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Luigi Vietti. an eccentric journey through twentieth-century history
The art of making entities
Around (and within) 'Lo spazio al centro in Kahn'



**Magazine del Festival
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Via G. P. Usberti, 181/a
43124 - Parma (Italy)

Riccardo Rapparini
Cesare Dallatomasina

Email: redazione@famagazine.it
www.famagazine.it

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FAMagazine. Research and projects on architecture and the city is the on-line magazine of the [Festival of Architecture](#) on a quarterly temporality.

FAMagazine is a scientific e-journal in the areas of the architectural project (Anvur disciplinary areas: 08/C - Design and technological planning of architecture, 08/D – Architectural design, 08/E1 – Drawing, 08/E2 - Architectural restoration and history, 08/F - Urban and landscape planning and design) that publishes critical articles compliant with the indications in the [Guidelines for the authors of the articles](#).

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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.

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- 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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NEXT ISSUE

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The architecture of the Tropical City in the Subsaharian Africa edited by Manlio Michieletto

The objective of the call is to solicit a critical investigation of the design experiences of tropical modernism in Africa with particular reference to the sub-Saharan region. The relationship between architecture and the city is analyzed over time and space. Regarding the time, it's intended before and after Independence, which for many countries took place in the 1960s, and regarding the space it's targeted a geographical area where the architectural project is inextricably linked to the context above all regards the sometimes extreme climatic conditions.

The architecture of the tropical city is substantially the architecture of the city composed by the tropical modernism given that many of the buildings considered historic can be placed in that architectural chapter of the 20th century and that today we can define permanence in the midst of the urban delirium that afflicts the construction of the city. These urban artifacts literally take shape and are structured through urban plans aimed at re-establishing an architecture-city relationship not forgetful, as mentioned, of the tangible and intangible

environment. Therefore, the call aims to stimulate reflection on the architectural project through the declinations that this language has been able to assume in the tropics of the African continent both in reference to individual buildings and to the urban composition. Architects, architectures and cities, therefore, which could only exist in those places, as Hassan Fathy taught us, and which tell us an urban story whose reading begins with its planning or with the knowledge and conception of the city as a project.

In the introduction to the first volume of the *Ouvre Complete 1910-1929*, Le Corbusier publishes a letter sent in 1936 to a newborn group of modern architects in Johannesburg, the Transvaal group, expressing all his astonishment at the architectural commitment profuse in seeking a new sensitivity away from Europe. A little less than two thousand years earlier Pliny the Elder, in the *Naturalis Historia*, quotes the Greek proverb according to which something new always arrives from Africa (*Ex Africa semper aliquid novi*). Pliny tells of the discovery of a metaphor of nature, the African one, always made of the same elementary things, however composed according to different methods because they are suited to another context. The call aims to collect contributions that investigate the rhetoric of tropical modernism, an architectural language that translates into the rediscovery of elements of the indigenous art of building as neologisms of a common knowledge translated to different latitudes. British architects Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew are notoriously considered the proponents of this language thanks to the work carried out in the former British colonies of West Africa. In fact, the research for an architecture connected to climate and place will bring the language of the modern movement into line with the context. A language that reinvents or rather rediscovers the modern in a tropical key, giving it local but not necessarily vernacular connotations. The identity of the place is found expressed in the artifacts through the use of materials and with the epiphany of an architectural grammar composed and regulated by a few but precise principles capable of providing adequate protection. These principles are also pretexts for preparing an apparatus of construction details aimed at optimizing the use of the two natural elements, the sun and the wind, to which must be added the relationship with local tradition. Vitruvius himself remarked how the place had an effect on the conformation of the building and how, conversely, the construction influenced the surrounding site. The most relevant aspects of the project and of the construction concern, in the words of Vitruvius, the choice of the place, the microclimate and the landscape.

The architecture of sub-Saharan Africa has been linked, since its inception, to the issue of place and to the issue of building the city in an environment not accustomed to being urban. The cities built at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries are sometimes real foundation projects that from small agglomerations and even in some cases individual outposts, are transformed into metropolises that have now risen to the urban chronicle at the rank of uncontrollable megalopolis. An emblematic case such as Kinshasa, or known by the name of Leopoldville until 1960, represents the evolution of a village located along the banks of the Congo river which in little more than a century becomes the capital of a new country until it becomes megalopolis where by now the *polis* disappears to become just *megalopolis*. From the projects of the pioneers, through tropical modernism to the unbridled eclecticism of the last decades, this type of city has lost its identity and consequently its recognizable and transmissible form.

**66/
67**

**The evocative force of
architecture.
Design competition for a
Monument-memorial**

by
Gentucca Canella

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Enrico Prandi
On the necessity of designing and writing about (one's) project

Abstract

This editorial comments critically on the experience of the journal's first "call for project" alongside the many usual "call for abstracts." It was a positive experience, which brought to light a complementary issue of the project, namely, that of the written explanation of the project process representing a parallel narrative of it. The result, therefore, was an interesting experiment in three respects. The first is inherent in the desire to hold together theory and practice, writing about architecture and making architecture through design as characteristic of a typically Italian approach to architectural design. The second, is that of an exercise of project criticism that in the case of this issue moves from the projects of others (of Masters, colleagues, students) to one's own project. The third, no less important, is to make the project intelligible, thus elevating it to an example of a scientific product of disciplinary research.

Keywords

Theory and praxis – Operational critique – Project as a product of scientific research

As chance would have it, I am writing this article upon my return from the *National Conference of Architectural Design PhDs* organized by ProArch, the scientific society of architectural design teachers that took place in Rome on March 1-2, 2024. This has its importance in that the recipients of the FAM call that make up this issue were precisely the doctoral students, in architecture and not only in architectural design who evidently represent a subset of them. Therefore, the article will inevitably be influenced by the reflections that arose in that debate.

Those who follow FAM know that the journal is wont to delve even methodologically into little-explored if not completely unexplored territories. So that the call in question was the journal's first "call for project," which complements the numerous "calls for abstracts" launched in the past few years. It was a positive experience, that of soliciting design reflections, which brought to light a complementary issue of the project, namely, that of the written explanation of the design process that represents a parallel narrative of it. Being a magazine that publishes scientific articles, we felt it was only fair to make the explanation coincide with the scientific article commenting on the project.

The result, therefore, was an interesting experiment in many ways.

The first is inherent in the desire to hold theory and praxis together, writing about architecture and making architecture through the project as characteristic of a typically Italian approach to architectural design – the reference is to Gregotti's definition of architects born "with a pen in their hand"–. We have, therefore, reversed the terms of the discourse: in this case the project is not commentary on theoretical writing, the usual mechanism of the critical articles of which FAM is almost entirely composed, but it is

the writing that becomes commentary on the project. In designing the Memorial Monument from the five proposed solicitations, in fact, the project team is supposed to have experimented with a reverse, more “operational” procedure similar to what is usually done on the table in the architectural office (at one time it would have been said on the drawing board – drafting table). The novelty lies in the fact that it is intended to give an account of the design operations by means of a writing that allows one to understand the method in its processualities, the reason for the choices (initial, partial or final) and the value of the answers in order to fully understand the resulting form.

On the other hand, if there is a *Theory of Architectural Design* (SAMONÀ 1968) it cannot but manifest itself in the work designed and/or built.

The second, is that of an exercise of design criticism that in the case of this issue moves from the projects of others (of Masters, colleagues, students) to one’s own project carried out in collaboration with a sculptor. An exercise in self-criticism that would impose additional rigor tending toward demonstrativeness and transmissibility, aspects in which FAM has always been interested. Indeed, it is our belief that the exercise of criticism (which includes self-criticism) is a basic act of project growth as well as the foundation of the disciplinary practice of architectural and urban design.

The third, no less important is to make the project intelligible, thus elevating it to an example of a scientific product of disciplinary research. The topic is widely debated especially in the field of architectural design (suffice it to mention that the first issue of the newly founded journal *ProArch Intersections* is devoted precisely to the topic of *The architectural project as a product of scientific research*, AA.VV. 2024). The interest lies in the fact that the intelligibility of the project exists if the accompanying report reveals its main methodological steps. Without such explanation, the project is difficult to evaluate except by entering into the mere evaluation of functional aspects. In order for the project not to be misunderstood in its simplistic formal perception (thus becoming otherwise formalist), it is necessary to “make the design experiment replicable” by allowing its choices to be followed not so much as the reasons for the choice. Replicability, a fundamental character of scientific research, can be understood in architecture as the condition that allows us to understand the formal outcome in progressive choices. It is in this aspect that we can bring research in architecture (an inexact science) closer to traditional scientific research, that is, by equating the certain outcome of the exact answer of hard science to the non-uncertain but possible outcome of architecture.

As figures in training in teaching and research in architecture (such are doctoral students) it is correct to expect a certain methodological rigor of the project.

Having established the evaluation grid we can now shift our attention to the specific experience. In the curator’s proposal to address the theme of the Memorial Monument there was also the desire, in analogy to the Cuneo competition, to invest a Commission with the responsibility, – not only evaluative but factually formative in a pedagogical sense -, to choose the projects and direct the groups in the design depth of the second and final phase. This coincides perfectly with the formative role of the journal generally entrusted to the partisan review process.

Contextual designing: the themes offered (and those chosen)

Having always believed that abstract design does not exist, in other words, that designing means translating contextual valences, the design exercise takes its cue from five differentiated themes – *A Monument-Memorial for the Architecture of the “Three Worlds”*, *A Monument-Memorial for the Wars of Liberation*, *A Memorial in the “Monument”*, *A Monument-Memorial for the “Unfinished” Author*, *A Monument-Memorial in the Mediterranean*, which relate to five respective places/contexts: Havana, Cuba, Asmara, Eritrea, Climat de France, Algiers, Baggio, Milan, and the Island of Lampedusa, which relate more or less directly to five architectures: The Art Schools (ENA) by Garatti, Gottardi, Porro, the “Zero School” in Asmara, the residential unit at Climat de France by Pouillon, The Marchiondi-Spagliardi Institute by Viganò, and the Gateway to Europe by Mimmo Paladino. A combined relationship that allowed a diverse choice according to varying design approaches in terms of scale, themes, places and architectures (or architects).

The choice fell on three themes in particular, of which the construction of the Mediterranean Memorial Monument was the favorite: a project certainly not easy but one that guaranteed the possibility of expressing itself with unprecedented strength and freedom equal only to the tragedy it commemorates (the 368 migrants who died in the October 3, 2013 massacre). Neither the Marchiondi-Spagliardi Institute, a typically Milanese theme that nevertheless brought into play the fascinating aspect of the “unfinished” in a mid-twentieth-century work, nor the more international one of the Climat de France residential unit with its large square of “two hundred columns” (the largest of the urban basins, as he defines POUILLON 1968), succeeded in catalyzing the attention of the participants.

Completely ignored and not chosen were both Cuba and Asmara certainly the most distant and hostile in terms of comparison.

The commission

Paolo Icaro, Sculptor, former President of the Academy of St. Luke 2021-22 and Carmen Andriani, Full Professor in Architectural and Urban Composition at the University of Genoa, joined by the undersigned representing the magazine and Gentucca Canella creator of the call, were entrusted with the far from simple task of pre-selecting and judging in the two phases the different projects.

In the first phase the committee selected the ideas made explicit through the graphic “sketch” and abstract, while in the second phase the designers proceeded to the elaboration of the project and its representation in the form required by the call.

The final outcome

Beyond the judgments on the individual projects, for which I refer to Carmen Andriani’s precise essay, it is important to emphasize how many projects suffered from the misunderstanding of considering the presence of the sculptor as ancillary and not co-participating in the project by distinguishing between two different modes: the first that assumed the sculptor’s work as an element to be placed within the architectural project that was therefore conceived autonomously with respect to the solicitations (mostly indirect, that is, through his work) of the sculptor; the second that saw the sculptor reflecting autonomously but at least assuming the theme for the ad hoc conception of the sculpture.

In these cases, in fact, the committee wrote to the selected groups to “make the sculptor’s role in the development of the project more constructive,” which was not always interpreted in the final results in the correct meaning. Where, in my opinion, architect and sculptor measured themselves equally by stepping into the role of designer – albeit with a direction entrusted to the architect per se accustomed to the skillful and effective coordination of different technical or poetic components – the best results were manifested. Another aspect on which it is necessary to dwell is the relationship of the project to the context. In the three cases chosen by the groups, not even in the one where the relationship between the project and existing architecture is closest (the Marchiondi’s completion) did the architectural object appear to support the representation leading the commission to a general warning urging the groups to “make evident (also from the point of view of representation) the relationship with the chosen development context.” A certain general tendency to isolate the monument-memorial from the perceived context in the first phase later resulted in a more constructive and measured relationship.

There were, then, the specific directions given for each individual project that aimed to address weaknesses by directing the work of developing and deepening the project toward deficient aspects rather than uncovering latent ones.

In conclusion, a positive experimentation whose design outcomes corroborated by effective representations made it possible to baste a (partial but convincing) portrait of design in a field, the doctoral field, in which theoretical reflections are to be imagined as a function of the operativity of architecture. To reiterate, ultimately, the need to design by reflecting and reflect by designing.

Enrico Prandi (Mantua, 1969), architect, graduated with honors from the Faculty of Architecture in Milan with Guido Canella with whom he carried out teaching and research activities. He holds a PhD in Architectural and Urban Composition at the IUAV of Venice, obtaining the title in 2003. He is currently Associate Professor in Architectural and Urban Composition at the Department of Engineering and Architecture of the University of Parma. He is director of the Parma Architecture Festival and founder-director of the A-class international scientific magazine «FAMagazine. Research and projects on architecture and the city” (ISSN 2039-0491). He is the scientific director for the Parma unit of the project ArcheA. Architectural European Medium-Sized City Arrangement (published in volumes Routledge, Aión and LetteraVentidue). Among his publications: Luigi Vietti, scritti di architettura e urbanistica (con PV. Dell’Aira, AltraLinea, Florence 2022), Il progetto del Polo per l’Infanzia. Sperimentazioni architettoniche tra didattica e ricerca (Aión, Florence 2018); L’architettura della città lineare (FrancoAngeli, Milan 2016); European City Architecture, (with L. Amistadi, FAEdizioni, Parma 2012); Mantova. Saggio sull’architettura (FAEdizioni, Parma 2005).

Abstract

The edition is an experiment aimed at prompting a reflection on the concept of a *Memorial Monument*, through the involvement in a design contest of architecture graduates and with the necessary participation of a sculptor. The project for a celebratory memorial in five contexts of singular value involved an initial selection of documents in the first round (abstract, sketch, model), by a jury chaired by Paolo Icaro, master sculptor, with Carmen Andriani, full professor in architectural design. An exceptional jury, therefore, which skilfully recaptured certain moral constants present in several extraordinary national design contests held in the 1960s and 1970s. This document therefore deviates from an editorial in the traditional sense, in an attempt, fraught with uncertainties, to offer a reasoning fluctuating between sculpture and architecture, between "plastic strain" and the elements to be composed, between its "domestic" nature and its role as a "monument to memory", between "rebound stress" and militant criticism.

Keywords

Memorial Monument – Sculpture – Architecture – Militant Criticism – Second Half of the Twentieth Century



Fig. 1

Poster of the *Giornata di studi sul Monumento memoriale*. *Figurazione e tensione plastica come istanza morale*, Turin, 10 May 2023, Hall of Honour, Valentino Castle, Department of Architecture and Design (DAD), Turin Polytechnic. Curated by Gentucca Canella, Paolo Mellano with Tanja Marzi, Maurizio Villata. The proceedings of the Study Day are being printed in the series *Architetti italiani del Novecento*, publisher Franco Angeli.

A “Memorial” monument in the form of a sculpture.

A combination of autonomy of language and choral testimony

According to the 1973 municipal census, Ales had 2,351 inhabitants [...]. The statistics also indicate that there were 200 illiterate people, 300 with no academic qualifications, 600 with an elementary school diploma and 300 with a middle school diploma [...]. These figures point to an extremely contradictory and highly problematic social situation, particularly when arriving from Milan with the purpose of building a public work using the local materials, tools and workforce¹ (Pomodoro 1977, p. 26).

I want to start here, with the introductory image of the Turin Study Day² held in May 2023 – organised in parallel with the memorial monument contest published in this edition of FAM –, the *Piano d’uso collettivo* by Giò Pomodoro in Ales, a small memorial monument created in a little town in Sardinia to celebrate an eminent personage, Antonio Gramsci, which was inaugurated on 1 May 1977 in the presence of the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Pietro Ingrao.

The memorial to Gramsci was completed in three months – from February to April 1977 – with the voluntary contribution of its author, who «came to Ales, settled there, “perceived” and assessed the contradictions that originate from the combination of an exceptional wealth of humanity and a condition of objective marginalisation»³, in the chaotic work of the local builders, labourers and stonemasons, together with the municipal technicians, firms and students. The limestone quarry of Masullas and the black basalt quarry of Mogoro, which had been closed for more than twelve years, were reopened for the occasion.



Figg. 2-3

The stonemasons working on the black basalt ashlars in the Mogoro quarry. Ales, March 1977.

Exhibition on the "Piano d'uso collettivo" staged in front of the Town Hall.

From various authors, *Giò Pomodoro, Piano d'uso collettivo a Gramsci-Ales 1977*, Marsilio Editori, Venice 1977.

Until then, Ales – the birthplace of Gramsci – had been one of any number of extremely poor and entirely anonymous towns, enlivened solely by the excessive size of one of its beautiful churches, but lacking any attraction other than having witnessed the birth of an eminent Sardinian philosopher and politician [...]. The great merit of *Giò Pomodoro* [...] was starting, right from the very beginning, with an "anti-monumental" concept, and focusing instead on a communal space that could be used and enjoyed by the entire local population (Dorfles 1977, p. 7).

Gillo Dorfles introduces thus one of the basic questions on which we have decided to seek the opinion of architects, sculptors and critics, called to Turin to offer their insights – and not only in terms of language – on the means of expression and the figurative tension fluctuating between the concepts of "monumental" and "anti-monumental", which, since the 1960s, have contributed in Italy to highlighting, in certain cases, the creation of "informal" artistic works, frequently transformed, over recent years, into a kind of misunderstood general slogan that has also found fertile ground in architecture. In contrast with these assumptions, the perhaps provocative choice to take inspiration from the small catalogue of the Venice exhibition of 1977 indicates, in the first place, the intention, the deeper meaning, perhaps even one of the greatest merits, in our opinion, of this work by sculptor *Giò Pomodoro*: celebrating Antonio Gramsci through a "place of collective use", whether it is a square, a marketplace, a hearth or a fountain, even a livestock transhumance station, a place that would seem to absorb the monument and the memorial into the traditions of a typical agricultural town, without placing them in conflict, «in a single creative process»⁴. A secular interpretation, writes Antonio Del Guercio, of a «highly articulated and malleable cultural philosophy [...]. A method that Longhi would perhaps have defined as "workaday", just as he might have placed this renewed Sardinian square among the possible, and extremely rare, *sanctuaries of a simple art* of our time»⁵. A monument? I will start by paraphrasing, for the *Piano d'uso collettivo* dedicated to Gramsci, what Carlo Aymonino wrote in 1988 on the Pesaro Campus: «If what I stated before produces monuments, then yes, it is a monument»⁶.

I am, in fact, convinced, perhaps exaggerating a little, that when an artistic union was sought in the compositional project, claimed as far back as the 1950s more by the actual "designers" (including Ponti, Magistretti, Caccia Dominioni, Zanuso, Sottsass) than by the sculptors themselves, entirely original results were not always obtained, in either expression or function, in certain cases even relegating the work of art to a sort of decorative ele-

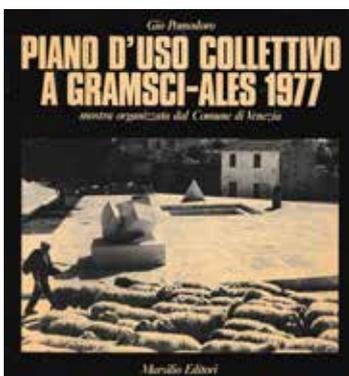


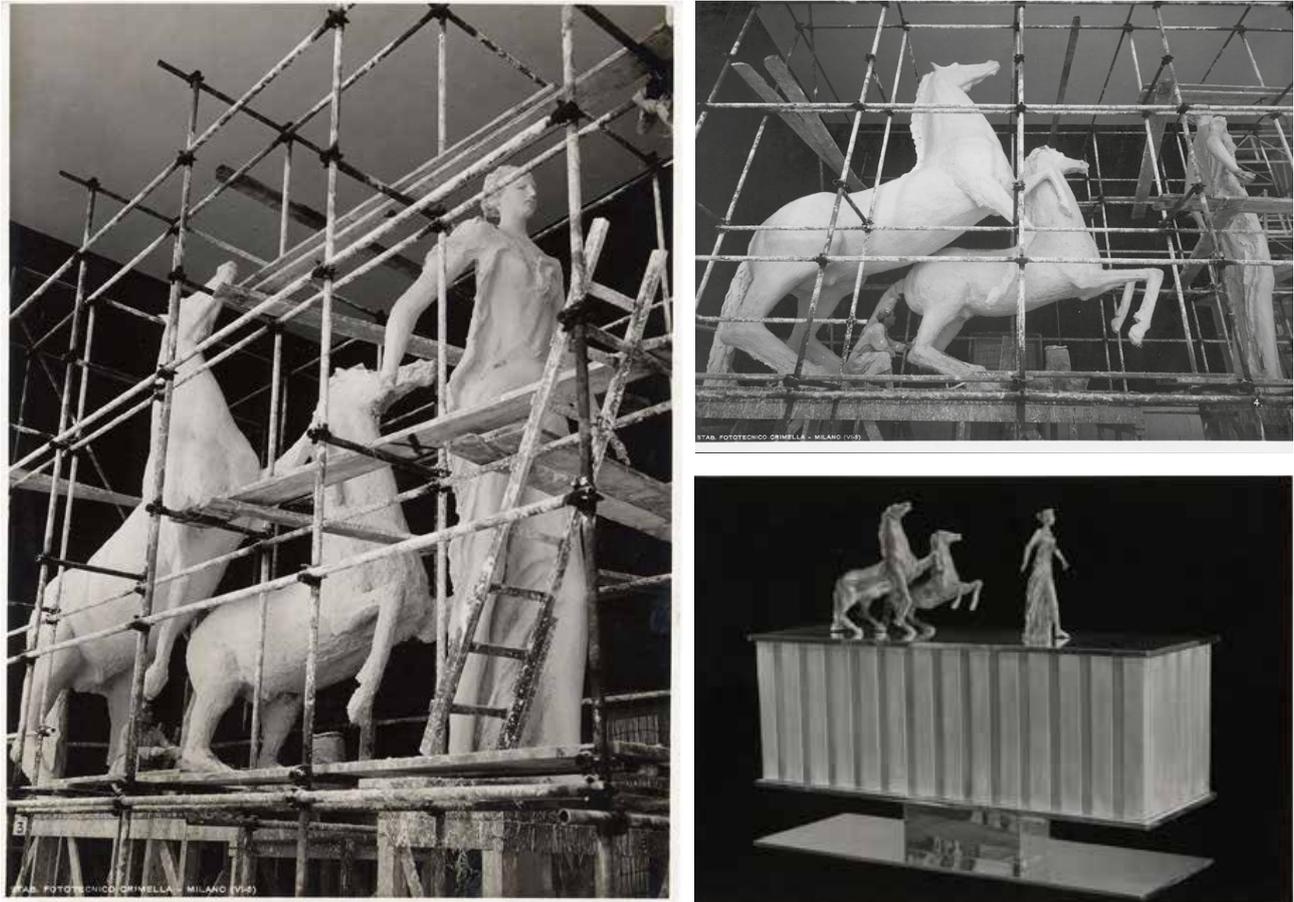
Fig. 4

Cover of the book. Various authors, *Giò Pomodoro, Piano d'uso collettivo a Gramsci-Ales 1977*, Exhibition organised by the Venice Municipal Authority, Marsilio Editori, Venice 1977.

Fig. 5-6

Lucio Fontana, Sculpted Group
in the Hall of Honour, by Persico,
Nizzoli, Palanti, Sixth Triennial,
Palazzo dell'Arte, Milan, 1936.
©Milan Triennial.





Figg. 7-8-9

Lucio Fontana, *Sculpted Group in the Hall of Honour*, by Persico, Nizzoli, Palanti, Sixth Triennial, Palazzo dell'Arte, Milan, 1936. ©Milan Triennial.

ment, albeit of undoubted quality. Equally unpersuasive are the reflections of Gillo Dorfles, insofar as they are established, in a certain sense, by an idealistic valuation of merit, in an interview given in 2003, when he says: «the insertion of a “decorative” work of art into a contemporary setting should be an instance of perfect harmony between the artist and the architect»⁷. The same applies to several overzealous attempts of Gio Ponti to create a partnership between a “new” artist and the technical production focused on acceptance. It has to be recognised that the artistic component of “civil” architecture, mostly in the second half of the twentieth century – and there are not many works that satisfy this condition – was neither a typological nor functional, nor yet figurative, invariant.

The reacquisition of a certain autonomy of language tested and used on topics of major import or moral tension – from the secular or religious “memorial”, up to a kind of civil celebration achieved for integrated functions of “*monuments to the suburbs*”⁸, such as a school, a civic centre or a theatre – would therefore now guarantee a more incisive success of the art in general and perhaps give a new meaning to “sculpture”, when this takes tangible form in occasions not motivated by a private commission, in a dimension that is certainly three-dimensional, but also has a figural freedom. Sculpting, which is also closer to architecture in the scalar dimension, could thus reacquire that fleeting moment of pure expression, its own new “sentimentally more involved” method of communicating, perhaps introducing certain aspects of affinity from the pure visibilism of the criticism of Longhi into a relationship of form and content, between interpretation of the work and simultaneous complexity of its author. To give an idea of what is meant here, how much more powerful is the youthful work of sculptor Lucio Fontana, among others, compared with his involvement in



Fig. 10

Lucio Fontana, *Via Crucis*, 1947.
Stazioni.

From *Lucio Fontana: Vie Crucis 1947-1957*, Mondadori Electa, Verona 2011. ©Fondazione Lucio Fontana; Enrico Crispolti, *Lucio Fontana. Via Crucis 1947*, Gangemi Editore, Rome 2007.

the major “redevelopment” in architecture and in his «spatial» exhibitions, however beautiful they may be?

«He therefore believes – wrote Enrico Crispolti in 1962 – in language, as a creative hypothesis, not a module, cipher or convention [...] he invents a new linguistic term every time, a new idea of communication»⁹. It is worth remembering here the not-to-scale sculptural group of prancing horses behind the statue of Italy (subsequently renamed Victory), which almost seem to be leaping out of the two-dimensional photographic image in the exhibition in the Hall of Honour at the Sixth Triennial inaugurated in 1936, and the words of Edoardo Persico himself, author with Nizzoli and Palanti, in the project report: «sculptures and mosaics are not intended as “decoration”, or as parts added to the architecture, but nonetheless almost constitute the topic, due to their stereometry and to the intimate stylistic bond»¹⁰. Every claim to political celebration is eliminated, including through an extraordinary expressive reinterpretation:

[...] leaving intact, because it is deliberate, the rhetoric of suspension intended as a moral testimony. [...] Persico [...] opts for the “*monumental nature*”, which re-proposes, in original terms, the ancient archetype of the colonnade in an Italian work that is capable of confirming the principles of contemporary taste with “*an act of faith in the magnificence of a Europe at peace*” (Guido Canella, 2010, pp. 226-227).

It is even clearer when Fontana addresses, as a sculptor-ceramist, the topics commissioned by the clergy, reinterpreted in the form of secular memorials, including not only the model that remained in sketch form of the figurative studies for the fifth door of the Duomo of Milan, 1951-52, but also the previous extraordinary tiles of the 14 sections of the enamelled *Via Crucis* of 1947 which, in the words of Giovanni Testori in 1988, «he created without any commission; driven, therefore, by his own highly private tension and need»¹¹. But is this internal moral tension, needed to give the *Via Crucis* of Fontana its “monumental” nature – not in terms of dimensions, but of expressive power – not perhaps driven almost by a profound and transcendent sculptural trauma?

This tangle of materials – continues Testori – superbly glazed, [...] agonisingly glazed, almost as if the glaze were a bleeding candy, sacrificial yet also stellar; this tangle, as I said, where the figures follow each other, draw towards each other, twist and stretch, claw at each other, embrace each other, injure each other and kiss each other, and where, act by act, the final event in the life of Christ is humiliated but celebrated at the same time, identifies, to put it bluntly, all of Fontana’s work [...] In short, what we have always believed and what we now know for certain, with a greater consciousness, and interest, is that Fontana was and will always be, not just primarily, simply a sculptor (Testori 1988, pp. 45,46).

Taking a step back in time, but still focusing on the topics of “memorial togetherness”, we have the eighteenth century *Via Crucis* of Beniamino Simoni in Cervo, entirely inside the Sanctuary. The 14 frescoed chapels, containing statues of natural size in wood and stucco, are distributed along a path ascending in large steps– a «Sacred stairway or large and irreverent stairway, as it seems right to me to call our monument»¹²–, culminating at the top with the Deposition of Christ. It is nice to think that this was also a reference to the equality extraordinary ascent, dating to the second half of the twentieth century and marked by two single-flight staircases, of the Novitiate of Giorgio Raineri at Valsalice in Turin, now lost and transfigured. And for the *Via Crucis* of Simoni in Cervo, it is Testori once again who

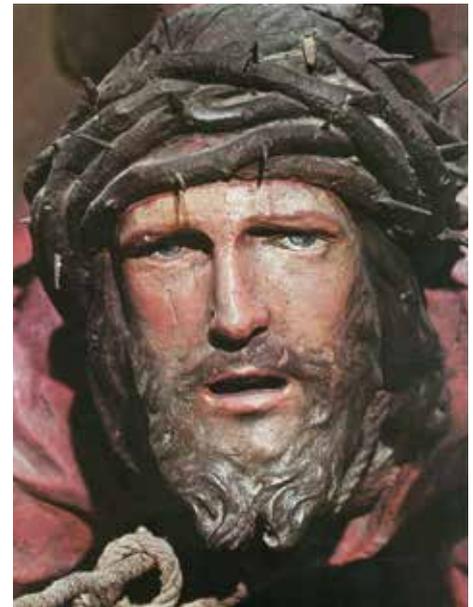
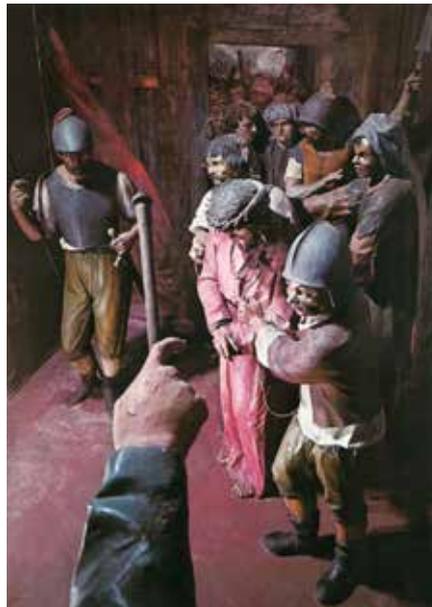
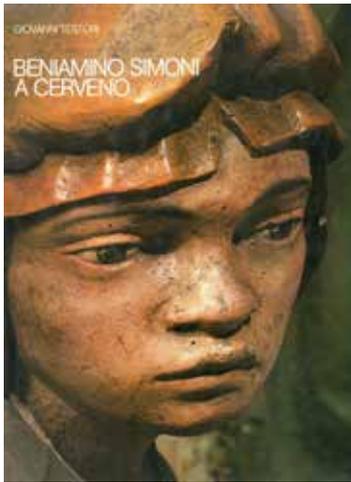


Fig. 11-12-13
Beniamino Simoni, *Via Crucis* in Cerveno, 1752. Cover of the book and *Stazioni I, VII*. From Giovanni Testori, *Beniamino Simoni a Cervo*, Grafo edizioni, Brescia 1976.

tells us about the monument, a riotous and dissenting undertaking, including in the secular manner of understanding sacred sculpture, where the large statues, in truth, on the verge of making, or being subjected to, a gesture, an action, together with the «admirable Staircase», are waiting to be made whole again, also in the shades of their original colours:

The Simoni [...] stands there, right in the middle of the century, with its stubborn and restless bull's hooves; it stands there and lives; lives and suffers, right until the very last drip of sweat and blood, the present and past suffering, injustices, violence, servitude, immorality, famine and shame of its impoverished and desperate populace; it lives, suffers and observes; observing compassionately with the only type of compassion possible in those times (which was indignation), a sculpture that grew in his hands, powerful, tragic, entirely new [...] and another that crumbles in his hands, collapses onto the remains and falls into nothing like an empty bag. All of this, mind you, using for both of them the same, absolutely identical means and the same, absolutely identical style. In this sense, the work of Simoni [...] is, in my opinion, the most tragically extreme fact that our figurative culture (not to say our culture in its entirety), within the entire eighteenth century, was able to offer us (Testori 1976, p. 20).



Fig. 14
Beniamino Simoni, *Via Crucis* in Cerveno, 1752. Interior of the Sanctuary. From <https://www.capeledicerveno.it/>.

Lastly, in conclusion of this first part, it is worth remembering, in more recent years, the *Compianto sul Cristo morto* of 1985, in polychrome engobe and engraved terracotta, by Ilario Fioravanti, a sculptor from Cesena, which, although distant from the contextualised architecture of the more well-known and loved *Sacri Monti* (Sacred Mountains) of Lombardy and the Piedmont, brings to mind the mountain theatre of Gaudenzio Ferrari and Tanzio da Varallo, exaggerating the pain, in body and in spirit, through the sculpture in the round technique and the colour. «Fioravanti's feeling about life is so terrestrially, so fully, so irreparably Christian – we could say so Franciscan – as to leave, now, as forbidden [...] what was, and what remains, of the modern terracotta art of our country, the true shepherd kind and true king, lover, singer and cantor»¹³. A monument? If what was stated before produces monuments, then, yes, they are monuments.

The “Memorial” monument in the form of architecture.
Mors construens. The Monument to the Resistance of Cuneo and the new Cemetery of Modena

Everything began with the contest for the Monument to the Resistance of



Figg. 15-16

Ilario Fioravanti, *Compianto sul Cristo morto*, 1985, Church of Suffrage of Longiano

From https://bologna.repubblica.it/cronaca/2023/03/29/news/fioravanti_compianto-394148744/.

Cuneo, in 1962-63, which has already been written about¹⁴, and which led to certain basic choices, not just organisational ones, present in the Call open to graduate students of the Schools of Architecture and to sculptors. What was being sought was a less consolidated interpretation that, on the one hand, did not focus, as usual, on the project of Rossi, Polesello, Meda, although highly symbolic, but proceeded by trial and error, combining several assumptions, even improperly and through improvisation. Thus, the idea was to start with what was written by Ernesto Rogers in the introduction *Progetti di architetti italiani* on «Casabella-Continuità», no. 276, of June 1963, «Monuments at the margin of architecture where its borders with sculpture»¹⁵, which is a befitting way to introduce this proposal of ours in FAM and also hopefully to extend its intentions in the future:

Publication of the projects comprising this edition is just the first series of a group of presentations of this kind that we intend to make. Although it establishes a critical choice, «Casabella» does not thus intend to sponsor any one group but, above all, to update the information with the works of people who are, for the most part, unpublished. This is not a random choice, although it is incomplete in certain aspects: these are young architects who can be considered – within a certain margin – as belonging to the same generation (Rogers 1963, p. 13).

The involvement of a younger generation such as the graduate students, perhaps less used to tackling an architectural project, also offered a second occasion for discussion, in December of last year, in the presentation of several of the 14 works selected for the second round of the contest, in the Theory Workshop of the project at the Turin School. We decided to introduce them to the third-year students with a poster which was, in a certain sense, a homage to “older siblings”: *The generation gap between teaching and project. From FAMagazine, projects on the Memorial Monument of graduate students of architecture*¹⁶.

As was the case for the second round of the Cuneo contest, in the intention of this Call on the Memorial Monument «it is superfluous to advise you that the choice has been made without considering emblematic definitions»¹⁷. The sketch or sculptor model intentionally comes before the report transposed into a paper and, absurdly, before development of the project idea itself. We do, in fact, believe that the most convincing projects are those in which the sculptural element, not necessarily materially produced by the artist, almost gains the upper hand. This is why it was decided, in the magazine, to publish on the opening page, for each group – deliberately on a black background – the not-to-scale image of the model. The celebratory topic that binds architecture to sculpture therefore does not require an “artistic union”, but an emotional strength and expressive tension.



Fig. 17

Poster of the seminar *Generazioni a confronto tra didattica e progetto*. From *FAMagazine, progetti dei Dottorandi di architettura sul Monumento-memoriale*, Turin, 20 October 2023. The architecture graduates and sculptors taking part: Annalucia D'Erchia with Giorgio Milani, Andrea Valvason with Nicola Facchini, Houssam Mahi with Lorenzo Manunta, Thomas Pepino with Elio Garis, Riccardo Rapparini with Pinuccia Bernardoni, Maurizio Villata with Paolo Delle Monache. Project Theory Workshop, 2023-2024 academic year, Department of Architecture and Design (DAD), Turin Polytechnic. Lecturer Gentucca Canello, Assistants Ja-Zhen Chang, Giulio Saponaro.

In order to avoid risky abstractions, five contexts with a singular idealistic, political and symbolic value were provided: the relationship between reconstruction of the social system and education for national independence and the architecture of the “Tre Mondi” (the Havana Schools of Art, 1961-63, and the *Zero School*, in Eritrea, 1970); the not-to-scale “monument” for the poorest classes of Algeria (the large square with “two hundred columns”, in Climat de France, 1955-57); the construction of a “social order and fertile route of the artistic lexicon” for a new “city of youth” (Marchiondi-Spagliardi Juvenile Institute in Baggio, 1953-57); the identification and recognisability of a necessary and due “territoriality” and citizenship of migrants and burials¹⁸ (the tragedy of Lampedusa on 3 October 2013). The groups formed of graduate students and sculptors chose, for the most part, the “Memorial in the Mediterranean”¹⁹, surely the most topical and engaging for the younger members, even if the subtle suggestion and the hope, as already tried before with the Turin students, was to anticipate in the project hints and conjectures that would involve more deeply the still unresolved questions of dignity for those lost at sea and for the victims – «acknowledged at least in death»²⁰.

We could say a kind of “*uniting of the memory and the spirit*”, to use the words of Salvatore Bisogni, an act of regeneration with reference also to «entities that have remained isolated or have subsequently been absorbed by the city around them, as happened with the Campo dei Miracoli and the Cemetery in Pisa or with the Federician Castles on the Adriatic Sea and in the Apulian hinterland»²¹, here, in Lampedusa, taking tangible form in a cemetery memorial – taking into consideration the possible extension of the two existing ones facing the eastern bay – along the imaginary line between the Port of Europe of Mimmo Paladino and the migratory routes. A not-to-scale sign, a celebratory monument, based on the urban-territorial redesign and typologically expressive of several emblematic cases, built between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as the Paupers’ Cemetery with 366 graves in Naples and the Cemetery of Santa Maria dei Rotoli in Palermo (but also the more recent extensions of San Michele in Isola in Venice, in 1998, by Gianugo Polesello and Antonio Monestiroli).

A combination of militant criticism and necessary “prejudice”.

