoral students), which compiles the project profiles while earning academic credits toward their degrees and scientific qualifications[8].

Unlike other Italian platforms such as Divisare, Archiportale, and Archilovers, ArchiDiAP offers a scholarly perspective on architectural works, which are catalogued in profiles and organized by images, text, credits, CAD models, web references, and bibliography. These categories allow users to explore the portal at multiple levels of depth, and visitors to the website can choose to view only the images, simply read the project's chronology, or consult the bibliography to expand their research into other contexts. It is precisely the bibliographic references, the cataloguing method, and, finally, the review of the entries by an editorial team of experts (doctoral candidates, PhDs, researchers, and professors) that make the portal a scientific tool for the dissemination of the discipline. But ArchiDiAP does not belong solely to the online world; ArchiDiAP is an educational platform that extends its virtual dimension into the physical environment by organizing conferences and publishing books.

Thirteen years after the portal's creation and in the midst of a new IT revolution, the interview with Orazio Carpenzano and Fabio Balducci (the founders) reflects on the virtual transmissibility of the discipline of architecture. The concluding remarks on the future of ArchiDiAP bring the fundamental aspect of its nature back to the center of the discussion: being a communication tool for the school beyond the school. According to this premise, artificial intelligence is therefore not a threat but a resource for the portal, whose intellectual domain belongs exclusively to the scientific community.

The sharing and free access to knowledge are therefore the defining characteristics of the platform, which has no intention of succumbing to

the persuasive trends of contemporary web design. ArchiDiAP's ultimate goal is to promote and defend the poetic dimension of architecture by communicating its profound essence through thoughtful content that goes beyond the slogans and images of today's media culture. ArchiDiAP's democratic effort to disseminate design culture[9] is a laconic way of communicating knowledge that, as Gramsci states regarding the intellectual's commitment to the formation of society, does not focus on "original discoveries, […] –but insists– critically […] –on– truths already discovered –in order– to socialize them […] and make them the basis of vital actions" (Gramsci 1977, Quad. 11, 1377–1378). In the society of spectacle and distraction, ArchiDiAP stands out as a reliable reference point for design culture, a web channel dedicated to disseminating high-quality works and themes through minimalist, timeless graphics, yet one that invites us to reflect on the form-content relationship in the discipline's current communication.

Note

[1] See *L'arte contemporanea: da Cézanne alle ultime tendenze*, pp. 16-20.
[2] The book cited is *Editoriali di Architettura*.
[3] The Roma 500 Architetture initiative, open to all students in the School of Architecture at Sapienza University of Rome, awarded 1 credit for submitting a descriptive entry for a work selected from the list published on the ArchiDiAP website.
[4] See Eco's definition of communicative acts of different "chemical composition" (Eco 1973, 421).
[5] See Recinti in the bibliography.
[6] See "Parte 3 Come agisce l'Esterno oggi. Una indagine sui processi di apprendimento esterni alla scuola". In: Riccardo Rapparini, *Per una Scuola fuori dalla scuola. Fenomeni, strumenti e prospettive della trasmissibilità extra-accademica*,, PhD in "Civil Engineering and Architecture," Cycle XXXVI, University of Parma, advisor: Enrico Prandi.
[7] See the "Chi siamo" section on the ArchiDiAP portal website https://archidiap.com/benvenuto-in-archidiap/
[8] The portal is classified with ISSN 2283-9747.
[9] For further exploration of ArchiDiAP's communication approach, see also Comunicare l'architettura nel web 2.0, a master's thesis by Verdiana Ciampricotti

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Giulia Furlotti

Filming, questioning, transmitting. OnArchitecture and the audiovisual archive as a critical device for architectural knowledge

Abstract
The interview with Felipe de Ferrari reconstructs the trajectory of *OnArchitecture*, an audiovisual archive dedicated to contemporary architecture. Starting from its first experiences within a student context, the dialogue retraces more than fifteen years of activity, relating the emergence of the project to the Chilean cultural context and to the evolution of online architectural communication. The conversation also addresses the criteria behind the selection of content and the role of the interview as a critical device. What emerges is a reflection on the pedagogical value of the audiovisual archive as a tool capable of fostering learning, the confrontation of different positions, and the transmission of architectural culture.

Keywords
OnArchitecture — Video — Pedagogy

A good interview is always, at least in part, a form of mutual exposure. On this occasion, that awareness imposed itself with a certain irony, as I found myself interviewing an architect who has made the interview one of the principal instruments of his research. Felipe de Ferrari, an architect and professor trained in Chile and now based in Europe, is one of the founders of *OnArchitecture*, "an online audiovisual archive of architecture." It is, in fact, a vast and carefully selected collection of videos on the contemporary, directed and produced by the two authors.

Upon accessing the platform, the graphic approach clearly reasserts the centrality of the video product. Information and supplementary content are kept to a minimum, a selected video occupies the centre of the screen, accompanied by a concise caption, and is followed by a selection of videos labelled "Editor's Choice". The structure of the website remains clear and minimal on the subsequent pages as well, while the menu immediately makes evident the division of the content into two broad categories: interviews and architecture videos.
The two types of videos are clearly identified through specific directorial choices, which remain rigorously consistent in stylistic terms throughout the extensive catalogue. On the one hand, the interview videos, with a fixed camera, which portray exclusively the architect, while the interviewer remains off-screen. The result is a form of discourse that is almost autonomous, very close to a monologue, from which even the questions have been removed. The duration is considerable, in some cases reaching up to forty minutes of footage, with the material structured into thematic chapters under broad headings. The quality of the interlocutors is such that

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Fig. 1
Screenshot from OnArchitecture homepage

any selection would necessarily be partial, since among the many figures present in the archive are Smiljan Radić, Alejandro Aravena, Paulo Mendes da Rocha, Lacaton & Vassal, Sou Fujimoto, and Toyo Ito, among others.
The second category collects instead videos dedicated to architectural works. Again, the camera is fixed, but the videos are animated by people walking through and using the spaces, by variations in light, by environmental movements. The shots appear carefully constructed, often symmetrical, and are organized through static takes lasting a few seconds which, once edited in sequence, offer a reading of the building that is both concise and precise. These are generally short videos, under five minutes in length, although in some cases they may extend to fifteen.
What is striking in both formats is the programmatic absence of a traditional explanatory apparatus. There is no critical commentary accompanying the works, no contextualizing texts, and no plans or drawings appear within the interviews. At first glance, though the interview itself will show how partial this reading is, the figure of the curator seems almost to withdraw.

This interview thus arises from an attempt to conceptualize *OnArchitecture* not so much as an archive of audiovisual materials, but rather as a cultural project. By retracing the stages of its development, it seeks to reconstruct the project's relationship with the Chilean context and with international architectural culture, its distance from other digital platforms, and its gradual transition from a student initiative to an archive capable of generating critical reflection, addressed also to schools and research communities. It will also investigate the extent to which video may be considered a pedagogical tool: not merely a medium for communicating architecture, but a means of constructing relations between ideas, works, and authors.

Giulia Furlotti: I would like to open this interview in the most conventional way, by retracing the origins of the project. The earliest videos currently accessible on the platform date back to 2008, a relatively early moment in relation to the digital era in which we are now immersed, especially if one considers that, at the time, video was still a scarcely consolidated tool for the online documentation and transmission of architecture. In what context

did OnArchitecture develop, and what conditions made its emergence possible?

Felipe De Ferrari: I first came to Europe in 2006, with the intention of enjoying visiting the cities and a strong interest in the direct observation of architecture, almost as an extension of the kind of study one undertakes during university years. While speaking with one of my closest friends, another Chilean architect, Sebastián Paredes, the idea emerged of sharing the experience I was having. We concluded that we would start a blog, one based not on text but on images, on video. We were already consumers of blogs, and an important reference for us was PLOT[1] which was already using video as a tool to present certain projects.
In retrospect, I also believe that this choice was rooted in a formation strongly marked by television culture. Television was a constant presence in everyday domestic life and, although it was not something I reflected on critically at the time, it represented a continuous point of reference. During my years studying architecture, for instance, I remember the television always being on in the background, contributing implicitly to the development of an interest in visual culture; I would say especially television culture, rather than cinema.

GF: It is difficult to believe, because your shots are very cinematographic.

FDF: Yes, because we learned. I grew up in a rather ordinary Chilean city, without any particularly strong cultural stimuli. When we began studying architecture, our background did not include references such as Godard or Italian cinema; we watched football matches and reality shows, content very much connected to popular culture. But, as I was saying, we were already very interested in the video format. We began to use it in a completely experimental and non-professional way, essentially through moving shots, on foot or even by bicycle. During my trip through Europe, I would visit as many as five buildings a day, and then we would begin editing the material I had filmed.
We were still students, and this aspect was closely connected to another fundamental element: the collective work within the school. When we realized that we had effectively created a platform with an audience, we also understood that we needed help. We began to involve other people, friends and colleagues, who discussed the work critically with us and contributed to the editing and translations. It was not a structured system: we were students collaborating with one another, without interns or a formal organization. Still, younger students would take care of the transcriptions, which was the most tedious part [laughs].

We were, of course, as young people often are, very ambitious. I remember, for example, that we sent a rather cheery video to OMA, which had been a major point of reference for us during our formative years. And at a certain point, we actually received a reply! They said they had found the video very interesting and asked whether they could use the material on one of their platforms. We were in China at the time, and that recognition struck us deeply. From that moment on, we began to work more and more intensely on the project, and gradually introduced the interview format as well.

The entire project was, in a way, a reaction to platforms such as *Plataforma Arquitectura* and *ArchDaily*, both of which had emerged from the same academic context in Chile, within our university. When we began to grow, they even invited us to collaborate with them, but our position was rather critical. It seemed to us that their platform lacked a real editorial project, and that it functioned more as a system for aggregating content, without a clear intentionality. Their discourse around the "democratization" of architecture also appeared unconvincing to us at that stage. At the same time, it immediately became clear that it would be impossible to compete with that model. These were platforms capable of publishing dozens of pieces of content every day, simply by collecting and relaunching material produced by professional offices. We, on the other hand, worked in a completely different way, producing the videos ourselves, which made any comparison on a quantitative level entirely impracticable.
We recognized that there was no point in pursuing that direction, and began to reflect on our audience and on the possibility of sustaining our work economically. There was an audience interested in video content on architecture, and that was where we needed to focus our attention. At the time, the website was free, and we did not want to introduce advertising. We therefore opted for a paid subscription model, also thanks to the support of a small but significant group of supporters – including editors, architects from our school, and professionals we had come to know through our documentation work – who agreed to subscribe.
And yet we had a basic conviction: we did not want to base our livelihood on individual users by asking them to pay for membership. We ourselves consumed a great deal of material that we found freely on the internet, and it seemed wrong to ask individuals to pay in order to access the content.

At that moment, a significant coincidence occurred: AHO, the Oslo School of Architecture and Design in Norway, contacted us asking to subscribe to our archive. We received a formal email that surprised us, also because the platform was not yet structured to handle institutional subscriptions. We decided nonetheless to grant access, but in exchange we asked for critical feedback that could help us reformulate the project.
At that time, it was still a student initiative, not particularly structured from a professional point of view. With AHO, and shortly afterwards with our own university, the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, we set up a kind of pilot phase: we gave them access to the content and, in return, received operational feedback, for instance on the need to improve indexing, integrate metadata, or reorganize the material. Drawing on these suggestions, we redesigned the platform and developed a new website, equipped with a search engine and conceived as a product better suited to the needs of research and libraries. Through this transition, the objective gradually shifted from the desire for individual visibility toward the construction of an archive, which implies different temporalities and modes of use, more closely aligned with cultural and academic contexts. This initial phase dates to around 2009, and the project has continued to develop from there.
To summarize, and to give you a clearer overview, the project originated in 2006, when we were still students. Between 2006 and 2008 we produced highly experimental and still rather immature videos, which is why the materials currently available begin from 2008 onwards. There are, for example, earlier interviews, such as those with Mark Wigley or Bjarke

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Fig. 2
Frame from the film "Loos Ornamental", part of Heinz Emigholz's Architecture as Autobiography series

Ingels, that were not kept online because we came to recognize their limitations. There is also an interview with Rafael Iglesia, a very interesting Argentine architect who passed away around ten years ago, which was the first in the entire series but is no longer available today, precisely because it belongs to that initial phase.

This transition also marked a broader change. We began to study cinema more closely, questioning our own way of filming, which at that point was still tied to recording in motion and increasingly seemed to us an artificial way of representing architectural space.
And it was during that period that we discovered the work of the German documentarian Heinz Emigholz. This was very important for us, because Emigholz is not an architect; he is a filmmaker, a documentarian, but he produced a series entitled *Architecture as Autobiography*[2]. He portrays buildings by often overlooked architects, such as Loos, Neutra, or Sullivan, developing his own grammar of filming, a highly personal way of shooting, with shots that are often "broken," not perfectly straight, rather unusual, and mostly static, with very few movements within the building.
We were strongly influenced by this, and began to tell ourselves that, as architects, we wanted to learn from this approach. The ideal would have been to make it possible to compare individual shots, creating a document through which comparisons could be established.

GF: I am particularly interested in an aspect you have referred to while retracing the origins of the project, meaning the difference in approach that seems to underpin this "dualism" within *OnArchitecture*'s audiovisual production. On the one hand, there are the interviews, which, as you anticipated, emerged almost in reaction to a certain type of online architecture aggregator; on the other, there are the architectural recordings, which I would describe as almost poetic, if you allow me the term, yet at the same time highly explanatory. As you were saying, they are truly tools of analysis, as they make it possible to understand the project, to establish critical comparisons, and to grasp its uses. In some way, the two formats appear to function as complementary instruments: on the one hand, architectural theory, the explanation of architecture; on the other,

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Fig. 3
El Croquis, 145, Christian Kerez 2000–2009. (2009). El Croquis Editorial, cover.

its figuration. Even in interviews in which architects speak directly about a specific project, no images appear, nor are there plans or architectural drawings.
Why such a radical choice?

FDF: It is closely related to the kind of culture in which we were formed at that time. One could say that we were, and I think still are, very critical, and that this project emerges precisely from that critical stance. We were tired of a certain kind of interview, in which the questions always revolved around formulas such as "what is the role of the architect?" or "what is architecture for you?"
These questions are not banal in themselves, quite the opposite, but they were treated as if they were, in a superficial and repetitive way. They did not contribute to building a discourse, but merely collected generic, almost interchangeable opinions. From this came the idea of adopting a different approach to architectural culture and to the way it is constructed.
We decided to work with video, and through video we also intended to react to a certain way of representing architecture, typical of some monographs or journals that we frequently consulted, but which often seemed artificial to us. I remember the comment of a professor, who said, "It is suspicious that photographs of a building are always taken in the best weather and under perfect conditions."
For us, this was already a fact. For example, we received an issue of *El Croquis* dedicated to Kerez, Swiss architecture, entirely in concrete, extremely refined, with no people in the image, no trace of life. On the cover, one sees a glimpse of a staircase and asks oneself, "is this architecture?"

We began to think that it was necessary to look for the real uses of buildings, to visit places, and to gain access to what the media normally does not show. Quinta Monroy by Elemental, in reality, resembles a favela much more than the controlled and idealized image circulated in publications. At that time, we were very interested in the idea of reality, in the way architecture ages over time, and above all in the contradictions that emerge in spaces through everyday use, including improper uses, transformations, and people's appropriations of space. For us, it was essential to bring these aspects to light.

At the same time, we were not entirely convinced by the traditional interview format. We believed more in the tradition of oratory, in the narration of an idea. For this reason, we decided not to construct videos filled with images intended simply to animate boring interviews with architects. We wanted to maintain a very direct form, in which what matters is the argument, the discourse. We also did not want to appear in the videos ourselves. Rather, we were interested in constructing a kind of monologue, one capable of introducing and making legible the ideas of the architects being interviewed.
And this is because, and I would say this is where the main difference from platforms such as *ArchDaily* lies, from the very beginning we knew that we wanted to design, and that we wanted to be directly involved in the practice of architecture. The interviews and the editorial work developed in parallel with a process of learning from figures we deeply admired. For us, it was a privilege, for example, to be able to meet Pier Vittorio Aureli in 2009, or Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal. Had we not had those encounters,

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Fig. 4
Frame from the video "Quinta Monroy" by Felipe de Ferrari and Diego Grass, 2010, from OnArchitecture.

we would probably have completed our education with different references and different ideas, and we would have become very different architects, and very different people. Those experiences transformed us.
I myself interrupted my final diploma work for a semester in order to travel through Europe and conduct interviews, and this opened up the possibility of discovering new cultural and design models. For example, it was through reading Aureli's *The Project of Autonomy*[3] that I began to take a real interest in politics. I was already very critical of neoliberalism in Chile, but I had never felt the need to engage with it more deeply or directly. That book marked an important turning point. From there, I began to take an interest in Italian post-Marxism and in certain theoretical and political movements. I realized that in Chile there was an entire generation addressing similar issues, sharing similar references and positions. One of them was also the current Chilean president, who at the time, around 2012, was one of the leaders of the student movement. His positions later shifted toward a more moderate social democracy, but in that initial phase the context was very different. We became closer to that movement and collaborated on several political campaigns.
In this sense, I would say that figures such as Pier Vittorio Aureli and Lina Bo Bardi played a decisive role in the formation of my political imagination. Through Lina Bo Bardi, for instance, I discovered Gramsci. She discussed him in the Brazilian context, and this led me to read his texts in full.

GF: Retracing the history of the project, it seems clear that *OnArchitecture* is, at least in part, a reaction to the Chilean political and cultural context, but also a product of that same context. Added to this is the fact that some of the online architecture platforms now best known internationally were developed within your own university, or at least in close relation to that environment. Do you think this influenced the birth and evolution of the project, from a cultural, political, and academic point of view?

FDF: Certainly. To clarify, because this point is important to me, as

students we had a rather suspicious attitude toward student movements. We had reached a level of criticality that led us to say, "they take to the streets, they protest, but in the end nothing changes." For this reason, during the final years of university, we concentrated almost all our energy on this project. We were not only making videos, but also organizing events within the school, as a form of cultural activity and a way of discussing and circulating ideas. In a sense, we were working in parallel with the student magazine, which dealt mainly with political and urban issues. We were friends, but our interest was slightly different. We wanted to talk about architecture, though not only in formal terms. We wanted to listen to figures such as Lacaton & Vassal, for example, and to build a discourse around those kinds of positions. At the same time, as I mentioned, we were also reacting to that group of platforms that functioned mainly as content aggregators. We were not convinced by the concept behind them. The idea of the "democratization of architecture," in that context, seemed to us in some way naïve, if not actually false, because those platforms were in fact generating significant profits from that model.
That said, one has to consider, and it is important that you pointed this out, that Chile is probably one of the most extreme neoliberal laboratories. This means that everything is turned into a commodity. In some way, every aspect of life is marketized. And I would say that, as individuals, there is only so much one can do. It is not easy to fight or react frontally. One can try to resist, but the system is so pervasive that it becomes part of the culture itself. For example, almost every weekend I would go with my family to malls, to shopping centres. That was the family event. We did not do sports, we did not go to parks. We really went to the centre of the empire, travelling all the way to Santiago to spend the entire day there, walking around and visiting shops inside a closed environment. I hated it, but in some way this too was part of our culture.

GF: *OnArchitecture* is a project with a very small structure. It is essentially the two of you, and there is no real scientific or editorial committee in the traditional sense. You have already mentioned that the selection often emerges from personal interests, from figures who arouse your curiosity or whom you admire. What kind of knowledge, or what idea of architecture, do you seek to transmit through this selection?

FDF: Until last year, for twelve years, there were only three partners, and the third person was an investor, a psychologist. I would say that almost all of the content was produced by Diego Grass and me. There are a few exceptions, but they are very rare. It is therefore a very small structure. It was never really a collective. At the beginning there was a group of students, but the project gradually stabilized into a much smaller organization.
As for the selection of content, I would say that until Diego was a partner at Plan Común, that is, until 2016, we carried out the vast majority of the interviews together. It was more demanding work, because it required us to discuss them beforehand, prepare the questions, and construct a shared point of view. When Diego left the office, we understood that the best way to continue would also be to divide the production of content. In a sense, it no longer made sense for us to be recognized as a single entity. It was more accurate to allow two people with different interests to emerge, also because he had left the office precisely in order to pursue other directions. At the basis of the project, however, there is the conviction that architecture

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Fig. 5
Screenshot from OnArchitecture during an interview with Enrique Walker by Felipe de Ferrari and Diego Grass, 2011.

is a common field of knowledge. This is very important for us, because of course we know which architecture interests us, and we also know what we do not consider to be good architecture.

Furthermore, still with regard to the question of what to transmit, one thing we understood as soon as we began interviewing people and meeting many architects is that there is this endless, and rather vicious, debate about whether architecture is political or not. This can also be seen in the Biennials: one is more oriented toward activism and the social, the next returns to form, then again to the social, then to ecology, sometimes with rather questionable outcomes, as seems to have happened in the latest one, and then back again to form. It is an endless debate, with people who want to talk about democracy and others who do not want to talk about it at all, preferring instead to discuss ambiguity or autonomy. An interminable and, often, unproductive debate.
Until, also thanks to the position expressed by Susan Sontag[4], we understood that it was not necessary to decide. One does not necessarily have to choose between one thing and another. One can have one, and one can also have the other; then one can try to construct a synthesis, or a hybrid. And the hybrid, in the end, is often more interesting, because it allows for a more relational form of thinking, capable of establishing even unexpected connections, for example between Dogma and Raumlabor in Berlin, to mention two very different practices. Learning from both sides, or from many different sides, is much more interesting.
Naturally, this is also a position from which we ourselves have benefited. I can interview a scholar of Cedric Price simply because I am interested in Cedric Price, and have a good conversation with him. Then I can move elsewhere. For example, two days ago I contacted Bernard Tschumi to talk about the Parc de la Villette, because I really like it and I cross it every day. Another important figure for us, for the creation of our position, was Enrique Walker, a Chilean researcher, who a few years ago directed the Master in History and Theory at Columbia. He is a very interesting figure. Enrique had already done interviews before us and had published a book with twelve architects, including Tadao Ando, Toyo Ito, maybe Tschumi, I

don't remember exactly[5]. We interviewed him precisely on the topic of the interview: on how to approach it, how to construct it.

He said something very intelligent to us, namely the idea of constructing one's own agency through questions. It is not simply a matter of placing a microphone in front of an architect and saying, "say something intelligent." We have our own arguments, we have a position, and this position is in some way hidden in the way we formulate the questions. Some architects notice this, they are aware of it; others simply talk. But some people say to you, "Actually, with this question you are criticizing me." Aravena, for example, in the last interview in 2010, told us, "Every time you ask a question, I have the feeling that you want to kick me in the balls." And it was true, it was absolutely true.
This was our way of conducting interviews. Of course, we are more accommodating with the architects who interest us most, or whom we hold in higher regard. But for us, this aspect was very important.

GF: After what you have said, I feel very self-aware about the next question, so I will ask it directly: do you consider yourselves artists or pedagogues? On the one hand, there is an evident educational dimension, a desire to make accessible ideas, practices, and figures that you consider relevant, and to construct a tool useful for understanding architecture and generating a shared debate. On the other hand, however, the way you film, edit, and more generally construct the archive seems to imply a very personal position. Even the use of video itself seems to operate in a way that is almost counterintuitive with respect to the possibilities offered by the medium for representing architecture. I am thinking, for example, of Zevi's lesson and of the idea of video as a privileged tool for describing space, because it allows movement, situated perception, and a first-person experience. In the videos currently accessible on the platform, however, the camera is fixed. What captures the viewer's attention is instead the people who use and move through the architecture.