An initial conclusion

The result of the first round of the contest for the Monument to the Resistance of Cuneo was revealed in advance by Bruno Zevi, through an explicit and passionate judgement that was also clear in the order of opening and closing the ten projects selected, first in «L’Espresso»²², in 1962, and then in «L’architettura. Cronache e storia», in 1963²³, publishing the images and the report almost in their entirety:

CUNEO. The members of the jury were visibly moved when they handed the result of the first round of the contest to the mayor. The Italian art world had responded in its entirety to the appeal for the monument to the Resistance: 62 projects prepared by hundreds of architects and sculptors, an unprecedented level of participation for a contest; from the most well-established artists to the youngest, everyone had given the best of themselves. It was clear that, for many of them, the result was not important: they had drawn or sculpted almost by instinct, almost to re-imagine the gestures, the fallen friends, the most generous part of a life, the hopes that seemed to come back to life, after twenty years. [...] the monument in Cuneo was not simply evocative; it marked the bond with the new resistance within the framework of a political revival (Zevi 1962, p. 19).



Fig. 18
Bruno Zevi, *Il monumento di Cuneo. Dieci interpretazioni della Resistenza*.
From «L'Espresso» magazine, 30 December 1962, p. 19.

Zevi had, in any case, already anticipated these non-conformist predilections and attitudes of a working architect, over those years, in the unbreakable bond between a magazine and its director, which became an important element of architectural communication and contributed to creating a critical culture. He was also atoning for several peremptory value judgements made on the various poetics and personalities of modern architecture, as Guido Canella stated in a lesson on Bruno Zevi in 1982:

Nevertheless, I have personally always had great admiration and affection for him: as a critic and as a historian, for his intellect, as a man of learning who always chose the path of sincerity, to the point of provocation, meaning a moral rebellion of his own poetic truth against the endless ambiguities that too often obfuscate an authentic and honest debate on the controversial destiny of architecture²⁴ (Guido Canella, 1982, 2002).

Ten years later, in the magazine «Controspazio»²⁵, in 1972, Paolo Portoghesi introduced the projects for the national contest for another major “memorial monument”, the new Cemetery of San Cataldo in Modena:

The response of Italian architects to the questions posed by the national contest was bountiful and multi-faceted: around fifty projects that were, for the most part, the result of a meaningful commitment and the desire to seek a valid methodological indication that went beyond the incidental occasion. The final result, although provisional, offers a clear indication. It is not the result of an agreement of the jury, but actually of a rift and a lively debate between a majority and a minority of its members. It is also a sign of the firm rejection of that all too frequent compromise of blithely accepting what emerges from mediocrity and rewarding not this choice or that choice, but the absence of choice, the absence of a “trend” (Portoghesi, 1972, p. 2).

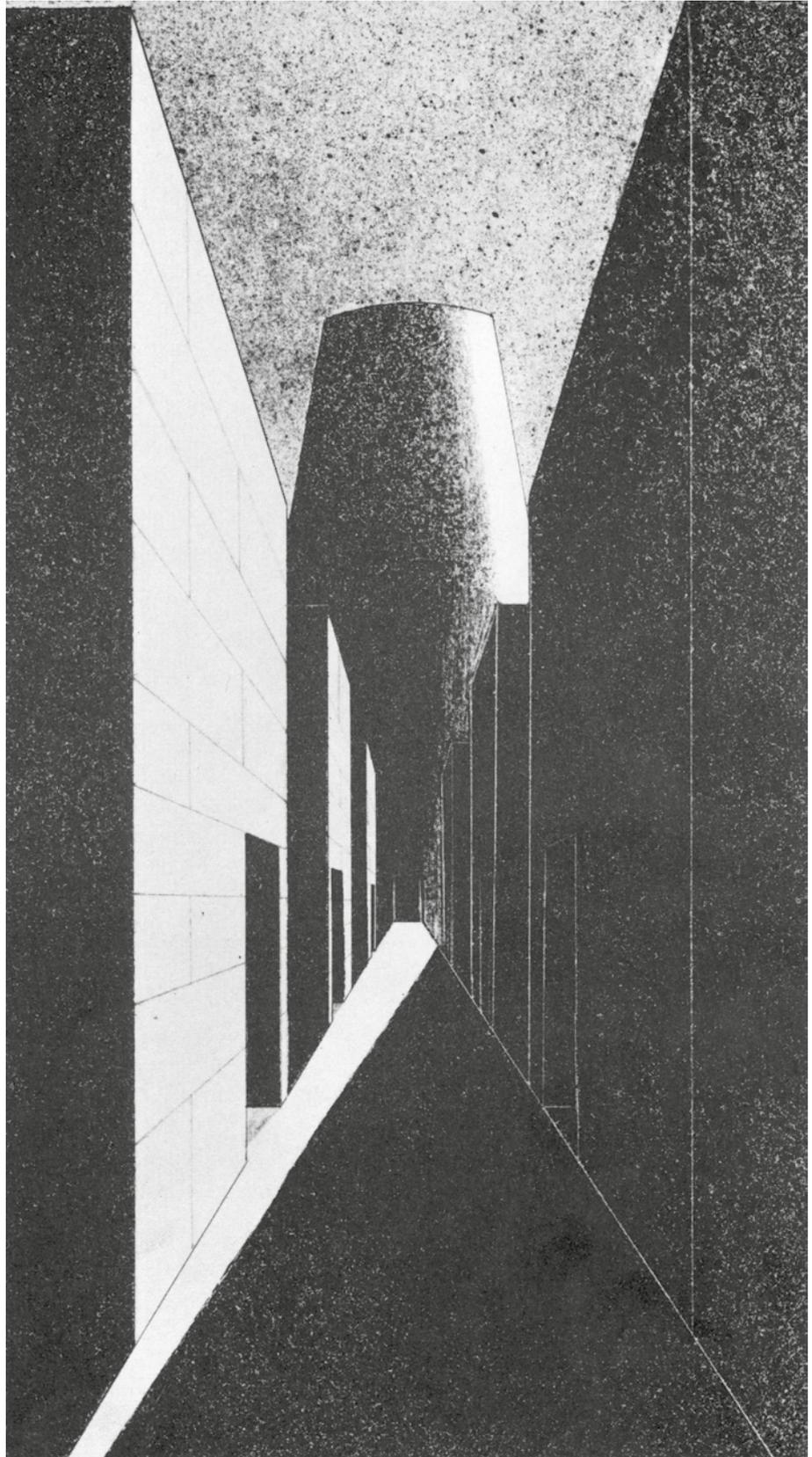
The projects of Aldo Rossi for the two national contests for design of the Monument to the Resistance of Cuneo, in 1962, and for the new Cemetery of San Cataldo of Modena, in 1972, have been analysed and perhaps eviscerated in all their aspects. What interests us here, albeit schematically, is to compare the role of the two juries, unquestionably both “exceptional”²⁶, in two of the most significant contests for the Italian scene, and not just in those years:

The cemetery of Modena was changed slightly in the two rounds of the contest and I remember the interminable discussions to arrive at the victory in the second round, after the project had won outright in the first. We had left each other in the evening with the doubt over whether to indicate a single winner; Carlo Aymonino himself was undecided, partly because Nino Dardi had presented such a truly fascinating project, and one of the most joyful (Portoghesi 2021, p. 42).

While it is impossible to forget the strong and intransigent opposition of Bruno Zevi, limited not just to these two projects by Rossi – from the cubic memorial to the Resistance of Cuneo, which was not among the ten finalists in the second round, to the cries of «scandal» prompted by the results of the contest for ideas for the new cemetery in Modena, in the piece entitled *Cadaveri architettonici* published in «L'Architettura. Cronache e storia» in 1973²⁷ – it is also necessary to consider that Paolo Portoghesi was a judge, invariably in several of the most important contests, all of which decisively confirmed the success, also international, of Aldo Rossi, obviously in addition to the direct assignment for the Theatre of the World during the Venice Biennial. I therefore believe that in *L'azzurro del cielo*, by Aldo Rossi with Gianni Braghieri, the assumption of a meaning perhaps

Fig. 19

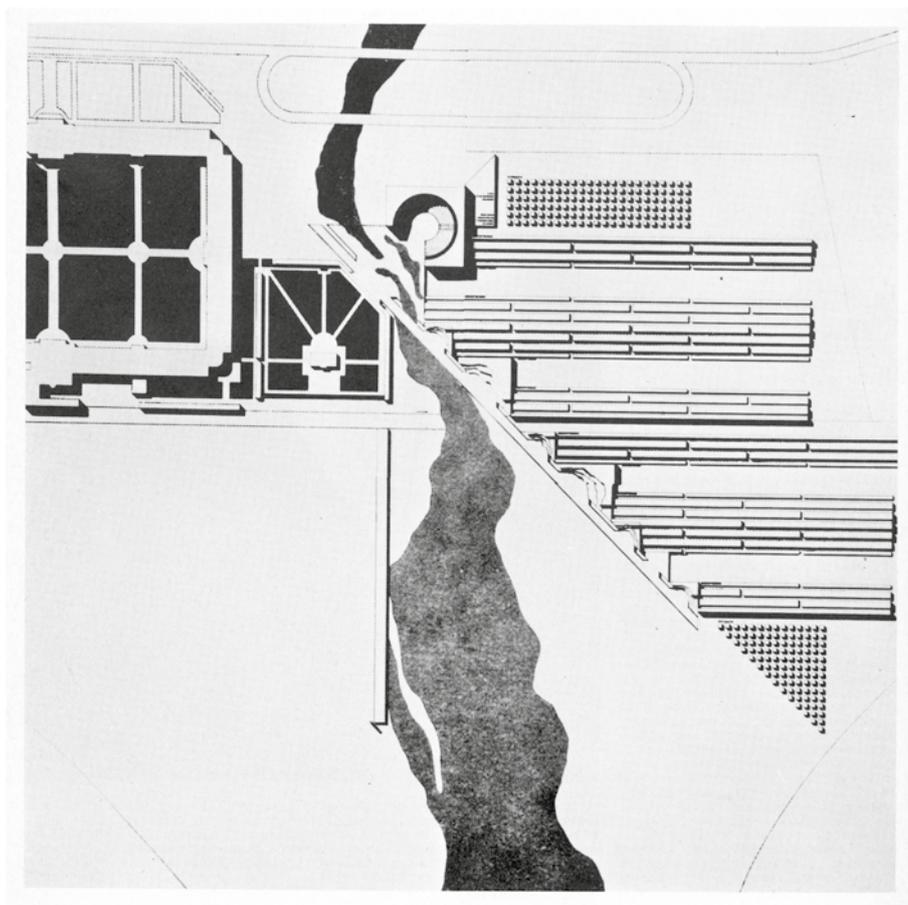
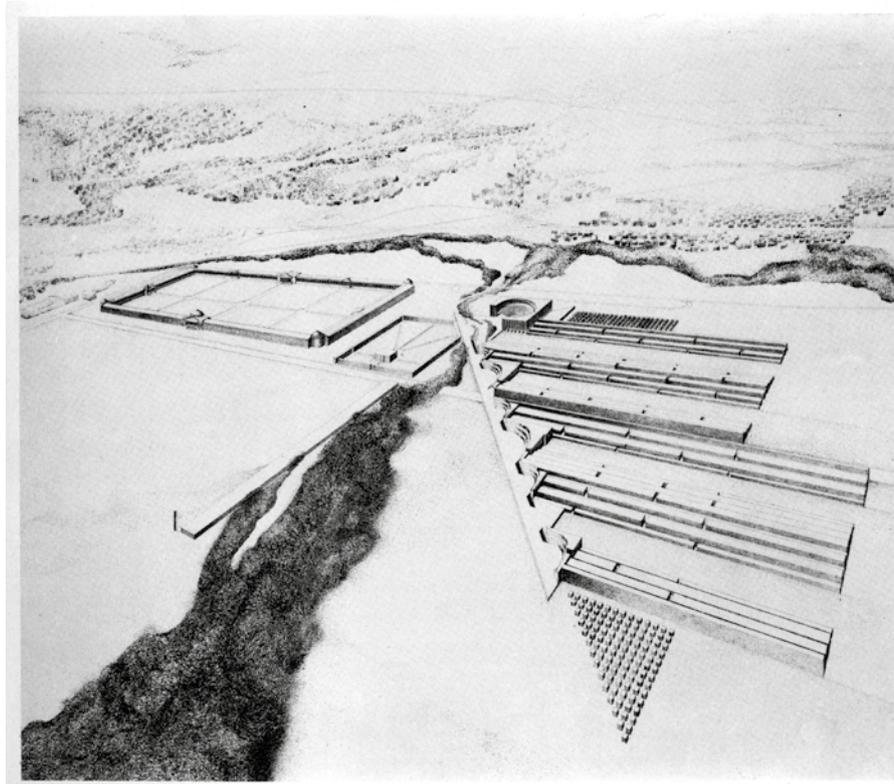
Aldo Rossi with Gianni Braghieri, *Prospettiva dal corridoio centrale fra gli ossari verso la Fossa comune*, Project, *L'azzurro del cielo*, winner of the National Contest for ideas for the new Cemetery of Modena, 1972. From «Controspazio» magazine, no. 10, October 1972, p. 9.

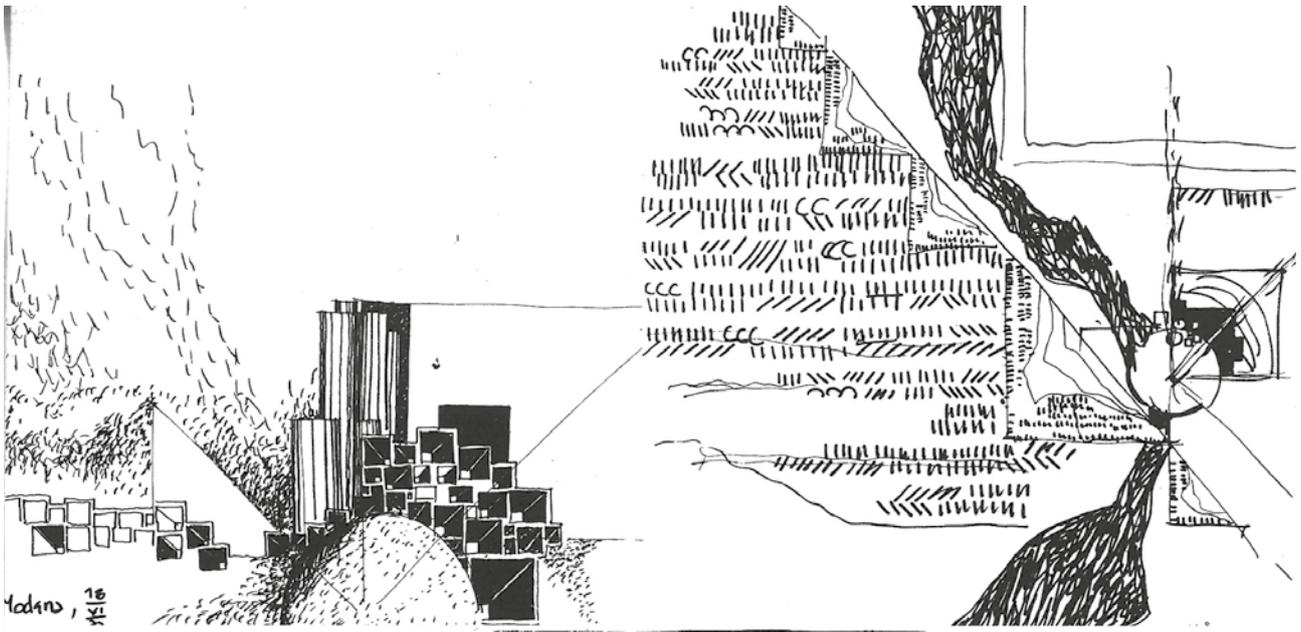


Figg. 20-21

Costantino Dardi, Giovanni Morabito, Michele Rebora, Ariella Zattera, *Veduta prospettica generale and planimetria generale con ombre, Dom Project*, runner up of the National Contest for ideas for the new Cemetery of Modena, 1972.

From «Controspazio» magazine, no. 10, October 1972, p. 13.



**Fig. 22**

Costantino Dardi, *Disegni di studio, Dom Project*, National Contest for ideas for the new Cemetery of Modena, 1972.

From Costantino Dardi, *semplice lineare complesso*, Quaderni di Teoria e Progetto, no.1, Editrice Magma, Rome 1976, Città e progetto 1, Architecture Series edited by Francesco Moschini.

too closely bound to a theory based, a priori, on combinations that are almost “domestic” in nature: «the empty cube with holes without windows, like an uncompleted and abandoned house, the chimney stack as a symbol of the factory», or even “zoomorphic”: «the central spine resembles a fish bone, the skeleton of vertebrates»²⁸, as it was subsequently reinterpreted by others, students and non-students, over the following years, and less to the effective value almost of a “symbolic insurrection” of the composition, has favoured, in contrast, a kind of «rebound stress» as Zevi would say. In any case, this withdrawal would seem to be confirmed in the introduction of Portoghesi in «Controspazio», who was initially almost hesitant about the final award, and took a personal stand on this:

In the project entitled «L’azzurro del cielo» [...] the architecture reclaims its semantic function, it starts to «speak» in its attempt to set the directly communicable collective values against the privacy of the individual being mourned. However, the lexical choices appear to border on ambiguity [...] Are the unquestionably archaistic inspiration of De Chirico and, even more, the bonds with Boullée and ideological Neo-classicism, the “unburned waste” of a short process that was halted too soon, or legitimate cultural kinships? (Portoghesi, 1972 p. 3).

In short, as was the case ten years previously in the contest for the Monument of Cuneo, in the contest for the Cemetery of Modena, what would have been expected from such an exceptional jury was that same singular “gestational labour”, with an involvement, even alternative, of lines already drawn. Thus, the first place awarded to the project of Aldo Rossi – I believe more for its poetic-linguistic originality, so deeply entrenched in the sketches and studio drawings, expressed here particularly in the large “Cone” of the *Fossa comune*, unfortunately never built –, could perhaps have been shared with a first place awarded to the *Dom* project of Costantino Dardi, which is truly beautiful, and to that “monument to memory” that is the *Torre delle ombre*:

an explicit citation of the architectural structure of the same name that Le Corbusier placed in the centre of the new Capitol of Chandigarh [...], the tower of shadows has become a volume, barycentric to the various areas of the cemetery, performing several functions simultaneously [...] and within which, in conclusion, a collective space is created that allows, in a pertinent and significant manner, choral participation in pub-

lic ceremonies and functions (Dardi 1972, p.12).

A monument? If what was stated before produces monuments, then, yes, they are monuments. I therefore believe that the words of Guido Canella during a lesson on Roberto Longhi at the Milan School in 2007 offer a clarification, also for the guiding choices of this Call:

Longhi is a master of Italian literature for the way in which he writes. He was also the inspiration for many writers and art critics, such as Briganti, Testori, and so on. His ability to paraphrase the picture through his own reinterpretation is also the reason, in my opinion, for his choice of device. What do I mean by device? I mean a method he uses to understand the problems of figuration [...]. The search for a device in criticism is extremely important. I prefer critics who use the device, in other words I believe that a critic should, for want of a better word, be driven, be motivated by prejudice²⁹(Guido Canella 2007).

Notes

¹ Giò Pomodoro, *Come nasce il «monumento» a Gramsci*, in AA.VV., *Giò Pomodoro, Piano d'uso collettivo a Gramsci-Ales 1977*, Marsilio Editori, 1977, p. 26.

² *Giornata di studi sul Monumento memoriale. Figurazione e tensione plastica come istanza morale*, Turin, 10 May 2023, Hall of Honour, Valentino Castle, Department of Architecture and Design (DAD), Turin Polytechnic. Curated by Gentucca Canella, Paolo Mellano with Tanja Marzi, Maurizio Villata.

³ Flavio Caroli, *Il futuro ha un cuore antico*, in *Piano d'uso collettivo a Gramsci-Ales 1977*, cit., p. 13.

⁴ Flavio Caroli, *Il futuro ha un cuore antico*, in *Piano d'uso collettivo a Gramsci-Ales 1977*, cit., p. 13.

⁵ Del Guercio 1977, p.18). Antonio Del Guercio, *Santuario d'arte semplice per Gramsci*, in *Piano d'uso collettivo a Gramsci-Ales 1977*, cit., p.18.

⁶ Carlo Aymonino, *Complesso scolastico di Pesaro 1974-1978* in Carlo Aymonino, *Piazze d'Italia. Progettare gli spazi aperti*, Electa, Milan 1988, p. 54.

⁷ Gillo Dorfles, *Lucio Fontana e l'artigianato creativo*, in *Lucio Fontana e il mosaico di Cantù*, Catalogue of the exhibition in Cantù, Mazzotta, Milan 2003, p. 31.

⁸ Marco Dezzi Bardeschi, *Monumenti alla periferia*, in «Domus», n. 635, January 1983, pp. 12-27.

⁹ Enrico Crispolti, *Fontana*, Städtisches Museum Leverkusen, Schloss Morsbroich, 12. Januar bis 25. februar 1962 and in *Lucio Fontana. Opere 1931-1968*, Martano/ Due, Turin 1969.

¹⁰ Edoardo Persico, Marcello, Nizzoli, Giancarlo Palanti, Lucio, Fontana (sculpture), Project for the Hall of Honour at the VI Triennial of Milan, 1936.

¹¹ Giovanni Testori, *Come terrecotte Sukhotai (Lucio Fontana)*, 1988, in *La cenere e la carne. Scritti sulla scultura del Novecento*, Le Lettere, Florence 2002, pp. 45-47.

¹² Giovanni Testori, *Beniamino Simoni a Cerveno*, Grafo edizioni, Brescia 1976.

¹³ Giovanni Testori, *Fioravanti terrecotte 1982-89*, Milan, Compagnia del Disegno, 1990 and in *Ilario Fioravanti*, 1990, in *La cenere e la carne. Scritti sulla scultura del Novecento*, Cit., pp. 95-96.

¹⁴ Gentucca Canella, Tanja Marzi, *Scale e risalite verso "l'azzurro del cielo" nelle architetture monumento dei protagonisti dell'architettura del Novecento italiano* in *Scale e risalite nella Storia della Costruzione in età Moderna e Contemporanea*, Quaderni di Storia della Costruzione 2, edited by Valentina Burgassi, Francesco Novelli, Alessandro Spila, Construction History Group - Turin Polytechnic DAD, 2022, pp. 439-460.

¹⁵ Ernesto Nathan Rogers, *Progetti di architetti italiani. Introduzione*, in «Casabella-Continuità», no. 276, June 1963, p. 13.

¹⁶ *Generazioni a confronto tra didattica e progetto. Dalla rivista FAMagazine, progetti dei Dottorandi di architettura sul Monumento-memoriale*. Architects and sculptors: Annalucia D'Erchia with Giorgio Milani, Andrea Valvason with Nicola Facchini, Houssam Mahi with Lorenzo Manunta, Thomas Pepino with Elio Garis, Riccardo Rapparini with Pinuccia Bernardoni, Maurizio Villata with Paolo Delle Monache, Turin 20 October 2023, Turin Polytechnic, Department of Architecture and Design,

Course of Studies in Architecture, 2023-2024 academic year, Theory Workshop of the Project, Lecturer Gentucca Canella, Assistants Ja-Zhen Chang, Giulio Saponaro.

¹⁷ Bruno Zevi, *Il monumento di Cuneo. Dieci interpretazioni della Resistenza*, L'Espresso, 30 December 1962, p. 19.

¹⁸ *Territorialità e cittadinanza della morte*, «Hinterland», no. 29-30, June 1984.

¹⁹ If I were involved in a “call” on a memorial monument, I would have chosen to intervene in several contexts, as envisaged in the Call put out by FAM and in the previous contest for Cuneo. I would focus, in particular, on the exceptional third-world supporting vocation of the Havana School of Art and on the transcription, in a design sense, of the *Zero School* in Eritrea, which provided schools and occupational training centres for fighters and civilians and became, in the years of the war for liberation, a set of classrooms “in the trenches” located throughout the country, for dozens of kilometres, concealed among the valleys and organised with temporary structures to be put up and taken down to avoid the bombardments, alongside field hospitals, workshops, craft workshops and service stations. The young students (often the children of fighters of the People’s Liberation Front) received primary and secondary education, thus recreating a normal life and participating in the work in the fields of the rural communities. Once they received their diploma, they taught reading, writing and arithmetic to adults, along with health and hygiene. These topics have always fascinated me, not just in the teaching, but also because they involve a stance being taken on the question of Africa, the south and the Mediterranean, more generally on the countries of the “South” of the world viewed from a different perspective to the current governmental directives. A “thought about the north-south divide”, using the words of Franco Cassano: «Thinking about the south means that the south is the subject of the thought: it does not need to be studied, analysed and judged by an outside way of thinking, but needs to reacquire the strength to think for itself and determinedly reconquer its independence» (Franco Cassano, *Il pensiero Meridiano*, Laterza, Rome-Bari 1996).

²⁰ cf. Editorial, *Reggio Calabria: il primo cimitero per i migranti morti nei naufragi. Monsignor Morrone: “Riconosciuti almeno nella morte”*, Risveglio 2000, 3 June 2022; Maria Teresa Ripolo, *A Reggio Calabria il cimitero dei migranti e dei poveri*, Corriere della Calabria, 10 June 2022.

²¹ Salvatore Bisogni, *Zolle. L'architettura della zolla come sintesi di edifici pubblici. Progetti per l'entroterra campano*, in *Ricerche in architettura. La Zolla nella dispersione delle aree metropolitane*, edited by S. Bisogni, Edizioni scientifiche italiane, Naples 2011, p. 268.

²² Bruno Zevi, *Il monumento di Cuneo. Dieci interpretazioni della Resistenza*, L'Espresso, 30 December 1962, p. 19.

²³ *Concorso nazionale per il Monumento alla Resistenza a Cuneo*, in «L'architettura. Cronache e storia», no. 90, April 1963.

²⁴ Guido Canella, *Bruno Zevi*, Lesson, 5 February 1992, in *La critica operativa e l'architettura*, edited by Luca Monica, Unicopli, Milan 2002, p. 12.

²⁵ Paolo Portoghesi, *Città dei vivi e città dei morti*, in «Controspazio», no. 10, October 1972, p.2

²⁶ Jury of the National Contest for the Monument to the Resistance of Cuneo, 1962: Giulio Carlo Argan, chairman, Albino Arnaudo, Nello Ponente, Maurizio Saglietto, Bruno Zevi.

Jury of the National Contest for the new Cemetery of Modena, 1972, including: Paolo Portoghesi, Carlo Aymonino, Carlo Melograni, Pier Luigi Cervellati, Glauco Gresleri.

²⁷ Bruno Zevi, *Cadaveri architettonici*, in «L'architettura. Cronache e storia», no. 12, April 1973, p. 773.

²⁸ Paolo Portoghesi, *Il teatro della morte*, in *Aldo Rossi il teatro e la città*, Sagep Editori, Genoa 2021, pp. 40-42.

²⁹ Transcription of the lesson of Guido Canella with Daniele Vitale on Roberto Longhi as a commentary to the video *Breve ma veridica storia della pittura italiana*, directed by M. Bosio, Corso di Teorie e tecniche della progettazione architettonica, Facoltà di Architettura Civile Milano Bovisa, Politecnico di Milano, 24 October 2007.

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Gentucca Canella (born in Milan in 1964), is an architect and associate professor in architectural and urban design at the Department of Architecture and Design (DAD) of Turin Polytechnic. After obtaining her degree, she worked as a lecturer and researcher at the School of Civil Architecture of Milan Polytechnic and obtained her Research Doctorate in Architectural Design at Rome “La Sapienza” University in 2003. She has participated in national and international architectural design contests and received several awards and acknowledgements, while continuing to teach in the architectural design workshops of the bachelor's and master's degree courses. She has designed and curated national and international conferences and exhibitions on the masters of the Twentieth Century and on the protection, enhancement and redevelopment of the architectural heritage of Italy of the second half of the Twentieth Century. The documents are collected in the volumes: *Guido Canella 1931-2009*, *Roberto Gabetti 1925-2000*, *Giorgio Raineri 1927-2012*, *Il diritto alla tutela. Architettura d'autore del secondo Novecento*, in the *Architetti italiani del Novecento* series of books, of which she has been editor since 2018, published by Franco Angeli.

Paolo Icaro
Remembrance yes, monument no

Abstract

What follows below is a document sent by master sculptor Paolo Icaro in April 2024 to the editor of this edition, accompanied by the following words: «Dear Gentucca, I am attaching the notes I made to outline an idea of the landscape as a place in which to examine the concept of an “MM”, or memorial monument».

It has been decided to publish the notes in the original version, showing the transcription of the text at the beginning.

Keywords

The place — The invisible

[sheet 0,0]



White

Memorial Monument

Architecture and Sculpture

Complementary? Supplementary?

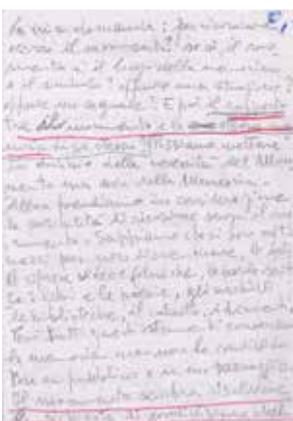
Synergy or competitiveness?

Degrees of kinship or unfamiliarity?

A study into this degree of kinship is interesting and necessary

A memorial monument is a monument that keeps the memory of events and people who should not be forgotten alive, at least for as long as possible.

[sheet 0,1]



My question is: do we need a monument to remember? And if we do, is the monument the place of the memory or the symbol of it? or a situation?

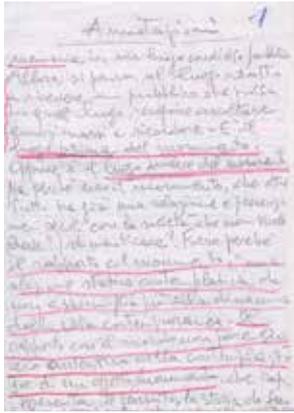
or a sign? And what exactly is the relationship between the monument and the actual memory itself? We can certainly question the need for the monument, but not the need for remembrance.

So, let us consider the idea of remembering without the monument.

There are other ways of not forgetting something, such as photographs, video clips or films, the written word, books and poems, archives, libraries, registries and documents.

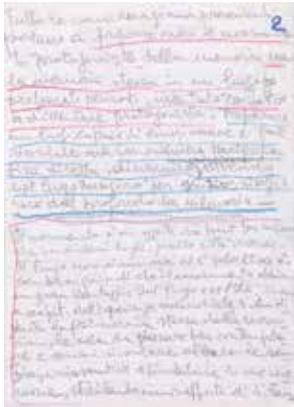
However, while these all preserve the memory, they do not share it with a wider public or within a landscape.

A monument would seem to be the answer to the desire to share the memory in a communal and public place.

[sheet 1] **Notes**

So, what is needed is a place where people can come to see, listen, become emotional and remember. The place comes before the monument. Or it is actually the place rather than the monument. But why not the monument, as something that already has a relationship and a presence over the centuries, in a society that does not (or should not?) forget?

Perhaps it is because the relationship with the monument is a static and contemplative one that no longer resembles the dynamics of contemporary life. The relationship with the memory seems neither sincere nor authentic when it simply comes down to contemplating an object or monument that represents the past, times gone by. The monument is presenting itself, rather than the memory it is supposed to represent. It betrays that memory.

[sheet 2]

All the above considerations lead to the concept of the monument no longer taking “centre-stage”, but rather the memory itself, in a place that has been prepared, conceived, invented and “charged” with taking centre-stage. The idea is to prepare a place that strikes an emotional chord and allows people not just to remember, but to participate in a direct and dynamic manner, walking through and experiencing something in a “magical” place which allows that memory to resurface from the depths of their consciousness.

A monument is an object that allows remembrance in different places, squares and cities. The place does not move, it remains there, precisely where it is. A monument would therefore appear to have a major advantage over a place, and it does in a certain sense, but to the detriment of the actual experience of remembrance: it becomes the “face” of the memory, the object placed there to contemplate and maybe to remember something that has the summary or symbolic appearance of a memory, but establishes a relationship of distance and respect: almost godlike.

[sheet 3]**Thoughts**

But memory is a human emotion, it is a way of still having feelings about events, people and the past that brings them alive and closer to us, moving us.

It is not something godlike, the monument on a pedestal looking down on us from above, about which we often know nothing. It is here among us, on the ground, in a place designed to bring out the emotions of the memory as we walk by. It is a bush, a flower, a rock, a piece of fruit or a piece of ground, something that rises and then falls, a patch of gravel, sand or grass, a horizon that changes a little, a tree and a stump, a thread that descends and a colour in the mud, a little bit of light and a little bit of dark in a hole, a waterfall that cascades with a sound like music, chatters to us and makes us think and feel.

[sheet 4]

In short: a “non-monument” is a landscape in which we experience something by moving and walking, leaving the present to be reached by a recollection, a memory, the unforgettable.

Several ideas on the memorial landscape: modelling a path, promoting the sense of well-being of an emotional experience and the memory itself, with flowers, colours, lights, pebbles, sand, branches and roots.

The chatter of a stream or a fountain, a comfortable seat for meditation, so many small places, on a human scale, to pause and reflect ...

There are numerous possibilities for creating this contemplative landscape. Not a park and not just a garden, but a place designed with the artist and the

[sheet 5] architect and the psychologist!



A place of inner peace, an abstraction from the noise of city life, a people-friendly place: memories are for the living!

Signs

Several of my observations on the Memorial.

There is a need to rethink the concept of a memorial monument.

A memorial monument is often more a memory of itself, rather than of the memory for which it has been built. The main concern of the architect and the sculptor would often seem to be focused on aesthetics rather than ethics.

Remembering an event, a person, an era, a tragedy or a victory is always an emotional experience, a rush of feelings and thoughts that reappear in the depths of our consciousness, thanks to the power of suggestion, the moment and the place in which we find ourselves. The so-called MM itself should therefore not be the visual focus, but a presence that allows that memory to return.

[last sheet]



My MM is not an object, but an imagined place, designed, measured, transformed, capable of provoking concentration, emotion and authenticity. In those conditions, the memory comes closer to us and we can experience it with a sense of sincere and authentic participation.

Zero

Covering a topic such as memories and monuments exhaustively would take a lifetime, so I am not copying these notes, there is no time for neat copies or conclusions ... life can be unpredictably short and you cannot spend it without being aware of that limit.

Dear Gentucca, I wanted to but I didn't know how, but please understand that, if the enticing occasion were to arise, I would do my utmost to develop the best place for never forgetting.

Yours with appreciation and affection.

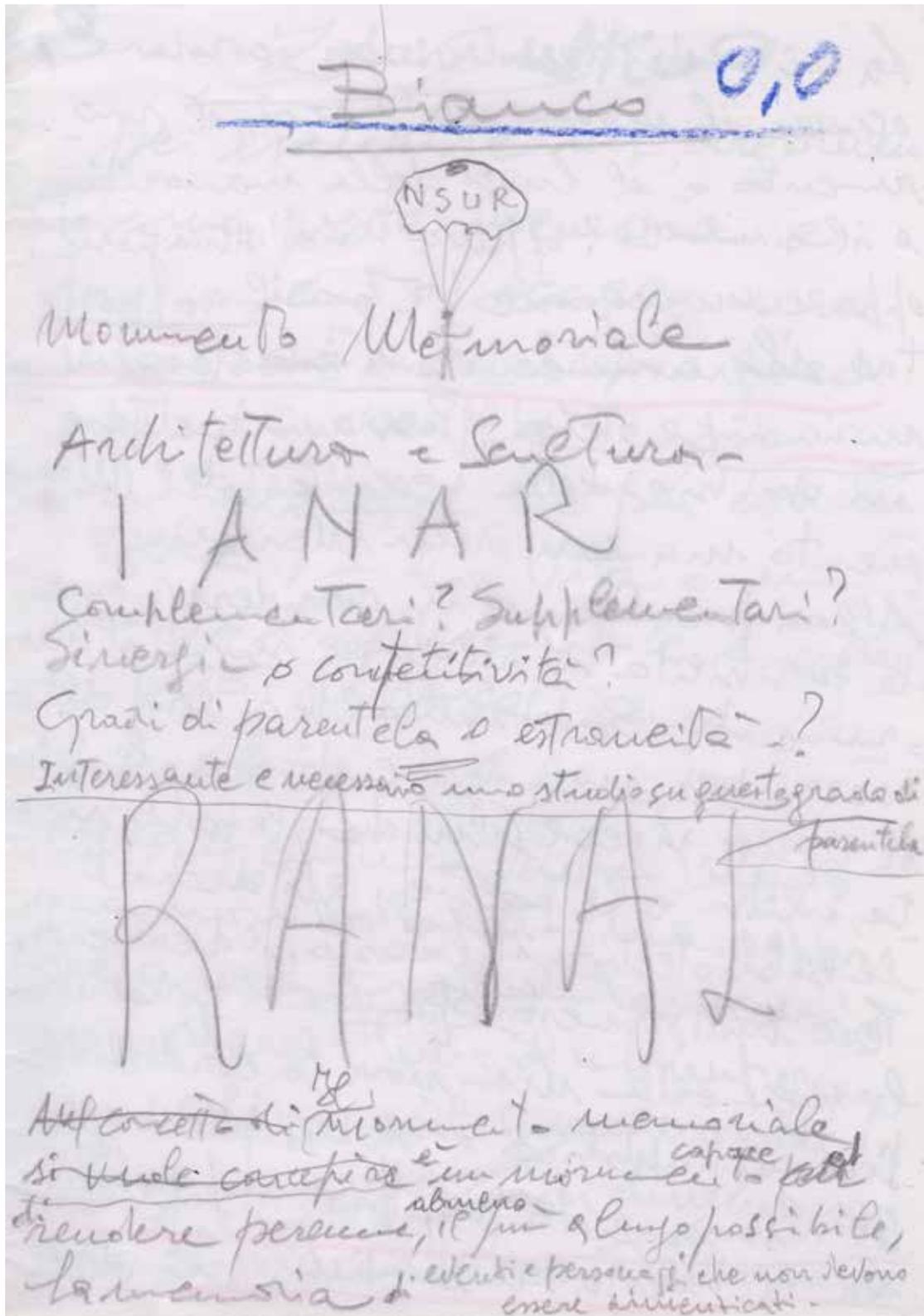


Fig. 1
Paolo Icaro, sheet 0.0.
12th April 2024.

la mia domanda: per ricordare,
 occorre il momento? se sì, il mo-
 mento è il luogo della memoria
 o il simbolo? oppure una situazione?
 oppure un segnale? E poi il rapporto
tra il momento e la ~~stessa~~ stessa me-
morìa di se stesso? Possiamo mettere
 in dubbio della necessità del Monu-
 mento ma non della Memoria.
 Allora prendiamo in considerazione
 la possibilità di ricordare senza il mo-
 mento. Sappiamo che ci sono altri
 mezzi per non dimenticare, le foto,
 le riprese video e filmiche, le parole scrit-
 te i libri e le poesie, gli archivi,
 le biblioteche, il catasto, i documenti.
 Però tutti questi strumenti conservano
 la memoria ma non la costituiscono
 con un pubblico e in un paesaggio.
 Il monumento sembra risolvere
la richiesta di costituzione della

Fig. 2
 Paolo Icaro, sheet 0.1.
 12th April 2024.

Annessioni 1

memoria in un luogo condiviso pubblico
 Allora si pensa al luogo adatto
 a ricevere un pubblico che possa
 in quel luogo recepire ascoltare
 emozionarsi e ricordare - E' il
luogo prima del monumento.
 Oppure e' il luogo invece del monumento,
 ma perche' non il monumento, che oltre
 tutto ha gia' una relazione e presenza
 nei secoli con la societa' che non vuole
 (deve?) dimenticare? Forse perche'
il rapporto col monumento e' una
relazione statica contemplativa che
non assomiglia piu' alla dinamica
della vita contemporanea. Il
rapporto con il ricordo non pare sin-
ceramente autentico nella contemplan-
za di un oggetto/monumento che rap-
-presenta il passato, la storia che fu.
 = Il monumento presenta + sostiene che la memoria per cui e' stato costruito. Tradisce

Fig. 3
 Paolo Icaro, sheet 1.
 12th April 2024.