FDF: The official answer is that, of course, we produce videos that can be watched, revisited, discussed, and we truly believe that they are very interesting pedagogical tools. They are also an invitation to discover other questions. For younger generations, for example, watching an interview, even one lasting only three minutes, can be a more immediate way of approaching a subject, and perhaps later arriving at a book.
From this point of view, yes, video has a pedagogical function, and we believe that building an archive in this way can be relevant for academic communities. It can stimulate students' curiosity, offer new tools to teachers, create opportunities for dialogue, and so on. This is, let us say, the official answer.
On the other hand, there is an unofficial answer: we are authors. We produce a grammar, a system for filming videos, and our subjectivity is very present, reality is framed from our point of view, which is always the point of view of an author. Diego is probably less convinced by this aspect, and perhaps this is why he no longer films works today, it is not what interests him most. He wants to speak with people, he has above all this kind of intellectual curiosity.
As far as I am concerned, instead, every time I film a video I think of all the photographers and authors who interest me, and of the way they construct

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Fig. 6
Candida Höfer, Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen I, 2001. Colour photography, Tate collection (P78678).

an image: from Hockney to Luigi Ghirri, Walter Niedermayr, Bas Princen, Candida Höfer. So, even though I am not an artist, I recognize that I have a very artistic position in relation to this work. Because, at the very same time, it is one hundred percent pedagogy, but it is also something entirely personal: it is my research, which I share with Diego.

All of this has begun to define, in quite a profound way, our way of thinking, our way of being as people, as citizens, but also the way we run an office. Because the vast majority of the things we do we have learned from others: people who had already faced them before us and with whom we had the privilege of establishing a direct dialogue.
In this way we can learn, at the same time, from a more conceptual approach, such as that of Kumar Vyas, or from particularly interesting methodologies, such as those of 51N4E in Belgium, or of Harquitectes, who are extremely constructive architects, almost old fashioned in this sense, because they make buildings, rather than research or publications.
I was talking about this with some friends just the other day: it is surprising, because we can build our own synthesis. We know the way in which these different figures address certain issues, and we can learn from each of them, relating very different approaches to one another. And this is the basis of pedagogy.

GF: If *OnArchitecture* is also a pedagogical tool, how much are you willing to change in order to make it more accessible or more effective from this point of view?

FDF: On the one hand, we are doing everything possible to bring the academic community into the videos. This is why we are working on a brochure, this is why we continue filming, why we try to build relationships with schools of architecture and to define certain projects together. On the other hand, however, I would also say that we continue to film as we did at the beginning, in 2006: in the end, also for ourselves.

We know very well that in recent years the attention span has decreased. Ten years ago, it was easier for people to watch a thirty-minute video, today very few reach the end. And this can be seen very clearly from the data we obtain from the video platform: many people watch the first five minutes, but very few reach the end of the video.
One possible consequence would be to produce shorter videos, but I do not really believe in this solution. We want to continue engaging with these issues, with the speed of modernity, but this does not mean we will move to TikTok. To be more popular, instead of making interviews on Cedric Price, who is an architect from another generation and whom today, I would say, few people know, even though he is an extraordinary figure, we could make videos on artificial intelligence, on how to produce better images, or similar themes. I am sure it would be more successful. But this is not the culture, nor the vision of the world, that we are interested in constructing.

In fact, the issue of length had already emerged at the beginning of our experience, for reasons I would describe as logistical. You have to imagine that in the first five, perhaps seven years, Diego and I carried out around three hundred interviews. We translated them ourselves, we did the transcriptions manually, before automatic tools existed. I remember, for example, a thirty-page transcription of Yoshiharu Tsukamoto of Atelier Bow-Wow. We did the proofreading, then translated everything into Spanish and English. It was an enormous amount of work, and we did it constantly, almost as an exercise. Of course, all of this obviously required a great deal of time. But, in the end, I am not afraid of long videos. I know that there are people interested in that content, and we therefore try to produce valid content, especially in the case of interviews. They can also be in French, I do not care: I now live in France, and if people express themselves better in French, then we do them in French, the important thing is that the interview is good. I am very pleased with the last people I interviewed: very well-prepared architects and researchers, with whom it was possible to construct truly substantial conversations.

GF: Can we consider *OnArchitecture*, an audiovisual archive, as a form of teaching beyond the school?
I am interested in understanding whether, in your view, a video platform can operate in parallel with traditional academic education, therefore in a freer and more informal way, or whether it can enter directly into institutional paths of architectural education, as material for research and learning.

FDF: I truly believe in video. I do not understand it only as an element of visual impact, nor as something we use simply to build a business. I truly believe in video, and also in online video platforms, as materials for learning architecture. For example, I teach a course in the master's programme at the *Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile*, which began during the pandemic, entitled *The Studios*. I give the students, around twenty of them, a list of two hundred, two hundred and fifty videos, all freely available on the web. This becomes the material we use during the two or three months of classes. The students have to watch a lecture, construct an accurate index of it, produce a summary with images taken from the video, key information, texts, and direct quotations. The following week they present this work. My role, in that context, is above all to provide frames

of reference. If, for example, during a presentation someone introduces Dogma, I intervene by trying to give a concise but clear overview, so that everyone can understand what is being discussed. The final objective is for the students to construct an imaginary dialogue between different authors, and it is a very effective exercise. They can start, for example, from the theme of in-between spaces in collective housing and construct a fictional conversation between eight or ten architects who may never have met. It is once again the idea of architecture as a common field of knowledge: a weaving of ideas.

This is why I strongly believe in the capacity of video. In my courses, in fact, I do not even necessarily speak about how to film architecture, although I have already taught courses specifically on this subject, but rather about research, and about how to use different sources to construct research.

Also, in my design workshop in Chile, where students work on theses and projects, it often happens that they bring many screenshots from videos found on YouTube in order to discuss more precisely the works we are analysing. The official images, the canonical portraits of buildings, are not sufficient. In this sense, I would say that video represents a great opportunity: for better or worse, we live in the age of images.

In conclusion

The apparent curatorial withdrawal of *OnArchitecture* proves, upon closer inspection, to be a very precise form of critical presence. The archive is not a neutral repository, but the result of a practice of selection, interpretation, and study. It is therefore interesting to observe how a project that also began as a tool for personal inquiry and self-education – carried out through the act of choosing one's own masters and questioning them directly, in a literal sense in the case of the authors and in a broader sense in the case of the buildings – ultimately becomes a tool for the reinterpretation and transmission of knowledge, a pedagogical act in its most concrete form.

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Note

[1] PLOT was an architecture studio founded in Copenhagen in January 2001 by architects Julien De Smedt and Bjarke Ingels, and closed in 2006. For a deeper understanding of its theoretical thinking, see https://plot.dk/

[2] Heinz Emigholz, *Architecture as Autobiography*, film series, in *Photography and beyond*, 1993–

[3] Aureli, P. V. (2012). *The project of autonomy: Politics and architecture within and against capitalism*. Princeton Architectural Press.

[4] For a more in-depth look at Susan Sontag's position, see: Sontag, S. (1966). *Against interpretation and other essays*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

[5] Walker, E., & Oppici, F. (1998). 1*2 entrevistas con arquitectos* (R. Pérez de Arce, Introd.). Ediciones ARQ, Escuela de Arquitectura, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile.

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Matthew Blunderfield

Scaffold: Recording Architecture

Abstract
Scaffold is a podcast on architecture understood in its broadest sense, as a discipline connected to literature, art, and everyday life. Born in London in 2018, when I was still working in architectural practice, it emerged from a feeling of doors closing: the compromises of professional life, the abstractions of academia, the speed and noise of contemporary media. Scaffold reopens those doors through long, in-depth interviews with architects, artists, and designers, creating a space for sustained reflection at a moment when architectural criticism, like virtually all criticism today, appears increasingly reductive, cautious, and promotional. Influenced by the early architecture blogs and public radio programmes, the podcast's goal is not virality, but slow and attentive conversation. Over five years it has become a resource for students, teachers, and professionals seeking new perspectives on their field, ones capable of leaving room for curiosity and possibility.

Keywords
Architettura — Media — Attention

Scaffold began in late 2018, when I was still working as an architect in London. By that point I had been practicing for four years, long enough to start ceding my idealism – that architecture could envision and enact new ways of living – to the realities of professional practice: value engineering, consultant coordination, planning constraints, political maneuvering. All the things that keep the machine of building moving forward, and that gradually close the doors on the expansive questions that drew me to architecture in the first place. I thought of the early interviews I was recording as a wedge I could stop those doors with, keeping them open a little longer.

If you're going to start an architecture podcast, London is one of the best places to do it. The city hosts a deeply informed and ideologically diverse chorus of voices, fostered by its architectural legacy and its density of schools and cultural institutions. Scaffold began independently, but it continues to exist thanks entirely to one of those institutions in particular – the Architecture Foundation – through which the project has been produced since 2018.

The format has barely changed since I began. Typically there is just one guest, in one long conversation. The landscape around the podcast has changed considerably though. I've remained an avid podcast listener, but when I started, I was listening to programmes like *Bookworm*, *Longform*, and *The Organist*, all of which have now gone. They were reflective, meandering shows descended from public radio, and they treated conversation as something serious and sustaining. I loved their rigour and their commitment to ideas that weren't necessarily timely. More than anything, they were intimate, full of suspense and emotion in a way that only

seemed possible through the event of conversation, where the voice works in collaboration with the mind. Today my podcast feed fills up with news analysis, polarizing commentary, and shows promoting ways to improve my earning power, fitness and well-being. Instead of being exposed to ideas to grapple with, I feel spoon-fed positions and protocols. Scaffold has tried to resist that drift, embracing something slower and more willing to risk interpretation, more attentive to tracing out new thoughts with guests as opposed to having them perform from a script. The medium itself helps. In a conversation, most of us are not speaking to be clipped and shared; we speak to connect with the person across from us. Ideas can stay provisional and develop in real time. The podcast has more in common with a real-world encounter than with what the internet has become; it aspires to the pleasures of a long meal, versus the blunt efficiency of the feed.

I studied English literature before I studied architecture (my university didn't offer architecture as an undergraduate degree), and to me fiction and architecture have never been far apart. Architects, like writers, are speculative creatures, thinking deeply about how people live. The novelist, like the architect, is a keen observer of environments and behaviour. In some ways, buildings are not unlike texts. Both are open to interpretation; they are expressive and legible if you learn how to read them.

The name of the podcast carries something of this attitude. A scaffold is temporary, provisional, a thing that allows another structure to come into being. Language has the same relationship to architecture: it builds frameworks that let us read and interpret buildings, and it can just as easily obscure the thing itself. The interview is scaffolding in that sense – a temporary support that, if built well, lets meaning take shape without getting in the way.

This is why Scaffold has never been about architecture in the narrow sense. I invite artists, poets, industrial designers, landscape architects, people whose work expands my sense of what architecture touches and is touched by. The podcast is a way of finding architecture beyond conventional frameworks of understanding, defined less by the boundaries between it and other disciplines than by its entanglements with them.

Part of why this felt urgent was the widening gap between academia and practice. The atmosphere of schools today is often marked by doubt and hesitation in students. In their concern for the harms caused by architecture, they have opted to analyse and critique rather than to design and propose. In practice, meanwhile, architects are consumed by the logistics of specification and coordination, with little time to reflect on the deeper meaning and ambition of their work. The poles of academia and practice rarely meet, and in fact feel as if they are drifting further apart. Scaffold tries to inhabit the space between them, letting the contradictions surface and keeping architecture alive as a cultural practice rather than a closed system.

My sensibility was shaped as much by literature, blogs, and radio as by architecture. As a student I was absorbed by Geoff Manaugh's *BLDGBLOG*, which in its search for new ways of seeing the built environment was equally interested in storm drains, planetary geology, science fiction, and ruins as in actual buildings. From there I found J.G. Ballard, whose novels revealed the inner strangeness of everyday landscapes – the office park, the motorway, the high-rise as psychological terrain. And I read *Cabinet* magazine, which introduced me to the sprawling polymathic ideas of

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Fig. 1
Richard Wentworth, Islington, 22 September 2022.
The interview with Richard Wentworth was published as episode 70 of the Scaffold podcast.

people like D. Graham Burnett and Steven Connor, who showed me that criticism could be playful and enchanted. Rarely did academic writing feel so alive.

Then there was Michael Silverblatt's *Bookworm*, which I listened to religiously. Silverblatt treated the interview as an art form, revealing to novelists and poets thoughts that illuminated their work in new and surprising ways. He read every book his guests had written before speaking with them, and his attention was so total that David Foster Wallace once asked, on air, if he would adopt him. For me, listening was often an ecstatic experience, like going to church. It's an experience I rarely achieve with my interviews but one I always strive for.