Tutte le considerazioni precedenti portano a preparare non il monumento ²
 to "protagonista della memoria ma
la memoria stessa in un luogo
preparato pensato inventato "caricato"
a diventare protagonista - Preparare
un luogo capace di emozionare e far
ricordare ma in maniera partecipativa
diretta, dinamica ^{comunicando} vivendo
nel luogo "magico" per sentire riaffiorare
dal profondo la memoria -

Il monumento è un oggetto che può far memoria in diversi luoghi, piazze città diverse. Il luogo non si muove ed è solo lì che è. Sembra quindi che il monumento abbia un gran vantaggio sul luogo e col'ha, ma a scapito dell'esperienza memoriale: lui di tutte le funzioni stesse della memoria, le cose da piazzare per contemplare e mai ricordare altro, con le similitudini riassuntive o simboliche di una memoria, stabilendo un rapporto di distanza.

Fig. 4
 Paolo Icaro, sheet 2.
 12th April 2024.

Pensieri 3

di rispetto: sobrumano. Male memo-
ria è emozione umana, è un mo-
do di provare ancora sentimenti di
accanimento persone storia del passato
e sentirle dinanzi vive e vicino a noi
per emozionarci. Non il sobrumano,
il momento sui piedistalli in alto
lasciò di cui spesso non si sa nulla
ma noi qua, a terra, in un luogo
pensato per ~~far~~ ~~l'emozione~~ far
emergere mentre posseggiamo le
emozioni del ricordo, inerte ma
siepe, un fiore, un sasso, un frutto
una terra ^{che sale un po' e ho scende,} un po' e un po' di gliaia,
una sabbia e l'erba, un signor-
te che un po' cambia, l'albero e
un ceppo, un filo de scande e
un colore nel fango, qualche
luce e un buio in un fosso una
linea d'acqua che saltella e
suona diachiera e si pensa e sente.

Fig. 5
Paolo Icaro, sheet 3.
12th April 2024.

Il memoriale: il non-momento è un
 paesaggio in cui fare esperienza ^{paraggiando} ~~vivendo la vita della morte, non la morte~~
~~della vita da è di fingere~~ azzorrandolo il
 presente per essere raggiunto dal ricordo
 la memoria, inimitabile = 4

alcune ipotesi sul paesaggio per la memoria:
 modellare un percorso, favorire il benessere
 dell'esperienza emotiva del ricordo con fiori
 colori suoni luci, sassolini sabbie rami e radici
 il chiacchiericcio di una ~~fontana~~ ruscella
 e di una fontana, una caduta formosa, alla
 macchina, tre, tanti luoghi, piccoli, a misura
 d'uomo per sostare...
 Innumerevoli le possibilità per realizzare
 questo paesaggio inedito. Non un parco
 e non solo un giardino: un luogo studiato
 con l'artista l'architetto e lo psicologo!
 Un luogo di pace interiore, di astensione
 del rumore delle attività metropolitane,
 un luogo a misura d'uomo: la memoria
 è per i vivi!

Fig. 6
 Paolo Icaro, sheet 4.
 12th April 2024.

5

Segni

Alcune ^{mie} osservazioni ~~per interpretare~~
 il Monumento ^{di ripensare} ~~di ripensare~~ ^{del cosiddetto MM}
 più se stesso che la memoria per cui
 è stato costruito - da preoccupazione
 dell'architetto e dello scultore sembrano
~~invece~~ ^{invece} ~~una presenza estetica~~ ^{invece}
~~la bellezza~~ ^{invece} che etica - ~~Per quel che riguarda~~
 Ricordare un evento, o un personaggio, un'epoca,
 una tragedia, una vittoria, o sempre una
 esperienza ambiva, un flusso di sentimenti
 e pensieri che riaffiorano dal nostro profondo
 proprio grazie alla forza suggestiva del
 momento nostro e del luogo in cui siamo.
 Occorre primariamente che il cosiddetto MM non
 si proponga come oggetto estetico protagonista ma
 una presenza capace di favorire il riaffiorare
~~del ricordo~~ - Il mio MM non è
 un oggetto, ma un luogo ^{immaginato} ~~immaginato~~ misurato
 Trasformato capace di favorire la concentrazione
 fine, l'emozione, l'autenticità - un
 quelle condizioni in possiamo vivere il ricordo
 avvicinarsi alla memoria ^{in una} ~~partecipazione~~
 sincera ~~autentica~~, autentica ←

Fig. 6
 Paolo Icaro, sheet 5.
 12th April 2024.

Zero ultimo

per esaurire un argomen-
to come questo: memoria e
momento occorre una
vita, così non ricopio questi
appunti, non c'è tempo
per belle copie né per conclu-
sioni... — la vita è un
tempo imprevedibile e non
si può passarla senza con-
saputezza del limite.

Cara Gentucca, avrei voluto
ma non ho saputo, ma sappi
che a una provocante occasio-
ne metterei tutto il mio impegno
per realizzare il ~~piacuto~~ ~~partito~~
luogo per meglio non dimenticare.
Con stima e affetto. Paolo Icaro

Fig. 7
Paolo Icaro, sheet 4.
12th April 2024.

Notes on the “memorial monument”

If it is a memory (of events, people, important historical facts, human endeavour) that we want to preserve, confirm and consolidate, in order not to forget, then I will dwell first on that memory and then ask myself which ways are the best for preserving it and, possibly, celebrating it. Memories are present in our everyday life, in both a voluntary and involuntary way. I want to focus on voluntary memory, leaving involuntary memory to experts in the human psyche. We use our voluntary memory constantly, in order to be able to function with sufficient awareness, deciding the logical sequence of our actions. When we forget why we have opened the fridge, we make a concerted effort to remember which item we intended to take from it, we try to remember, just as you do when you encounter someone who says they know you and you try to recall, not always successfully, what their name is and even where you met them, in order to return the greeting. We need to make an effort to remember. But we also need to make an effort not to forget. In our everyday actions, this often simply means not forgetting to buy something or an appointment or a payment, whereas, in the continuity of distant or even remote and historical events, the effort not to forget is totally different and much more complex. This effort combines the culture we possess, in terms of knowledge of facts, circumstances and social, political and economic conditions, together with the environment and education, individual concepts and preconceptions, of each person who does not want to forget and, on the contrary, feels the need to remember. We could refer to this feeling as a historical conscience, and therefore an awareness that is both individual and collective and that needs a *collective, strong and penetrating public testimony in bringing it from the past into the present* in order for it not to be forgotten: it is like pulling a bucket full to the brim with the history and stories of humanity from a well that is tens or hundreds or even thousands of years in depth. This could be the foundation for a memorial concept.

Above all, I imagine a possible project for a memorial place as outdoors, a narrow emotional path for one person, who walks in a *spiral towards the centre, yin and yang*, helping them to concentrate on themselves and allowing the memory to become an emotion. There are a multitude of solutions to design and delimit the spiral, depending on the soil, the areas, the surrounding environment, all in relation to the nature of the memory and with everything allowing an emotional resurfacing of the reason for which we are walking, alone, on the spiral path.

Another path, a design once again dictated by the various circumstances already listed in part, could be a *horizontal hourglass*: a convergence, as scene from above, towards a “critical” point, where the emotion of the memory enters into the true nature of the Ego. The path then opens slowly and brings us back to the present, as we emerge from the deep well of the past.

I have to specify here that, for me, a path is, for the time being, simply a line but, in the actual natural landscape, it becomes a material physical dimension, with measurements and proportions, and even the memory itself of the hypothetical path makes a difference. In passing from the initial idea to the actual construction, it is obviously necessary to consider all the elements involved, sometimes as obstacles and sometimes as beneficial

suggestions. The final design considers all the elements and is always subject to variants, with the original, interior spiritual structure always acting as a guide.

Last but not least, a place where the right conditions exist for the concentration that assists remembrance, whether it is a page of history or a prestigious person, could be considered not as a monument, but as a memorial place, in which to walk, to stop and to reflect, meeting ourselves in the silence and thanking the memory for the emotions it affords us in thinking about the past.

Paolo Icaro

Post-scriptum:

Reading back over what I wrote (with a slight sense of embarrassment), I felt that my proposal for a memorial place needed to be coloured with joy: a moment of existential enrichment, retracing a memory is vital nourishment, an ecological delight.

Exaggerating to make the concept clearer; I imagine a playground for the soul, populated not with symbols but with incentives, etc., not a visit to a cemetery!!!!!!!

Paolo Icaro (Turin, 1936). He studied music and enrolled in the Faculty of Language and Literature at Turin University in 1955. In 1958, he abandoned his studies and began sculpting in the studio of Umberto Mastroianni. In 1960, he moved to Rome, where he held his first solo exhibition at the Galleria Schneider in 1962. In 1966, he moved to New York, where he lived until 1968. In 1967, he held a solo exhibition at the Galleria La Tartaruga in Rome and was invited by Germano Celant to participate in the exhibition "Arte Povera Im-Spazio" at the Galleria La Bertesca in Genoa, the city where he went to live on his return to Italy. In 1968, he held a solo exhibition at the Galleria La Bertesca, called "Faredisfarerifarevedere", a title that reflects his approach to his art. Between 1968 and 1969, he participated in the main exhibitions of the international avant-garde art scene, performing works at the Teatro delle Mostre, Galleria La Tartaruga, Rome (1968) and in "Arte povera più azioni povere", Amalfi (1968); he was also invited to "Op Losse Schroeven. Situaties en cryptostructuren" at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (1969), and "When Attitudes Become Form", curated by Harald Szeemann at the Kunsthalle in Bern (1969). In 1971, he returned to the United States, in Connecticut, where he lived for the next ten years, before returning to Italy for good at the start of the Eighties. He held numerous solo exhibitions at major galleries in Europe and the USA in the Seventies and Eighties, including: Verna, Zurich; Françoise Lambert, Milan; Marilena Bonomo, Bari; Massimo Minini, Brescia; Paul Maenz, Cologne; Hal Bromm, New York; Jack Tilton, New York. His most recent solo and group exhibitions include: "Appunti di Viaggio 1967-2014", Peep-Hole, Milan (2014); "Teoria ingenua degli insieme", Galleria P420, Bologna (2016); "Respiro, all'interno dell'esterno dell'interno", Fondazione Volume!, Rome (2017); "Le Pietre del Cielo: Paolo Icaro and Luigi Ghirri", Fondazione Querini Stampalia di Venezia (2017); "Un prato in quattro tempi", Università Statale di Milano (2018); "Alla ricerca dell'equilibrio perduto", Galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia (2018); "Paolo Icaro: Cantiere", Galleria P420, Bologna (2019); "Antologia", GAM Torino (2019); "Polarità", Pinacoteca di Volterra (2021); "Dribbling", Galleria Lia Rumma, Naples (2021); "Arte povera and beyond", Le Bal e Le Jeu de Paume, Parigi (2022); "Anacronismo", Chiesa dei SS Pietro e Paolo, Spoleto (2023); "Rifrazioni", Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, Rome (2024); "Overall", Galleria Lia Rumma, Milan (2024); "Meteorite, gemello", Dalle sculture nelle città all'arte delle comunità, Pesaro 2024 Capitale italiana della cultura, Pesaro (2024).

Carmen Andriani
Memoriae Causa¹.
Brief notes on possible Memorials

Abstract

Memorials are monuments built to remember an event that belongs to the collective memory. They aspire to a condition of transcendence and immanence at the same time. Rooted in place and linked to a precise temporal circumstance, they free themselves from any time and place due to their universal significance. Memorials express a profound symbolic meaning shared by a community that recognizes itself in them. In this way, they actively enter our present, capable of building narratives and places of collective mythology within which we can identify.

Memorials speak to us; memorials evoke: this was the meaning of the Design Competition for a Memorial Monument promulgated by the FAM magazine in 2023 and of the results commented here.

Keywords

Memory/remembrance — Collective heritage — Topography — Mediterranean — Silence

When walking inside the vast area of the monument, one will feel alone and lost. There is no representation of any specific memory, but rather an experience of total disorientation that the loss of all rational control generates.

With these words, Peter Eisenman commented on the Berlin Memorial, inaugurated in 2005 and designed by himself and Richard Serra. The 2,711 stelae, driven directly into the ground with a gesture as radical as it is absolute, formed a wavy ensemble, like a dark wave sinking and rising according to the variations in ground elevation. The hallucinatory sense of space repeats itself infinitely, combined with the vertigo of the labyrinth/non-labyrinth: “There is no space for reason in this project; the theme is the reason that becomes madness.

The memorial, in itself, is a monument erected in memory of an event to be remembered. However, there is a difference between memory and recollection. While the latter records the emotional and subjective aspects (the term recollection includes the Greek origin of the word heart), memory is an intellectual faculty capable of receiving more data and imprinting them in the mind objectively and more detachedly. Somehow, recollection involves an entirely personal instant emotional state, while memory aspires to be a collective and permanent fact. Memorials aspire to a condition of transcendence and immanence at the same time: rooted in the place and linked to a specific temporal circumstance, yet they transcend all time and place due to their universal significance. Memorials express a deep symbolic meaning shared by a community that recognizes itself in them. Memorials speak to us; memorials evoke.

These were the meanings of the Design Competition for a Monument-Memorial announced by the magazine FAM in 2023, and the outcomes are commented on here. Three contexts were chosen, two of which are in the Mediterranean area. At the same time, the third is a case of unfinished work by an author: the Marchiondi-Spagliardi Juvenile Institute by Vittorio Viganò.

The theme of the Mediterranean elects the island of Lampedusa as a symbolic place, a tragic place of arrival and transit, of hope and death. The terrible event of October 2013 is a fact to be commemorated. The Mediterranean is also a space of relationship, the medium through which different cultures and politics meet and clash: a fragile space, the result of continuous negotiations, conditioned by historical and political changes, a field dense with events at every moment of its history, a space with uncertain boundaries, and variable geometries, susceptible to ruptures, shifts, metamorphoses. Such a complex and meaning-laden ensemble requires an interdisciplinary approach: architectural, artistic, literary, anthropological, geographical, and political in the broadest sense of the term. An artist accompanies the architect in almost all the proposals presented here, and the word runs parallel to the form. On the memorial theme, a mutual correspondence between images and texts is established, a reciprocity that sometimes overlaps, blurring the boundaries of one another.

La Fata Morgana (the motto of the first project) is a floating platform subject to marine currents and drifting with them, even though it is anchored to the seabed. It is surmounted by a large wheel, itself supported by a wooden truss. The imposing structure (the wheel is ten meters high) reacts to the wind by resonating and drifting with the marine currents. It is visible day and night, with lights that evoke religious processions. *La Fata Morgana* suggests the provocative nature of the project, reworks certain folkloric rituals, reasoning on an idea of deception and illusion, and declaring its attitude to the cultures of impermanence. There is a circular correspondence between words and forms; one motivates the other without a hierarchical order but is mutually indispensable. In *Torre Viva / Torre Afona*, the correspondence between text and image lives in an inverse relationship: the architecture, powerfully evocative, precedes the written explanation, which consists of the dry description of data centred on the double (the above/below relative to sea level) and open to analogical references. *Torre Viva*, studded with 368 openings on the four emerged faces, groans at the passage of the wind, becoming a signal of itself like a lighthouse, while *Torre Afona* remains closed and silent in the depths of the sea. The cross-shaped plan that connects them directs the arms toward the four winds.

In *Passaggi di Stato*, the vision broadens to the vastness of the horizon. Here, the landscape is marked by the transitional characteristics between the Mediterranean and desert climates and the incessant blowing of the winds. The drawings accompanying the text are maps and territorial sections composed of multiple pencil-drawn sheets. Words and images run in parallel, reinforcing the sense of the proposal; the allegorical alternation of light and darkness, fragile elements, and stone excavations configure the Monument Memorial's extensive landscape system made of connections and experiences of the traversed space. However, what is the Mediterranean? The question posed by Fernand Braudel and cited in the *Oltremare*

project brings us back to its origins. The myth of the Mediterranean begins with its geological stratification, evoked by many of the proposals illustrated in these pages, because “the layers of the earth are an unlimited museum of signs that evade the rational order and social structures that limit art” (R. Smithson)².

Furthermore, the Mediterranean is, above all, a condition even before being a physical place: the *medium terrae* is a space of relationship crossed by a dense network of invisible and yet traceable routes; it is a resounding of idioms that bounce from one shore to another³. The first act of the proposal, *Oltremare*, is founded on these idioms and the letters that compose them. The single letter is the material of collective memory, as the Mediterranean city is a palimpsest, an overlapping of writings, a stratified city par excellence⁴. Moreover, *oltre* (beyond) means beyond or on the other side, indicating a crossing beyond one’s realm, a going beyond the limit beyond which one enters a zone (conceptual or physical) not regulated⁵.

A low podium, almost a solid surface that hollows out towards the sea level, draws the place of a temporary landing. Straddling between land and water, slightly rotated concerning a body of water over which it overlaps, the podium wrinkles the ground elevation, converging like in a theatre towards the scene offered by the sea and those arriving from the distant horizon. A half-submerged base in the water is oriented according to chosen coordinates. Numbers and letters define it and materialize in small scattered sculptures. Memory and warning simultaneously seem to be evoked, as in the monument to the resistance by Gino Valle inaugurated in Udine on April 25, 1969. In Valle’s project, the square enclosure was suspended on three pillars and projected over a semicircular basin where water flowed intermittently. Francesco Tentori exalted its “purism and the ability to reach a simplicity that could guarantee artistic validity and longevity”⁶. The tension towards primary figures is the character that unites several projects. In *Mediterranean Inspirations*⁷, the monument is formally understood as an enormous massif emerging from the waters of the Mediterranean, partly excavated, partly extruded, in memory of the 368 migrants lost at sea. It is a primitive, assertive figure, a sort of monolith, counterbalanced by a cluster of crystal prisms grouped at the centre, at the point closest to the water, as if they were bodies of people. The memorial relies on the power of metaphor, just as in the proposal *Every Creature is an Island in Front of the Sea*, where an installation floats in the waters of the Mediterranean, here defined as a sediment of natural geography that emerges from the marine topography through a geological process of invention. The platform, tied to the mainland by a slender walkway, rises and falls in the sea according to the movement of the waves. By analogy, the thought runs to the *Monument to the Partisan* realized by Augusto Murer and Carlo Scarpa in the mid-Sixties and still emerging from the *Riva dei Giardini* in Venice.

The memorial is more and different from ordinary architecture; it brings together architectural and sculptural work and evokes a collective sentiment that it represents even through language silence. In *Landscape and Silence*, the wave motion of the waters is used, captured in depth by a sort of flexible organ pipe that amplifies its resonance⁸. With a text full of suggestions crossing different forms of expression (from philosophy to poetry to music), it reaches the silence of all language and, therefore, the

most powerful of expressions. It is undoubtedly an anti-rhetorical vision reflecting the idea of the anti-monument: after all, even the Mausoleum of the Fosse Ardeatine, designed by young architects, was considered such at the time. Now, it is one of the most significant memorials of the massacre of March 1944, perpetrated in Rome at the caves of Ardeatina Street. Similarly, visitors are accompanied on a memory journey, simulating the persistent existential instability which migration forces. Here, too, what matters is the path and emotional immersion rather than a static yet participatory contemplation.

Lampedusa also means the hoped-for landing, the dock from which one departs or arrives, and the port assumes a symbolic value. Ports are points of departure, arrival, and transit. Sea Ports are open to many semantic interpretations: they are the places of significant literary, iconographic, and pictorial narratives. “A new beauty has been born. As always, it is born from the waste of what we thought we knew, from the growth of a non-urban but oceanic periphery that knows”. Aldo Rossi’s words⁹, as surprising as they are unexpected, written as commentary on Gabriele Basilico’s photos, still astonish today for their relevance. In the project *Fatto dall’uomo e scolpito dal mare*, the Favaro pier becomes a symbol. Here, the memorial originates from the relationship between the natural and the artificial, between the sea and the port, and it slopes towards the water with the squared blocks of the breakwater, fragments, and ruins worn by time and the continuous motion of the waves. The project focuses on these elements, adding others, also squared, with letters engraved on the landward side; other texts will be added over time. Finally, when the project’s action concerns the ground, when it becomes a furrow, engraving, labyrinth marking a path of no return, the transit provokes anxiety and disorientation. *Transiti* is an evocative title: the path, described by the authors as silent and disorienting, refers to a condition of exodus, passage, escape. It is unknown if there will be a possible exit; perhaps technology could alleviate this by simulating an illusory virtual reality. The landing takes the form of a semi-submerged dome and the project becomes visionary, delineating a primordial condition, selecting as its figurative antecedents the Cretto di Burri in Gibellina or the Eisenman Memorial in Berlin.

Another context in which the idea of Memorial is tested is offered by the Marchiondi-Spagliardi Juvenile Institute by Vittoriano Viganò, designed in the mid-1950s, never completed, and now protected after decades of abandonment and decay. The unfinished is like “a broken shell: the interior, revealed, lets us discover a fascinating world” as stated in the project report *Senza titolo*: the authors rightly cite Francesco Venezia, who becomes a key to interpreting the ruin, the unfinished, the open work with an undeniable value of vitality, discovery, and invention. In this case, the reflection goes beyond architecture¹⁰: in the school of life conceived and designed for troubled boys, Viganò had abolished bars, creating a supportive context, a small open city capable of creating empathy with its young residents suffering from existential discomfort. The Memorial thus emphasizes this aspect: the unfinished in architecture allows those who inhabit it to interact with it actively without being subjected to constraints. It is a tool of democracy and vitality, an open work that welcomes and accepts modification in harmony with the community that experiences it.

Confronting the complexity of Viganò's thought to bring it to Memory without betraying its integral sense is not easy. But if one considers that in the unfinished the process of realizing the idea becomes clearer, and it is possible to know details otherwise inscrutable in the finished work, the reasoning becomes clearer. The proposal for *Dimensione libera* is based on this reflection, daring a parallel with the most famous unfinished sculpture in the world, exemplary: Michelangelo's Pietà Rondanini. There is no doubt that observing a process in its making, as happens on construction sites, lays bare the true essence of space, its relationship with matter and form, allowing those who interact with it to insert themselves into an ongoing dialogue. The unfinished leaves ample room for the free interpretation of possible completeness, leaves room for imagination and spatial experience. The Dimensione libera proposal consists of an abstract three-dimensional structure that permeates a longitudinal space and accommodates in its growth a series of solid volumes. It stands as a manifesto of architecture emphasizing the compositional principle of rationalist inspiration (references point to the settings of Albini, Pagano, Persico, Nizzoli, BBPR, etc.). The proposal realizes the linear structure as a spatial continuum, ultimately applying that principle of abstraction which, quoting Antonio Monestiroli's phrase mentioned in relation, "performs a reduction of phenomena to some essential traits that do not belong to any of those phenomena but encompass and represent them all."

Among the strategies explored, there is also that of simulating a possible completion. It is the door left open by the unfinished, it is the opportunity that the project *La simmetria del non speculare* seizes, transforming it into a proposal. Viganò had not managed to complete this small city, which also included the Theater, the Gymnasium, the Church, and other services. The proposed project sets up some installations in the remaining voids: they are the extra-places, in memory of what was not fully completed but not for this reason less real than what was realized. Finally, the last context, Fernand Pouillon's Climat de France, built in Algiers in the 1950s, can also rightfully belong to the Mediterranean context but with a gaze that starts from the South, no longer along the itineraries of tourism and Myth, but from the tragic routes of migrations. In the *Plan Oblique* proposal, a narrow and long ramp marks a longitudinal axis throughout the length of the inner courtyard, the Great Square of the 200 columns; it is an oblique plane in mirrored steel that views and surpasses Pouillon's complex, exceeding it in height. The choice is clear, it wants to be a counterpoint to the rigidity of the great courtyard regulated by prime numbers (1,3,5,7) and at the same time an element of rupture, already announced outside. The mirrored coating reflects, dematerializes, disorients. The oblique blade, the relation reads, is like a wound inflicted on the enclosure of the Great Square, highlighting the contradictions and conflicts between Algeria and the Muslim population, between the original idea of domestic monumentality and the current condition of urban ruin. *La memoria è il luogo in cui accadono le cose per la seconda volta*: the project for a memorial at Climat de France, the last project's report reads, involves the reading, decomposition, and re-composition of the archetypal forms of Fernand Pouillon's building. With an abstract but not less interesting approach, Climat de France is reduced to a frame of a developing palimpsest: the ground is shaped with a new decomposed and recomposed topography, the heart of the community that inhabits it and reappropriates it each time by modifying it.

In Pouillon's intentions, the large Algerian complex wanted to recreate a Casbah "no longer medieval but ultra-modern", to give the poorest of Algeria their domestic monument, the same one they baptized as the Great Square of the 200 columns. It is along this line of reasoning that the Monument-Memorial connects with the community that identifies with it and symbolically appropriates it. The Monument-Memorial thus enters our Present actively, with the ability to construct narratives as places of a collective mythology in which each of us can identify.

Notes

¹ "Memoriae causa" is the title Carlo Scarpa gave to a volume published in 1977. It illustrates the Brion Monumental Cemetery with a careful selection of photographs and describes it through a narrative journey. A film was also made to convey the emotional atmosphere and describe the dynamism of the spatial experience.

² Smithson, R., "A Sedimentation of the Mind: Earth Projects," in Flam, J. (ed.), *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, University of California Press, 1996.

³ See Anselmi, S., *Storie di Adriatico* (1996) and *Ultime Storie di Adriatico* (1998), published by The Mill.

⁴ Andriani, C., & Micara, L., *Archeologies in Mutazione*, Gangemi Editore, Rome, 2013.

⁵ If we go back to the Sanskrit prefix "ut," the root of the Latin etymology "ultra," it also means "outside." See also Andriani, C., "Oltre_ Metabolisms of the Urban-Port Margin," in Moretti, B. (ed.), *Beyond the Port City: The Condition of Portuality and the Threshold's Fields*, Jovis Ed., 2020.

⁶ Francesco Tentori was part of the commission for the competition announced by the Municipality of Udine in 1958. The chosen project was "Forra," which was appreciated for its urban planning value and ability to create a public space full of symbolic references in a substantially empty square.

⁷ The title takes up the well-known essay by Paul Valéry, «Inspirations Méditerranéennes," from the conference held at the Université des Annales on 24 November 1933.

⁸ There are examples of this kind in contemporary art. Among the installations created along waterfronts, particular mention should be made of *The Sea Organ* (2005) by the architect Nikola Bašić, who won multiple awards for this work, the first in the world to exploit wave motion and transform it into a soundscape.

⁹ Aldo Rossi in Basilico, G., *Sea Ports*, Art&, Udine, 1990.

¹⁰ Vittoriano Viganò's Marchiondi-Spagliardi Juvenile Institute was very well received by critics, particularly Reyner Banham, who considered Viganò's complex the first brutalist work in Italy.

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A nameless space. Proposal for a Memorial

Project: Carmen Andriani

with Chiara Zaccagnini [3D modelling; development with Rhinoceros3D McNeel];
Andrea Quartara [digital model of the Viadotto sul Basento by S. Musmeci]; Massimiliano Pontani [prototype realization]

Year: 2023

Against fiction _ As Shelling defined architecture, the music of plastic attributes to mechanical art the merit of being able to shape matter and, with it, space. Like a habitable sculpture, it could be considered solidified music and, as such, recognized in some orders of music (rhythm/arrhythmia; harmony/disharmony; melody/dissonance) that matter would return in plastic form.

The cube, like the square, is an absolute geometric shape; it is the canonical expression of Euclidean geometry generated from a square; it is a sacred and symbolic form if it is true that, as often happened in the classical world, the altar of the gods was a cube. The modification proposed here works on the problematic combination of opposites: the solid is transversely cut by a double curvature inspired by the shells of the Basento bridge by Sergio Musmeci, and the space generated inside is the result of this fissure that allows air, light, and atmosphere to flow through. The cube's exterior facades are smooth; the interior is rough, topographic, marked by contour lines and very dense steps. The quality of the generated space, not by language but by the plastic subtraction of matter, arises from a subtractive gesture that shapes the void. The abstract geometry of the cube thus combines with another geometry, non-Euclidean, complex, and metamorphic, which imprints a dynamic tension on the interior space as opposed to the firm assertiveness of the original solid body. A metaphor and manifesto of the irreconcilable condition of two opposing spatial conceptions, this object bears witness to architecture, which is understood as the ability to hold opposites together and reconcile them in a space of strong emotional and atmospheric tension. Light adds infinite modulations and variations to a matter that reacts by form while remaining of the same substance. For this reason, its being without scale and place, but available to any scale and place, the solid thus made predisposes itself to being a Memorial, a testimony and a warning at the same time of values, gestures, and people to remember, against any fiction, camouflage, or hypocrisy. A space still without a Name.

Carmen Andriani, Architect, Full Professor of Architectural Design at the University of Genoa, and previously at the University of Chieti-Pescara (1992-2014), Carmen Andriani has held various institutional roles and is currently the Rector's delegate for the Polycentric University. Visiting Professor at several foreign universities, she is an active member of numerous scientific committees and an official advisor for the Italian Architecture Award promoted by the Milan Triennale and MAXXI in Rome. Carmen Andriani works on design in both consolidated urban contexts and territorial areas, with particular reference to disused industrial heritage, the transformation processes of the city/port interface, the relationship between infrastructure and landscape, and the regeneration processes of fragile territories in the Mediterranean, particularly concerning the coasts. [www.costaldesignlab.wordpress.com]. She has numerous projects to her credit, resulting from international and invited competitions. She published writings and projects in numerous catalogues and architecture magazines. From 2005 to 2016, she founded and directed the series "Le Forme del Cemento", which includes five volumes, the latest of which, "Future Concrete" (Skira editions, 2016), is bilingual. She has also engaged in substantial design research based on language and technique experiments. Recently, her projects and drawings have been exhibited at the Royal Palace of Caserta (2019), the Ducal Palace of Urbino (2021), the Museo Novecento in Florence (2021), the University of La Sapienza in Rome (2021), Palazzo Gravina in Naples (2022), and MAXXI in Rome as part of the "Buone Nuove Good News" exhibition (2022). In 2013, she won the Career Award as part of the first international art and architecture exhibition, "Icastica," in which she participated in an urban installation. She lives and works between Genoa, Rome, and Milan.

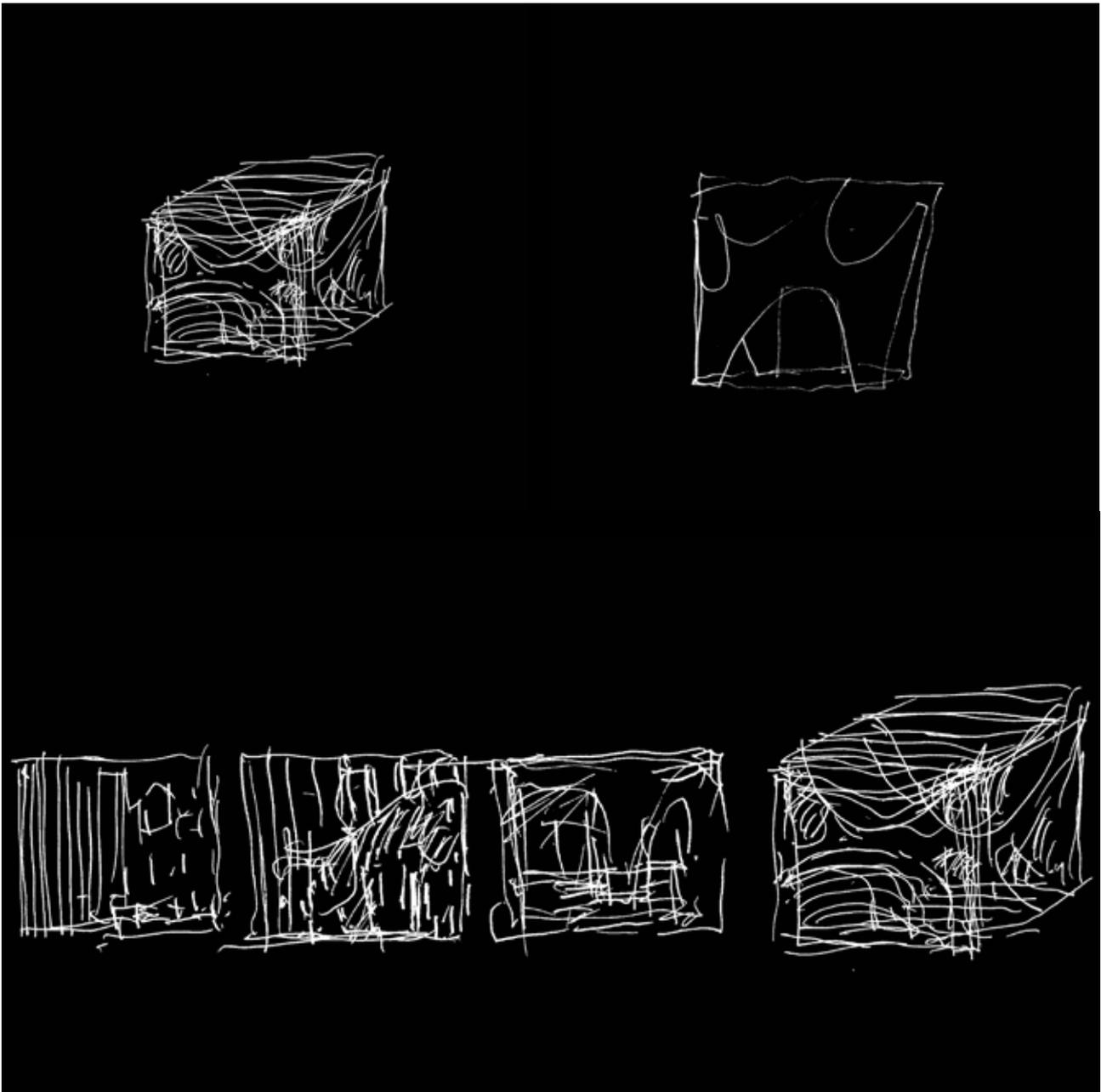
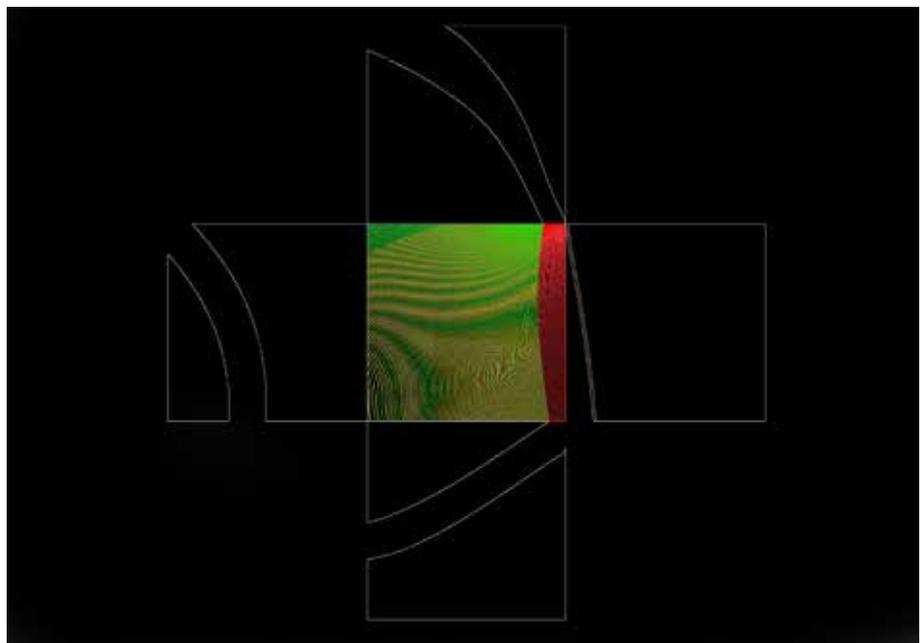
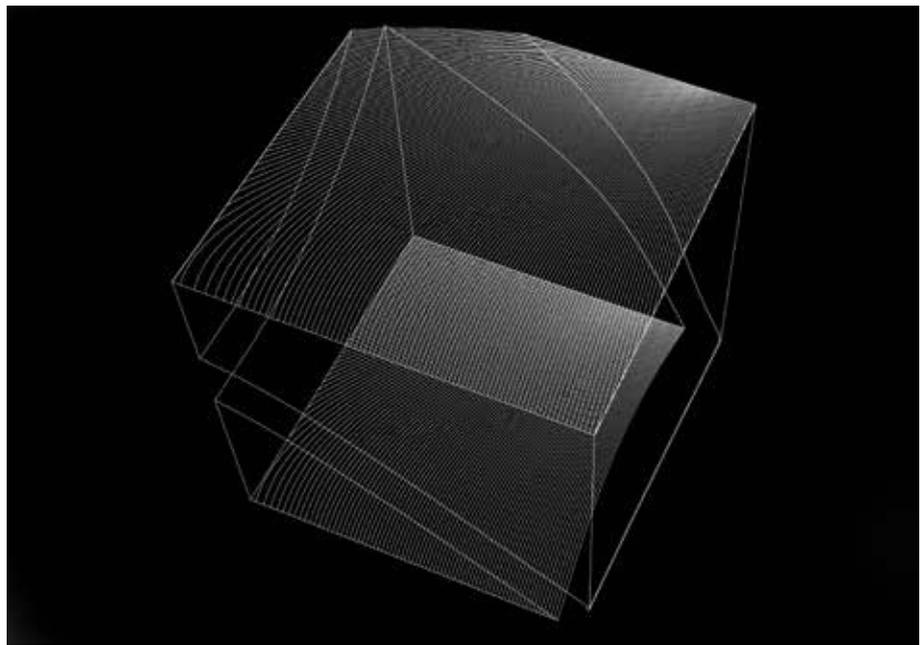
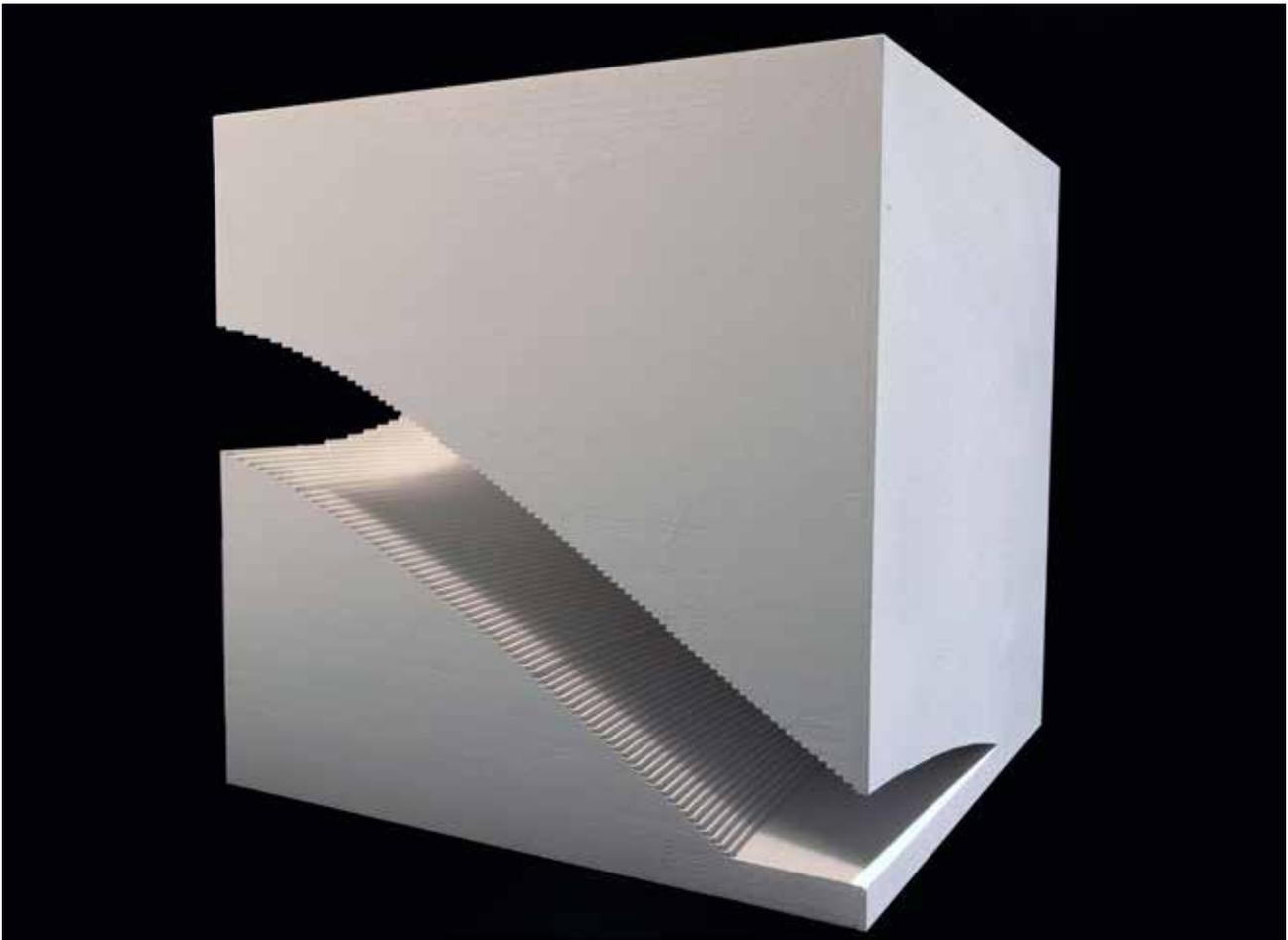


Fig. 1-2-3
Carmen Andriani, *A nameless space. Proposal for a Memorial*, 2023. Study drawings.

Fig. 4-5

Carmen Andriani, *A nameless space. Proposal for a Memorial*, 2023. Axonometric view and plan with elevations.





Figg. 6-7
Carmen Andriani, *A nameless space. Proposal for a Memorial*, 2023. Model.





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Design competition for a Monument-memorial

Design competition for a Monument-memorial
by Gentucca Canella

INTRODUCTION

FAM magazine is pleased to support and collaborate in a broad cultural project structured on the theme of the Monument-memorial composed of:

- A) a design competition;
- B) the publication of a monograph issue of FAM containing the materials of selected projects (project reports, drawings, photographs of scale models, etc.);
- C) a potential project exhibition;
- D) a study day at the Politecnico di Torino;
- E) the publication of the study day proceedings in the *Italian architects of the 20th century series*, published by FrancoAngeli.

As far as regards FAM, it is an experiment intended to gather, through a call for proposals or call for projects, young students of Architecture doctoral students, both Italian and foreign, to develop a design proposal with the mandatory participation of a sculptor. The experimental part that the magazine promotes involves selecting projects (through a dedicated committee) and publishing their different materials (drawings, diagrams, models, captions, reports, etc.), thus making them comprehensible and communicable. Thus, we undertake to directly confront the project theme as a specific product of architectural research.

ABSTRACT

The call is intended to prompt reflection on the theme of the Monument-memorial by re-proposing some structural constants: moral commitment, critical content, but also an indissoluble link between architecture and sculptural elements, present in some emblematic cases of the Italian 20th century, by supporting the contributions of Italian and foreign scholars and researchers with a design competition, open to Architecture Doctoral students (individually or in groups) with the mandatory participation of a sculptor. We wonder, in fact, if it shouldn't be considered useful, or even necessary (especially in an emergency situation like the current one), to again dwell on a theme: the Monument, which is little practised in its contextualised memory. This theme is to be understood, therefore, first in its relationship between sign and ideological intention, among elements of composition and plastic tension of the arts and construction techniques, until imagining a new role of collective condenser that is wholly practicable in its entire breadth. On the other hand, if it is true that the task of an architecture magazine is also that of promoting new directions, new lines of inquiry, we believe that involvement in a graduate-level design competition may enable experimentation with a trend reversal trying to strengthen, at least in this case, the design phase with research.

CALL

In L'Espresso of 30 December 1962, in an article entitled *Il monumento di Cuneo. Dieci interpretazioni della Resistenza* ("The Cuneo Monument: Ten Interpretations of the Resistance"), Bruno Zevi, with profound engagement, commented thus on the conclusion of the first round of the Competition: (*"In delivering the judgement of the first-round competition to the mayor, the members of the committee were visibly moved. The whole force of Italian art had responded to the call for the monument to the Resistance: 62 projects drawn up by hundreds of architects and sculptors comprised an unprecedented participation in a competition: from the most established figures to the youngest, everyone had enthusiastically given their best...In Cuneo, the monument isn't just evocative, it signals the link with the new Resistance in the context of a political recovery."*)

Cover:
Roberto Gabetti, Aimaro Isola,
Franco Garelli, with Giuseppe
Raineri (structures),
*Concorso per il Monumento alla
Resistenza a Cuneo, 1962-63.
Progetto «Di Piastre», Model
view.*
Gabetti & Isola Archive.

Figg. 1-2

Un monumento-memoriale per l'architettura dei "Tre mondi".

Havana, Cuba. From the Literacy Campaign to the Art Schools (ENA), 1961-63, by Ricardo Porro, Vittorio Garatti, Roberto Gottardi.

In the images: Ernesto Che Guevara playing golf with Fidel Castro at the former Country Club, Havana, Cuba, 1960;

Ricardo Porro, School of Visual Arts, Havana, Cuba, 1961-63.

From J.A. Loomis, *Revolution of Forms: Cuba's Forgotten Art Schools*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York 1999.



Fig. 3

Un monumento-memoriale per le guerre di liberazione.

Asmara, Eritrea. National independence and reconstruction of the social and educational system at the «Zero School», 1970. In the image: Eritrea. Field schools of the Zero School during the war of liberation, 1970s.

From the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (<https://eriyouth.org/2023/05/the-resilience-that-silences-world-dominances/>).

Fig. 4

Un monumento-memoriale per il "non finito" d'autore.

Milan, Baggio. The Marchiondi-Spagliardi Juvenile Institute, 1953-57, by Vittoriano Viganò.

In the image: Detail of the dormitory pavilion. View of the north facade.

From «L'Architettura. Cronache e storia», no. 40, February 1959, p. 687.

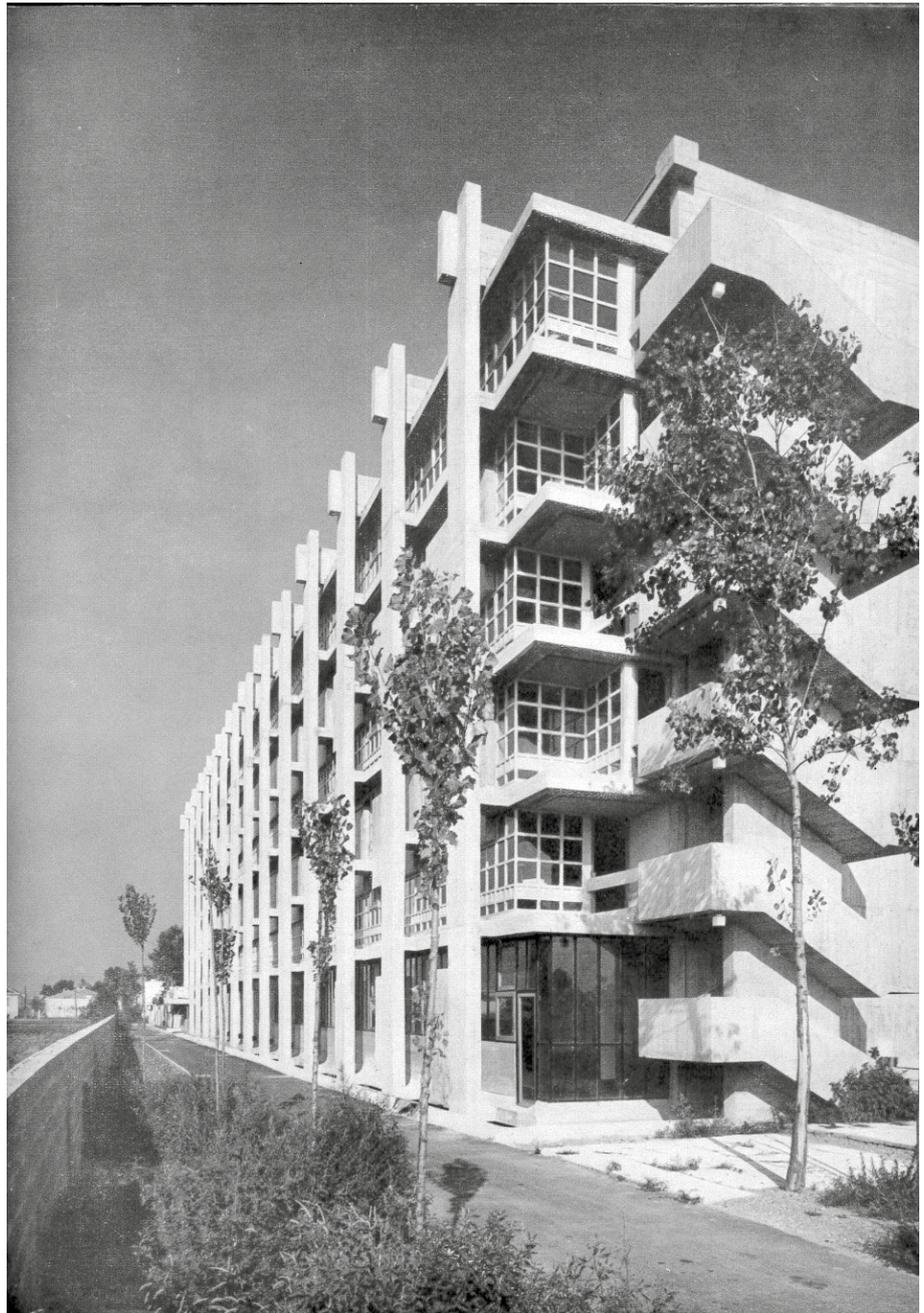


Fig. 5

Un memoriale nel "Monumento".
Algiers. Climat de France.
The great square of the "two
hundred columns", 1955-
57, by Fernand Pouillon.
In the image: Jacques Cheval-
lier, Mayor of Algiers, in front
of an image of Climat de France
in Algiers, 1958.

From . J-L. Cohen, N. Oulebsir,
Y. Kanoun (eds.), Alger. Paysage
urbain et architectures, 1800-
2000, Les Éditions de l'Impri-
meur, Paris 2003, p. 229.



Fig. 6

*Un monumento-memoriale nel
Mediterraneo.*

Island of Lampedusa. Oc-
tober 3, 2013: the mas-
sacre of 368 migrants.
In the image: Lampedusa.
The "Gateway to Europe",
by Mimmo Palladino, 2008.
From "October 3. A European
Day of Remembrance for Lam-
pedusa and the Victims of Shi-
pwrecks" (<https://www.avvenire.it/attualita/pagine/3-ottobre-lampedusa-giornata-europea>).



The call proposes the theme of the Monument-memorial in architecture understood, in particular, in its intention of suspended and celebratory “ascent” with reference to some emblematic cases, which were mainly unrealised, of young leaders of the Italian 20th century, highlighting how constructive solidity and technical approaches are combined with the ideological intention of political and moral reawakening, expressed through plastic tension and the work’s figurativeness.

The reasons that still make a thoughtful estimate of the stages of the *Design competition of the Monument to the Resistance of Cuneo*, 1962-63 – taken as a guideline for this FAMagazine call – current and, perhaps, of the deviations proposed, are, we believe, still recognisable in the same archival documentation (correspondence, papers, project reports). This documentation testifies to how much the extraordinary labour of hundreds of architects and sculptors, “from the most established figures to the youngest”, corresponds with the ideological response to the theme of the monument-memorial, the expression of the most original figurative culture of the Italian post-war period. This is not, thus, a contribution of merely symbolic exaltation, nor of pure sculptural-construction expressiveness in purely typological terms, nor attributable to an urban context.

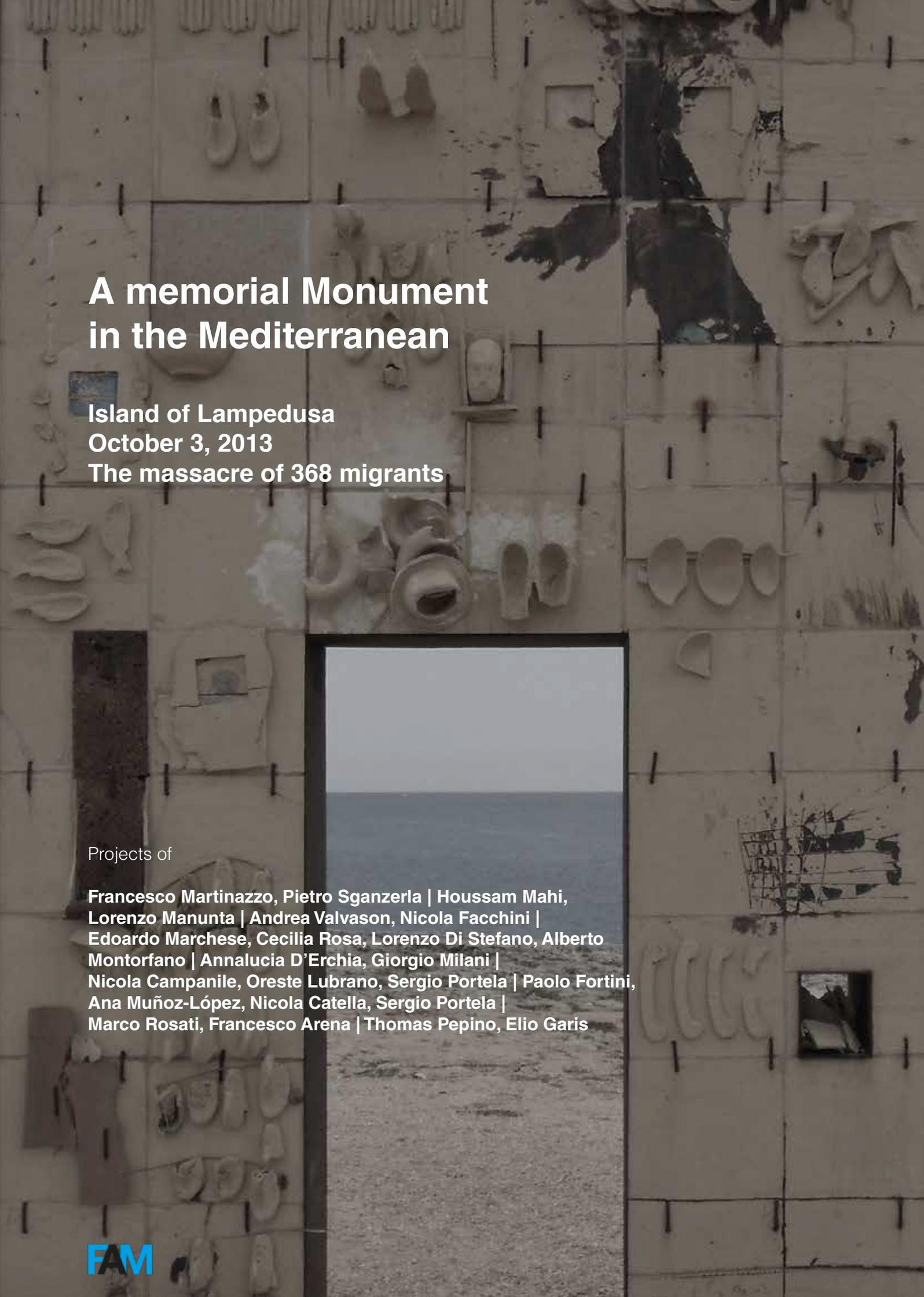
The projects commemorating the Cuneo Resistance intentionally go beyond the limits indicated by the competition call and the urban scale, as though the moral emphasis – “had designed and sculpted by a non-instrumental impulse, almost to re-think the gesture, the fallen friends...the hopes that seem to be re-embodied after twenty years” – , should escape the confines too through an exorbitant production, unusual in our days, of papers expressed in several variants and solutions (sketches, models, floor plans, figurative and decorative elements, construction details, economic estimates, material loans, but also special systems for consolidating and fixing structures).

On the other hand, the passionate involvement first, in the concept phase, of Lionello Venturi, then of an exceptional Jury presided over by Giulio Carlo Argan, with the substantial contribution of Bruno Zevi, who confirms, in years still marked by strong theoretic and ideal commitment, the counter-cultural propensities and attitudes of a working architect, in an experimental vision of the theme of the “memorial” straddling political prototype and sculptural tension, is entirely unique in the Cuneo competition.

In this sense, the solution “*Di Piastre*” (“Of Plates”) for the second round, by Roberto Gabetti, Aimaro Isola, Franco Garelli, sculptor, and Giuseppe Raineri, for the structures, seems not just, as Bruno Zevi writes, the most committed in terms of landscape, but also immediately readable in terms of compositional, technical, and construction choices. These are expressed through “static difficulty” and “risk of equilibrium” in the horizontal development of the wholly practicable off-scale journey, in a poetic fusion of function and figure, where the effort to rise, going beyond the structural limit, is emphatically “extended to infinity”.

The issue of FAMagazine will publish the projects submitted to the design competition. The participants – Architecture Doctoral student/s (group leader/s) and sculptor – are asked to develop a project proposal for a Monument-memorial by choosing from among the five themes/contexts* listed below:

- A monument-memorial for the architecture of the “Three worlds”
Havana, Cuba. From the literacy campaign to Art Schools (ENA), 1961-63, by Ricardo Porro, Vittorio Garatti, Roberto Gottardi
- A monument-memorial for the wars of liberation
Asmara. Eritrea. National independence and rebuilding of the social system and education in the “Zero School”, 1970
- A memorial in the “Monument”
Algiers. Climat de France. The large square of the “two hundred columns”, 1955-57, by Fernand Pouillon
- A monument-memorial for the “unfinished” by the author
Milan. Baggio. L’Istituto minorile Marchiondi-Spagliardi, 1953-57, by Vittoriano Viganò
- A monument-memorial in the Mediterranean
Lampedusa. 3 October 2013: the massacre of 368 migrants



A memorial Monument in the Mediterranean

Island of Lampedusa

October 3, 2013

The massacre of 368 migrants

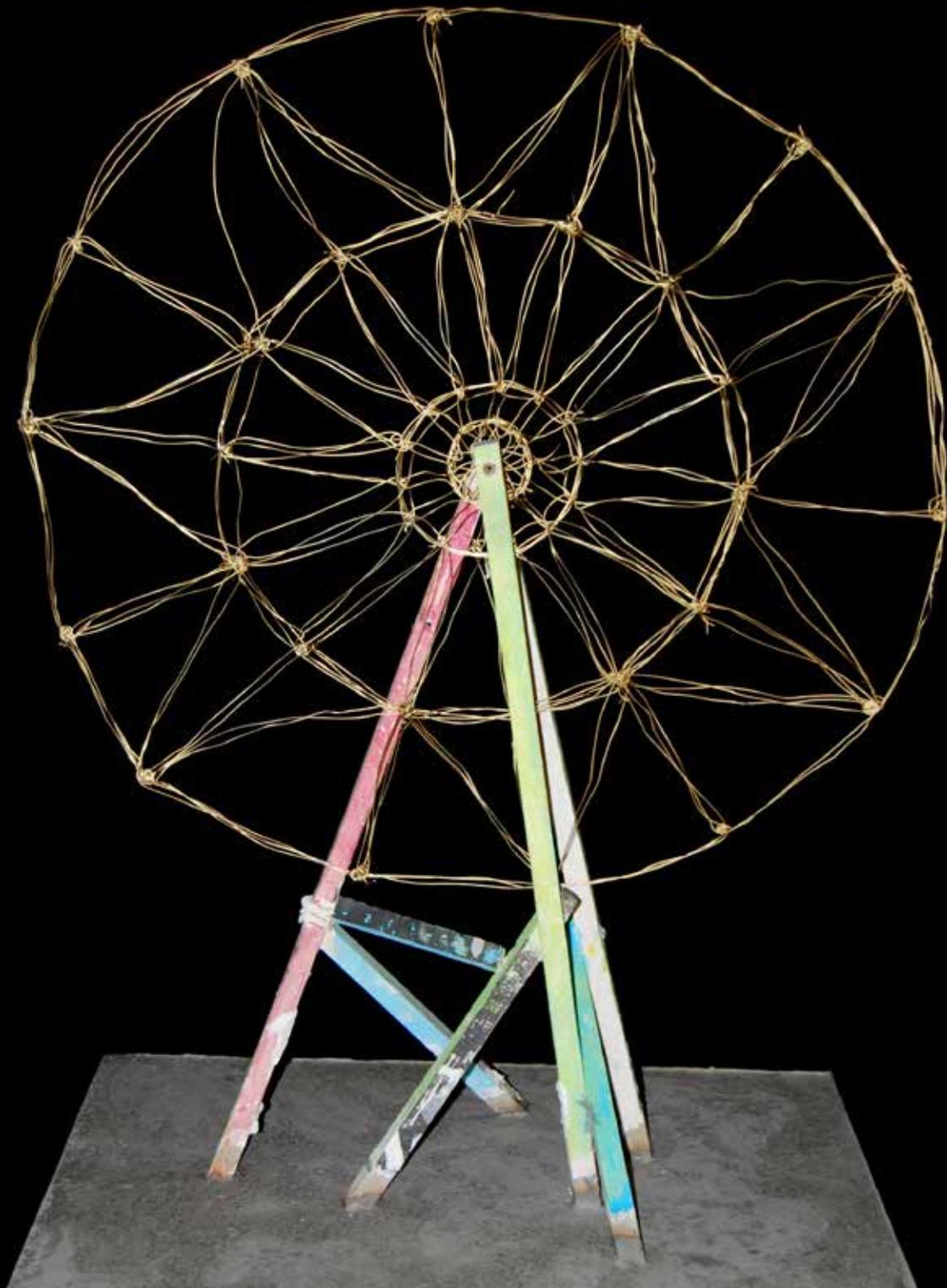
Projects of

**Francesco Martinazzo, Pietro Sganzerla | Houssam Mahi,
Lorenzo Manunta | Andrea Valvason, Nicola Facchini |
Edoardo Marchese, Cecilia Rosa, Lorenzo Di Stefano, Alberto
Montorfano | Annalucia D'Erchia, Giorgio Milani |
Nicola Campanile, Oreste Lubrano, Sergio Portela | Paolo Fortini,
Ana Muñoz-López, Nicola Catella, Sergio Portela |
Marco Rosati, Francesco Arena | Thomas Pepino, Elio Garis**

Motto Fata Morgana

Architectural project Francesco Martinazzo

Sculptor Pietro Sganzerla



Francesco Martinazzo, Pietro Sganzerla (Sculptor)
Fata Morgana

Abstract

«If the point does not differ from the body, the centre from the circumference, the finite from the infinite, the maximum from the minimum, then surely we can affirm that the universe is all centre, or that the centre of the universe is for everything, and that the circumference is in no part because it is different from the centre, or even that the circumference is for everything, but the centre is not to be found because it is different from that» (Bruno 1584). If infinity is made up of infinite points, each point is also its centre. Indeed, in every “foundation myth” there is an affirmation of the centrality of a particular place. Thus the theme of the monument is interpreted here as *imago mundi*, or even *axis mundi*: it consists of a floating landing place symbolising the mending of the “archaic” and the “modern”, the “rational” and the “irrational”.

Keywords

Raft — Wind wheel — Sod — Solar myths

The topic

And immediately resumed
 The journey
 Like
 After the shipwreck
 A survivor
 Sea dog (Ungaretti 1919).

The proposed project is based on a historical-anthropological reflection on the Mediterranean, which has always been the theatre and metaboliser of conflicts and exchanges between different cultures. An example of this is the medieval cartography drawn by Opicino de Canistris, the subject of Carl Gustav Jung’s latest studies (1943) (argued at the Eranos Conference on *The Religions of the Sun in the Mediterranean*), in which the Mediterranean is depicted as a demonic world, a dark “anti-world” opposed to the luminous world of the mainland (reminiscent of the Old Testament distinction between fresh and salt water, symbolising purity and impurity respectively). If therefore, in cartographies, Europe is represented as a male figure and Africa as a woman, the Mediterranean appears instead as a demonic figure with a “goat’s beard”, carnally intermingling in the design with Europe and Africa. It is no coincidence that the culturally defined processes of mourning, in particular the institution of so-called “ritual mourning”, studied by intellectuals such as Ernesto de Martino and Mircea Eliade, also link the residual forms still present in southern Italy with the funeral mourning practised in the agricultural societies of the ancient Mediterranean.

Fig. 1

On the previous page: Photograph of the monument model “Fata Morgana”; tempera-coloured wood, chalk, wire, string.

Fig. 2

Photograph of the sketch of the model of the “Fata Morgana” monument.



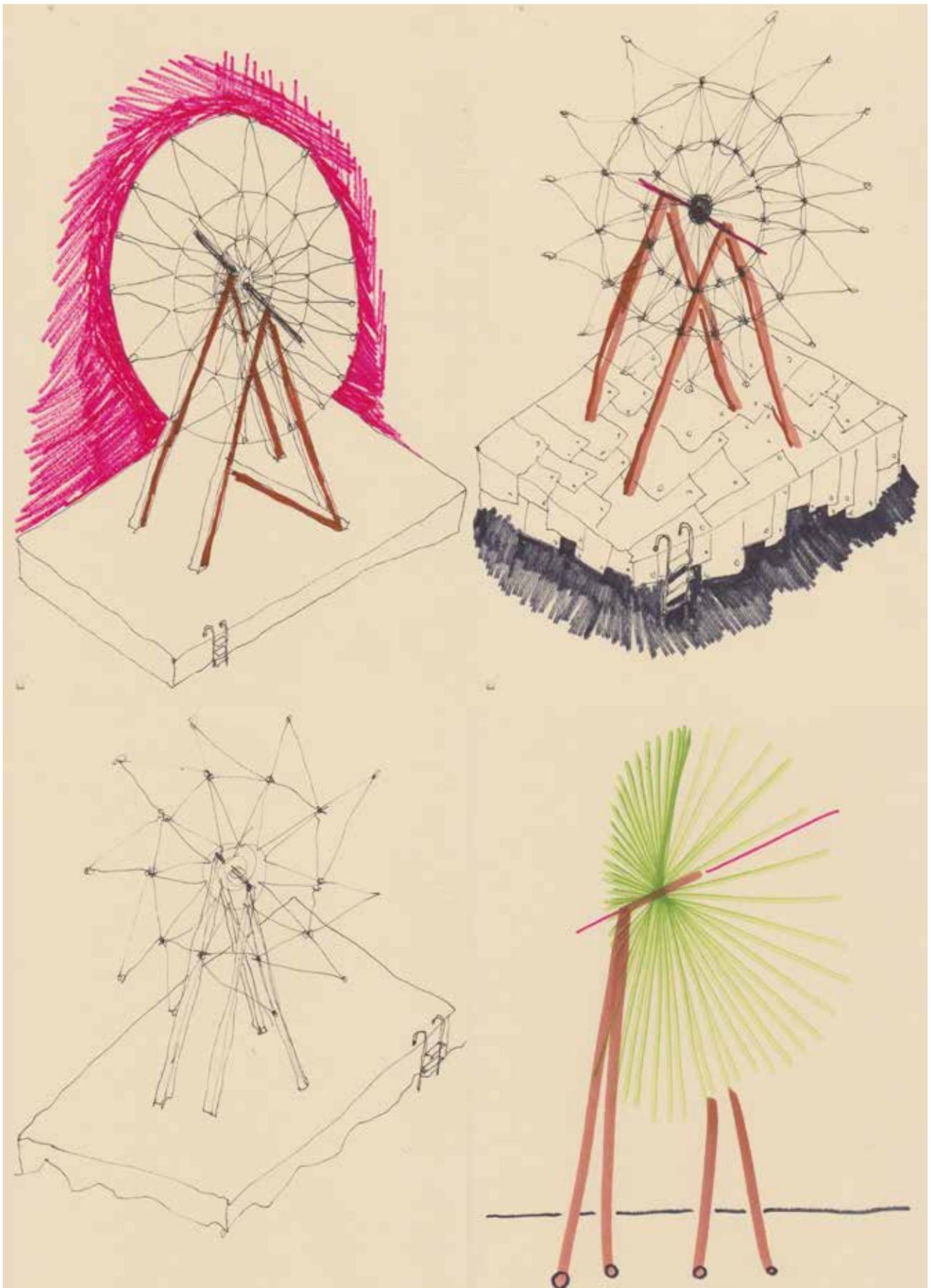


Fig. 3
Study sketches of the “Fata Morgana” project.

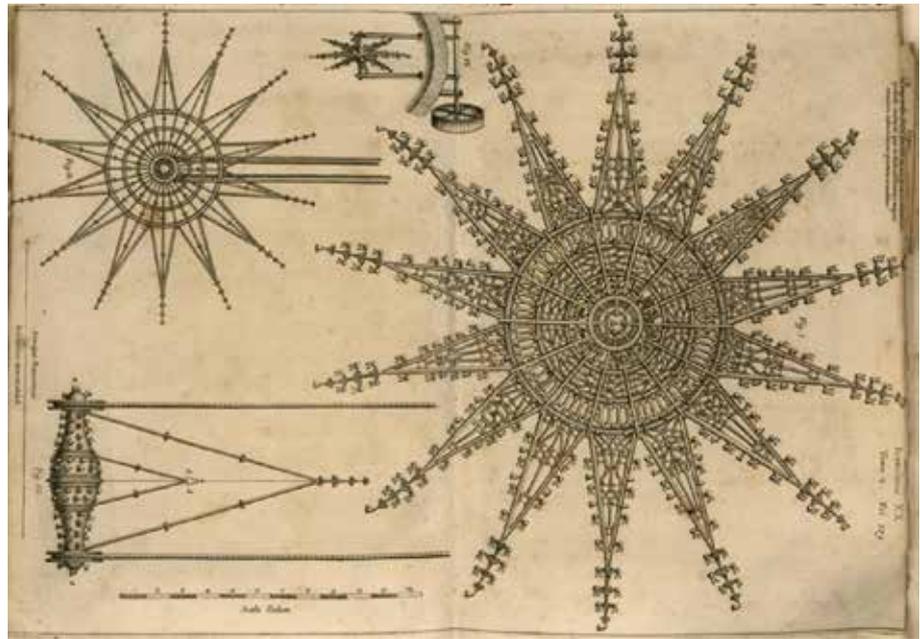


Fig. 4
Athanasius Kircher SJ, "Murgia Universalis", 1644.

Hence the motto *Fata Morgana*¹ suggests the ambiguous and provocative nature of the project, which reworks certain folkloric rituals common to the basin, and all linked to the cult of the Sun (solar myths) as a metaphor for knowledge, illumination, revelation, reasoning on an idea of deception and illusion as a constant of a certain common disposition of those cultures to the impermanence of things, to a melancholic look on life. The monument, in fact, floating (anchored to cables) on the route that connects Lampedusa to Misurata (about 400 km), would never occupy the same position and, although visible from afar, could not really act as a point of orientation, thus assuming the "task" of a "rescue buoy", abandoned to the pitching of the currents. It was not created as a "finished" or "eternal" monument, but stands as a formal idea (or archetypal scheme) available to the unexpected, to accidental encounter and even to ruin. The pieces of wood and sheet metal that compose it are in fact imagined to be recovered from the sea, and – in some cases – assembled according to contingencies, to compose a sort of "raft made of wrecks".

By its heterotopic nature, it is ascribed to an iconological-literary tradition that, from Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautics*, to Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff*, to Gericault's *Raft of the Medusa* (see fig. 3), resists as a fragment of a contemporary epic, which, like the "ancient" ones, recounts the "impersonal" diaspora of populations torn apart by wars, famine and post-colonial stubbornness.

If in fact, as Roland Barthes (1972) argued in *The Ancient Rhetoric*, rhetoric was born out of property processes, when following the overthrow of a tyranny in Syracuse (which had carried out several expropriations) the old land rights had to be re-established: therefore it was necessary to convince, to be eloquent in order to "charm" popular juries. Today, even the sea seems to be subject to relations of ownership and rhetoric: no longer a treacherous expanse abandoned to the "anarchy" of wayfarers; but the site of a "tug-of-war" between states, peoples and solipsistic demagogues.

It may then come in handy to recall a section of Pier Paolo Pasolini's poetic and very lucid "prophecy" on Africa, which is the film *Appunti per un'Orestiade africana*:

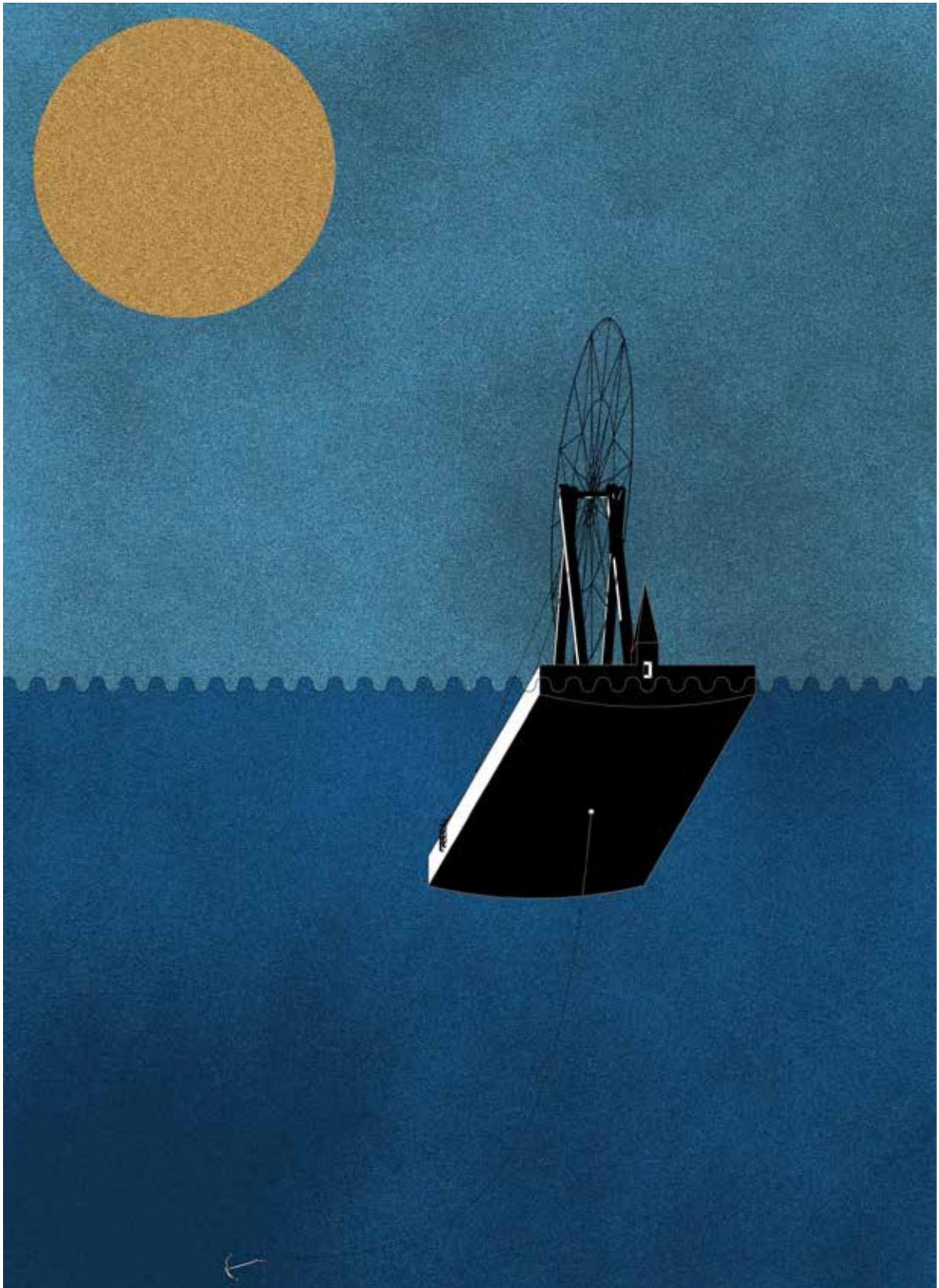


Fig. 5

Axonometric view of the project from below "Fata Morgana"; for: "Un Monumento-Memoriale Nel Mediterraneo"; location: Lampedusa Island; date: 3 October 2013; event: the massacre of 368 migrants.



Fig. 6
Théodore Géricault, "La zattera della Medusa", Museo del Louvre, 1818-19.

The Orestiad summarises the history of Africa over the last hundred years: that is, the almost abrupt and divine transition from a 'savage' state to a civilised and democratic state: the series of kings who, in the atrocious secular stagnation of a tribal and prehistoric culture, dominated – in turn under the rule of black Furies – the African lands, has, as if suddenly, been broken: Reason has instituted democratic institutions almost *motu proprio*. It must be added that the really burning and topical problem, now, in the 1960s – the Years of the Third World and Negritude – is the 'transformation of the Furies into Maenads': and here the genius of Aeschylus has foreshadowed it all. All advanced people agree [...] that archaic civilisation – superficially called folklore – must not be forgotten, despised and betrayed. But it must be taken up within the new civilisation, integrating the latter, and making it specific, concrete, historical. The terrible and fantastic divinities of African prehistory must undergo the same process as the Erinyes: they must become Eumenides (Pasolini 1978; 1979, pp. 79-81).

Pasolini thus attempts to account for the "clash" between the "irrational" (represented by Africa) and the "rational" (by Europe) by using the myth of Orestes and Clytemnestra, representing the birth of the court, as the space of a violent and "magical" process of metamorphosis from the archaic world to modernity. Which turns out to be a hymn to mutual integration and enrichment. Similarly, the *Fata Morgana* project attempts to coordinate defined and perfectly rational compositional-figurative aspects with the randomness of the "fragment" as a metaphor for "migrating". On the other hand, the wayfarer who embarks in search of a homeland, as splendidly described by Michel Foucault:

is a prisoner in the midst of the freest, the most open of roads: solidly chained to the infinite crossroads. He is the Passenger par excellence, the prisoner of the Passage. And one does not know the country to which he will land, just as, when he sets foot on land, one does not know which side he comes from. He has no truth or homeland except in this barren expanse between two lands that cannot belong to him (Foucault 2011, p.71).

Project report

Nay, thou wilt not boast, time, that I mute:
With new force thy founded pyramids
To me have nothing strange or novel;
They are but the spoils of past images.
The days are short to us, and we have a longing
Of that which by now ancient thou didst impose upon us,
And at our pleasure we love to bring them forth
Than to think that we have ever heard them heard (Shakespeare 1609).