Editing is, it must be said, a crucial part of the process. While I aim for an hour-long episode, I often record for two, sometimes three hours before cutting the tape down to the most essential parts. Even then, they are probably too long. Still, the experience of interviewing is not unlike the process of panning for gold – there will often be a lot of silt and sand in both my questions and my guest's responses. As we grow more comfortable and open to each other, the flecks of gold start to appear.

What this looks like in practice is hard to predict, and that's the point. When I interviewed the architect Jamie Fobert, we spoke about his genteel, even stoic facades, and the inner complexities they concealed, before he began to reflect on the double life he led as a gay architect in the 1980s, and the profound aesthetic experience he had as a child attending church. The anecdotes didn't resolve into a single reading of his work. Together, though, they made it newly legible. Interviewing Richard Wentworth, we recorded on a walk through Islington, where he stops occasionally to take pictures for his ongoing project *Making Do and Getting By*. As we made our way along a canal, down a street, across a housing estate, he

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photographed makeshift solutions and improvisations in the landscape. Each image he made and each detail he noticed produced a chain of associations that wouldn't have surfaced otherwise. He was performing his thought process for me in a way that's rarely revealed. And meeting more recently with the architect Tony Fretton, I found him cooking lunch as we spoke, his digressions following the rhythm of stirring and tasting. At one point I offered to check the stove for him, with unspoken concern for his age. The insistence in his voice that he do it himself carried a faint trace of frustration, a small denial of the limits imposed by an aging body. Architecture is fertile ground for this kind of attention. While language is the writer's currency – which is partly why writers often give the best interviews – for the architect, meaning resists words. The most honest expression of a building is its material presence; any description is already a translation. Audio is, in its own way, surprisingly spatial. Stripped of images, speech has to do more work – identifying what's essential about a scene, which itself carries auditory hallmarks like the birds on a canal, the hiss of a gas range, or the small sounds of a studio. The interview can't replace the building, but it lets us glimpse the lives that shaped it.

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Luigiemanuele Amabile, Marianna Ascolese, Alberto Calderoni

1080x1350. Pedagogy for Architectural Design and Social Media

Abstract
Instagram is now one of the main ways in which design ideas are created and shared. In architectural design education, images serve as both teaching tools and curatorial instruments, with digital visual archives influencing a shared aesthetic, representation, self-promotion, methodologies, and languages. However, the logic of scrolling – fast, synthetic and fragmented – risks replacing theoretical reflection with visual recognisability. In this sense, Instagram is not just a container; it has become an active agent in the design formation process. This article reflects on contemporary modes of transmitting architectural design, paying particular attention to Instagram's role in shaping teaching methods and its impact on younger generations of architects as they engage with design.

Keywords
Architectural Pedagogy – Design Studio – Social Media

From Deep to Doom

In web design, *deep scrolling* is an approach where new content is dynamically added to the bottom of the page as the user scrolls down. It is a method of creating social media content that guides the viewer towards virtually infinite new visual materials. The upward thumb movement leads the viewer towards vast expanses of heterogeneous content that is increasingly aligned with the user's emotional state as they use the platform. The result of algorithms based on increasingly precise data collections, it generates a flood of images that is hard to avoid and that, indeed, architects are increasingly trying to absorb and manage to their own advantage. 1080x1350px is the new shared standard within which the intentions and expressions of architectural design are framed. Web pages proliferate, offering anthologies of Instagram profiles dedicated to architecture students. Here, one can immerse themselves in what appear to be contemporary trends[1] alongside guides to self-promotion strategies[2], visual identity curatorship and professional networking. In this sense, Instagram is not only configured as a platform to gain visibility and conduct business, but also as an authentic laboratory where a learning process based on imitation and the reiteration of content through communication is experimented with. Over time, this feedback system – more likes and confirmation of the success of the communicative act – determines *style* orientations and *behavioural* trends within an extensive disciplinary community. «The interactions of users with architects' images on Instagram suggests that the architect's greater preoccupation is with the production and cultivation of audiences, not images» (Denny, 2018).

Instagram is one of the most widely used social networks, and in fact

the most prominent one in Europe today. Launched in 2010, it quickly gained popularity, reaching 1 million registered users within two months, 10 million within a year, and 1 billion by June 2018. On average, people aged 18 to 24 (a group that includes many undergraduates and some postgraduates) in the United States spend 53[3] minutes per day on Instagram. In Italy, the average adult spends about 30 minutes on this platform per day[4], but this figure is steadily growing. Instagram's pervasiveness across a wide range of contexts puts its detractors – those who downplay its impact and effectiveness, confining it to a mere distraction from authentic experience – in an anachronistic position. In a context where the goal seems to be the establishment of figures in the cultural and professional market through the acquisition – or acclaim – of legions of "authentic" followers, does it make sense to oppose this transformation? A priori rejection of this dimension could appear dangerously outdated, especially in an era where online visibility is a prerequisite for authorial recognition, which is becoming increasingly elusive due to the progressive fragmentation of the architect's role into specialisms, or conversely, due to the hyperproduction and omnipresence of multi-trait figures (Canty, May, Koreitem, 2023): architect, professor, curator, artist, publisher, etc. «Social media platforms like Instagram reconfigure the terms of circulating information. These acts of sharing promote knowledge at the same time that they produce selves vis-à-vis authorship. For the architect, the *Instagrammatic* production of the author is in fact first a function of producing an audience (and reciprocally, the audience is produced as an effect of sharing information)» (Denny 2018).

At the same time, anxiety about new things can turn an innocent hobby into *doomscrolling*, a kind of digital hypochondria. «Media hypochondriacs are obsessed with the depressing novelties they constantly uncover, especially through the internet and digital mass media»[5]. It is hard not to notice how this trend also has consequences in architecture. In this context, information overload and *FOMO*[6] (fear of missing out) lead to the exclusion of those who cannot keep up with the constant flow of online content, creating a divide between those who actively participate in the noisy *chatter* that fuels the up-to-date architectural world, and those who remain on its margins (Puente, 2024). Those who don't keep up are left out.

According to Paolo Landi, the issue is that social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter have not brought any significant change to our lives. However, they subliminally manipulate our anthropology and culture, pushing us, for better or worse, to simplify them (Landi 2019). Landi believes that the deeper problem lies in the cultural and anthropological impact of social media as a whole. Instagram does not generate anything truly new. Rather, it amplifies and exploits pre-existing human tendencies and behaviours, often negative, such as social competition, the pursuit of approval and ostentation. The context of architectural education is not immune to these tendencies. These negative attitudes are not only made more visible, but also more accepted and encouraged. In this way, the platform ends up normalising and legitimising dynamics that, in an alternative context, would be considered superficial or morally questionable.

Mirror and Reflection

Architecture firms use posts, stories and reels to publicise and disseminate their work, promoting and documenting not only traditional project

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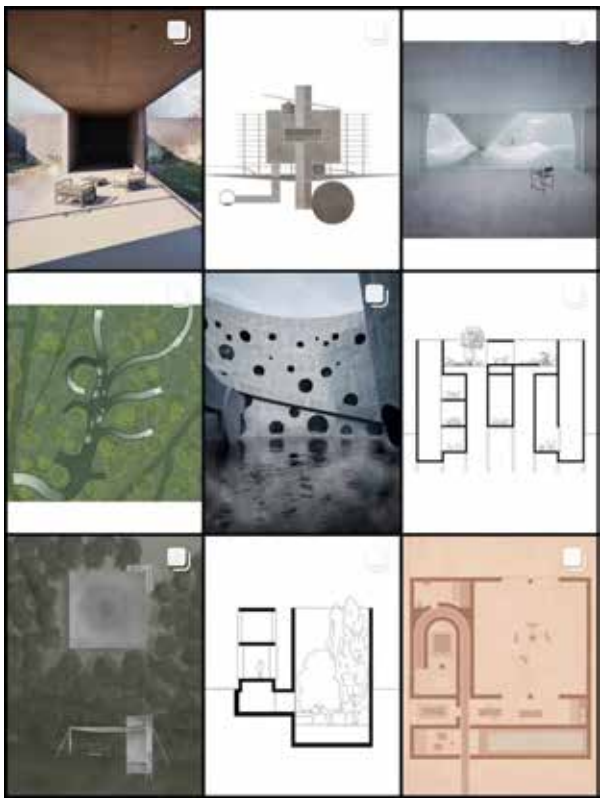


Fig. 1
Screenshot of the Instagram page content, June 2025. © Atelier first year Olgiati, Academy of Architecture of Mendrisio, Università della Svizzera italiana.

content, but also the activities, references and narratives evoked by these images. The same applies to design studios and academic workshops, for which Instagram has become one of the primary means of sharing academic activities, such as confrences, lectures and student outputs, both to reach the widest possible audience (including students) and to establish a distinctive visual identity.

Instagram fosters an imitative process that defines modes of information transfer and shapes educational dynamics. Accounts with the most followers set the standard, dictating a *prêt-à-porter* visual culture that emerges and fades within the span of an academic semester. In practical terms, this leads observers to mimic certain posting styles, such as black-background photos or cropped edge-to-edge images. Overlaid text or neatly framed captions? «Instagramming architecture is not the same as photographing it, carrying not only its own aesthetic and globally conformed standpoints, but an urgency and need for the image to work beyond art object and within an economy of likes, self-promotion, and social currency» (Jennings, 2019).

Over time, this activity has given rise to immaterial archives – yet these are undeniably concrete in the form of digital representations of posters, models, drawings, travel notes and short texts – for the use and, above all, consumption of architecture students worldwide. These archives have effectively become stylistic references, influencing methods of representation and self-promotion both inside and outside academia. While this approach risks oversimplifying key moments of the design process, such as gathering references and representation, by reducing them to a sequence of eye-catching, easily digestible images constrained by the dimensions of a smartphone screen, it also demands critical reflection on the ability to synthesise visual material. Some architects and educators have started to treat Instagram as a form of pedagogical curatorship, carefully selecting images to transform the platform into a tool for disciplined visual discourse.

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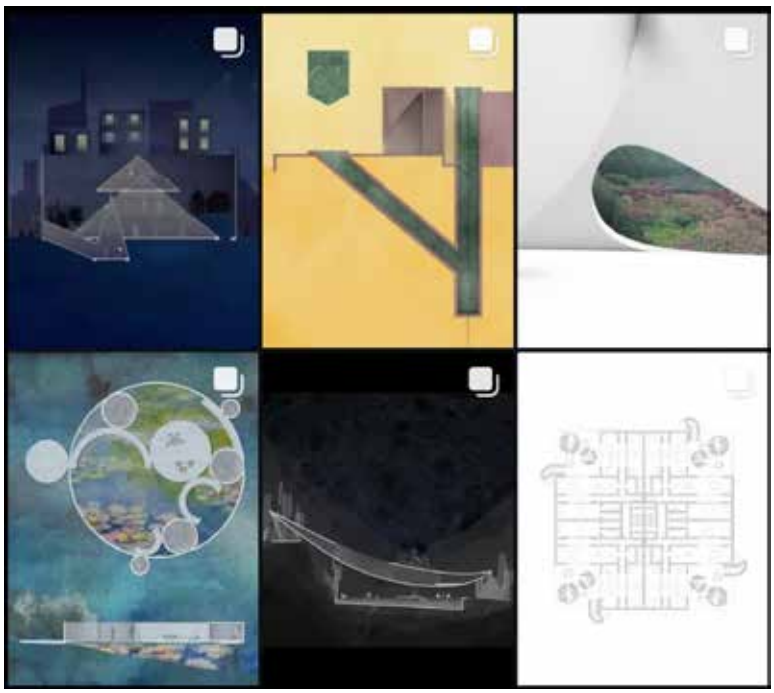


Fig. 2
Olgiati_and_ideas. Screenshot of the Instagram page content, June 2025. © Atelier first year Olgiati, Academy of Architecture of Mendrisio, Università della Svizzera italiana.