The project consists of a 30-metre long and 14.5-metre wide floating platform that serves as a pedestal for a 29-metre high and 11-metre radius wind wheel, supported by a timber trellis:

– The platform is formed by pieces of sheet metal (salvaged from wrecks) welded together, serves as a podium for the assembly of the pylon and is paved with ceramic tiles measuring 50x50 cm, useful to avoid excessive overheating of the walking surface during the day. It is a large watertight chamber for floating, 2 metres high, with a convex keel that reaches a depth of 2.85 metres. Access to the platform, which emerges 80 cm from the water's edge, is via two "pool ladders" positioned on its long sides. Two habitable "garitte" (also made of sheet metal), with a square base (1.5x1.5 m) and a pyramid-shaped roof, serve respectively as the raft's prow and stern, as well as "sighting" points, thanks to two rectangular



Fig. 7
Opicino de Canistris, "Palatinus latinus 1993", Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

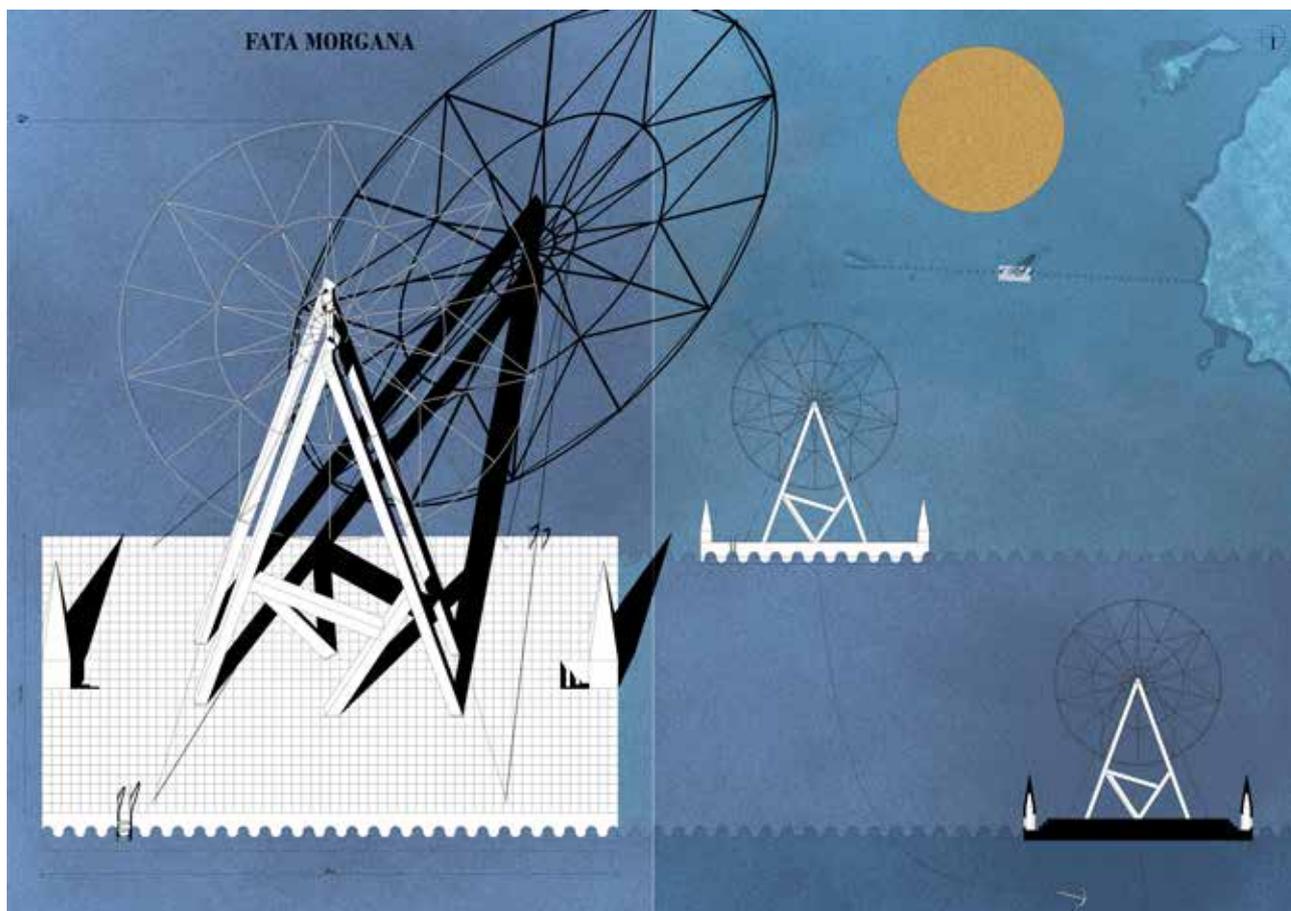


Fig. 8
Project board "Fata Morgana".

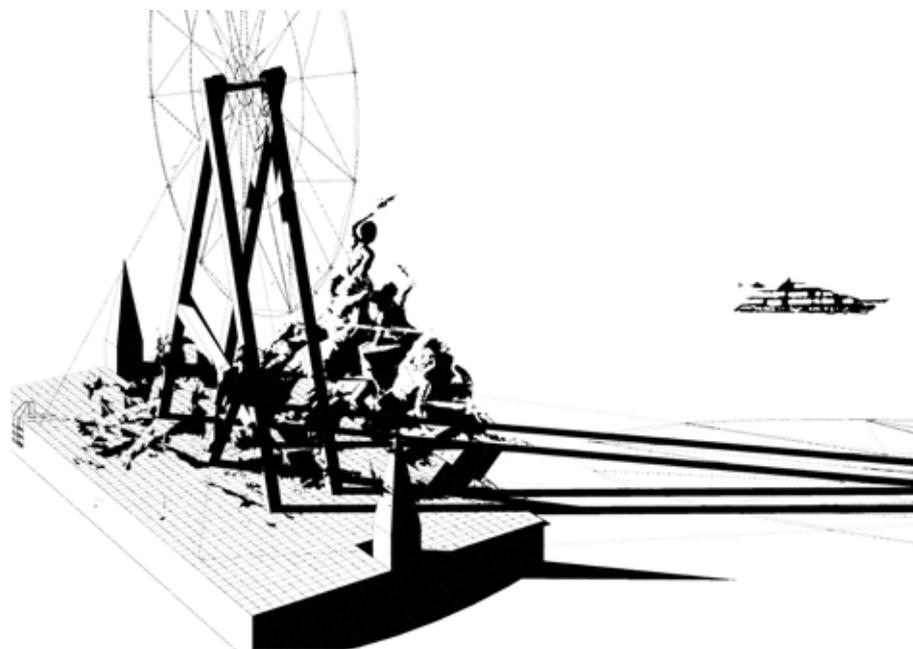


Fig. 9
Perspective view of the "Fata Morgana" project; assembly version of "The Raft of the Medusa".

Fig. 10

The storm, photomontage of the "Fata Morgana" project.



oculi that look out to Africa on one side and Italy on the other. They are embedded in the 1.5-metre-deep platform, and reached via a three-step ladder. From a figurative point of view, the platform resembles a “barge”, while maintaining the typical “solemnity” of the Greek temple “podium”, embellished by the “Egyptian garitte”.

– The trellis consists of (salvaged) wooden poles with a square base (60x60 cm), bolted and painted. It reaches a maximum height of 18.5 metres (with poles of a maximum length of 20 metres) from the paved surface and is composed of two parallel triangular structures (2.60 m apart) that – similar to a swing – are connected by a central pivot to support the wind wheel.

– The wind wheel is made of metal rods 3 cm in diameter, joined together and gilded to form three concentric rings (2, 4 and 5 metres apart) supported by 14 spokes, which draw and define, together with the bracing, a mesh of juxtaposed triangles. It is also stabilised by four tie rods anchored directly to the platform; and able to rotate freely around the pivot that supports it, depending on the winds and currents. From a figurative point of view, it freely reinterprets certain iconographies typical of the Mystery Processions and Patronal Feasts, with an internal decoration inspired by African sun masks, gaining great visibility by day through the reflection of the golden “filaments”, and by night thanks to a system of illuminations.

Conclusions

In the same way as Salvatore Bisogni’s *archipelago of clods*, *Fata Morgana*, in the light of what has been said, intends to present itself as an “intermediate notion of architecture”, as architecture’s capacity to build places in open space, an “island of order”, a “clod of the spirit” in which to take refuge (Bisogni 2011; Capozzi 2019). On the other hand, the word “place” metaphorically represents the “clearing circumscribed by the forest” (*lichtung*), the “domestic” light that is antinomically opposed to the inhospitable darkness (Heidegger 1927).

It is on this horizon of ideas that the confrontation between architect and sculptor has developed, in an attempt to build not so much a commemorative (and always “consolatory”) “cenotaph”, but to question the notion of

Figg. 11-12-13

Photograph detail of the monument model “Fata Morgana”; tempera-coloured wood, chalk, wire, string.



“monument”, to give rise to something immanent (and in a certain sense useful), to an island “of no-one”, but habitable, in the middle of the sea. The walkway is in fact conceived as a point of landing-staying-anchor for the “wayfarers” of the Mediterranean.

In order to realise this “rescue buoy”, an attempt was made (as already mentioned), not to start from a formal idea already given, but to go by trial and error, mistakes, second thoughts, making various models of “rafts” which were then disassembled and reassembled with the materials available.

The wheel would in fact be intended as an apotropaic sculpture and point of orientation/disorientation both visually and conceptually, capable of reacting differently to atmospheric events. A “clod of land” at sea capable, it is hoped, of evoking the continuously changing nature of time and the fragility of an image, of a shipwreck: «Because I know that time is always time / And place is always and only place / And what is actual is actual only for one time / And only for one place» (Elliot 1930).

Notes

¹ The title refers to the optical effect known as Fata Morgana, a form of mirage frequently observed in the Strait of Messina referring to the mythological figure of the same name, who induced false visions in sailors to lure them into her trap. The resulting deformation (due to the bending of light rays passing through layers of air at different temperatures) distorts objects to such an extent that they take on unrecognisable and fantastic shapes.

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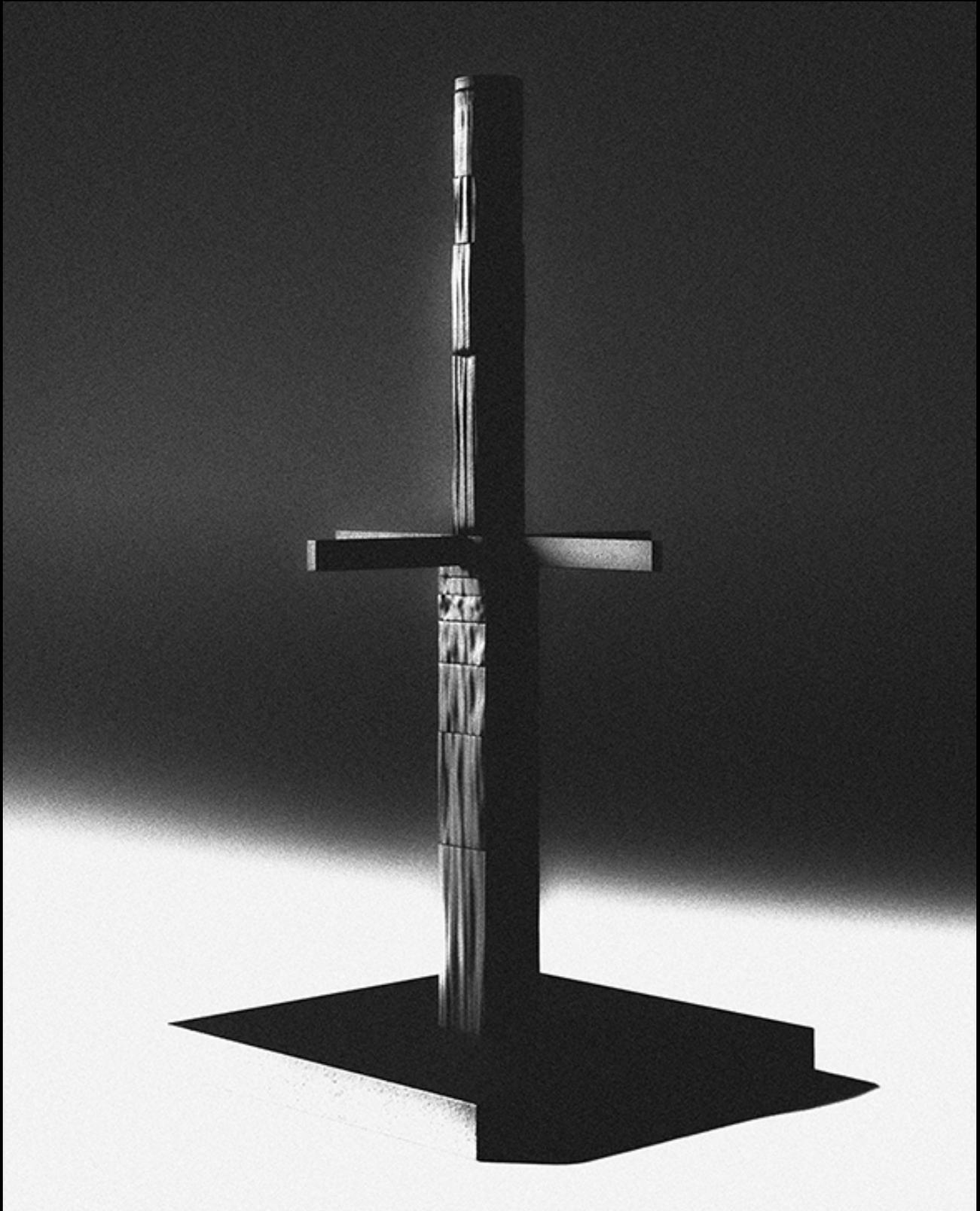
Francesco Martinazzo, Born in L'Aquila in 1992, he lives in Milan, where he graduated in architecture in 2020 and is currently completing a PhD in architectural composition at the Politecnico, on the subject of school buildings. In 2016, he obtained a Filmmaker diploma at the Luchino Visconti Civic School of Cinema. He has made short films presented at the Mostra Internazionale del Nuovo Cinema in Pesaro and at the FilmMaker Fest in Milan, as well as projections for theatre shows and art festivals such as the exhibition *Dal Nulla al Sogno (From Nothing to Dream)*, at the Ferrero Foundation in Alba. He is a book collector and founder of the Potlatch bookshop in Via Padova in Milan

Pietro Sganzerla, Born in Milan in 1985, he grew up in a creative environment and approached art from an early age. After classical studies at the Giovanni Berchet high school, he enrolled at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts, choosing painting as his major. After graduating, he moved to Berlin for five years, where he began to approach the art world more deeply and professionally.

Motto Torre Viva | Torre Afona

Architectural project Houssam Mahi

Sculptor Lorenzo Manunta



Houssam Mahi, Lorenzo Manunta (Sculptor)
Torre Viva | Torre Afona

Abstract

«Instants follow one another: nothing gives them the illusion of content or the semblance of meaning; they unfold; their course is not our own; prisoners of an inebriated perception, we watch them pass by; the emptiness of the heart before the emptiness of time: two mirrors, one in front of the other, reflecting their absence, a same image of nothingness... As if under the effect of dreamy idiocy, everything levels out: no more peaks, no more abysses... Where to discover the poetry of lies, the sting of an enigma?» (Cioran 1996, p. 26). In this "incurable convalescence" driven by boredom, one wonders how, in a reality where « data and information have no symbolic force, so they do not allow recognition» (Chul Han 2021, p. 12), the Monument can imprint a particular event in memory.

Keywords

Aion — Support — Hybrid — Myth — Amnesia

«Look at this cart gate, dwarf» I continued: «it has two fronts. Two roads join here: no one so far has travelled all the way. This long road backward: lasts an eternity. And that long road forward: that is another eternity. They contradict each other, these roads; they collide with their heads against each other: and here, under this door, is the point where they join. The name of the door is written above it: "moment". But whoever would go forward on one of them, and go further and further: do you think, dwarf, that these roads would contradict themselves forever?»
 «Everything that is straight lies» muttered the dwarf scornfully.
 «All truth is curved, time itself is a circle.» (Nietzsche 2017, p. 161)

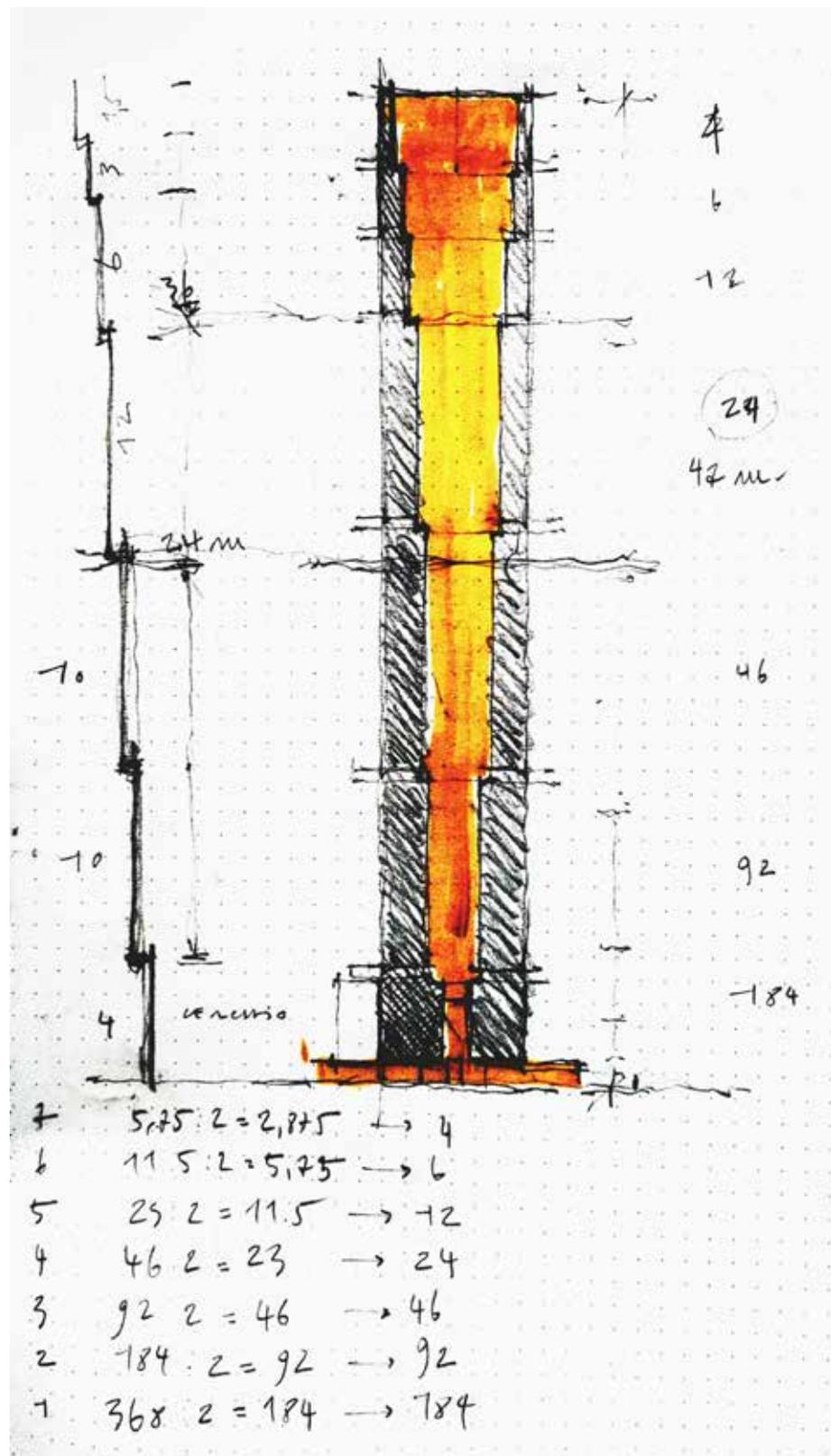
What makes the act of "remembering", the purpose to which the monument should respond, effective is the time of "return". Remembering means witnessing the return of something that, not only physically, no longer exists; an eternal return of the corpse from the grave, which is made omnipresent to the viewers. The monument thus fits into a "timeless" context, namely that of eternity. Deleuze (2005, p. 147) in "The Logic of Meaning" deals with the theme of Aion, explaining that: «According to Aion only the past and the future insist and subsist in time. Instead of a present that summarizes the past and future, a future and past that divide the present at each instant, endlessly subdivide it into past and future, in the two senses simultaneously. Or rather, it is instant without thickness and extension that subdivides each present into past and future, instead of vast and thick presents that encompass future and past concerning each other.» (Deleuze 2005, p. 147) There is not, in the ancient conception, a present that hopes for the future and mourns the past. Instead, there is the coexistence of past and future and, between them, a virtual line that separates them. It is precisely in that particular dimension that monuments

Fig. 1

On the previous page: View of the model of the Torre Viva monument | Torre Afona.

Fig. 2

Image of the sketch of the monument "Torre Viva | Torre Afoa".



TORRE VIVA | TORRE AFONA

La torre è un unico volume verticale che si sviluppa verso il cielo.
La torre è un unico volume verticale che si sviluppa sotto il mare.

Uno spazio cruciforme, lungo 47 metri per lato e alto 3 metri,
presenta un vuoto centrale che collega il cielo con il mare.

Le estremità dei bracci guardano in direzione dei 4 venti: Tramontana, Levante, Ostro, Ponente.

La torre viva ha un diametro di 7 metri e si sviluppa per 47 metri sopra il livello del mare.
La torre afona ha i lati di 7 metri e si sviluppa per 47 metri sotto il livello del mare.

La torre viva è formata da 7 rocchi cavi.
La torre afona è formata da 7 rocchi cavi.

La torre viva ha 368 facce e 368 bocche.
La torre afona ha 4 facce e nessuna bocca.

Gli esterni della torre viva sono in calcestruzzo armato.
Gli interni della torre viva sono rivestiti con lamiera dorata.

Gli esterni della torre afona sono in calcestruzzo armato.
Gli interni della torre afona sono rivestiti con lamiera dorata.

Il I rocchio della torre viva, alto 18,46 metri, ha 6 facce e 6 bocche.
Il II rocchio della torre viva, alto 11,44 metri, ha 12 facce e 12 bocche.
Il III rocchio della torre viva, alto 7,04 metri, ha 24 facce e 24 bocche.
Il IV rocchio della torre viva, alto 4,40 metri, ha 46 facce e 46 bocche.
Il V rocchio della torre viva, alto 2,64 metri, ha 92 facce e 92 bocche.
Il VI rocchio della torre viva, alto 1,76 metri, ha 184 facce e 184 bocche.
Il VII rocchio della torre viva, alto 0,88 metri, ha infinite facce e 0 bocche.
All'estremità della torre viva, alto 0,36 metri, un anello d'orato.

I rocchi della torre afona hanno le stesse altezze dei rocchi della torre viva.
I rocchi della torre afona hanno 4 facce e 0 bocche.

Le bocche della torre viva sono poste alla base di ogni rocchio e sono numerate dalla 1 alla 368.
Le bocche della torre viva iniziano il loro lamento quando vengono attraversate dal vento.

La torre afona non presenta bocche, ma solo una grande gola soffocata dal mare.

È consentito l'accesso solo a una persona per volta.
È consentito l'accesso solo alle 3:30 di notte (ora dell'incidente).

Al centro dello spazio cruciforme è presente una stanza a pianta quadrata.
L'altezza della stanza a pianta quadrata è di 2,10 metri.
Al centro della stanza quadrata sono presenti due bucatore.

La prima bucatore verso l'alto, dal diametro di 2,10 metri, guarda il cielo.
La seconda bucatore verso il basso, dal diametro di 2,10 metri, guarda l'abisso.

Il fiato del mare soffia costantemente attraverso la torre viva.
La violenza del mare soffoca costantemente la torre afona.

La torre viva guarda il cielo e grida al mondo.
La torre afona è osservata dal cielo e resta in silenzio.

Lo spettatore è testimone della morte attraverso la vita (torre viva),
e della vita attraverso la morte (torre afona).

Fig. 3

Poetry describing the project "TORRE VIVA | TORRE AFONA"; for: "Un Monumento-Memoriale Nel Mediterraneo"; Place: Island of Lampedusa; date: 3 October 2013; event: The massacre of 368 migrants.

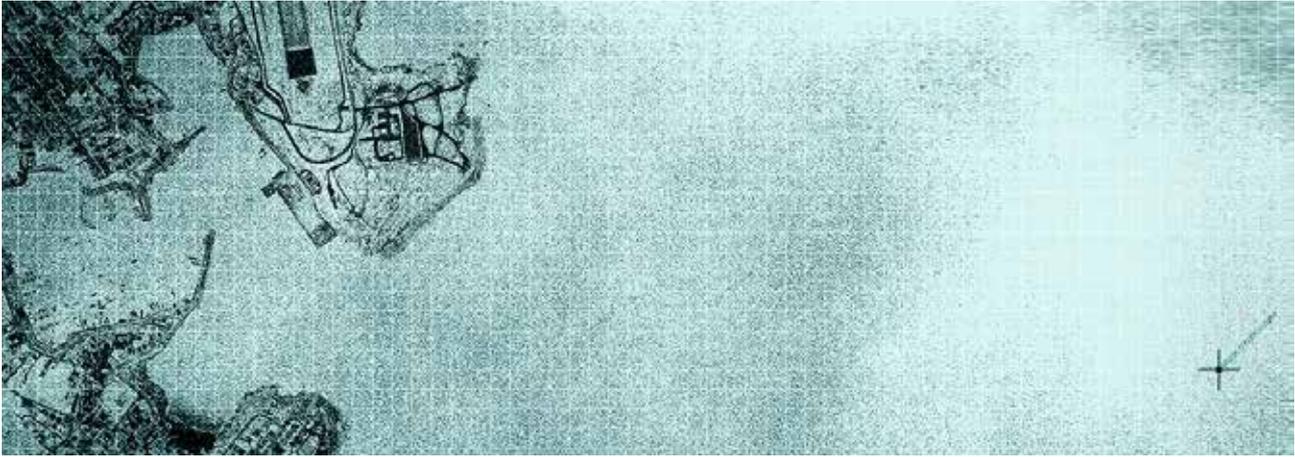


Fig. 4
Project drawing “TORRE VIVA | TORRE AFONA”; “Un Monumento-Memoriale Nel Mediterraneo”; Island of Lampedusa; date: 3 October 2013; The massacre of 368 migrants.
Planivolumetric.

are also found. On the other hand, to narrate the past to the future one must be uniquely eternal. The monument speaks neither the language of the past nor the language of the future, it lives in a place – support¹ – placed on the threshold that separates/unites two opposite directions, bringing back to us the image of the two-faced Janus or Janus the God of beginnings.

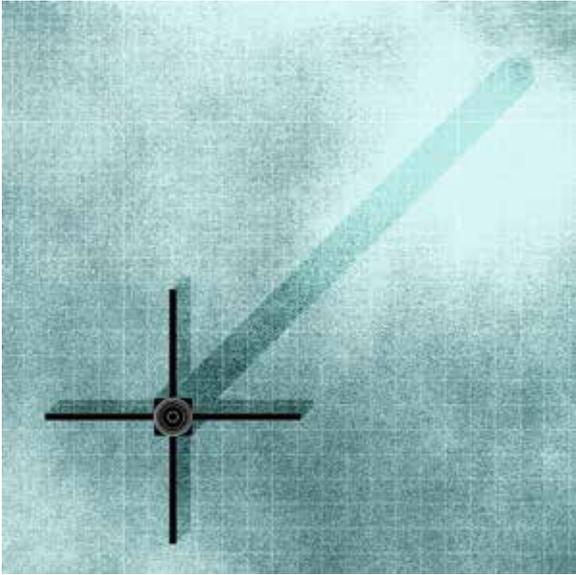
We see how architects such as Ledoux, Boullée and Lequeu, the so-called “visionary architects” of the French Revolution, drew on and modified in a more radical sense from the classical system architectural figures, working on the theme of the pantagruelic, boundless, mixed and the sublime².

They no longer believed, as had been the case in the Renaissance, that the architectural figure corresponded to a hidden reality, revealed through biblical authority or the classics; they continued, nevertheless, to make use of the Greco-Roman repertoire, whose meanings were considered stable social usage. [...], they combined the traditional elements in new ways, thus managing to extend and modify the classical meanings. [...] it can therefore be said that it represents not only a speaking architecture but also an ‘architecture qui parle de soi meme’: it consciously manipulates an existing code (Colquhoun 1989, p. 123).

This hybridization of meanings, related to the eternity of nature and death, in the case of the examples cited above, is all Baroque; a Vanitas in its own right, whose “Hybris”³ underscores its invulnerability and emphasizes its fundamental task, which is to «perpetuate memory» (Boullée 1981, p.122). This conception of “perfect harmony”, which we can, not too forcibly, transpose into the category of the “monstrous,” can be found in Boullée’s work – “Monumenti funerarii o Cenotafii”⁴ – whose descriptions, and “characters”, are manifested through a strong symbolic and figurative dimension.

In this sense, the architectural project, through its character, becomes an artifact evoking different meanings that cause a certain kind of impression on us. The concept gains strength through form, and form is enhanced using definite figures. Indeed,

while the concept of figure encompasses conventional and associative meanings, the concept of form excludes them; while the concept of figure presupposes architecture as a language composed of a limited set of elements that already existed in their historical specificity, the concept of form presupposes that architectural forms can be reduced to an ahistorical “degree zero”; architecture as a historical phenomenon is not determined by what existed before, but by emergent social and technological facts, operating based on a minimal number of constant physiological and psychological laws (Colquhoun 1989, p. 122)



Figg. 5-6
Project drawing “Torre Viva | Torre Afona”; per: “Un Monumento memoriale nel Mediterraneo”.

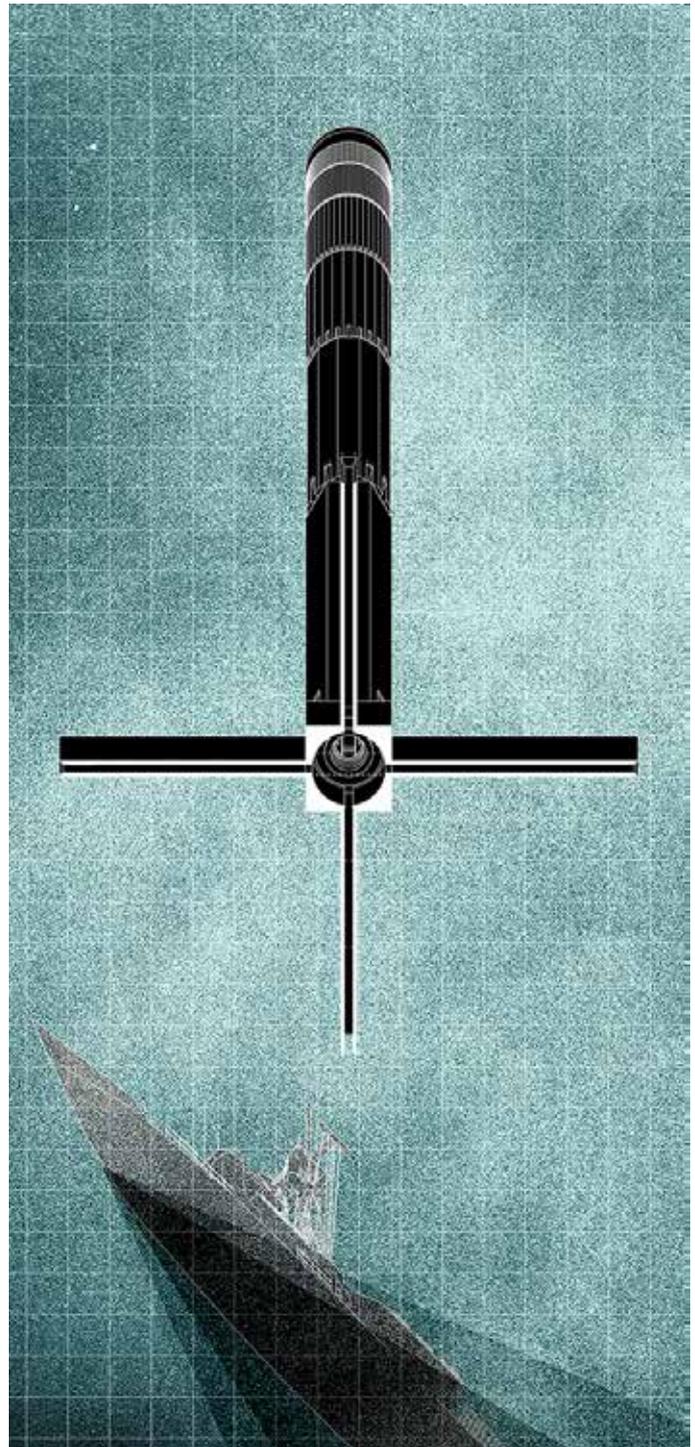


Fig. 7

Project drawing "Torre Viva | Torre Afona"; per: "Un Monumento memoriale nel Mediterraneo".



Thus, the idea of the sublime collides with dense layering of meanings, confronting us with an idea of monstrosity embodied in the guise of “Hybris”, etymologically translatable as “excess, insolence, tracotance”, thus understood, in the ancient sense, as «any violation of the norm of measure, that is, of the limits that man must meet in his relations with other men, with divinity or with the order of things» (Abbagnano and Fornero 1998, p. 547). But it is also true that the monument can no longer be understood in an “archaic” sense, as society is no longer structured in an archaic sense, the ethos and polis of the Greek world making room for technique (téchne takes over from archè, unlike the classical world where the two dimensions coexisted instead). See how already Schlegel, in the “Discourse on Mythology”, argues that «poetry lacks a center such as mythology was for that of the ancients, and all the essential for which modern poetry remains behind the ancient can be expressed by saying that we have no mythology.» (Schlegel 1967, p.192) This passage marks the need for a “new myth”, contrary to that aesthetic romanticism of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, in this case, a “Mythology of Reason”, going toward a technicalization of myth. The monument, and its amuletic capacity to convey a given concept over time, is transformed and with it its entire corporeal and incorporeal state. This paradigm reversal raises new questions of form as well as meaning, bestowing on art the ability to alter and modify nature through technique, being able, in this way, to produce another nature. Taking up Virillo’s words, quoted by Tschumi in “Architecture and Disjunction”, we can see how

in fact, there are no longer any norms and rules. [...] In the Middle Ages society was self-regulating, self-regulating. Regulation took place at the center of society itself. The prince of the city dictated the rules [...]. In the industrial age, societies began to be artificially regulated. The power of economic and industrial forces took over (Tschumi 2005, p.176).

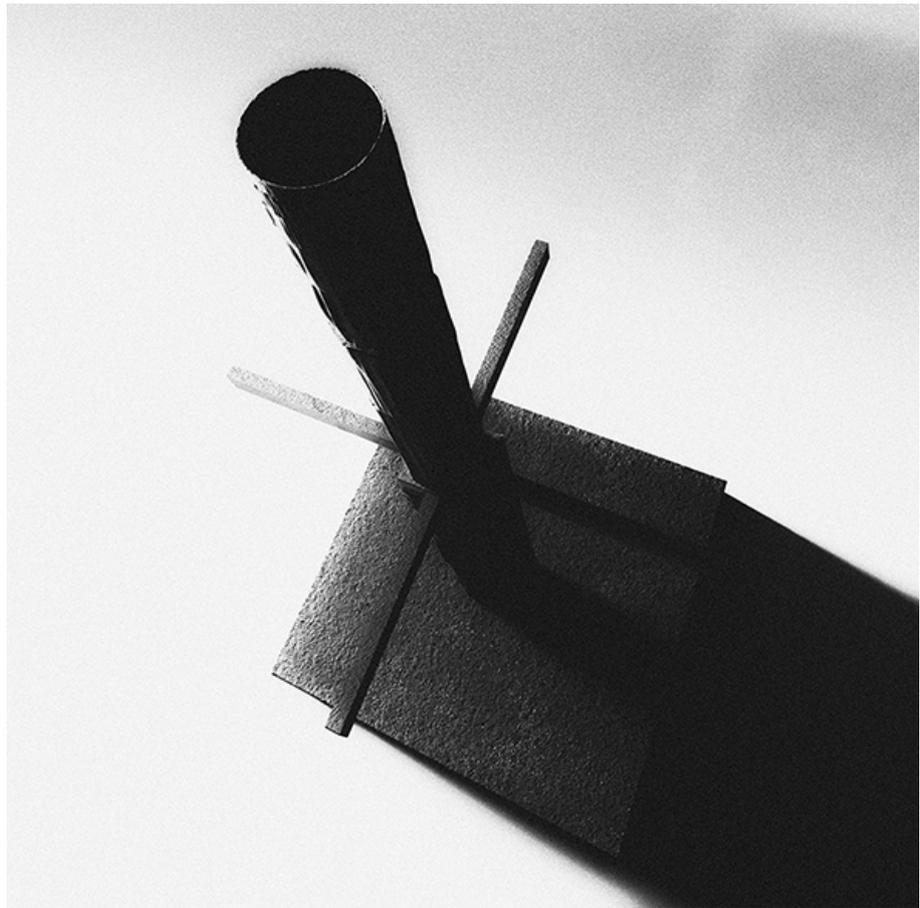
The difficulty in keeping forms linked with meanings has changed the relationship with spaces and the way they are experienced. This important detachment produces an autonomy of the image concerning its “support”, taking away

psychological depth from the character to allow attention to focus in toto on the action. [...] in other words, the story, the narrative plot ideally precedes and overrides the character’s psychology (Vercellone 2014, p.29).

The concept precedes the artifact, and in this case the concept is time. How, then, is it possible to survive the/within time? The ancients teach us that it is through ritual, myth, and rhythm that it is possible to keep a, or “the”, concept alive. Litanies, supplications, and prayers in general are examples. Musical eternity in this way allows the concept to survive through time. Coupled with the rhythm of the song is the rhythm of the body that shatters and corrupts space. This alteration is manifested through the “violence” of an “A” body on a “B” body (in this case space). This rituality, in the sphere of architecture, is nowadays accompanied by the rhythms of space that the “program” gives it. In this sense, the monument, to be able to preserve its NON-function – the eternity of the Aion – over time, must be able to shape its own Hybris – understood as “violation of the norm” – by fostering hybridization and thus its dimension of monstrosity, to ensure its persistence in memory over time. This can be

Fig. 8

Vista del modelo del monumento “Torre Viva | Torre Afona”.



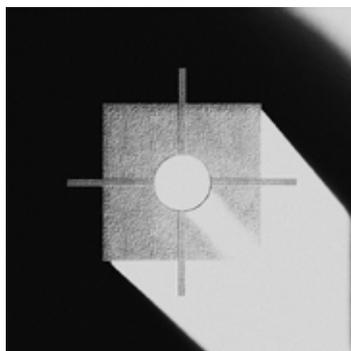
done only through the narrative device, in which the functional program becomes a mere “canvas”. The hybridization of the NON-function with the narrative program makes it possible to take that concept of Hybris and turn it into a Hybrid, attempting to give a new form to the monument, including fragments of the original concept. This is all the more necessary today given that

we are obliged to face a thorough reconsideration of all concepts related to depiction and representation: the constant storm of images to which we are exposed (be they drawings, graphics, photographs, films, television images or computer-generated) increasingly nullifies any attempt to re-establish the Renaissance ideal of the coincidence between reality and its representation (Tschumi 2005, p.176),

going against a general flattening. Memory in this way atrophies, becoming as malleable as the reality in which it is exercised, becoming capable of

reconfiguring itself when it wants to. [...] In such a condition of ontological precariousness, forgetting becomes a strategy of adaptation (collective forgetting). [...] In a condition where reality and identity are “updated” in the same way as software, it is little surprise that one of the main symptoms of cultural anxiety is memory disorders (Fisher 2018, p.116).

With these premises, in the project “Torre Viva | Torre Afona” an attempt was made to interpret through the tools of art, and therefore architecture, the catastrophic event of the 3 October 2013, that saw the death of 368 migrants in the Mediterranean Sea. An event that, to this day, recurs cyclically along the routes and coasts of the Mediterranean⁵. The artifact is designed and placed at the exact spot of the incident about 1.6 kilometers off the coast of Lampedusa, where the depth of the seabed is about 47 meters.

**Fig. 9**

Top view of the model of the monument “Torre Viva | Torre Afona”.

Fig. 10-11

Front view and bottom view of the model of the monument "Torre Viva | Torre Afona".