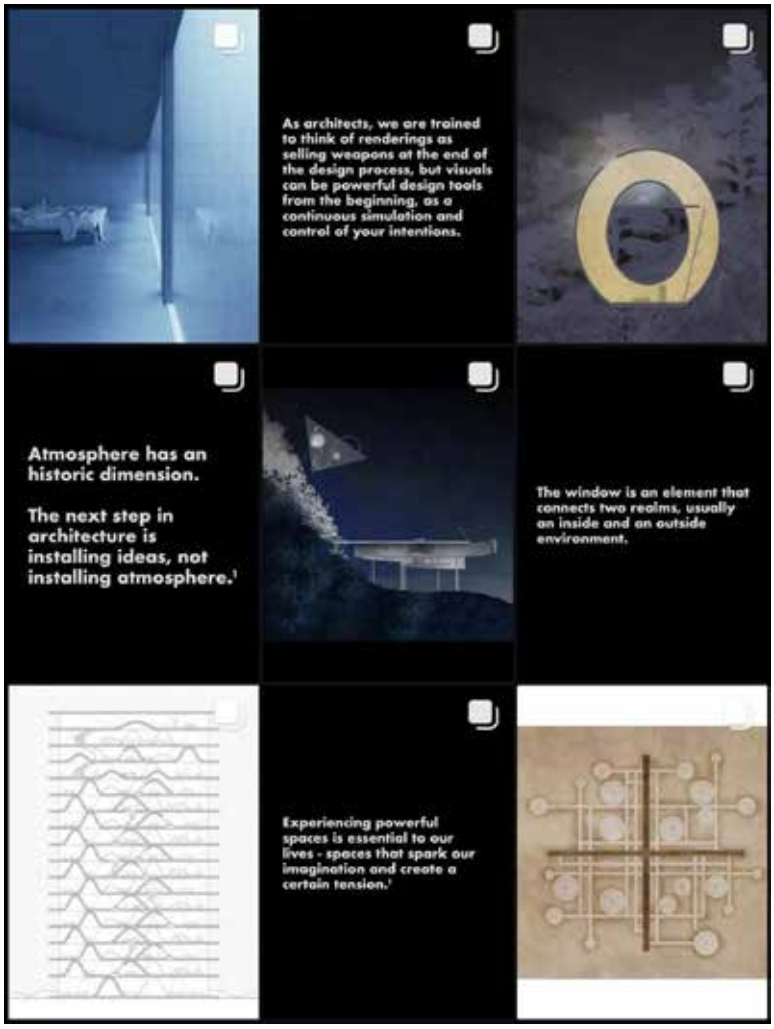


Fig. 3
Screenshot of the Instagram page content, June 2025. © Atelier first year Olgiati, Academy of Architecture of Mendrisio, Università della Svizzera italiana.

A Table of Ideas

Large, colorful drawings characterized by material textures and tonal nuances alternate with blank white or black pages. On these, a single drawing or a few phrases – almost like dogmas – form the grid of one of the most well-known profiles among architectural design educators. "Olgiati_and_ideas" uses images in an almost archetypal form, evoking a primitive thought process that traces possible interpretations in myths and rituals. The architectural language takes root in a precise way of being in the world, finding its justification in verticality, horizontality, centrality, individuality, and collectivity. Each condition is expressed through a gesture where «architectural forms are a language confined to the union of a few ideograms with an immense branching» (Stokes 2014, p. 75).

These kinds of images seem to leave an indelible mark on the observer and the student, shaping their experience without any conscious reflection (Pallasmaa 2014, p. 163). An easily replicated image often misinterprets – in many cases – the simplicity of the gesture as a compositional oversimplification, highlighting the inability to grasp a deeper, more rooted lesson that can hardly be conveyed through the condensed format of an Instagram grid. This process diminishes that «tendency of images to evoke certain emotions, reactions, and associations» (Pallasmaa 2014, p. 163).

Valerio Olgiati has always placed great importance on image-making as a tool for triggering a different way of thinking about, and practising, architecture. This has clear repercussions for teaching, too. His sequences offer an alternative method of conveying architectural concepts through abstract, metaphysical forms, shifting the focus away from discussions about the form of the various buildings that populate the extensive "Olgiati_and_ideas" portfolio. These dreamlike drawings evoke sensations, atmospheres and perceptions of earth, space, depth and abyss rather than describing materials and structures. Alongside these textured, pastel-like drawings are models – strictly white and photographed against a black background – or drawings with black backgrounds and white lines that heighten the abstraction and evocative power of the depicted spaces. The result is a vast table of ideas comprising sequences of drawn spaces: a visual universe in which architecture appears to transcend reality and serves as a radical meditation on the very notion of imagining space.

Domestic Lives

The sequence of architectural drawings and models serves as a narrative device for describing a specific teaching approach – and, before that, a way of observing the world. "Studio Sergison" reveals an almost obsessive desire to interpret architecture, identifying references in the work of the second half of the twentieth-century masters to study, interpret and translate into new forms.

While Valerio Olgiati's images evoke abstraction, "Studio Sergison" is firmly rooted in reality – an immersive exploration of the urban fabric, carefully tracing the conditions that define true urban architecture. The images alternate between photographs of studied works, models, and drawings, all of which evoke the dense materiality of objects that were first observed and then designed. They strive for the «vividness» of the material world, which can only be grasped by «imitating its persistence» and, crucially, the quality of «being given» (Scarry, 2001, p. 30). This is an architecture of surfaces, layers, materials and textures, tracing detail and particularity to define urban rooms from the inside out (and vice versa),

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Fig. 4
Studio Sergison, screenshot of the Instagram page content, June 2025. © Atelier Sergison, Academy of Architecture of Mendrisio, Università della Svizzera italiana.

Fig. 5
Studio Sergison, screenshot of the Instagram page content, June 2025. © Atelier Sergison, Academy of Architecture of Mendrisio, Università della Svizzera italiana.

where a profound connection to context is always evident.
This approach to design serves as a valuable reference for educators, particularly those who develop a teaching programme grounded in historical knowledge and the capacity to continually reinterpret it, adding another layer to the city. The residential buildings analysed on various study trips form a shared didactic guide for all students, proposing new interests and inspirations.
The meticulous attention to detail evident in the hatched lines and textures of drawings depicting domestic spaces is also apparent in the models. Some of these models illustrate urban integration, while others are used to create hyperrealistic images of these spaces. The drawings and models of student projects are populated with cardboard, colours, textures and objects, suggesting potential inhabitants who are ready to bring those spaces to life. This Anglo-Saxon tradition focuses equally on researching cities – Basel, Berlin, London, Naples and Zurich, to name a few – and the inherent elements of architecture, such as façades, rooms and thresholds.
The exercises presented on the "Studio Sergison" page outline a teaching methodology for design studios, manifested in programmes and outputs based on observation, translation and interpretation.

What Are Images For?

When viewing these Instagram pages, a clear tension emerges between the "curatorial" intention and the platform hosting them. Evocative images and post sequences confront the app's algorithmic feed, which transforms radical content into material for scrolling. As Nicola Zamperini (2018) states, these platforms are «digital meta-nations without physical territory, with citizens, rules, territories, banners, national interests and, consequently, commercial interests as well». On pages dedicated to educational content, these platforms become visual microcosms with their own rules, attracting

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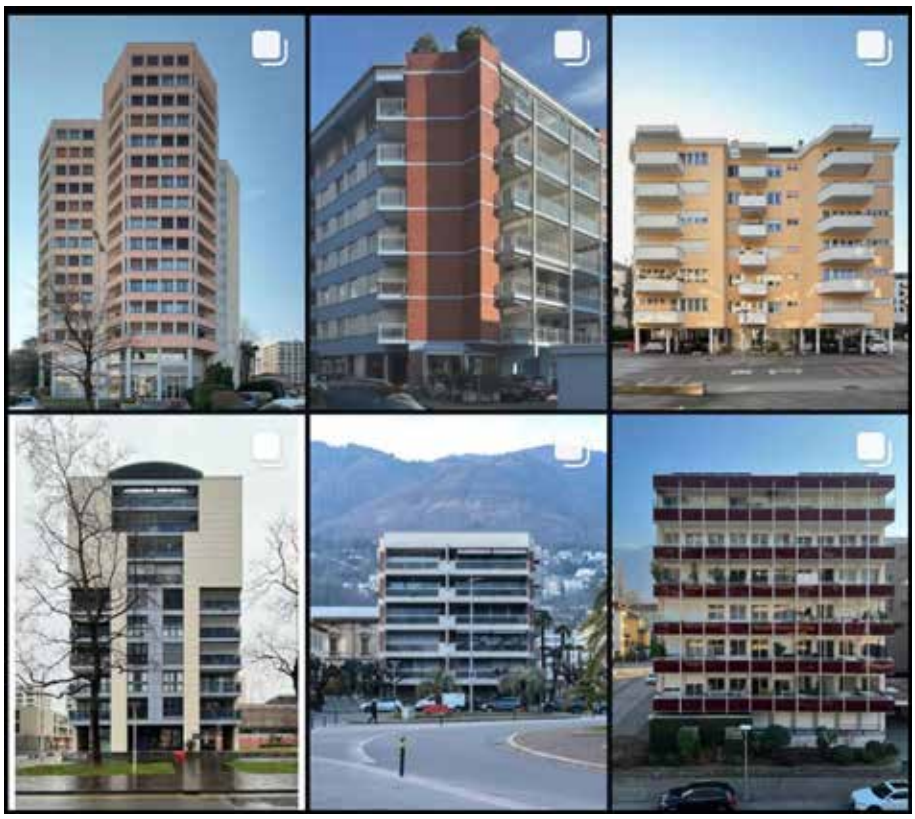


Fig. 6
Studio Sergison, screenshot of the Instagram page content, June 2025. © Atelier Sergison, Academy of Architecture of Mendrisio, Università della Svizzera italiana.

users who observe and then meticulously reproduce.
In contrast to the *verdor terrible* (Labatut, 2021) – the cognitive dullness produced by passive social media use, as described by Benjamin Labatut – many students exhibit a paradoxical hyper-selective attention to these profiles. This attitude is rooted in a logic that can be traced back to a form of *disciplinary power* (Foucault, 1975/2014) that operates within individuals themselves and from which it is becoming increasingly difficult to withdraw. This dynamic is based on the idea that the process of *acceleration* – of materials, times and spaces – that defines our current situation is linked to a kind of alienation of thought (Rosa, 2021). This translates into a weakening of the process of recognition, which is continuously stimulated by impressions that persist over time, as well as by a flux of shifting images that accumulate and demand attention (Simmel, 1903).
«Usually, the image is conceived in purely visual and stable terms, but the characteristic quality of the senses is their tendency to mix and integrate. A visual image is always accompanied by repercussions marked by experiences in other sensory modalities. Images also exist in the realms of all the senses. The visual image itself is a constructed fusion of fragmented and discontinuous percepts» (Pallasmaa, 2014, p. 63).
The carefully crafted images and meticulous consistency of the photographic sequence create an automatic authority for these visuals. Students obsessively view them until they have studied, replicated and internalised them. Students look, save and repeat these images in order to develop their own approach to design representation. Instagram profiles become the realm of the «proper image», standardising and homogenising approaches to practising and teaching architectural design through the aesthetics of reproduction. This mimetic process, which pushes towards visual reproducibility, endangers the experimental nature of architectural creation and education. Tools intended to support design risk becoming mere «posts», reducing critical space and design exploration. Ultimately,

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Fig. 7
Studio Sergison, Academy of Architecture of Mendrisio, Università della Svizzera italiana, Spring Semester 2015 Milan Facades, pp. 4-5. © Atelier Sergison, Academy of Architecture of Mendrisio, Università della Svizzera italiana.

Instagram is not just a repository of images, but an active agent in redefining design education and learning, namely how references are defined and used to stimulate imagination. These digital archives, far from the naive curiosity that characterised social media's early days, have become as politically oriented and influential as traditional media. They are shaped by *likes*, *shares* and *comments* – only what survives endless scrolling exists and gains value.

Historically, architectural design teaching conducted by architect-professors, particularly those engaged in professional practice, has produced results that transcend academic boundaries and become living matter for the discipline and its theoretical reflection. The materials generated in design studios often formed the basis for publications, exhibitions and writings. The dissemination of these outcomes through books, journals, catalogues and conferences was never secondary, but rather an integral part of establishing a disciplinary position. Architect-professors did not merely "display" results; through filters of selection, narrative and critical reflection, they defined a design vision and cultural stance.