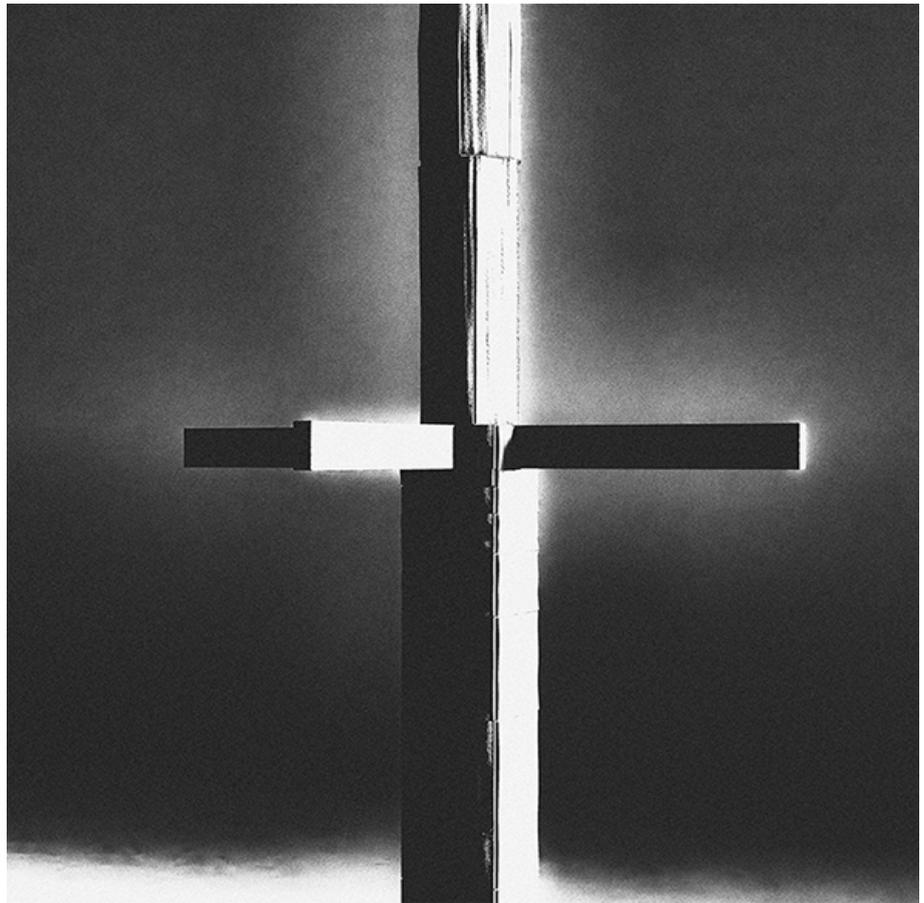


Fig. 12

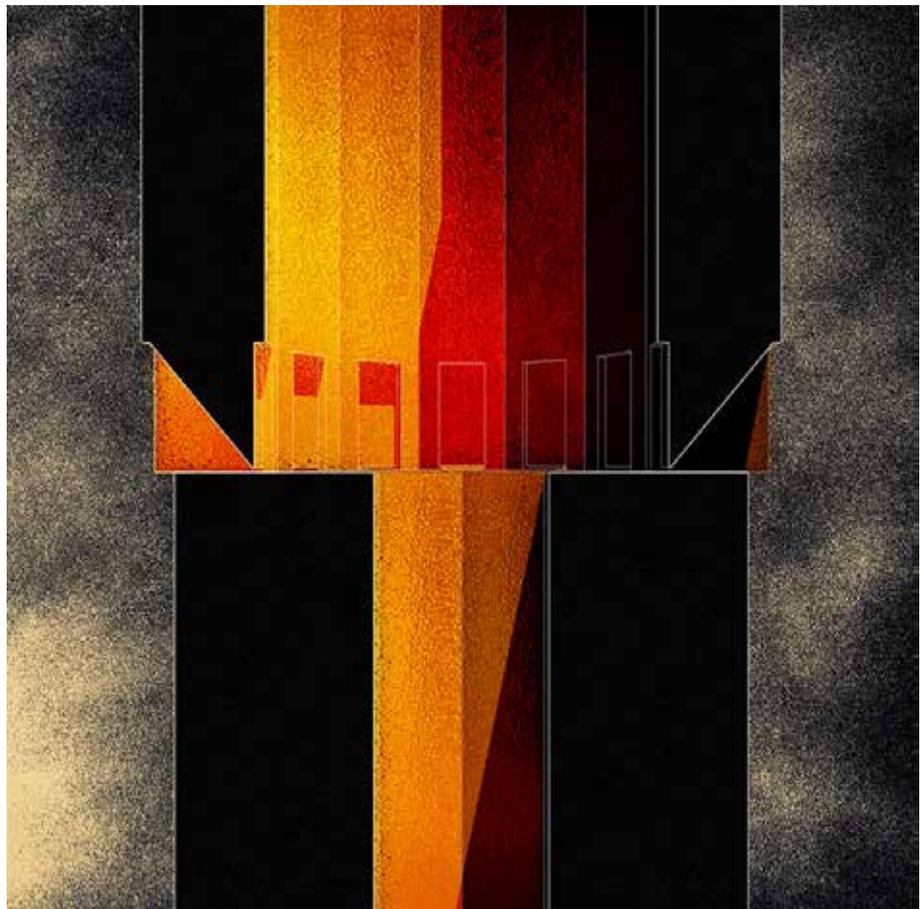
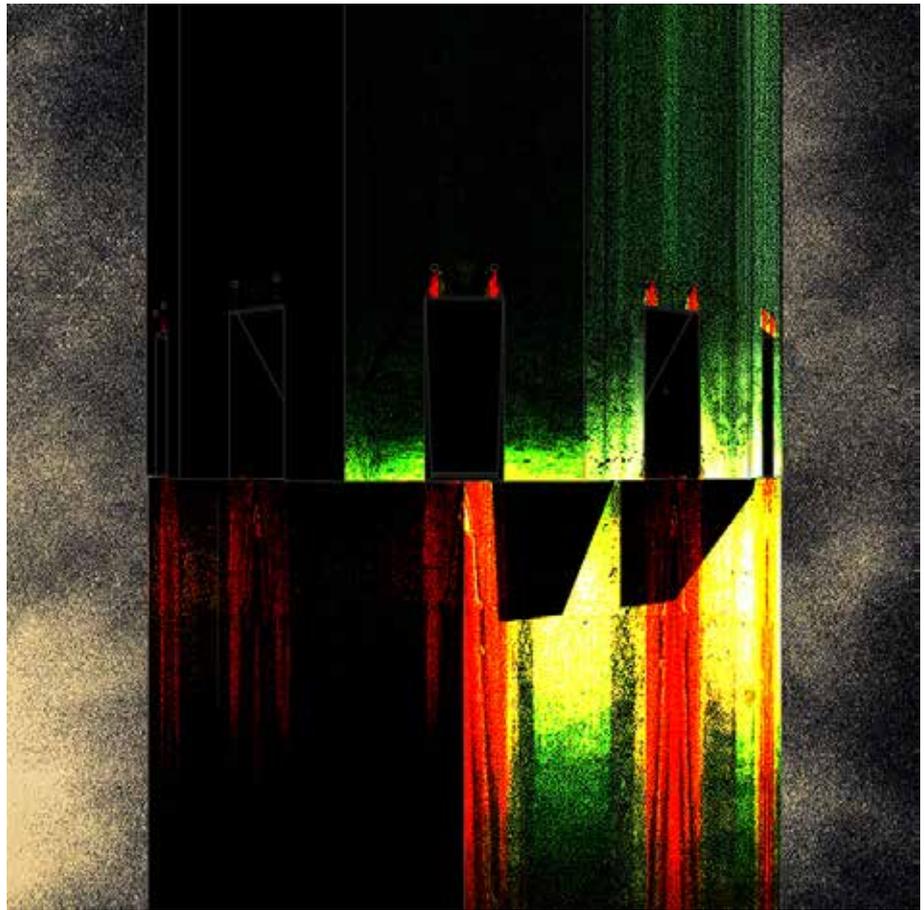
Axonometric view of the monument “Torre Viva | Torre Afona”.

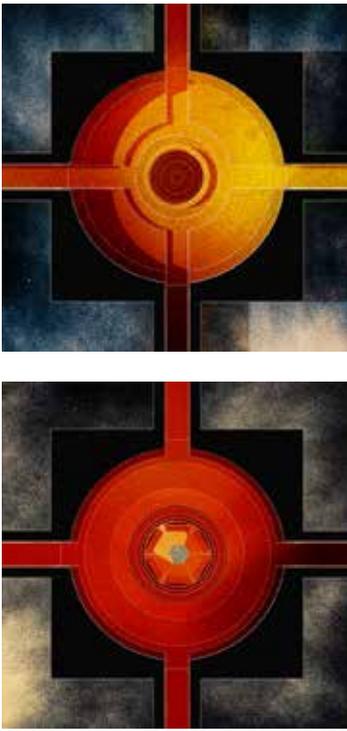


The poetic narrative⁶, even before the architectural work, collaborates in the description of the artifact. In this sense, the Hybrid, mediated by its Hybris, takes on the guise of the monstrous, making its way into the field of the uncanny.

The vertical structure, called the Tower, stands as a single volume extending towards the sky. This same building, the Tower, extends downwards, towards the seabed. A spacious cross-shaped area, with 47-meter sides and a height of 3 meters, has a void in the center that connects the sky and the sea, a “threshold of origin first, where the soul arose following the rhythm of the heart’s drum. When the earth became the drum of the sky, whose instrument cavity is the womb of life and death”⁷. The ends of the arms point towards the four cardinal points: Tramontana, Levante, Ostro, and Ponente. The “alive” tower [Torre Viva] has a diameter of 7 meters and rises 47 meters above sea level. Its counterpart, the “aphonic” tower [Torre Afona], has similar dimensions but rises 47 meters below sea level. Both towers consist of seven hollow blocks stacked on top of each other. The “alive” tower consists of seven hollow blocks, each with 368 faces and 368 mouths. Whereas the “aphonic” tower has only 4 faces, with no openings. The exterior envelope of the “alive” tower is made of reinforced concrete, while the interior is clad in gilded sheet metal. The “aphonic” tower has similar characteristics in terms of materials and cladding. Each of the “alive” tower’s rochos varies in height, from 18.46 meters for the first rochos to 0.88 meters for the seventh rochos. Each has a different number of faces and mouths. At the upper end of the “alive” tower, at a height of 0.36 meters, is a golden ring. The rooks of the “aphonic” tower correspond in height to those of the “alive” tower, but differ in structure, with only four faces and no mouths. The mouths of the ‘living’ tower are

Fig. 13-14
Detail (Mouths) of the monument
"Torre Viva | Torre Afona".





Figg. 15-16
Perspective sections of the monument "Torre Viva | Torre Afona". Field and reverse field.

located at the base of each rock and are numbered from 1 to 368. These mouths produce moans when the wind blows through them. Whereas, the "aphonic" tower has no mouths, but a huge opening choked by the sea. Access to the tower is limited to one person at a time and only at 03:30 a.m., the time of the accident.

In the center of the cruciform space is a square room with a height of 2.10 meters. This room has two openings: one facing upwards with a diameter of 2.10 meters looking at the sky, and the other downwards with the same dimensions looking at the abyss. A constant sea breeze passes through the "alive" tower, while the "aphonic" tower is constantly suffocated by the fury of the sea. The "alive" tower seems to stare at the sky and communicate with the world through its cry. The "aphonic" tower, on the other hand, is observed from the sky and remains silent. The observer witnesses death through life via the 'alive' tower, and life through death via the "mute" tower.

The monument is thus to be understood as embedded in a contemporaneity characterized by an «infinitely plastic reality, capable of reconfiguring itself as and when it wishes» (Fisher 2018, p.110), pregnant with new mnemonic pathologies such as amnesia or, as Fisher would put it, a "collective forgetting". This character of "invisibility" (Musil 2004, p.62) must be countered through the clash of the codes of eternity (archè) with the codes of stratifications (téchne), and thus by emphasizing, even more, the shift from the Hybris – archaic – with the Hybrid, being able provocatively to admit that architecture – like poetry – is everything in a construction that does not aim at utility.

Notes

¹ «By support is to be understood here as the threshold, that is, the ideal place of reflection and mirroring. [...] what it shows is a figure [...] it is precisely this figure that appears, not the support, which is a mere site of an in-objectifiable threshold and event of the original separation. [...] Happening, the two projects back its figure onto the one, figuring its origin, and at the same time projects forward its meaning or telos, into the figure of the three» (Sini 1990, pp. 150-152).

² «The positive antithesis of the sublime beautiful is the pleasant beautiful. The sublime tends toward infinitude, while the pleasant both rests within the limits of finiteness. The former is grand, strong, and majestic; the latter is graceful, playful, and attractive. The negative antithesis of the sublime, the vulgar, contrasts the great with the mean, the strong with the weak, the majestic with the vile. The positive antithesis of the pleasant and beautiful is repugnant, which contrasts the graceful with the awkward, the playful with the empty and dead, and the attractive with the hideous. [...] The repugnant comes from the pleasant beautiful as its opposition. As the positive opposition of the sublime in a quantitative sense the pleasant is that small, clearly visible in its totality of the delicate execution in its parts, which we Germans call "niedlich", gracious. [...] The positive opposition of the dynamic sublime is the pleasant, the playful. The sublime as power expresses its infinity in creating and destroying the great» (Rosenkranz 2020, pp. 184-185).

³ «The Greeks understood any violation of the norm of measure that is, of the limits that man must meet in his relations with other men, with divinity or with the order of things» (Abbagnano e Fornero 1998, p. 547).

⁴ «Temple of death! Your image stops our hearts. The artist flees the light of heaven. He descends into the sepulchers and traces figures in the pale, dying glimmer of the sepulchral lamps! Our purpose in raising monuments is to immortalize the memory of those to whom they are consecrated. It is therefore necessary that these monuments be designed to defy the ravages of time» (Boullée 1981, p. 120).

⁵ According to the O.I.M. (International Organization for Migration), since 2014 more

than 26,000 people have died or gone missing while attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea.

<https://italy.iom.int/it/news/mediterraneo-il-naufraggio-di-sabato-evidenzia-lurgente-necessita-di-fare-di-piu-salvare-vite#:~:text=Secondo%20il%20Progetto%20Missing%20Migrants,nel%20Mar%20Mediterraneo%20dal%202014>.

⁶ «This is what distinguishes it – Architecture – from construction, its sacredness that provokes emotions and feelings and disturbs our soul or unconscious. Architecture is this engaging, the mind through the senses, in a narrative.» from the transcript of a lecture by Luciano Semerani entitled “Architettura Arte Cosmica” as part of the first of the appointments in the cycle “Narratività e Architettura” within the event “Gaia che passione”, dialogues between disciplines on 27 May 2013. At the Stazione Rogers in Trieste. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccUysHPbQFY>.

⁷ Sini, C.; Scoto Eriugena e la Teologia - Sessione 5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FtaO1HSagRc>.

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Houssam Mahi (Sesto S. Giovanni, 1995), (Sesto S. Giovanni, 1995) PhD student, graduated with honors from the Faculty of Architecture in Milan with Prof. Francesca Bonfante and Prof. Federico Acuto. Since 2018 he has been supporting teaching at the Architecture Design II course of Prof. Elvio Manganaro. In 2017 he founded ARGON, an architectural research and design group, together with Davide Libretti and Marco Monico. He is currently developing his doctoral research in architectural composition (icar 14) at Politecnico di Milano. Among the publications to which he has contributed: *Disegnando l'utopia. Visioni e vedute di altri mondi possibili* (Mimesis edizioni, Milano 208).

Lorenzo Manunta (Sesto S. Giovanni, 1995) Sculptor, he graduated with honors from the Brera Academy of Fine Arts. His research aims to investigate new relational systems between human beings and their cultural products, drawing from different scientific fields. The result of this approach produces objects, installations and compositions seemingly timeless, an archaeology of the present where symbols and elements, like words, are decontextualized to become part of a new language. Among the exhibitions in which he has participated: *Petricore* (curate by: Riccardo Vailati, Lorenzo Valota e Giulia Mariachiara Galiano. Castello Visconteo di Pagazzano, Pagazzano (BG) 2023); *Colostro* (curate by: Riccardo Vailati e Giulia Mariachiara Galiano. Torre Massimiliana A, Venezia 2022); *Proiezioni di una Breccia* (curate by: Riccardo Vailati. Castello Visconteo di Pagazzano, Pagazzano (BG) 2022); *Posso – pensare – ad – una – sola – parola – ma – non – alla – frase – intera* (curate by: Riccardo Vailati. Palazzo Visconti, Brignano (BG) 2019); *Spazio Pollice Quadrato. No Entry* (curate by: AA ASS., Milano 2018).

Motto Landscape and silence

Architectural project Andrea Valvason

Sculptor Nicola Facchini



Andrea Valvason, Nicola Facchini (Sculptor)
**Landscape and silence:
 a monument in the Mediterranean Sea**

Abstract

What does it mean nowadays to conceive a monument, to establish how it is made and what is the object of its presence? Why build places of memory for today's society? What significance does the monument assume, and what can be its modes of expression within the contemporary world? The answer to these questions, through the project, takes place by deliberately distancing itself from certain formal and figurative issues aimed at communicating messages of pietas through a monumentality that has become "tired" and laden with superficial *pathos*: it is precisely through the integration of art and architecture that a possible way forward is sought that moves from an anti-rhetorical vision, privileging the experiential dimension and the mnemonic mechanism. Two towers rise from the remains of a shipwreck; placed on the boundary between land and sea, they accompany visitors on a "journey of memory" that unfolds in a condition of continuous instability, evoking the memory of a tragic crossing of the Mediterranean Sea.

Keywords

Monument – Lampedusa – Memory – Landscape – Perception

Fig. 1

On the previous page: Model.
 View from the North-East.

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow

Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
 You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
 A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
 And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
 And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
 There is shadow under this red rock,
 (Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
 And I will show you something different from either
 Your shadow at morning striding behind you
 Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
 I will show you fear in a handful of dust.¹

Thomas Stearns Eliot, *The burial of the dead*

In 1967 George Steiner published *Language and Silence*, a collection of essays on language, literature, and the "inhuman". The title foreshadows the author's deep reflection on the decline of contemporary society and its consequent impact on language, both in communication and in the arts, leading him to question: «Are we perhaps exiting an historical era of verbal dominance – the classical period of literary expression – to enter a phase of decayed language, "post-linguistic" forms, and perhaps partial silence?» (Steiner 1967, p. 9). An immediate observation follows: «Today, like few other times, poetry feels the temptation of silence» (Steiner 1967, p. 22). To describe today's cultural decline, paraphrasing the author, we could assert that nowadays we know that a minister can read Dante in the evening and the next morning go to work to decide the fate of some human lives². Bringing Steiner's words into the present, particularly relevant in the case



Fig. 2

Spatial layout.

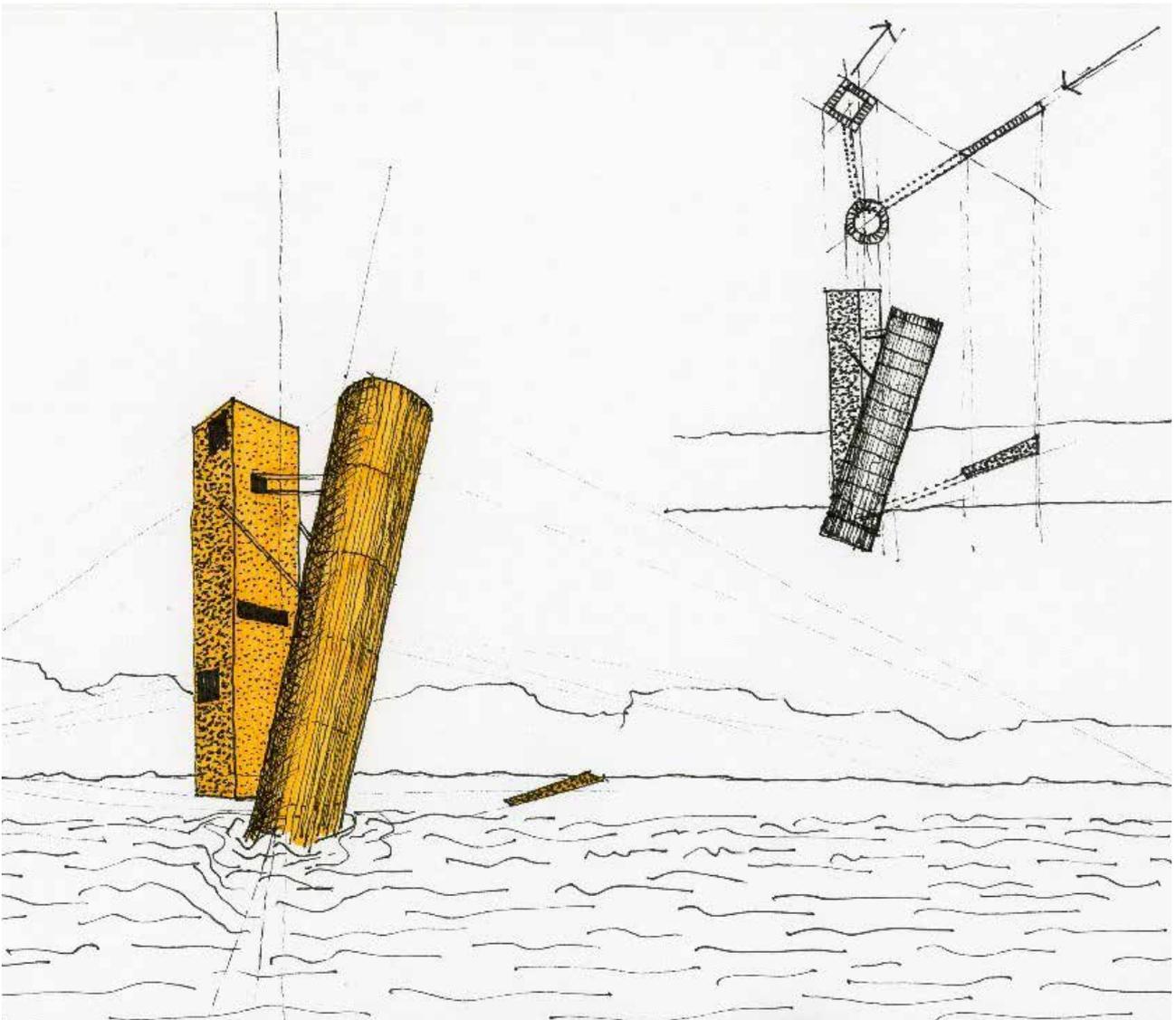


Fig. 3
Preparatory sketch by Andrea Valvason.



Fig. 4
Preparatory sketch by Nicola Facchini.

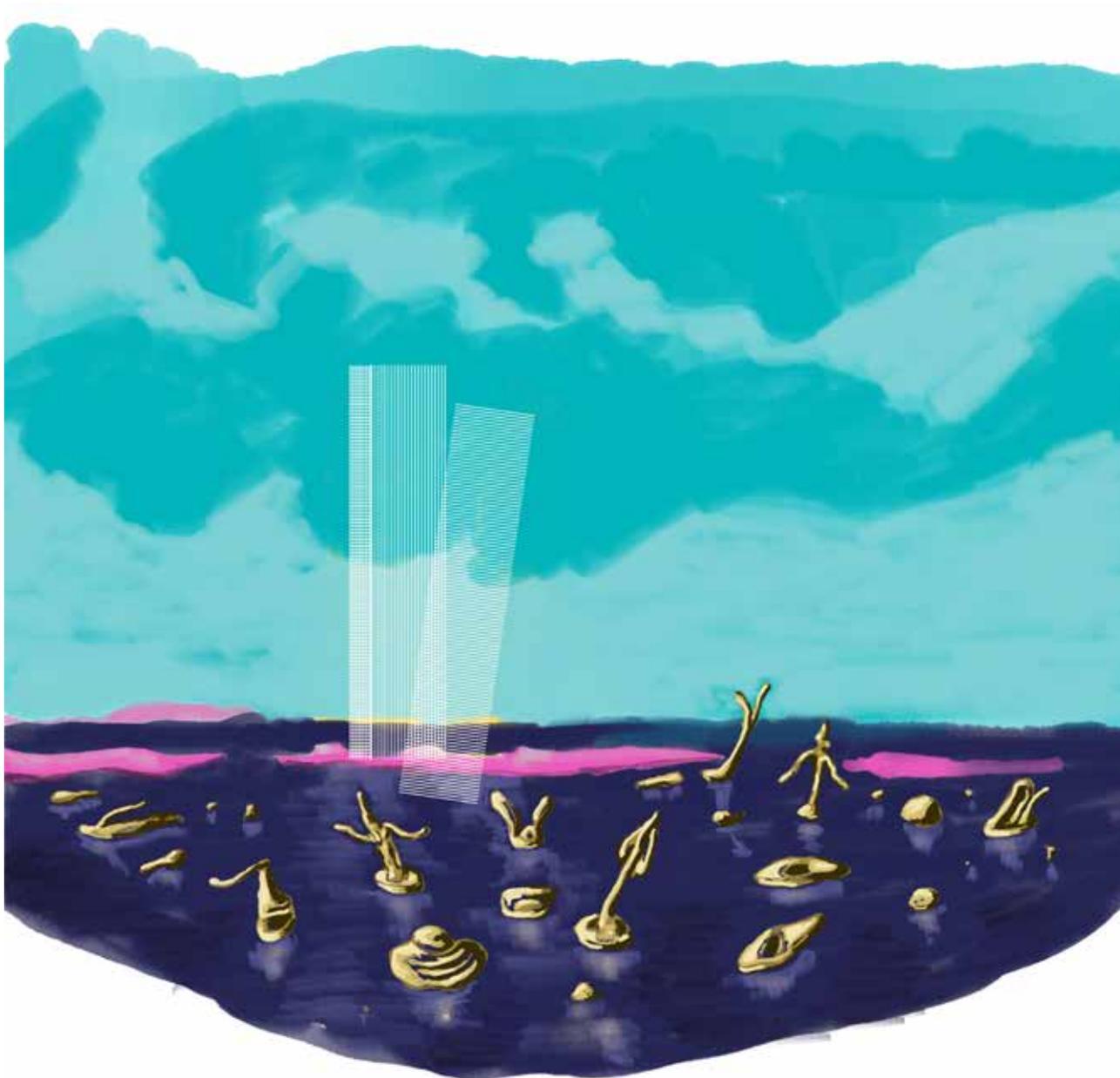
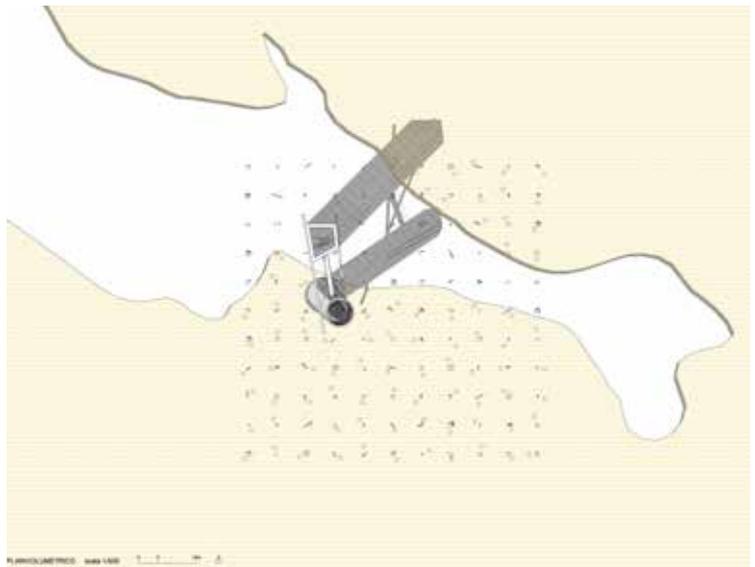
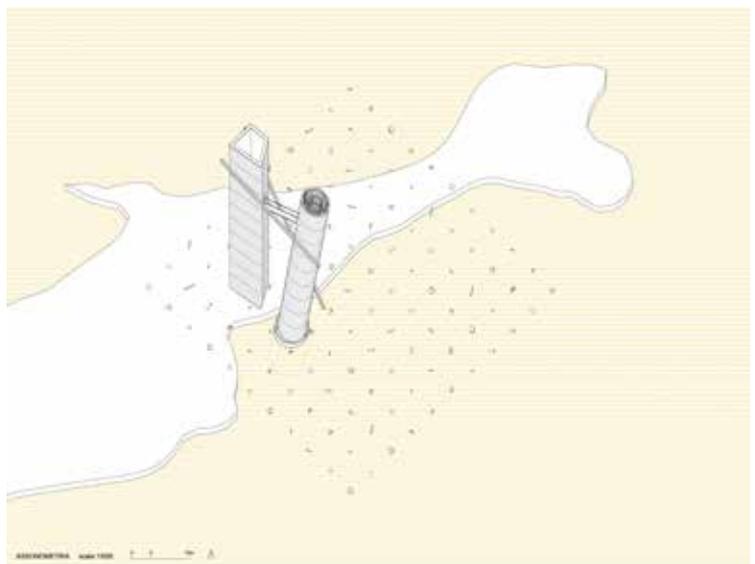
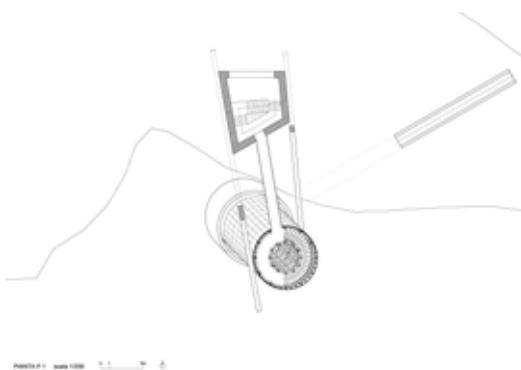
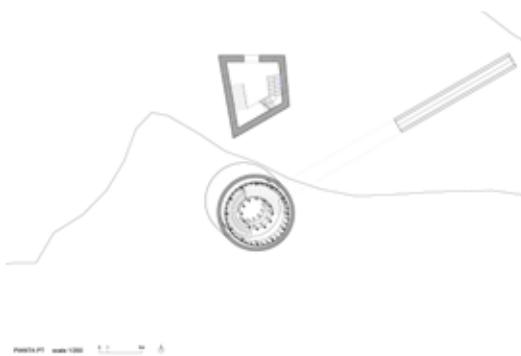


Fig. 5
Study drawing by Andrea Valvason and Nicola Facchini.

Figg. 6-7
Planivolumetric; Axonometry.



Figg. 8-9-10
Floor Plan P -1; Floor Plan PT;
Floor plan P1.



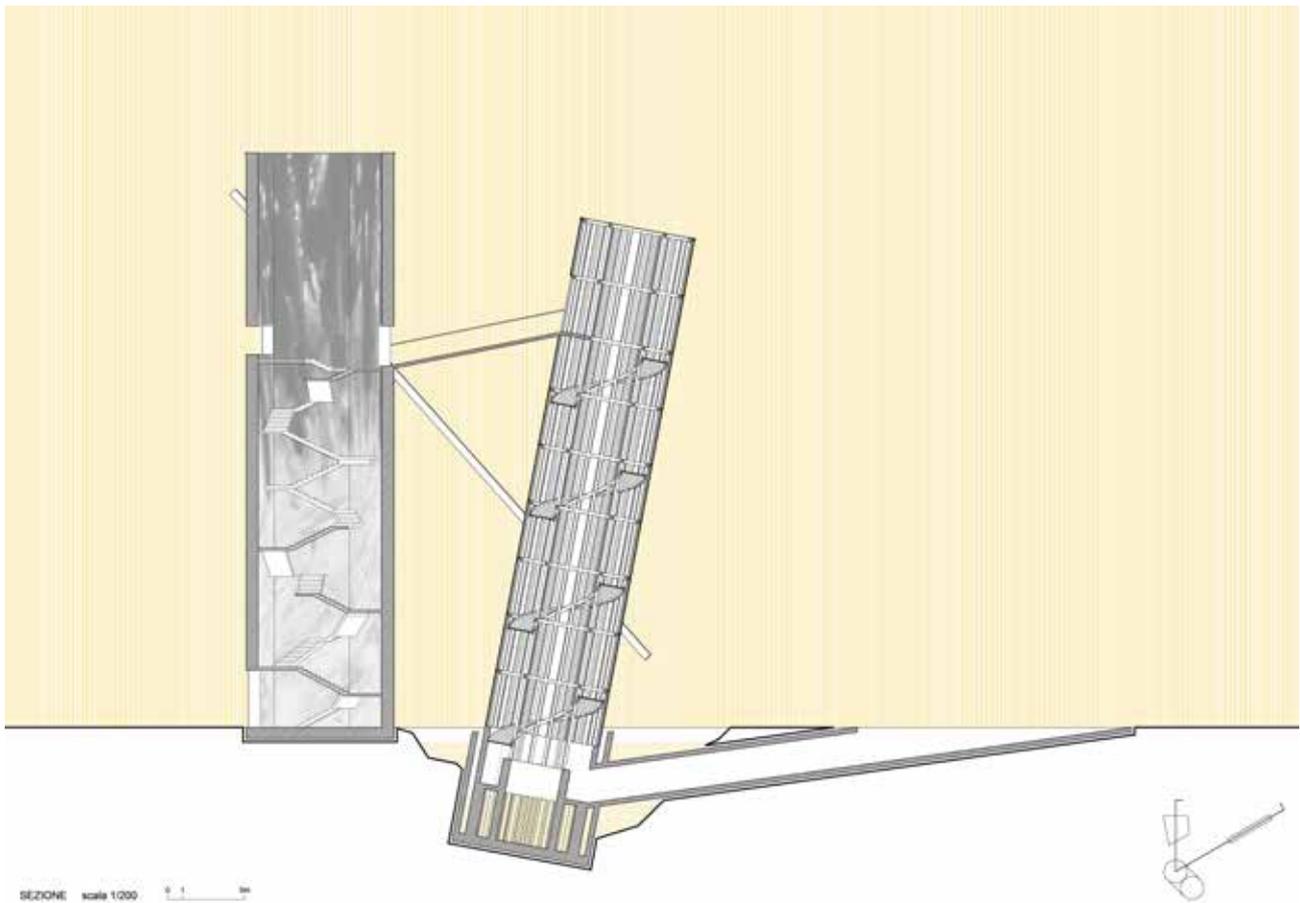


Fig. 11

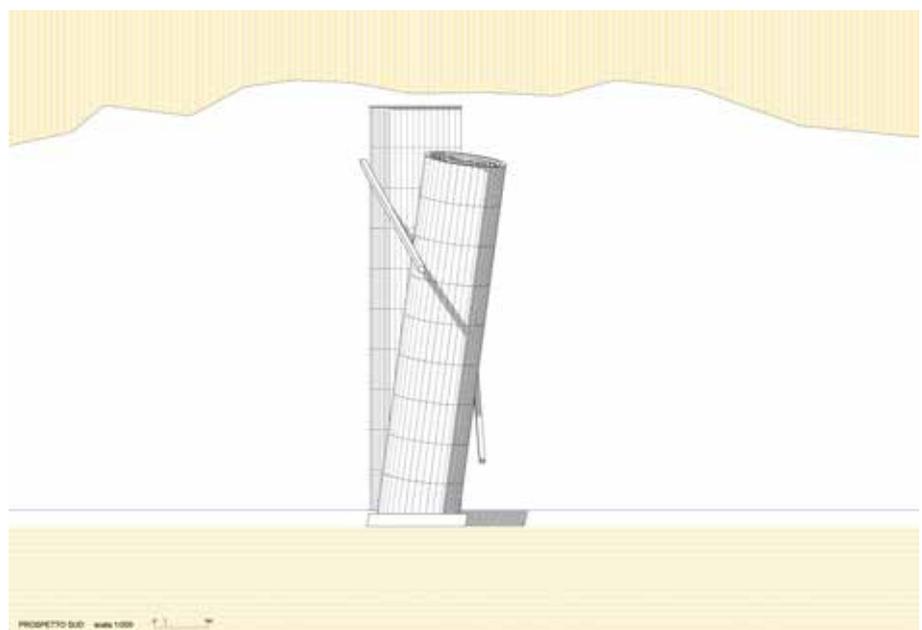
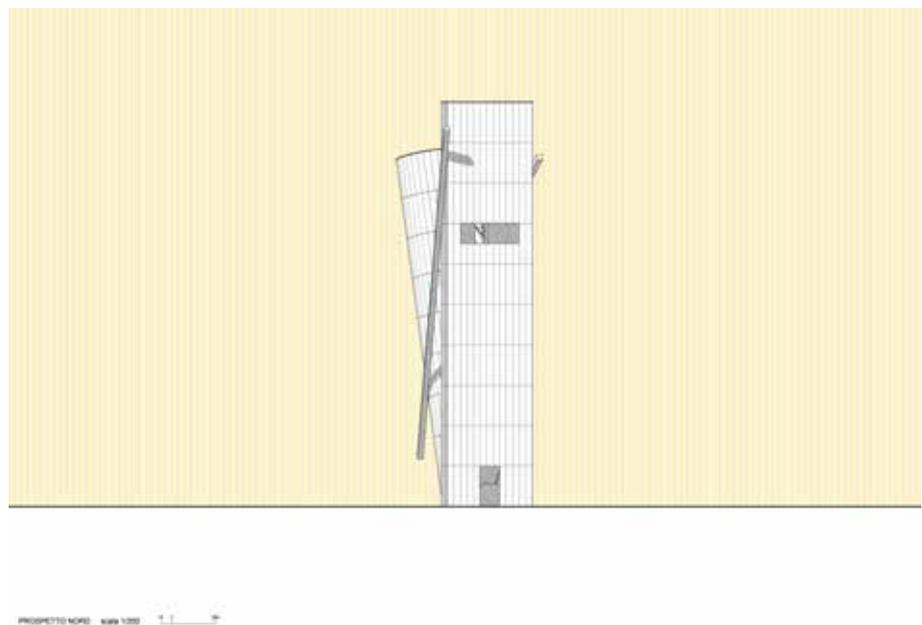
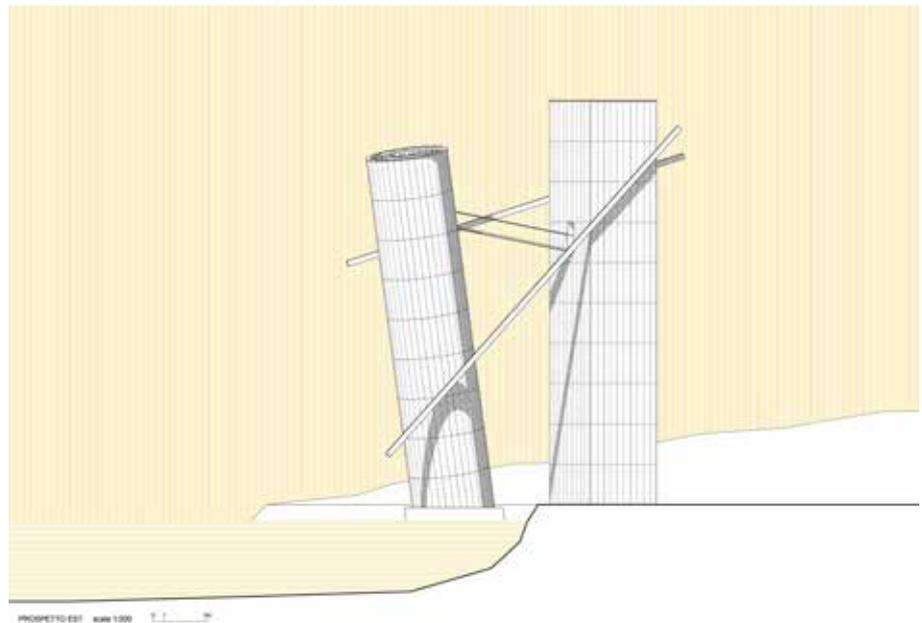
Sections of Tower 2 with interior wall frescoes.

of the project for “A memorial monument in the Mediterranean” on the island of Lampedusa, following the tragedy of three hundred and sixty-eight migrants on October 3, 2013, it spontaneously raises the question: «To whom is this monument addressed? What memory does it bear? Can a monument of this kind have a resonance of a civil, if not political, nature»? One possible answer – *among the answers* – lies in interpreting the theme according to an anti-rhetorical vision, in which no form of language is able to express the memory of tragedy, assuming the sensorial and perceptive dimension of silence, metaphysical and almost transcendental, as the only possible: «The highest and purest level of the contemplative act is the one that has learned to leave language behind. The ineffable is beyond the borders of words» (Steiner 1967, p. 27). Consider, for example, Wittgenstein’s “untranslatable”³, a composition by Webern⁴ or a performance by John Cage⁵. Hence the conclusion that perhaps architecture is the only *art* capable, through what Giuseppe Samonà called “second language”⁶, of translating meaning into space through the experience of a place, «knowing that there are no exact equivalences between languages, only betrayals, but that the attempt to translate is a constant necessity if poetry is to fully realise its life» (Steiner 1967, p. 23).

Located near Punta Sottile, the southernmost strip of land in Europe, the project takes shape through a combination of elements perceptible at different scales, following an approach path from land or sea that progressively reveals the meaning within a space, where space follows a proxemics made of references that gradually unveil its significance.

The experience of this place begins with a shipwreck. At the geographic-territorial scale, the monument carves out its own space through a *parterre*

Fig. 12-13-14
East elevation; North elevation;
South elevation.



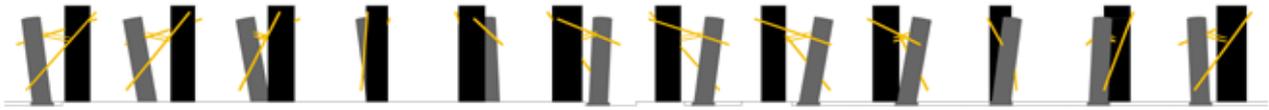


Fig. 15
East-North-West-South silhouette.

of sculptures, transfigured remnants of an incident at sea: allusive fragments of a broken *becoming*. These elements are arranged between land and sea along a regular layout⁷ that orders the overall composition⁸; they can be embedded in the ground or anchored to the seafloor, functioning as buoys: their position can vary over time, generating a different scenario each time⁹. Continuing on, we reach the central moment of the route represented by two towers, one of which is inclined, rising between the mainland and the sea, placing itself in a condition on the boundary between stable (land) and unstable (water). Two rods unite them and in their extension, taking on different inclinations depending on their positioning, from being a technical component they become a compositional element, dramatically loading the figure by means of a set of “harmonic dissonances” or “distant consonances”¹⁰.

A dig in the ground – «under the shadow of this red rock»¹¹ – identifies the entrance to the underground/underwater route that leads to the first tower in the sea. It is a slightly inclined hollow cylinder¹², composed of a metal structure inserted on a cement base, which, through an interstitial system, allows water, depending on the tide’s height, to invade the tower’s bottom (think of the principle of communicating vessels). The outer cladding is made of a translucent material that constructs a diaphanous environment: light enters and uniformly permeates the space, but our gaze cannot leave except towards the cavity at the top, towards the sky; everything is turned inwards, where the only sensory elements are the lapping of the waves of the sea, the hissing of the wind, the lapping of the water at the bottom of the well.

An ascending path invites us to escape towards the sky, leaving the darkness behind. The inclination means that the ascent along the perimeter of the tower does not have a linear course, causing a feeling of disorientation¹³ within an adverse place: one ascends laboriously enveloped and overwhelmed by the echoes of a journey across the sea.

Arriving at the top, a high-altitude path with a filamentous character opens up to the surrounding landscape, allowing access to the second tower. Anchored to the ground, solid and with a masonry character, it nevertheless presents a deformed planimetric profile¹⁴, stretched towards that twin tower that seems about to fall into the sea. The connecting path that unites them heads inside the second tower, where an opening facing north frames a glimpse of the landscape on the horizon, the hoped-for destination: Italy, Europe. But the journey is not over.

As the eye adjusts to the faint light of the environment, elements present in this interior begin to be perceived. On the walls, blind and so thick that no noise from outside can be heard, we recognise frescoed figures – as if we were in a primitive place – memories of a storm into which we are suddenly thrown: it is dark again.

A descending staircase, representing the only way out, invites us to descend. Here too, the path is not linear; the ramps have an irregular course, pushing us from one wall to another, as if we were inside a scene from *Labyrinth*¹⁵.

Fig. 16-17-18-19

Model. South Elevation; East Elevation; North Elevation; West Elevation.

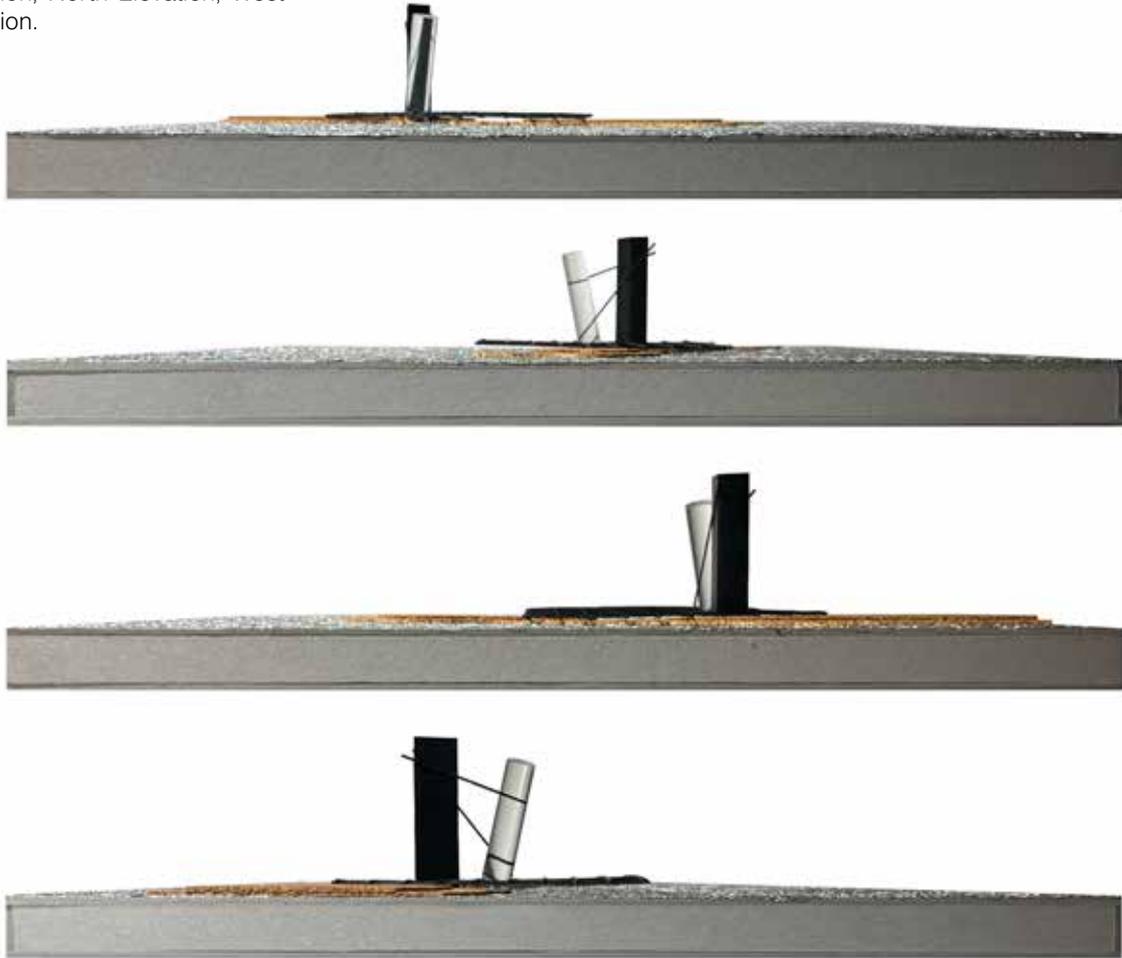
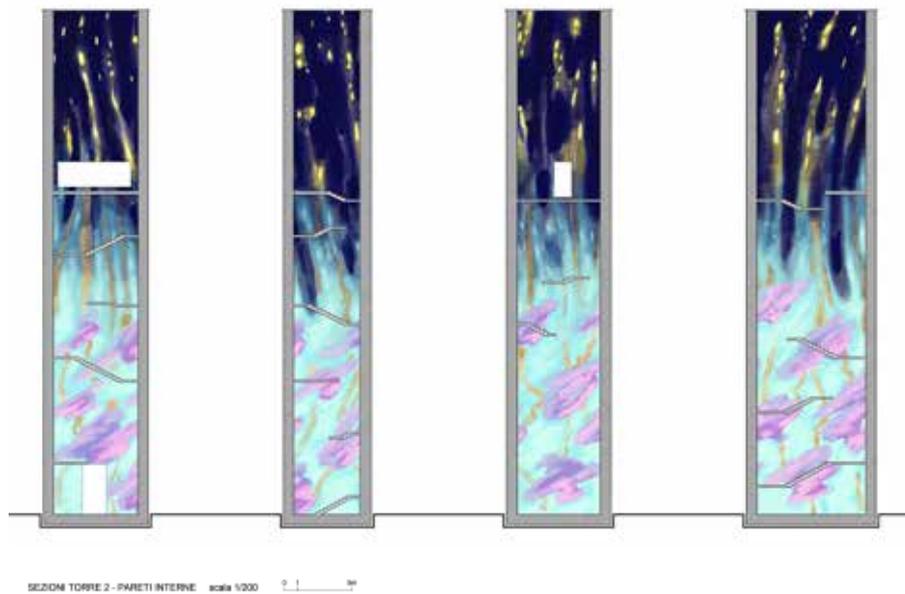


Fig. 20

Frescoes on the internal walls of Tower 2.





Figg. 21-22-23

View from the West; View from the North; View from the North-West.

During the descent, a light begins to be glimpsed at the bottom of the tower, the exit. The figures on the walls take on lighter and brighter tones, we are emerging from the storm, salvation is near. The descent takes place in an inverted landscape, darkness is above, and light is below, as in a dream where: «time runs, and at an accelerated speed, *towards* the present, *in the opposite direction* to the movement of waking consciousness time. It is *turned back on itself*, and all its concrete images are similarly turned back» (Florenskij 1922, p. 23).

Upon reaching the ground, the path concludes; the landscape is again serene, and that hostile nature from which we wanted to escape is now far away. But perhaps our consciousness, our spirit, our memory are no longer the same, we become witnesses to the tragedies that have occurred in these places.

At night, the tower at sea lights up to become a lighthouse, a lantern, a light in the waters of the Mediterranean that signals the presence of man.

The monument finds its meaning through multiple levels and scales of perception: the geographical-territorial one in its relationship between land and water and its connection to the landscape; the figurative-metaphorical one of two characters supporting each other amidst the remains of a shipwreck; the experiential-perceptive one, alluding to a remote reading, developed through a cathartic ascent and descent path that evokes the tragic memory of the sea journey.

At this point, it would be more appropriate to define it as an anti-monument¹⁶, akin to a «Pietà for the fallen and for us who can no longer make Monuments» (Boico 1975, p. 3), where formal rhetoric is minimized. Its composition develops through few signs and small movements, while the language diminishes, becoming rarefied, tending towards abstraction, in a union that holds together architecture, painting, and sculpture.

From this dialectical relationship and the resulting synthesis, this *sign* is born, whose true meaning is found in the act of *inhabiting* this place, in traversing it, entering and crossing it: the perceptive and sensory dimension prevails, memory lives in people who experience this place, in the perception of *this* space *over* time, in the «plastic feeling»¹⁷ that manifests along the path, not in possible forms and symbolic references or in the figure of the monument itself.



Fig. 24
Night view from the South-East.

Contrary to what happens in William Golding's *The Spire* (1964) where Dean Jocelin hoped for the construction of a monument that “touched the sky” to reach God – this work does not lead us anywhere. Assuming the existence in humans of a given perceptive and behavioural *Gestaltung*¹⁸, it takes us on a journey within ourselves, where the “sound of silence” becomes a sensory instrument of emotional transport¹⁹.

Braque was confronted with
An impossibility
He began to paint frantically
Before everything dried
Rodin went down to the beach
Scattered in the sand
Were all his figures
From the gates of hell
He felt Braque
To be in danger
He sensed the beautiful
Angels had drowned
And his friend
Was painting them²⁰.

Jhon Hejduk, *Sound of the sea*

Notes

- ¹ Thomas Stearns Eliot, *The Burial of the dead* (da *The Waste Land*, 1922), in Id. *T. S. Eliot. Opere. 1904-1939*, edited by R. Sanesi, Bompiani, Milan, 2001, pp. 584-587.
- ² See George Steiner, *Prefazione*, in Id., *Linguaggio e silenzio. Saggi sul linguaggio, la letteratura e l'inumano*, p. 11; in this case the author gave an example by relating reading Goethe and working in Auschwitz.
- ³ See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus e Quaderni 1914-1916*, edited by A. G. Conte, Einaudi, Turin, 1987.
- ⁴ In the twelve-tone compositions of Anton Webern, silence, which can be translated as empty space, assumes essential importance within the melodic structure.
- ⁵ Reference is made here specifically to John Cage's composition "4'33'", in which, according to the author, the composition must consist of the sounds present in the environment in which it is performed, giving an idea of the importance of the environment itself. Look at the various texts published by Richard Kostelanetz on the composer's work.
- ⁶ See Giuseppe Samonà, *Il significato storico del presente e i suoi problemi nell'unità del linguaggio architettonico*, in Id., *L'unità architettura-urbanistica. Scritti e progetti: 1929-1973* (II ed.), edited by P. Lovero, Franco Angeli, Milan, 1978, pp. 44-50.
- ⁷ A 10x10 grid with square meshes measuring 7,5x7,5 metres and a total side of 75x75 metres.
- ⁸ See Rem Koolhaas' competition design with OMA for the Parc de la Villette (1982) in which a series of "point grids" or "confetti" are placed to define the organisation of the space.
- ⁹ See the memorials by Edvard Ravnikar where the gravestones, starting from a geometrically ordered positioning, gradually sink into the ground, constantly changing configuration.
- ¹⁰ See Arnold Schönberg's observation on the harmonic concept of consonance and dissonance, in Id., *Trattato di armonia* (1922), Il Saggiatore, Milan, 2014, pp. 22-27.
- ¹¹ The reference is direct to the above-mentioned verses by T. S. Eliot.
- ¹² The cylinder has a diameter of 7,5 metres and a height development composed of ten 3,75-metre-high "drums" (one of which is below sea level), for a total height of 37,5 metres (33,75 metres above sea level). The inclination is given by a double rotation: 7,5° with respect to the YZ axis and 7,5° with respect to the XZ axis.
- ¹³ Think for example of the ascent inside the Leaning Tower of Pisa: walking along a helical staircase along an oblique axis, the centre of gravity of the path, in reference to the normal axis and therefore to the force of gravity, changes with each step, unbalancing the normal balance of the body.
- ¹⁴ The plan originates from a square with a side of 7,5x7,5 metres, grafted onto the regulating layout described above. The deformation takes place on the East, South and West sides, keeping the North side fixed, in the direction of the tower placed in the water. The development in height is composed of ten 3,75 metre high "drums", for a total height of 37,5 metres. The supporting tie-rods, on the other hand, have a square box section with a side of 0,5 metres, with different inclinations according to the most functional anchorage points from a structural point of view.
- ¹⁵ Film directed by Jim Henson starring David Bowie and Jennifer Connelly, 1986. Here we refer to the scenes, also featured in the music video of the song *Within you* by David Bowie himself, in which the antagonist Jareth (Bowie) chases Sarah (Connelly) moving within an "Escherian" space that causes a strong sense of disorientation in the protagonist.
- ¹⁶ The action of splitting the monument into two mutually antithetical yet twin towers reduces the monumental charge of the monument itself, which does not stand as a rhetorical element, but rather as a phenomenal device that offers the visitor a sensorial experience rather than imposing an objective or idiosyncratic statement.
- There are several previous cases that adopt such a strategy. These include the Mausoleo delle Fosse Ardeatine (N. Aprile, C. Calcabrina, A. Cardelli, M. Fiorentino, G. Perugini and the sculptor F. Coccia, Rome 1947-49), also defined at the beginning as an anti-monument; the Mauthausen-Gusen Memorial (L. Barbiano di Belgiojoso, Gusen, 1965-67), conceived according to a formal reduction in which the architectural language tends towards abstraction; from a personal memory, the Memoriale della Risiera di San Sabba (R. Boico, Trieste 1966-1975), conceived through an anti-rhetor-

ical and anti-celebratory vision arguing that no form of language is able to represent the memory of the tragedy. What these works have in common is that they work in space, creating a place for memory through the feelings that the space itself can evoke in the visitor.

¹⁷ The reference is to some definitions that Giuseppe Samonà used to comment on Le Corbusier's work during his presentation at the press conference held in Florence in 1963 for the exhibition on the Swiss master's work held at Palazzo Strozzi.

The quotation is taken from a 1963 episode of the Rai television programme *L'approdo – Settimanale di Lettere ed Arti*, entitled *Le Corbusier: verso un'architettura a misura d'uomo* (consulted on the Rai Teche website).

See also: Giuseppe Samonà, *Relazione ufficiale in occasione dell'inaugurazione della mostra dell'opera di Le Corbusier*, in "Casabella-Continuità", n° 274, April 1963, pp. 12-15.

¹⁸ See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Il metafisico nell'uomo*, in Id., *Senso e non senso*, Il Saggiatore, Milan, 1962, p. 108.

¹⁹ The theme of silence and the sensory dimension was the starting point on which we decided to work as architect and artist, painter before sculptor. Eliot's poem was the first "casual" connection, or common affinity, from which we chose to start, seeking references outside the figurative artistic-architectural panorama and focusing mainly on literary texts. The drafting of the project found a meeting point in the two-dimensional approach to the composition, developed through drawing (architect) and painting (artist), placing two apparently antithetical languages, one more abstract (architect) and one more expressive (artist), in a dialectical relationship, to reach a synthesis that would concretise the monument in plastic terms. Through this search for a "two-dimensional plasticity", it was possible to reason about the spatiality and measure of this place, primary questions from which it was then possible to arrive at its architectural-sculptural formalisation, which compares with the landscape context of the Island of Lampedusa and the Mediterranean. Art and figure inhabit the structure and the structure exists immersed and fluctuating between them, displaying them within it.

²⁰ John Hejduk, *Sound of the sea* (da *Lines. No fire could burn*, 1999), in Renato Rizzi, Susanna Piscicella, *John Hejduk. Bronx. Manuale in versi*, Mimesis, Milan, 2020, pp. 394-395.

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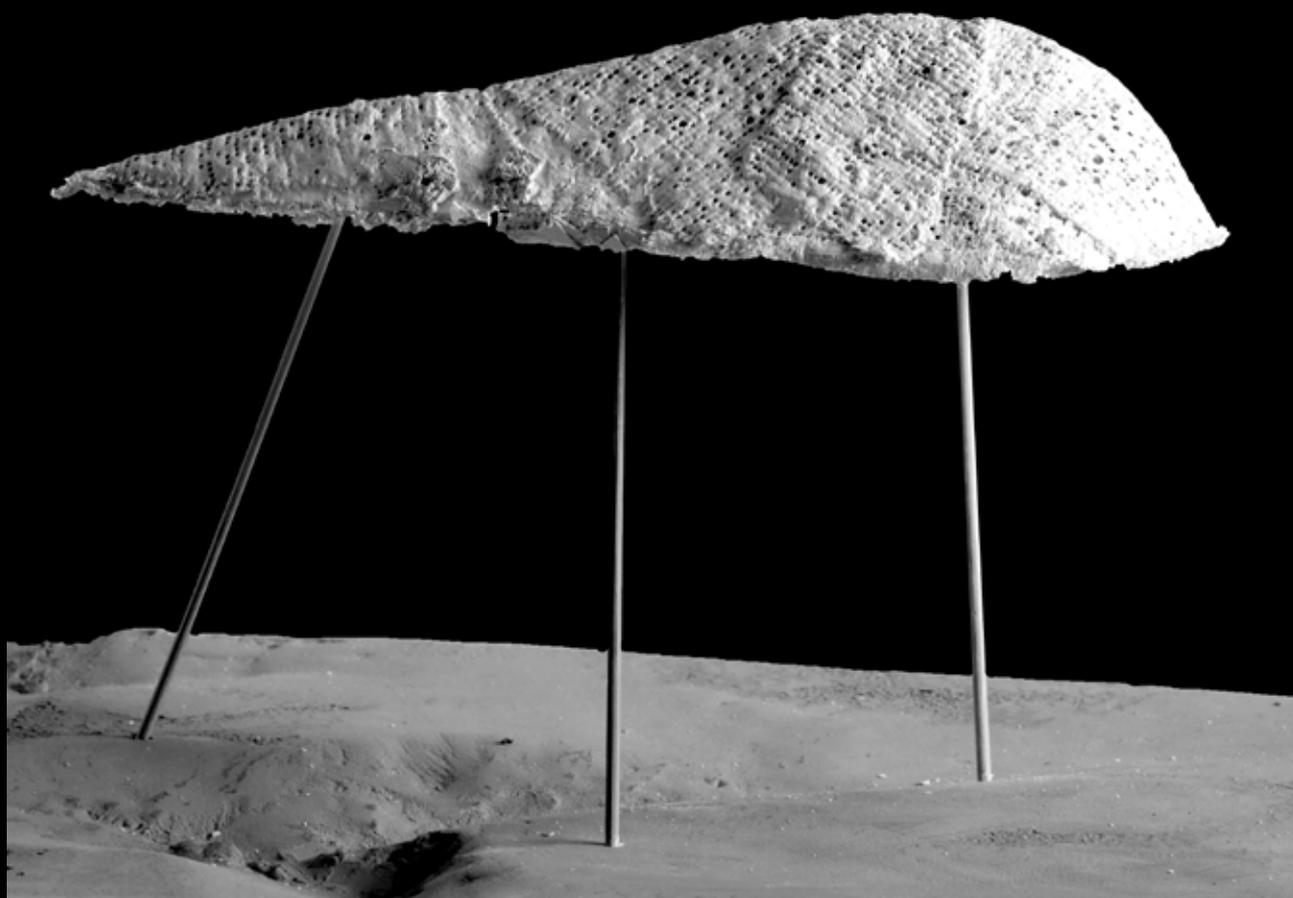
Andrea Valvason (Latisana, Udine 1994), architect, obtained a Bachelor’s degree in “Architecture Construction and Conservation” at the IUAV in Venice in the academic year 2015/2016 and a Master’s degree with honours in “Architecture and Urban Design” at the Politecnico di Milano in the academic year 2018/2019. Since 2021 he has been a PhD student in Architectural Composition at the IUAV Doctoral School in Venice, with a thesis on the figure and work of Giuseppe Samonà. He carries out various activities in support of teaching at the Politecnico di Milano. Alongside his academic activities, he collaborates with architectural firms and participates in national and international competitions and design research.

Nicola Facchini (Trieste 1990), painter and sculptor, graduated in Painting at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Venice in 2015. He works between Venice and Borca di Cadore where he collaborates with “Dolomiti Contemporanee” at the former Eni Village. He is co-founder of the Malutta Foundation Association and author of the monument in memory of Maria Theresa of Austria, with Eric Gerini and Elena Pockay in Trieste.

Motto State passages

Architectural project Edoardo Marchese
Cecilia Rosa
Lorenzo Di Stefano

Sculptor Alberto Montorfano



Edoardo Marchese, Cecilia Rosa, Lorenzo Di Stefano, Alberto Montorfano (Sculptor)

State passages.

A monument for migrants in Lampedusa

Abstract

Lampedusa is in the contemporary inextricably linked to the phenomenon of migration, as well as to the cathartic need for its monumentalization. Its territory, by geographic location and morphological characteristics lends itself to paradigmatic representation of the drama of the exodus. The design proposal for the memorial is configured as a landscape system capable of entering into a relationship both with the island, calibrating the insertion of architectural devices so that they interact with the territory, as well as with the already existing monumental apparatus. This project intends to connect the visitor to contemplation and memory through the spatial experience of several elements that, put in a system, make up the memorial: the *threshold*, the *path*, the *landing*.

Keywords

Spatial narratives — Archetypal dualities — Tectonic-Stereotomic — Spatial monumentality

The Island Theater Of Europe

Boundaries territories and narratives

Midway between Europe and Africa, the small island of Lampedusa, the largest of the Pelagic Islands, is the southernmost inhabited land in all of Italy. Farther south than Tunis and Algiers, Lampedusa's landscape is marked by transitional features between Mediterranean and desert climates and the incessant blowing of winds. Despite the name Lampedusa, of uncertain etymology, now almost automatically associated with human history on the territory, the island, was almost uninhabited until modernity (it was colonized by small French and Maltese nuclei in the second half of the eighteenth century). The land remained on the fringes of History for centuries, serving as a simple stopover for vessels in need of shelter and supply along Phoenician, Greek, Roman and Arab nautical routes; of the passage of these peoples some traces of settlements and especially underwater wrecks remain today.

Its easy-landing status, a condition that continues into contemporary times, seems almost to be an intrinsic feature of its morphogenesis: scientifically classified as a *horst* (a German term for a portion of the Earth's crust raised above a fault system in structural geology), it is configured as an anomaly: a portion of Europe on the African submarine *plateau*. This dual and contradictory feature typifies the island of Lampedusa: geologically African and administratively Italian. This contradiction is outlined as the hinge upon which we set up an experiential reflection that aims at highlighting the ambiguity between physical place and political space, between material limit and symbolic boundary, between stasis and path.

Fig. 1

On the previous page: Scale model of the Shell - Opera Viva: mixed technique.

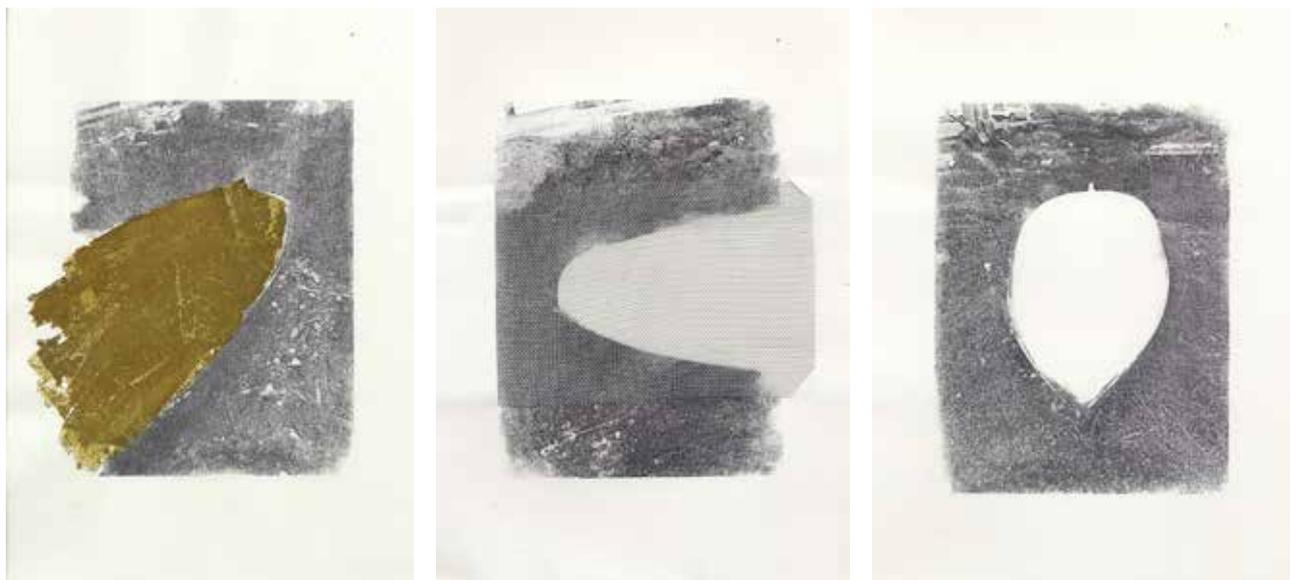


Fig. 2-3-4
Study on the void: mixed media and collage on paper.

Fig. 5
Environmental imaginative study of the Excavation - Dead Work: fusage on paper.

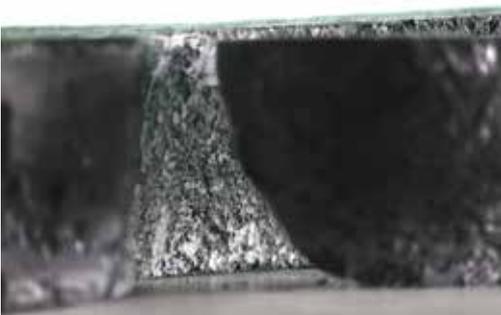
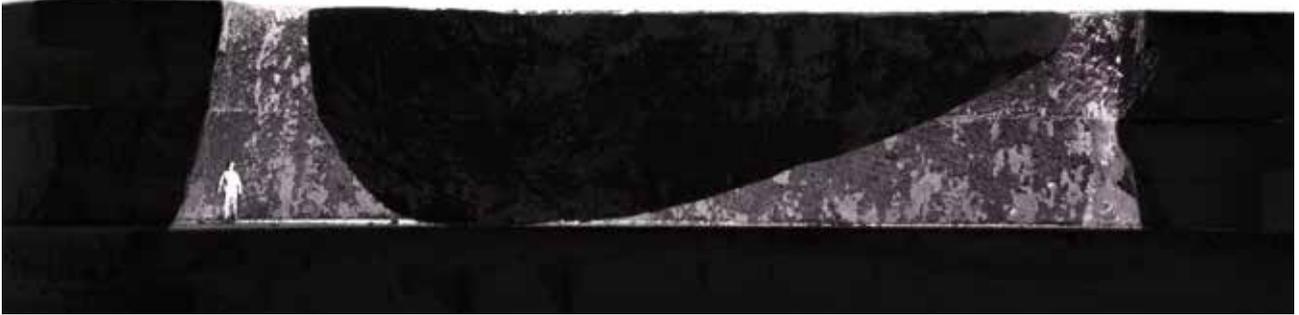


Fig. 6
Environmental imaginative study of the Shell - Opera Viva: fusage on paper



Figg. 7-8-9-10-11

Scale model of the Excavation -
Opera Morta: mixed media.



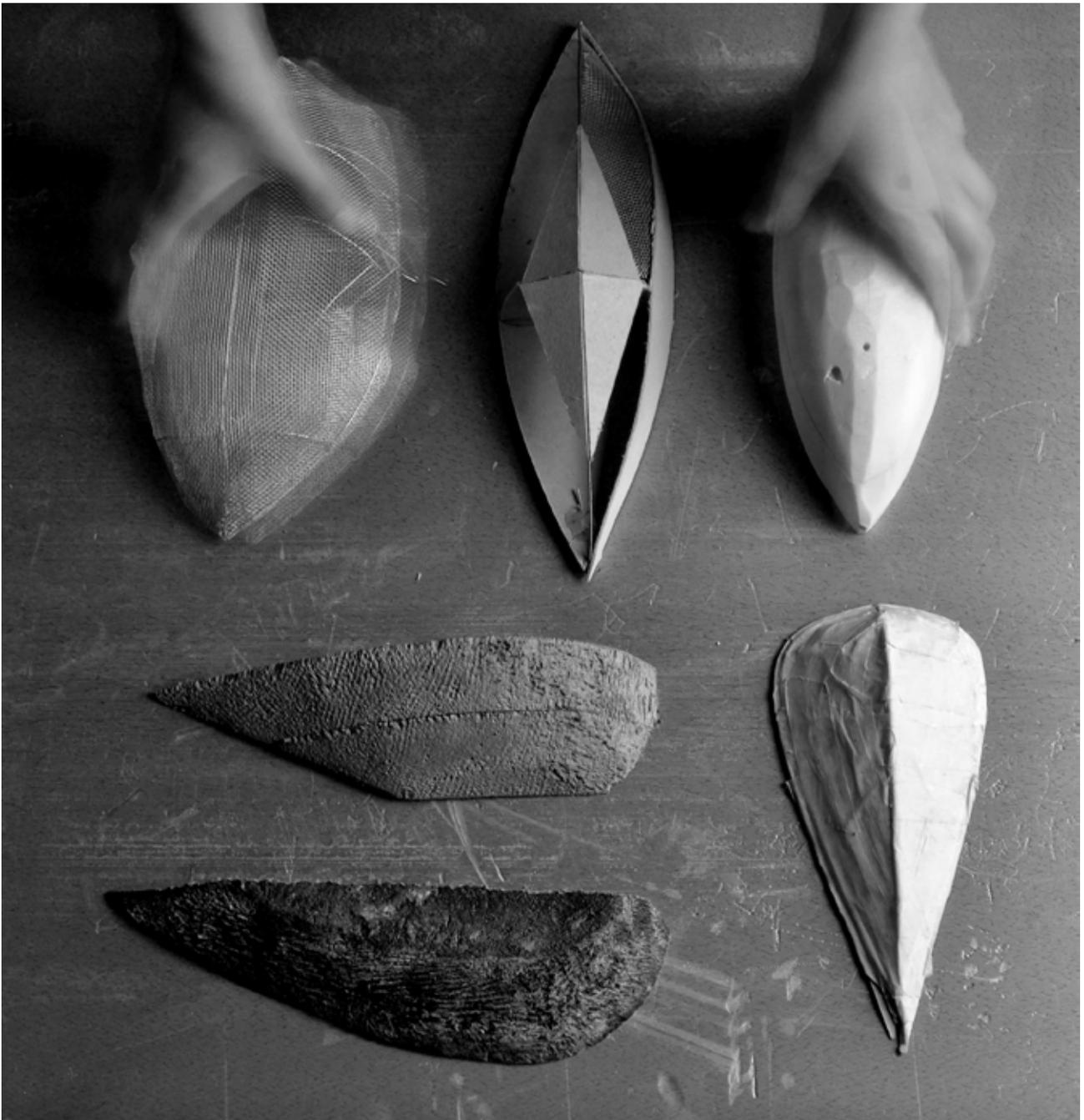
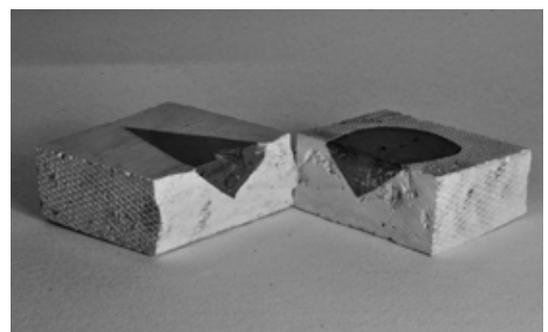


Fig. 12
Path study model: plaster and gold leaf.

Figg. 13-14
Scale model of the Shell - Opera Viva: mixed media; Form study model (Shell and Excavation): plaster.



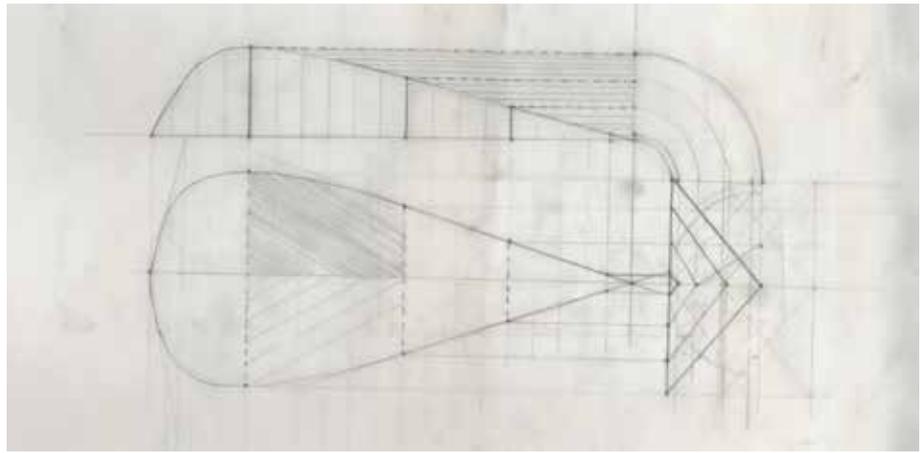


Fig. 15
Geometric shape construction:
graphite on paper.

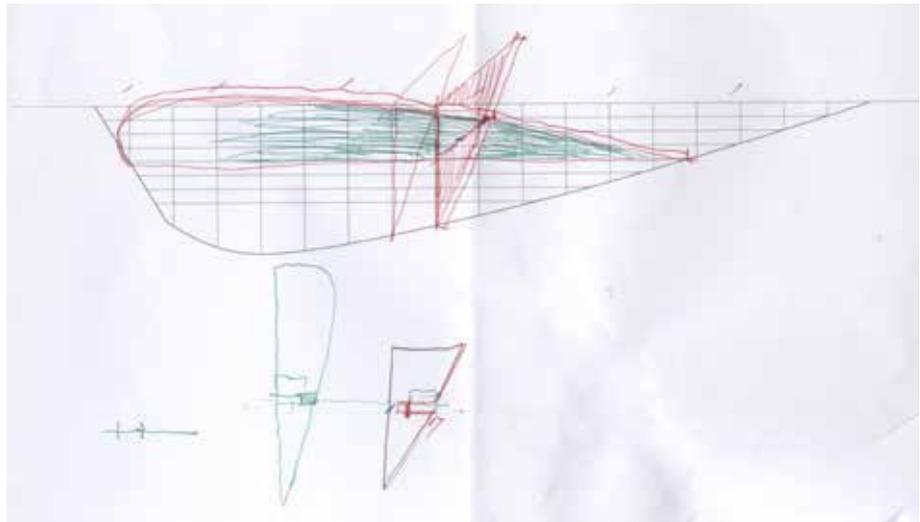
Morphologically, the island has the appearance of a barren limestone platform outcropping from the water etched by cliffs. In fact, Lampedusa, originally a forest, was deforested in the mid-nineteenth century in order to accommodate cultivation under support of Ferdinand II of Bourbon; the island lost its rich native flora to rapid desertification: crops, exposed to the Mistral and Sirocco, lasted very little. The material and historical record dictates that we must confront a landscape characterized by marked orographic trends but devoid of significant anthropogenic signs. Today Lampedusa is above all a symbol: it is the border between Africa and Europe, it is the tiny threshold to cross, in the total emptiness of the sea, to access the vast benefits of the Old Continent.

Its status as an *ex-clave* frontier has led it over the years to be at the center of contention and violence: the first landing, of 71 people, occurred in October 1992, six years after the attempted Libyan missile attack targeting the U.S. LORAN military base on the island. Over the next three decades, hundreds of thousands of people arrived on Lampedusa at the end of mass exoduses and tens of thousands died trying to reach it¹. By August 2023, one hundred thousand migrants had landed over the first eight months of that year. The data takes on an even more significant and dramatic proportion when compared with the island's population: just six thousand residents.

This human density has led over the years to two significant types of spatial modifications of the territory. On the one hand, reorganization and provision of voluminous and temporary emergency reception facilities has been necessary. On the other, a new contemporary *monumental system* was gradually established, adding new traces to those only two that had been there so far: the sharp incision of the airport runway and the Cartesian grid of the urban agglomeration to the south.