However, the advent of social networks has profoundly altered this scenario, introducing noticeable friction between past and contemporary modes of producing and consuming architectural imagery. The crux of the matter lies, quite evidently, in time. This was once expansive and multi-layered: a time for idea maturation, critical editing, editorial curation and careful reading. Today, the temporality of communication, especially that arising from teaching activities, is compressed, fragmented and accelerated.

In the digital ecosystem of social networks, images have acquired an unprecedented level of importance. In order to be effective, images must be immediate, concise and emotionally impactful. The communicative power of the image is no longer enhanced or enriched by discursive apparatus; rather, it tends to replace it. Textual narration and theoretical depth are

being replaced by the logic of visual instantaneity: the quality – or at least the recognisability – of a project is increasingly measured by its ability to become a memorable "emblem" within a few seconds of scrolling. Consequently, what was once the product of collective and patient elaboration has become an object of rapid and ephemeral consumption, often lacking context.

This transformation concerns not only communication formats, but also affects the very nature of architectural theory and its teaching more profoundly. If theory – particularly that implicit in teaching practices – constitutes progressive construction, critical articulation and conceptual experimentation, then iconic immediacy risks rendering it meaningless, reducing it to mere style or a recognisable sign. The image, rather than being a vector of thought, often becomes an end in itself.

We must question the extent to which theoretical reflection is still possible in design pedagogy today. How can we reconcile the potential of digital communication with the need for critical depth to be renewed? How can we re-establish a relationship of resonance between pedagogical practices and the processes of externalisation that characterise everyday experience? Rather than demonising fast images, we must reformulate the conditions under which they might once again articulate an intellectual position rather than merely functioning as communication strategies.

Notes

[1] See, for example, the webpage https://thearchitectsdiary.com/7-tips-for-architects-to-promote-their-work-on-instagram/ which compiles seven tips for architects to promote their work on Instagram, including «create a business profile» or «use visual content to your advantage».

[2] The page https://www.archdaily.com/900778/50-instagram-feeds-for-architecture-students-and-everybody-else? contains, for instance, feeds to follow for architecture students.

[3] See the web page https://www.emarketer.com/chart/263759/average-time-spent-per-day-by-us-adult-users-on-select-social-media-platforms-2023-minutes.

[4] See the web page https://wearesocial.com/it/blog/2025/02/digital-2025-i-dati-italiani/.

[5] See the web page https://www.treccani.it/magazine/atlante/societa/Doomscrolling.html.

[6] See the web page https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/fomo_(Neologismi)/.

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Giovanni Bellucci

Research on Swedish Humanized Modernization, or the *acceptera* "Case"

Editor: *Eugenio Lux*
Title: *acceptera*
Language of the text: *Italian*
Publisher: *LetteraVentidue*
Characteristics: *16,5x24 cm, 284 pages, paperback, black and white*
ISBN: *978-88-6242-979-5*
Year: *2024*



Nearly a century after its publication in Sweden in 1931, *acceptera*, an emblematic text of the Functionalist movement which, during those years, gained widespread and immediate support throughout the Nordic countries, is translated into Italian for the first time. The editor Eugenio Lux, here also acting as translator, thus contributes to the dissemination in Italy of a publication still considered seminal by scholars of contemporary architectural history. The volume, published by LetteraVentidue, also has the merit of having adopted a facsimile format that fully conveys the thought of the authors (the architects Gunnar Asplund, Wolter Gahn, Sven Markelius, Eskil Sundahl, Uno Åhrén and the art historian Gregor Paulsson), also through a significant iconographic apparatus comprising dozens of images and drawings. The volume opens with the brief preface by Marco Biraghi followed by the introduction by Eugenio Lux (both numbered separately from the main text), which lead into the core of the volume with the 201 pages of the translation. The editorial work is concluded by the afterword by Luca Ortelli and a rich appendix, again edited by Lux, which includes a set of notes useful for a more detailed reading of the cultural and historical references of *acceptera*, the contextualisation of part of the images, a bibliography extending to an international panorama and, not least, biographical profiles of the six authors.

The volume is linked to the celebrated *Stockholmsutställningen* (Stockholm Exhibition), curated by the same authors of *acceptera* in the summer of 1930, and with respect to which it constitutes an effective theoretical and pedagogical clarification. As Biraghi and Ortelli observe in their texts, the book has the ambition of communicating effectively and of not trivialising the meaning of the Functionalist revolution, seeking above all to broaden the readership beyond architects, thus not focusing attention on merely technical issues or exclusively on the questions most dear to the Modern Movement (first and foremost housing). Broadening the thematic spectrum by foregrounding social and ethical aspects considered by the authors indispensable for consolidating a genuine revolution, not only architectural but also cultural, thus

effectively substantiates the ambition envisaged by the protagonists of Swedish Modernism. *acceptera* therefore addresses a variety of themes preparatory to those more strictly pertaining to research on architectural language (among these, in particular, the Swedish cultural and social context, standardisation, the relationship between industry and craftsmanship, as well as the relationship between the new and the old, the structure of the modern city and its relationship with antiquity, various aspects relating to the theme of the house and dwelling, etc.), which culminate in the concluding act, with the invitation made by the authors in the final chapter to ".... accept present reality", not to "… escape from our own time", stressing that "Those who do not wish to accept will not be able to collaborate in the development of culture. They will sink into an insignificant position of bitter heroism or worldly scepticism".

In the introduction to the volume (pp. XI–XLII), Eugenio Lux guides us through the reading and examination of some of its distinctive features, particularly those expressed through images which also refer to geographical contexts beyond the Scandinavian one, to German and American architecture and theories of dwelling and building, especially in relation to the contacts developed by some of the authors and in particular by Sven Markelius, described by the editor as the most orthodox Functionalist of the group. These and many other themes, such as a hypothesis regarding the authorship of texts presented by the authors as the result of collective work and therefore never fully disclosed, as well as the graphic format chosen for the layout, find space in Lux's research, which is useful in effectively and meticulously contextualising *acceptera* as an emblematic editorial and theoretical "case" of the twentieth century.

Alessandro Brunelli

The degree zero of the art of building

Author: *Elvio Manganaro*
Title: *][][][][][][*
Note on the title: *The catalogue of the National Library Service OPAC SBN has indexed the book under the title [Architecture as an object of language], specifying that this is the title of the foreword.*
Language of the text: *English* (translation by Antonella Bergamin)
Publisher: *EUT, Trieste*
Characteristics: *12,8x18,4 cm, black and white, 95 pages*
ISBN: *978-88-551-1536-0 (paper) 978-88-551-1537-7 (online)*
Year: 2024



When an architecture loses its *utilitas* it returns to its asemic genesis. It is a fragment in the landscape, a meaningless two-dimensional sign on the earth's surface. The final state coincides with its beginning. A tear of wall in the land is the promise of a space on par with a line on a sheet of paper in search of meaning.

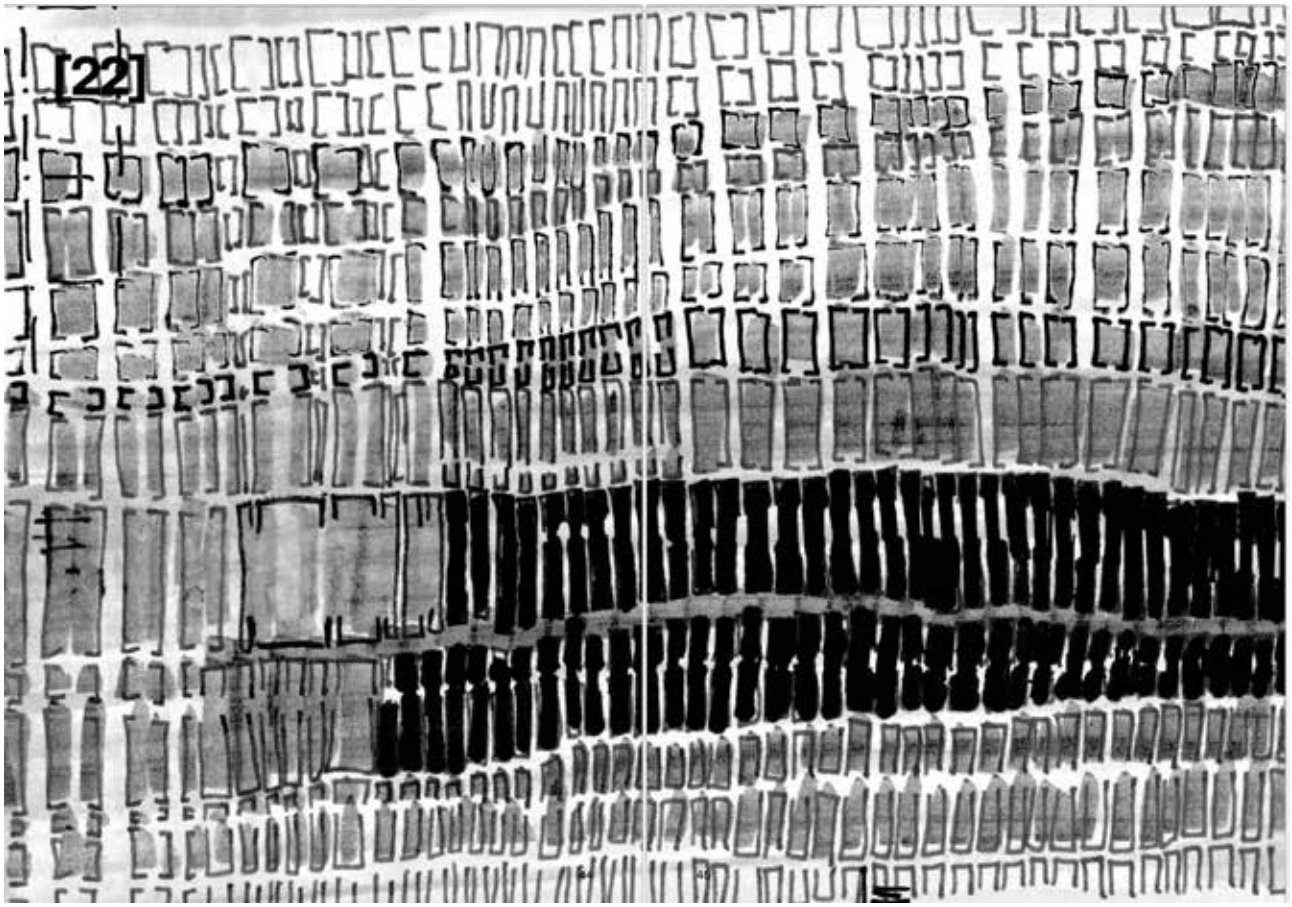
Elvio Manganaro's book narrates the same promise, the spatial power of two-dimensional traces in their zero degree. Before and after architecture there is no language: all signs are abstract, meanings zeroed out, like the square brackets shown on the book's cover. For the author, the title is unnecessary. The characters on the front *][][][][][][* are a fragment of a «muratoriana» composition contained within the book: they are traces of an embryonic city, or of a built past like the footprints on the ground of ancient Ostia, Timgdad and Olympia seen from above. Texts and images are intentionally unconnected, and the use of English, phonetically distant from the author as indicated in the foreword[1], emphasizes the casual composition of the book. The representations are different in nature (didactic exercises, photographs or two-dimensional drawings) dealing with architecture as an object of language.

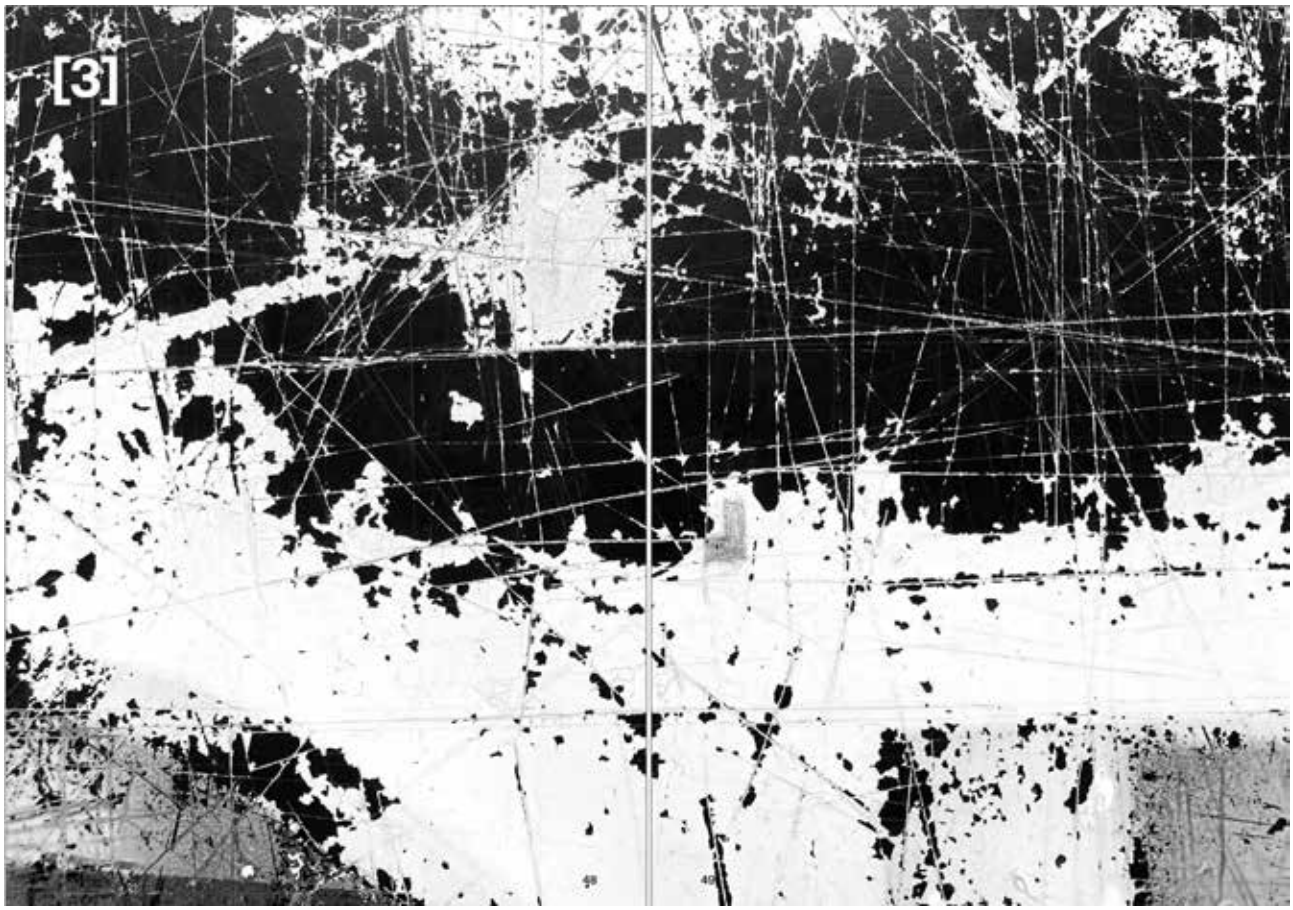
The book consists of forty-eight paragraphs grouped into eight thematic chapters, which the reader discovers only at the end: the composition is certainly arbitrary. The author uses asemic writing and concrete poetry as tools to investigate architectural signs understood as textual elements on the edge of disciplinary context.

Manganaro's volume suggests two possible levels of reading that merge and blur as we advance through the text. The first is the pedagogical one through which the author narrates between the lines a didactic method reaffirming the belonging of architecture within the domain of the arts. In this regard, the reworking of a project of the GRAU studio (Gruppo Romano Architetti Urbanisti), on page eighty-two of the book, is no accident since the same group posed the problem of architecture as art in the terms of «unity of the multiple»[2]. Manganaro reminds architectural novices that the art of building is an exercise in the sensibility of composing that is acquired by educating sight and manual-digital doing. Only in this way is it possible to sediment what Alessandro Anselmi (ex GRAU member) called the *Formation of Taste*: that is, that conditioned reflex that allows the tennis player to hit

Nella pagina successiva:

Fig. 1
][][][][][][, pp. 44-45.
Fig. 2
][][][][][][, pp. 48-49.


[22]


[3]

the ball without looking and the architect to possess, in a similar way, a spatial-figurative instinct[3]. The book educates, therefore, in the reading of images and composition by placing on the same level the pictorial, that is, the informal such as the photo of a time-scarred drawing board (pp. 48-49) –apparently a painting by Emilio Vedova– and the linear, a register of more defined geometric forms such as muratoriana representations (pp. 44-45) that harken back to the paintings of Capogrossi.

The second level of reading suggested by Manganaro's book is a reflection at the edge of the boundaries of the discipline, an invitation to meditate on the meaning of doing architecture today.

If the architectural sign becomes a figurative unit in itself, which can be composed and reassembled by an artificial intelligence or a subject (no longer the interpreter of a personal language), is a degree zero architecture possible in today's society?

Is it possible to practice, as in concrete poetry, opacity in architecture by combating its reduction to an art of space and crystallizing the meanings and signifiers of construction elements?

Venturing toward the disciplinary limit is Manganaro's challenge who, as he states in a recent text, invites us not to stop «considering architecture as an open field of experimentation»[4]. The book is thus a clear demonstration of this approach but also an object that appears as a self-signifying entity, a true «work of art»[5].

Notes

[1] «This is due to the need to assign the proposed themes a phonetic substance that is as far as possible from the voice of the autor». Manganaro E. (2024) – *[Architecture as an object of language]*, EUT, Trieste, p.6.

[2] GRAU (1981) – *Isti mirant stella. Architetture 1964-1980*, Kappa, Roma p. 9.

[3] Cfr. ANSELMI A. (1997) – "L'insegnamento ai primi anni della scuola di architettura. Una didattica per la formazione del gusto". In: ALTARELLI L. et. al. – *Forme della composizione*, Kappa, Roma. ANSELMI A. (2019) "Arte e figure della modernità". In: BRUNELLI A. – *Intuizioni sulla forma architettonica. Alessandro Anselmi dopo il GRAU*, Quodlibet, Macerata.

[4] MANGANARO E. (2025) – "I libri di architettura mi annoiano (con 7 postille)". In: BISIANI T., VENUDO A. (a cura di), *Seminario tre*, Maggioli, Santarcangelo di Romagna, p. 75.

[5] CELANT G. (2008) –*Artmix. Flussi tra arte, architettura, cinema, design, moda, musica e televisione*, Feltrinelli, Milano (2021), p. 26.

Beatrice Lampariello

A Detective Story *about* Architecture, *for* Architecture

Author: *Francesca Belloni*
Title: *L'eredità di Aldo Rossi tra teoria e pratica*
Language of the text: *italian, With a preface by Philip Ursprung in English*
Publisher: *Dario Cimorelli Editore*
Characteristics: *17×24 cm format, 224 pages, softcover with flaps*
ISBN: *9791255611394*
Year: *2025*



The extensive scholarship devoted to Aldo Rossi (1931–1997) has never ceased, neither during his lifetime nor after his untimely death, and in recent decades has been further sustained by the Fondazione Aldo Rossi. Within this context, Francesca Belloni addresses a previously unexplored question: how the theoretical principles Rossi formulated throughout his career, and enacted in his projects, have been received and reinterpreted by subsequent architects. This is a particularly complex undertaking, not only because of its relative chronological proximity, but also because of its geographical scope and its repercussions on contemporary architecture. As a perceptive scholar of Rossi (Belloni 2017; Belloni 2020), Belloni constructs her book by assembling "pieces" and "parts", weaving connections across different historical periods and geographical contexts, and then recomposes these fragments into a dense collage in which theory and practice are held in a productive equilibrium.

Although entirely centred on architecture, the book unfolds as a detective story. From the outset, the 'crime' is identified, yet its perpetrators and methods are disclosed only gradually, as in a thriller. It thus suggests an almost new literary genre for architecture, one that eludes the conventional categories of the historical or theoretical essay and finds resonance in contemporary publishing, as evidenced by Park Books' recent launch of the *Gumshoe* series (Fromonot 2025).

The 'crime' in question is that committed against Rossi's theoretical and practical legacy – a veritable "betrayal", in Belloni's words. This betrayal began in the 1970s with figures who knew Rossi personally, sometimes even as friends, and continues in more recent years through architects who encountered him only indirectly, through his writings and buildings. Belloni's use of the term "betrayal" is a deliberate rhetorical move that lends pathos to her architectural crime story. Yet it carries no negative connotation; instead, it echoes Walter Benjamin's understanding of "translation" as a necessary transformation of a legacy – an act that inevitably entails revision, adaptation, and reinterpretation.

The architectural detective story opens with *Architettura per i musei* (1968). This choice reveals not only Belloni's deep familiarity with Rossi's work, but also a conscious critical gesture, the book's first unexpected move. Rather than starting from Rossi's most canonical texts, such as *L'architettura della*



Miller & Maranta, progetto per il Vecchio Ospizio del San Gottardo, 2005-2008, Airolo

Terzo movimento

Analoge Architektur: die Praxis[1] (rosso troppo rosso)

Nel breve testo *La arquitectura analoga* Rossi ripercorre a ritroso – come di fatto Roussel aveva fatto credere di aver fatto – quel "qualcosa tra l'inventario e la memoria" che precede e produce le forme del progetto, cercando di evidenziare quali variazioni siano intercorse nei processi compositivi tra i suoi primi progetti – caratterizzati da un evidente "ordine geometrico" – e quelli del periodo a cui risale il testo, che mostrano "una sempre maggiore rarefazione delle parti a favore di modalità compositive complesse"[2]. Il riferimento a Benjamin e al suo "Io però sono deformato dai nessi con tutto ciò che qui mi circonda"[3] e la "questione della memoria", che trasforma l'architettura in "esperienza autobiografica", sono impiegati per elaborare e tematizzare un apparato del pensiero capace di chiarire la "concezione di un'architettura analoga". Non a caso, la medesima citazione di Benjamin era stata impiegata in apertura (e in chiusura) del film *Ornamento e delitto*, presentato nel 1973 alla XV Triennale da Aldo Rossi, Gianni Braghieri e Franco Raggi; per come è stato concepito e realizzato, è in sé esemplare nel mostrare – per così dire 'in opera' – il procedimento additivo di "composizioni o componenti" tipico del pensiero rossiano. Tutto secondo processi "radicalmente analogici"[4], all'interno di quella che Enzo Melandri teorizza come un'azione compresa tra le "condizioni della ripetizione" e il "problema dell'irripetibile."

Una certa delimitazione della tematica essenziale dell'analogia risulta in effetti possibile, se si rinuncia a insostenibili pretese di completezza, si restringe l'ambito alle questioni suscettibili di trattamento oggettivo (cioè, di preferenza, gnoseologiche) e si usa quale criterio discriminante

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Fig. 1
L'eredità di Aldo Rossi tra teoria e pratica, pp. 84-85.

città (1966), or the article and subsequent lecture entitled *L'architettura analoga* (1975), which nonetheless appear among the book's "pieces", Belloni turns to a less frequently cited yet theoretically pivotal text, published in the volume *Teoria della progettazione architettonica*. From this starting point, she reconstructs key Rossian principles: the reciprocal relationship between "urban facts" and "theories"; the distinction between "theory of composition" and "theory of design"; and the idea of a collection of "museum pieces" as a methodological device. This reconstruction serves as a necessary preamble to her central hypothesis. Rossi's legacy has been so thoroughly "ruminated" – to use one of Rossi's own terms – that in certain cases it has been transfigured to the point of becoming almost unrecognisable. According to Belloni, this constitutes the 'crime'. It is the transformation enacted by several architects, mainly Swiss or professionally connected to Switzerland, who appropriated Rossi's legacy, infused it with their own references, and combined it with personal experience to produce, continuing the literary metaphor, a kind of Frankenstein.

The perpetrators are introduced across the book's chapters under evocative titles. The narrative begins with Rossi's teaching in Zurich and his transmission, through design, of the centrality of history, urban analysis, and typological study. It then turns to examine the various 'crimes' committed against Rossian concepts such as "analogy", "autonomy", and "typology". Fabio Reinhart and Miroslav Šik's *Analoge Architektur* emancipates itself from the architecture of the city in order to foreground the atmosphere of place. Kristian Kerez, Quintus Miller, and Paola Maranta reinterpret Rossian attention to the *locus* through a "contextual gaze", developed by Kerez through abstraction and by Miller & Maranta through a renewed realism. Valerio Olgiati shifts from collective memory to a personal exaltation of "non-referential architecture", detached from history and tradition. Pier Vittorio Aureli reformulates autonomy as a "rejection of authorial creativity" and as non-figurative architecture. OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen and Christ & Gantenbein – along with Christopher C. M. Lee and Andreas Lechner – transform Rossian typology into an architecture "without content" (for OFFICE) and into a renewed conception of "design" (for Christ & Gantenbein). Adam Caruso and Eduardo Souto de Moura reinterpret Rossi's referential practice within their own projects. The "collage" architects extend Rossi's collages into mannerist exercises, while Herzog & de Meuron rework his typological-



Hong Kong Typologies, in Emanuel Christ, Christoph Gantenbein, Naïa Dachmann, Victoria Easton, *Hong Kong Typology*, gta Verlag, Zürich 2010

Quarto movimento

Al di là del tipo, alla ricerca di un ordine che escluda la legge

Sarebbe probabilmente necessaria una trattazione articolata per percorrere le numerose diramazioni che, a partire dall'accezione rossiana di tipo come costrutto teorico e, di conseguenza, progettuale, si sono susseguite negli anni, fino ad assumere, dopo diretti o indiretti processi di transfert, ciascuna una specifica autonomia, spesso distante, se non del tutto indipendente, dalle posizioni di Rossi stesso. Ciò soprattutto se ci si riferisce ad alcune ricerche sviluppate in anni recenti. Nei casi che qui si vogliono documentare, senza alcuna pretesa di completezza, ma solamente per identificare l'ennesimo campo di trasfigurazione delle posizioni rossiane, il punto di vista prevalente è quello di lavori in cui teoria e pratica si accompagnano vicendevolmente e rispetto ai quali parlare di tipo significa trovare nella formulazione di alcuni concetti di riferimento la via attraverso cui la teoria si fa materia e forma del progetto. Tali ricerche, seppur molto differenti le une dalle altre, sono accomunate dalla convinzione che l'atto del progetto possa essere ricondotto a un quadro generale, in qualche modo indipendente o, almeno, non strettamente dipendente dalla cosiddetta "accezione personale dell'esperienza", in vista di una forma collettiva di autorialità.

Premessa necessaria di questo breve *excursus* è la presunta genealogia che, pur semplificando, unisce o, quantomeno, collega Quatremère de Quincy, Giulio Carlo Argan e, a seguire, Aldo Rossi[1], presunta soprattutto per via del fatto che non si tratta di un'effettiva genealogia, quanto piuttosto di una linea di lettura che storici e critici hanno spesso tracciato per collocare la vicenda degli studi tipologici in Italia nel secondo dopoguerra. Dopo le esperienze di Samonà, Muratori o Caniggia e la trattazione di Argan[2], è infatti

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Fig. 2
L'eredità di Aldo Rossi tra teoria e pratica, pp. 148-149.

morphological analysis into a practice infused with artistic references and Swiss minimalism, establishing not yet another theory but a new architectural praxis. All are traitors, according to Belloni's Benjaminian reading-herself included. And yet it is hard to escape the impression that these very traitors are also the most refined interpreters of Rossian thought. It is a critical thought that traced a trajectory without ever circumscribing its possible outcomes, "because, if we know what we wanted to say, we do not know whether we only said that", as Rossi liked to quote from André Gide. This idea resonates with one of the conceptual premises underlying Rossi's formation: the openness of the work (Eco 1962). It is as though each of Rossi's writings, drawings, projects, or buildings concealed a "figure in the carpet" (James 1896), which successive theorists, historians, critics, and architects have unearthed and "ruminated" in different ways. Was this not precisely what Rossi hoped for when, in the introduction to *L'architettura della città*, he wrote that his "draft of a theory" "must be carried forward" (Rossi 1966: 17)? Seen from this perspective, Belloni's architectural detective story reveals not only the "betrayals" but, above all, the multiple "figures in the carpet". These betrayals appear not as negations of Rossi's thought, but as its most intimate condition of vitality: the very means through which his ideas continue to operate over time and ensure their transmission.

The book guides the reader with firmness and clarity. It explains the criteria behind the selection of architects, engages rigorously with hermeneutical questions, and does not shy away from taking a position. Ultimately, this detective story is not devoted solely to Rossi's legacy, but to contemporary architecture itself and to its dramatic search, amid the multiple crises it currently faces, for a renewed articulation between theory and practice. It is therefore a significant contribution to contemporary debate: a book *about* architecture, but above all, *for* architecture (Borasi 2015).

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Francesca Bonfante

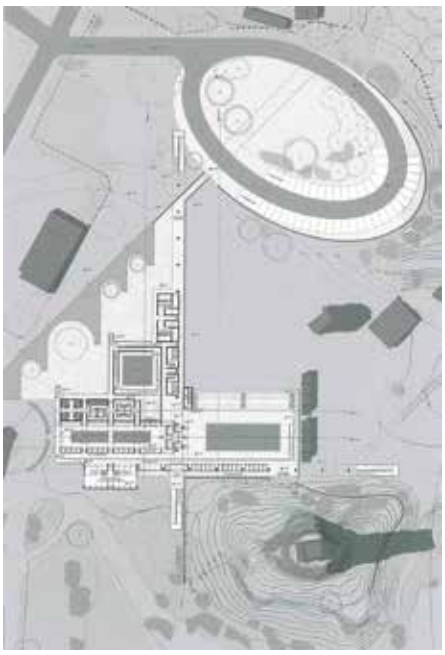
Palimpsest, types, figures

Author: *Cristina Pallini*
Title: *Nella Pianura Pontina: luoghi e temi di architettura*
Language of the text: *Italiano*
Publisher: *Casa dell'Architettura Edizioni*
Characteristics: *16,5 x 24 cm, 191 pagine, brossura, bianco e nero*
ISBN: *9788889002148*
Year: *2024*



Nella Pianura Pontina: luoghi e temi di architettura is, above all, a tribute to design as a process of knowledge. In this specific case, it concerns an understanding of a territory that has long been the subject of a long tradition of critical studies which, over time, have offered complex and multifaceted analyses and judgments. It is therefore not easy task to navigate the plethora of documents and viewpoints. The catalyst for the original research undertaken by Cristina Pallini – whether through documents or directly on site –, was the European research project Modscapes (Modernist Reinvention of the Rural Landscape), which was subsequently continued with the direct involvement of students and graduates from the design studios taught by the author at the Politecnico di Milano. The opening essay provides a concise account of this research, while the larger part of the book focuses on the design experiments developed with students across various "sites" in the Pontine Marshes.
The *Modscapes* research project aimed to unravel the oxymoron "modern rural" by comparing rural landscapes created in the20th century, highlighting their distinctive role in recent European history. The eleven case studies begin with the first Jewish settlements established in Ottoman Palestine from 1878 onward, before moving on to the 1920s with the Greek Orthodox refugees from Asia Minor "transplanted" into the rural areas of Northern Greece. In the 1930s, the project focused on the completion of the drainage of the Pontine Marshes and on the developments in the Tavoliere delle Puglie and in Libya, considered the "Fourth Shore" of Fascist Italy. In the same decade, Salazar's Portugal and Franco's Spain also began the colonisation of their inland regions to compensate for the crisis of their respective colonial empires; while in the 1950s, in French Morocco, rural centres in the Gharb Valley were modernised to counter the exodus to the major cities. At the same time, in the post-war period, agricultural collectivisation and mechanisation were exported from the Soviet Union to Eastern Bloc countries such as Ukraine, Estonia, and the German Democratic Republic. "Comparison" has been the key word in investigating this shared, often underestimated, heritage. The comparison between such diverse historical and geographical contexts reveals affinities, disparities, and significant dichotomies. The criteria adopted in organising the case studies include, in addition to the different political systems, the timing of projects implementation, the strategic role of rural modernisation in the various contexts, as well the national, international or colonial management of territorial transformation processes. Crucial to understanding the relationship between these key settlement experiments and the architectural design is also the layout of the villages – whether compact or scattered – in relation to the





presence or absence of pre-existing settlements, as well as the distinction between places of production and representative spaces marked by institutional buildings. A substantial difference, in fact, lies between communities conceived on the basis of a principle of secularism and those united by religious belonging and oriented towards new values. A pressing question concerns the extent to which the models of social organisation that inspired these settlements found fully realised architectural expression. In this sense, the relationship between the standardisation of rural housing – necessary to ensure minimum hygiene standards and contain construction costs – and the siting of public buildings, as well as their formal and figurative character, is particularly significant. What made these settlements not "traditional" but "innovative" was their orderly arrangement within an isotropic grid, a concentric layout, or a design that conformed to topographical features. An order expressed both in the hierarchy of streets according to their cross-section and in the arrangement of buildings in relation to open spaces. Within this complex framework, Italy in the 1930s represents a case in point. The reclamation of the marshes south of Rome, long celebrated by artists and travellers on the Grand Tour, quickly gained international recognition. The signicance of the Pontine Marshes project is further highlighted by the specific role played by architectural design. In the reclamation project, a precise settlement strategy was in fact being tested, in which new towns formed the "nuclei" of a broader infrastructural system extending across the territory through villages and farms, in closely linked to the traces of previous reclamation attempts and to the works carried out of the Civil Engineering Corps between 1910s and 1920s. Within this territorial framework, which in a decade would give rise to an entire province, the hierarchy between village and town is made evident by the presence of a system of squares with a theatrical vocation, true scenographies in which architects reinvented established types such as the church and town hall whilst experimenting with new themes promoted by the regime (Casa del Fascio, headquarters of the Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro, Casa del Balilla). Starting from these interventions, Cristina Pallini, through and in collaboration with the architectural project, persistently investigates the distinctive features of the Pontine Marshes in accordance with Braudel's principle of the longue durée, recognising beneath the transformations produced by successive reclamation efforts a latent order with extraordinary characteristics, without being misled by the visible yet superficial upheavals caused by human activity. Alongside the principle of the longue durée, a fundamental concept has been that of the "palimpsest," borrowed from André Corboz, which is useful for interpreting the



relationships that, from time to time, transformation projects have established with the resources available in the territory. This "palimpsest" forms the backdrop for the design interventions carried out between 2018 and 2024 in the academic context, organised into a series of case studies encompassing sites with diverse characteristics, capable of defining a broad spatio-temporal section. The thesis projects are divided into three groups: the first gathers five projects for five notable locations in the Pontine area; the second includes two projects for Pontinia, and the third comprises five projects for the centre of Latina. In the contemporary landscape, alongside the foundation towns, historical places with distinctive qualities thus re-emerge: the Acropolis of Cori, Ninfa along the consular road, Mesa along the Decennovio of the Via Appia, the village of Fogliano, and the abandoned quarry of Montecchio. A considered choice that rescues them from neglect and restores them to a renewed collective use and value. Starting from a careful reflection on the relationship between architecture and urban design, in Pontinia the projects reinterpret the "hidden geometry" underlying the parts of the city, for example through spatial sequences grafted onto the "theatrical backdrops" of the square; in Latina, instead, they operate through "contrapuntal" insertions and by completing the existing fabric. In other contexts, rather than the intervention area itself, the focus has been on potential points of reference and integration, identified through a careful survey of the environmental resources with which to establish relationships. Orography, hydrography, road networks, built heritage, and open spaces, together with the identification of planimetric focal points to which the orientation of the new layout could refer, have made it possible to identify visual axes and "focal points" where the new and the existing come together into a single scene. These aspects then converge in the typological definition and figurative characterisation of the projects. In such diverse contexts, perceptual and proportional aspects have been fundamental in developing, on a case-by-case basis, "promenades architectural", new "offshoots" and the re-proportioning of existing spaces. A valuable and exceptionally rich body of iconographic material, comprising archival documents, field surveys and meticulous reconstructions, helps to strengthen the relationship between theory and practice, between existing elements and new additions, and between intrinsic values and figurative intuitions: a patient and ingenious endeavour, not so common today, which itself becomes part of the creative process. For their part, the projects testify to a typological and figurative research highly sensitive to place, yet never subordinate or inclined to mimicry, but rather oriented towards experimentation capable of prefiguring possible futures, expressions of an architecture that is authentically contemporary in the fullest and most positive sense of the term.