In 2008, Mimmo Paladino's Gate of Europe was inaugurated, and currently the Natural Theater of the Quarry (connected to a new Migration Memorial) by Vincenzo Latina is about to open. Renato Rizzi (2017), meanwhile, has imagined for Lampedusa the Solomon's Cathedral, a majestic underground space of recollection without religious vocation dedicated to the tragedies connected to expatriations.

Lampedusa is thus projected into the contemporary, and into the future, not only as a land tied to the ongoing migratory phenomenon, but as a narrative space of the historical event: in the attempt to understand it now, and remember it later. Its arid land is the raw and unavoidable material through which to convey new narratives: an ideal cathartic stage, where to paradigmatically represent the drama of all exoduses to Europe.

**Fig. 16**

Geometric construction of model surfaces: colored pen on printed paper.

Actors and actions in space

Diderot from *The Encyclopédie* imagines, in his bourgeois drama *The Natural Son*, having a group of chosen theatricals settle in the Lampedusa of the time, lacking residents, which would make it a laboratory of experimentation, aiming at a radical change in the way of doing theater. Diderot was probably fascinated by Lampedusa's liminal condition as a fundamental quality for the encounter of different cultures. This welcoming attitude is captured in the play by the ironic figure of the island hermit Clement, who in the island's small church

had consecrated one chapel to Mohammed and the other to the Holy Virgin. If he saw a Christian ship coming he would light the lamp to the Virgin. If the vessel was Mohammedan, he would immediately extinguish the lamp of the Virgin and light one for Mohammed (Diderot D. 1757, 2020).

This passage, which for Rizzi manifested the absence of a secular place of contemplation on the island, generally describes the need to constitute a logical spatial structure capable of addressing culturally heterogeneous audiences, yet without being generic, ambiguous or grotesque as Clement's character may appear. On the contrary, the project attempts to highlight and unmask the ambiguities of reality by revealing a layering of senses conveyed exclusively through the experience of space.

With this in mind, this monument symbolizes the dual narrative of, on the one hand, migrants and islanders who, over time, have given rise to a shifting, nationless community governed by the rules of rescue and welcome. On the other hand, within institutional arenas, cultures and people are numbers to be managed, relocated, and buried by exerting material and symbolic forces that come far beyond physical boundaries. The complex totality of these actions of the bodies, and on the bodies, of migrants continually leaves on the territory of Lampedusa traces, objects and forms that the operation of monumentalization resemantizes to the status of symbols capable of staging and narrating this strabic dichotomy.

The Monument

Duality

The design proposal for the memorial is configured as a landscape system capable of relating both to the landscape of the island, calibrating the insertion of architectural devices so that they interact with the territory, and

Fig. 17

Giuseppe Saverio Poli, illustration of a *Pinna Nobilis* in *Testacea utriusque Siciliae eorumque historia et anatomicae tabulis aeneis illustrata*, 1791-1795 (p. 96).

**Fig. 18**

Sketches of study of the light element: graphite on paper.



to the monumental apparatus in place. The project also intends to connect the visitor with contemplation and memory through the spatial experience of a calibrated sequence of elements that, when put together, make up the memorial: the *shell*, the *path*, the *excavation*.

The proposal is articulated as a diptych of complementary elements (a *shell* and an *excavation*), and between them a *path* capable at the same time of separating and correlating them. The *shell*, the incipit on the surface, is configured as a catalyzing element capable of attracting and simultaneously projecting toward the extended monumental sequence. The *route* winds from north to south in the barren territory of the island following trajectories suggested by the shapes and irregularities of the landscape. In the last episode of the *excavation*, the architecture becomes hypogeal as a bare excavation in the rock, beyond the sea, in the belly of the Rabbit Island.

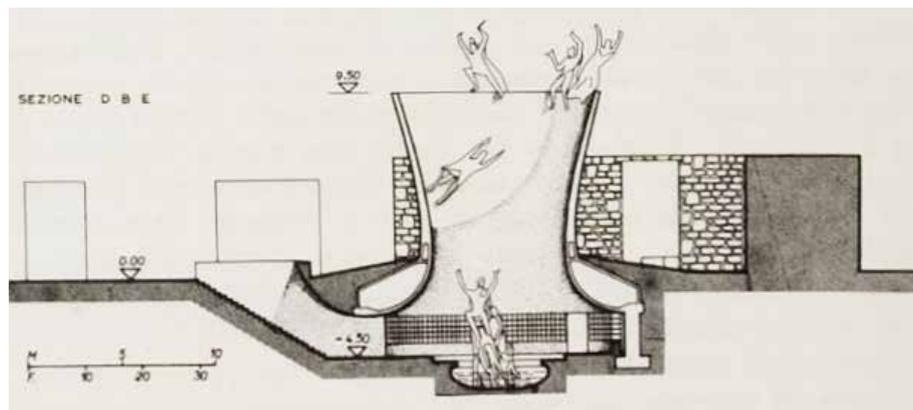
The inversion of the two extremes of the monument, which are composed of the same inverted form, stages the reversal of a dual migratory condition. An external duality in which the affair is alternately shouted and concealed, punctually monitored and at the same time poorly investigated as a systemic condition. Just as dual is also the internal condition of those who migrate on the boundary between survival and death: the very drama of the journey is located halfway between air and water and materially in the hulls of boats, in which the waterline separates, according to the nautical code, the *living work* (submerged surface) from the *dead work* (emerged surface). These inversions and reversals are reaffirmed by the architectural precisions of the devices: in the first part convex tectonic forms, fragile and

**Fig. 19**

Walter De Maria, *The Lighting Field*, New Mexico (USA) 1977.

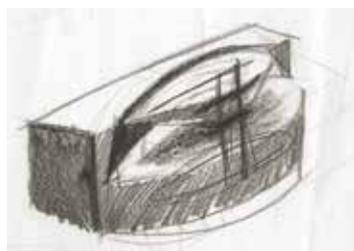
Fig. 20

Piero Bottoni, Monumento ossario ai caduti partigiani, Bologna (Italia) 1959.
Archivio Piero Bottoni, DASTU, Politecnico di Milano.



airy, bright with veils and light elements; in the second part a stereotomic, hypogeal space in semi-darkness, carved from a deep excavation in the stone that takes shape from a concave stone device.

The path takes a direction starting from the first light sculptural element; the device sits on a rise from which one can glimpse in the distance, and barely, the end of the monumental sequence. The prevailing direction of the monumental system does not exclude a recursiveness of the experience and the potential for it to be walked through backwards.

**Fig. 21**

Processual volumetric study of the Excavation: graphite on paper

Shell – Living work

This initial element serves as an activator through which the position of other parts is recognized and is composed of perishable materials, textiles and wooden elements, which need to be taken care of so that they can continue to communicate, in a constant act of responsibility to memory: a *living work*² to be kept as such. The fragility and perishability of these elements recalls the fragility of life exposed to the weather and the dangers of travel. Moreover, the notion of the memorial as a static and imperishable object, to be celebrated once and for all in regular formal recurrences, is to be questioned. The first element, essential to begin the monumental spatial sequence, is meant to express in its stages (including decay), the human capacity to keep awareness and memory alive.

This device is composed of an aerial shell supported by three slender sloping wooden poles, conveying the precariousness of the migratory condition. The organic and textile materials that make up the shell allow sunlight to filter through the cover. The shape of this “sailhouse,” whose lying indicates the direction of the path in the landscape system, refers abstractly both to the nautical world, recalling the upturned hulls of the “boat graveyard” present on the island and the sails of ships deformed by the winds, but also to a primal form of the *shell* understood as “home,” “casing.” In shellfish, widespread in several species in the Mediterranean, the inhabited shell represents not only a means of shelter, but also contributes to that duality in which, again, the animal exists in the world: composed of both living and dead parts, half soft organic and half hard inert substance.

This first element, located at one of the highest points on the island (approximately 107 m above sea level) and at the top of the valley of Cala Pulcino (the most prominent on the south coast), constitutes the apex of the slow system of descent to the *excavation*. The structure is the first metaphor – shelter, which welcomes but presupposes the act of *leaving* – of the migrant who leaves his shelter-shell, albeit precarious, and exposes his body (as a soft part), to the weather and uncertainties of exodus. At the same time, the visitor, sheltered from the sun in the dusty Lampedusa land-

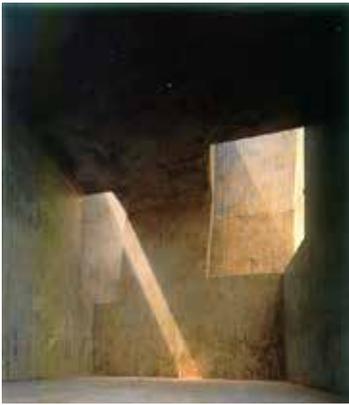


Fig. 22
Eduardo Chillida, *Plastico Mount Tindaya*, Fuerteventura (Spain) 1995

scape, can begin to recognize the first poles of the *path*, which connects the two ends of the memorial, denoted by shape by the fragile shelter.

Route

Having exited the shell, the visitor's "migration" thus begins. A system of punctual elements scattered across the landscape helps with orientation: a sequence of vertical cylindrical poles, made of brushed aluminum, indicates the route by reflecting the colors and shapes of the landscape in an approximate, blurred manner.

On the Lampedusa territory, stripped of most of its trees, the poles constitute a landscape-scale reference system. The slender and isolated elements opaquely reflect the territory, placing themselves in a relationship of mimesis and dissimilarity at the same time, so as to make the walk an experience, at the same time, orderly and alienating: «Only what was capable of dissimulation in the beginning can appear» (Didi-Huberman G. 2011). The complex of poles represents to the user what the stars meant to sailors who have sailed the Mediterranean since the earliest times: an immutable and abstract system of orientation, yet not easily perceived.

The rods are placed to be spotted little by little, walking along the valley that leads from the upper part of the island to Rabbit Beach: a path of steady descent that gradually reveals the last component of the memorial, the *excavation*.

Excavation - Dead work

The route takes advantage of the circumvolutions of the natural valley to only partially reveal to the visitor the last element of the memorial. This is presented as a double dry incision in the terrain of Rabbit Island. The rocky outcrop is also a significant site for the representation of the migration tragedy: near this small rock, one of the worst migratory shipwrecks in the Mediterranean occurred on October 3, 2013, in which at least 368 people lost their lives and 20 people went missing.

In this place, the memorial is configured as a rock carved element, reachable only by walking along the short stretch of sea that separates the small island from Lampedusa. The lanceolate shape of the veil-shell is reversed to take on the appearance of a large stone object embedded in the earth and resting in one spot. The object is made visitable through the void containing it and remains accessible by a single ramp placed on the longitude in the barycenter of the sculptural element.

The submerged bulk of the monumental mass is perceptible only by entering its hollow womb. The space, in half-light and bathed in constant grazing light, is characterized by the strong materiality of its stone. The last moment of the memorial is a hypogeal spatial device where the heaviness and immobility of the stone geometrically and allegorically form a *dead work*³, perceptible only from its outside, out of water, hewed by subtraction from the ground itself.

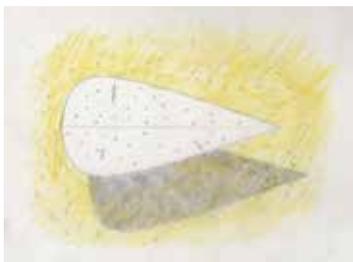
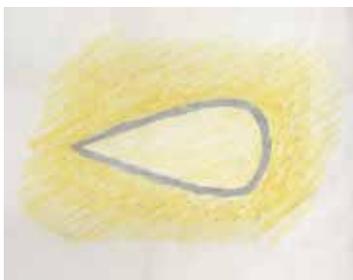


Fig. 23-24
Planimetry of the Excavation - Dead Work: graphite on paper; Planivolumetric of the Shell - Living Work: graphite on paper.

Fig. 25

Perspective views of the route
sequence: mixed media.

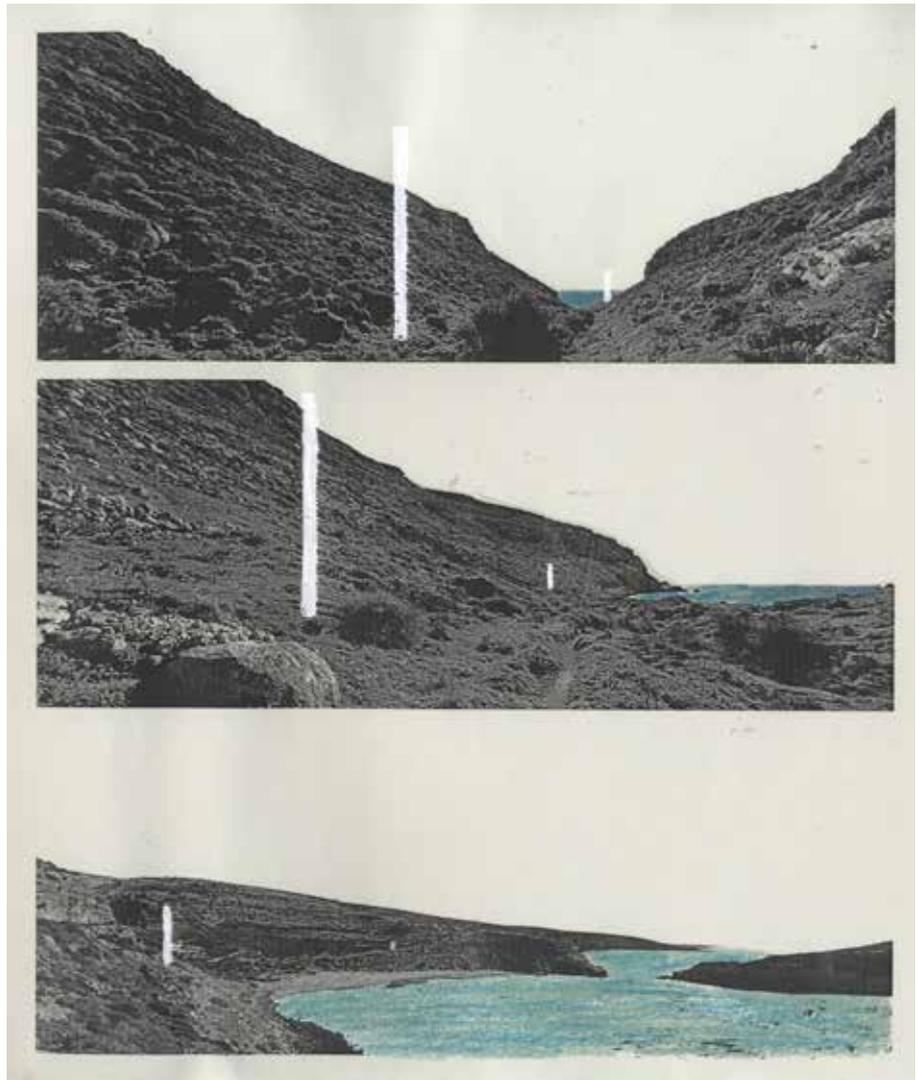
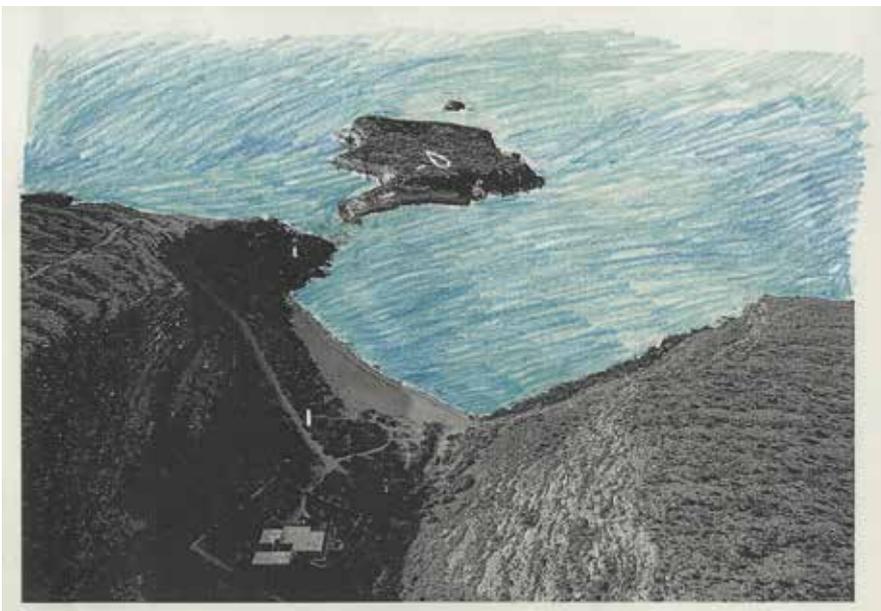


Fig. 26

Perspective view of the route
and the Excavation: mixed media.



Notes

¹ ANSA “New wave of landings in Lampedusa, towards 100 thousand migrants since the beginning of the year” Agency news 05/08/2023 <https://www.ansa.it/sito/notizie/cronaca/2023/08/04/nuova-ondata-di-migranti-a-lampedusa-verso-quota-100mila>. [accessed 07/08/2023]

² In Italian *opera viva* (living work) is also the name of the part of the hull submerged by water.

³ In Italian *opera morta* (dead work) is also the name of the part of the hull not wetted by water.

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Cecilia Rosa is an architect and a PhD candidate at Roma Tre University in the PhD program "Architecture, City, and Landscape" (38th cycle). In 2016, she graduated with honors in Architecture from the Polytechnic University of Milan with the thesis titled *Le forme dell'ascolto - Proposta di ri-uso per il convento di Monchique a Porto* (thesis nominated for the New Graduates Award of the Milan Order of Architects and project selected for the Young Talent Architecture Award 2016). In 2019, she obtained a second-level Master's degree from IUAV in Venice in "Digital Architecture." Since 2016, she has collaborated with the STARTT studio, working on projects of various scales, and since 2019, she has been a teaching assistant at the Department of Architecture at Roma Tre University. Since 2021, she has been writing for the *Giornale dell'Architettura*.

Edoardo Marchese is an architect and PhD in "Architecture. Theories and Project" from La Sapienza University. During his studies, he spent two years at TU Munich and ETSAB in Barcelona. He graduated with honors in 2018 under the supervision of F. Lambertucci, R. Flores, and E. Prats, and received his PhD with honors in 2022 with the thesis *The Eloquent Dimension of Space. Italian Trajectories of Architecture and Art 1946-1971*, supervised by F. Lambertucci. He is currently an adjunct professor of the course *Atelier of Temporary Design* for the master's degree in DBE at the University Federico II of Naples. His research focuses on the study of interior architecture, monuments, and installations in Italy and Spain.

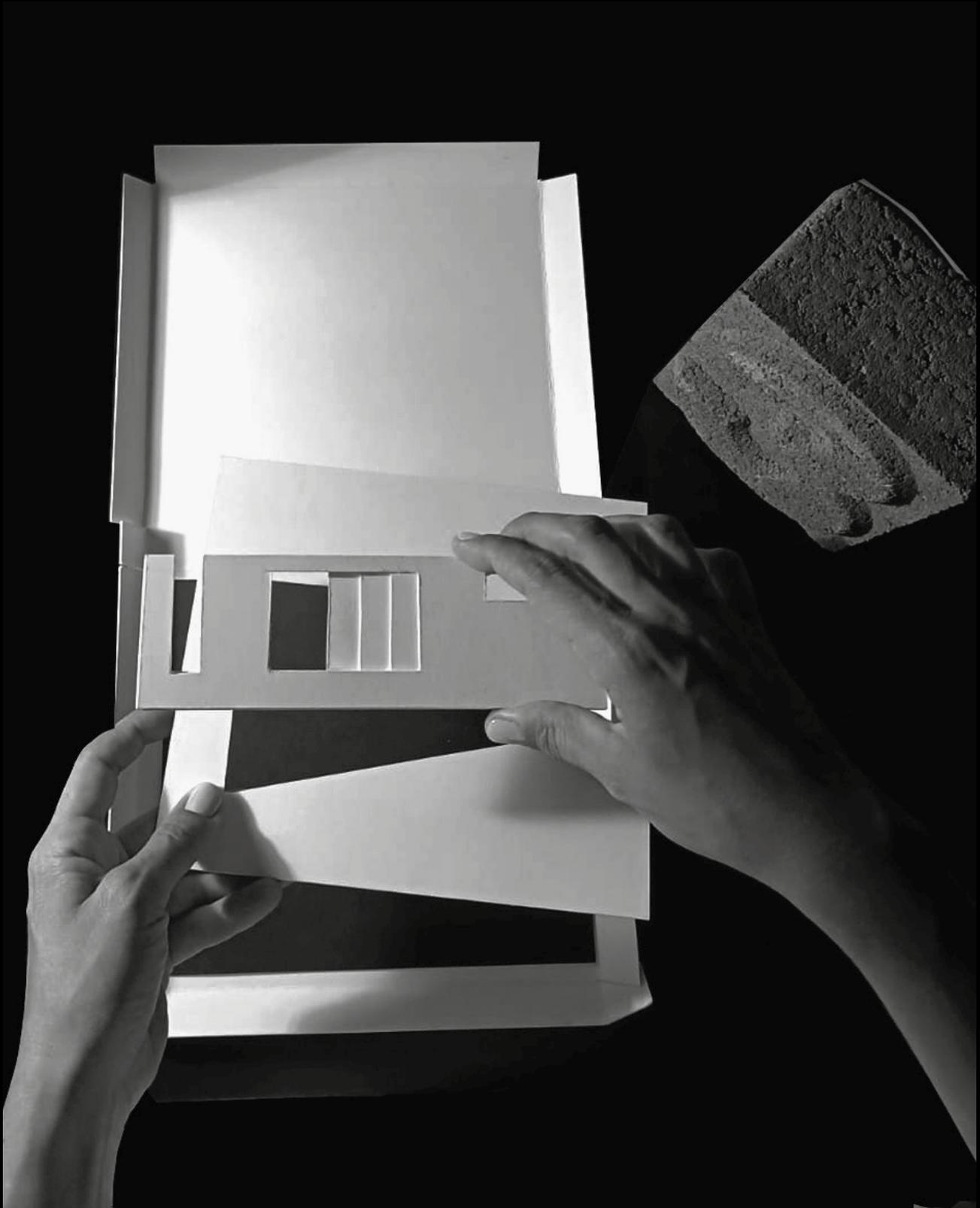
Lorenzo Di Stefano is an architect and PhD in "Architectural Design" from the Department of Architecture at Roma Tre University. He graduated with honors in 2017 under the supervision of Prof. A. Metta and Prof. V. Palmieri, and obtained his PhD in 2023 with the thesis *Overwriting the Contemporary City, the Relationship between Spatial Structures and Architectural Objects as Design Strategies*, supervised by Prof. M. Burrascano and Prof. Giovanni Caudo. Since 2018, he has been engaged in teaching support activities at the Department of Architecture at Roma Tre University. In 2018, he was a studio assistant to artist Alessandro Piangiamore, and during 2020-21, he was a consultant for the Teatro di Roma Association.

Alberto Montorfano is an artist and sculptor. After graduating from art high school, he attended NABA and the Brera Academy, graduating in 2009. Alongside his artistic research, he teaches Graphic and Pictorial Techniques at art high school and Engraving Techniques at NABA. A finalist for the 2021 Michetti Award, his recent exhibitions include: SPAZIOTRACCIA (Hendrik Christian Andersen Museum, Rome, December 2022-2023, curated by Collettivo LUISS Master of Art XII); ARTEAM CUP 2022 [finalist] (Palazzo del Commissario, Fortezza del Priamar, Savona, 2022-2023); LA FONTE DELL'OPERA (Rome, Consorzio La Giacinta, 2022, curated by D. Silvioli); NIENTE TORNA [solo show] (Rehearsal, Milan, 2022); MATERIA NOVA ROMA: Latest Generations Compared (Modern Art Gallery of Rome Capital, 2021-2022, curated by M. Mininni); TERRANUOTARE [solo show] (Rome, Fondazione De Gasperi, 2015).

Motto OLTREMARE 35°30'01.7"N 12°36'19.4" E

Architectural project Annalucia D'Erchia

Sculptor Giorgio Milani



Annalucia D'Erchia, Giorgio Milani (Sculptor)
Oltremare 35°30'01.7"N 12°36'19.4"E.
A monument-memorial in the Mediterranean Sea

Abstract

The possibility of interpreting the theme of the monument/memorial in the Mediterranean Sea by imagining it as a collective place, a new square, a centre of life, meeting, welcome and dialogue for the city of Lampedusa has led to the choices and the shared work presented here. Like an uninterrupted frieze, a succession of graphic signs and letters – in the alphabets and languages that inhabit our sea – chase each other, rearranging themselves into words, and then into sentences, periods and stories, along a low podium, punctured. A high seat, resting on a sheet of water that, questioning the size of the *belvedere* space, seeks relations with the city, recognising its ties and following its rules, imagining, a room without a roof, on dry land, safe but stretching out towards the sea.

Key Words

Lampedusa — Square — Memorial

The very etymon of the words monument/memorial evokes the boundaries within which this reflection develops, both as a theoretical speculation and as a verification of the project, with its unambiguous reference to the wider theme of memory.

Monument, from *mònere*, to make known, «pertains to anything that serves to commemorate a great event or illustrious personality, and is used especially for buildings»¹; Memorial, a from *memorialem*, pertains to memory, often implies *librum* or its diminutive *libellum*, refers to a piece of writing or an explanatory and detailed note accompanying an instance.²

Among the exercises on the theme of the monument/memorial – which reveal the history of architecture and art – this is certainly not the place for outlining the close and non-forced relation existing between the form and the thought that creates it, between a building and the society it interprets, between architecture and the values it chooses to convey in order to build memory³. However, the act of remembering, implied by both terms, has always relied on signs and symbols, words and representations, and through a positive and balanced dialogue between architecture and art it can make concrete and visible to everyone that which is no longer visible or concrete, and can give shape to something that not only links the present to the past but also becomes a place where thinking of a past event reverberates as much in the present as in the future.

It is with this attitude of mind that we have begun to question ourselves on the significance of the theme of the monument/memorial in our time, and to think about how the memory of that journey interrupted just a few miles off the coast of Lampedusa on 3 October of ten years ago can be interpreted through close dialogue between art and architecture. All this

Fig. 1

On the previous page: Oltremare 35°30'01.7"N 12°36'19.4"E; study model scale 1:200.

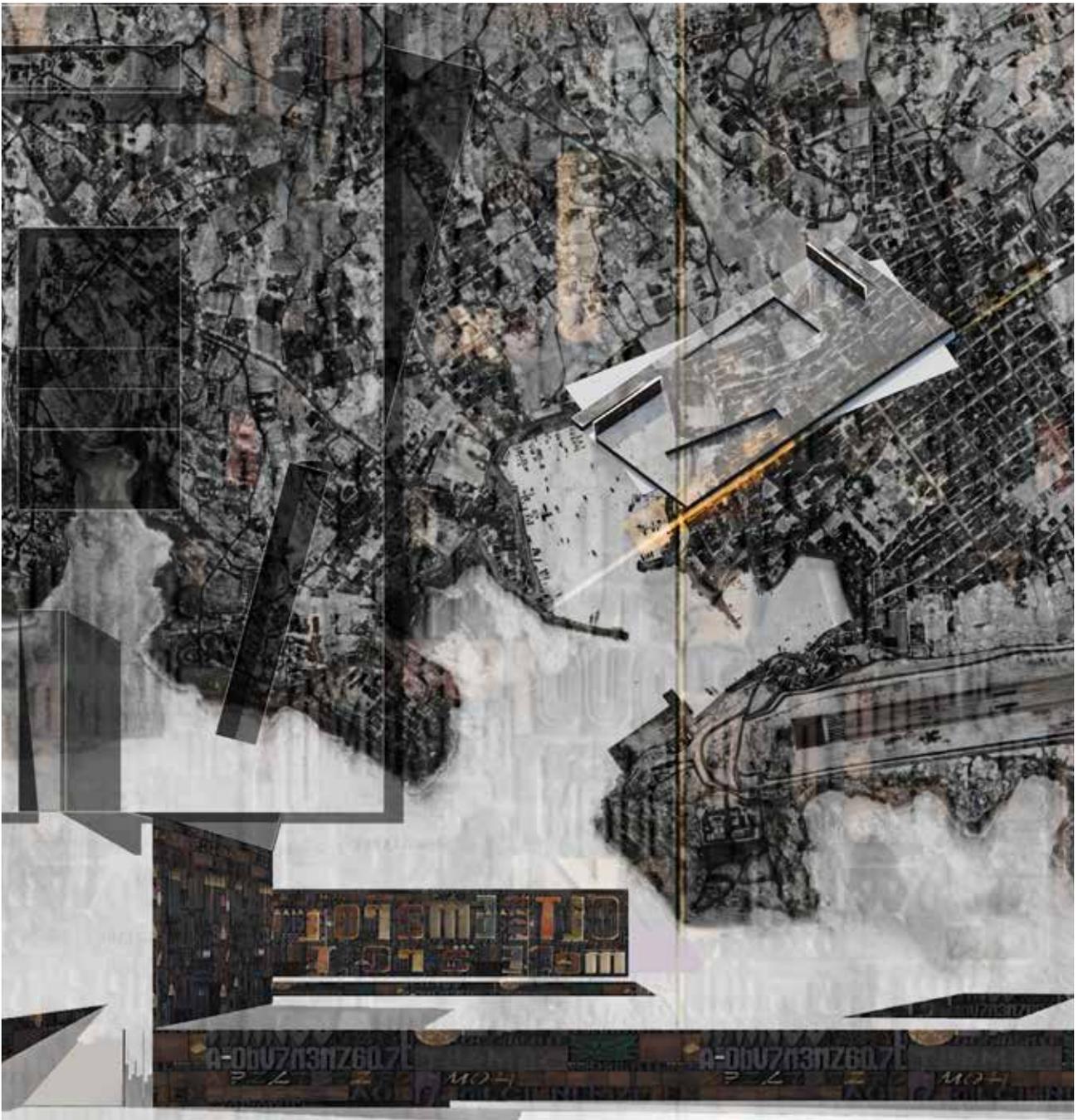


Fig. 2
Oltremare 35°30'0.7"N 12°36'19.4"E;
Project sketch.



Fig. 3
Masterplan.

while being harshly aware that the memory we chose to interpret would not end with that tragedy but would be an echo of all the journeys of the many people who in their lives never had the good fortune to reach *another shore*, and would be a witness to all the journeys and events of which the Mediterranean sea has always been and still is the setting, for different reasons and with different outcomes⁴ Sometimes, the sea is benevolent and willing to accompany those who make it to reach the other shore.

For this reason we have chosen not to forget these tragedies which take place at sea and to remember them through the lively and bright hope of the *Percorso della Pace*. This Path, inaugurated in Lampedusa in 2021 as part *Snapshots from the borders* connects twelve symbolic places on the island – from Mimmo Paladino's *Porta d'Europa* to Arnaldo Pomodoro's *Obelisco Cassodoro* – to design a collective place, a new square, a place of life, meeting, reception and dialogue in the town of Lampedusa.

It is a secular *Thirteenth Station* that draws its evocative power from reference to the Gospel. Freed from its Catholic meaning, it preserves the sacredness of the gesture of deposition. The body is forcibly displaced and thus experiences separation from its homeland and hopes to be received into a new embrace, and thus crosses the Mediterranean and reaches a shore, in a landing that is only one moment in a lifetime.

At the end of the axis of Via Roma, Lampedusa's main street which runs at higher elevation towards the Favalaro pier – an artificial place that soothes the water of the city's New Port, where newly disembarked migrants are gathered – a low stone podium is found that rests on a thin sheet of water. A low podium, like a high seat, draws the shape of a wide raft within the wider and shapeless *belvedere*, in a continuum with the built-up city, thus confirming its direction. The flat surface shelves towards a small arena

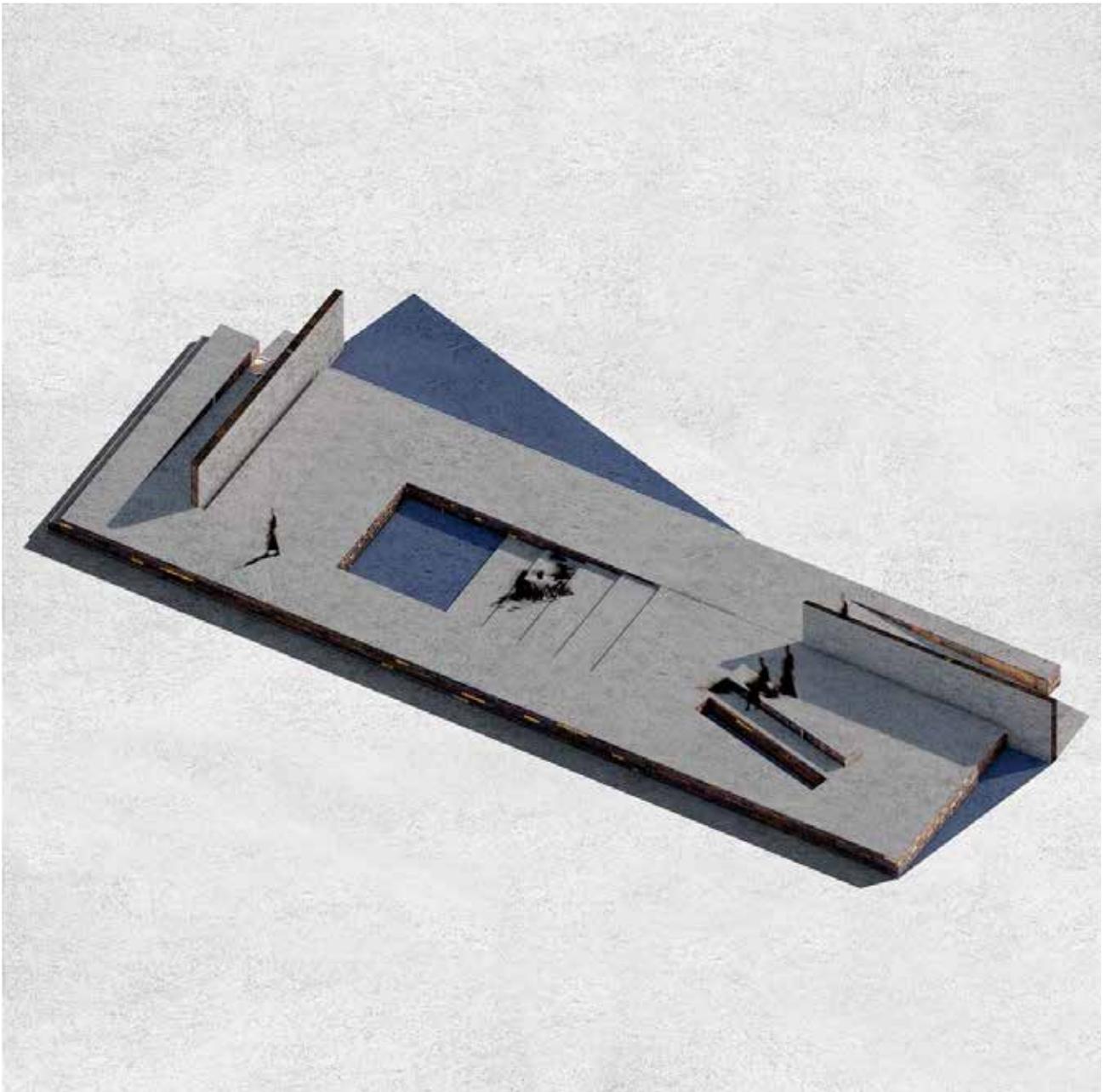
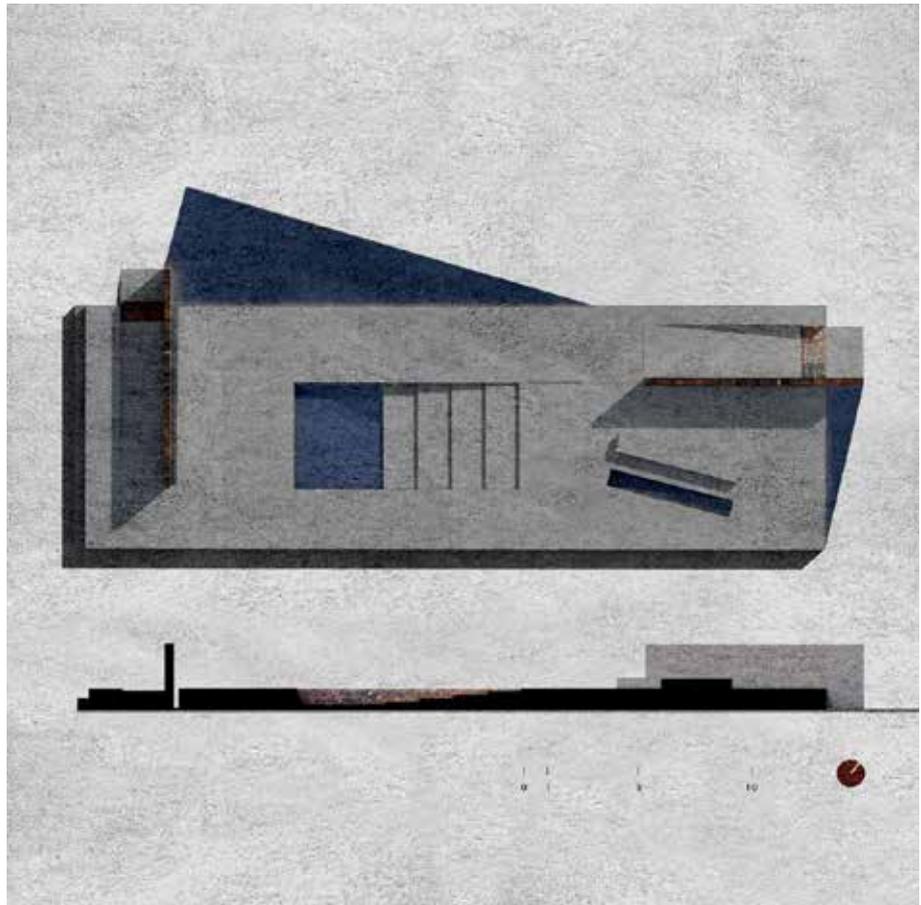


Fig. 4
Project axonometric view.

Fig. 5

Planivolumetric view and longitudinal section of the project.



that punctures it to host city events, or sinks into a long, narrow gash in the ground, and also becomes a seat, by subtraction. The solid surface, although punctured, still floats on that sheet of water which rotates until resting parallel to the embrace of the harbour.

A low podium that gets lived in. It welcomes those who pass through it, those who choose to stop in it, those who, almost unwillingly, decide to come together and build memory in it: this is what makes the podium exist. The height of the podium is conquered by ramps that are defined or concealed by as many blades, vertical surfaces dotted with graphic symbols and signs evoking the potential of innumerable combinations of words. In the very genetics of *memorial*, the word breaks down into its elementary parts and inhabits these vertical elements that, like a room without a roof, furnish this safe space on land stretching out towards the sea and defines its measure. They are liquid surfaces, with decorated cross-sections, which rise just as waves do, and feed the *Mare Nostrum*⁵ on which the podium rests.

A low podium as a contemporary *Piano ad uso collettivo* and knows and shares and has the flavour of Giò Pomodoro's work. Since 1977 the artist had organised a triangular portion of the urban fabric of Ales (Sardinia) into a space where human life can unfold and collective memory be built; in Giò Pomodoro's interpretation, as well as that of Gino Valle in Udine – to commemorate the Resistance and deportation – and that of Aldo Rossi – in Milan for the monument to Sandro Pertini and in Segrate for commemorating the Partisans – the monument in memory of Antonio Gramsci became an opportunity to envisage and build a space to be crossed and lived in, « not only to preserve the memory but also to transform mourning into works for humankind» (Rizzi, 2014), conceived « as a quiet square [...] , a place where to meet [...]» (Rossi, 1988).

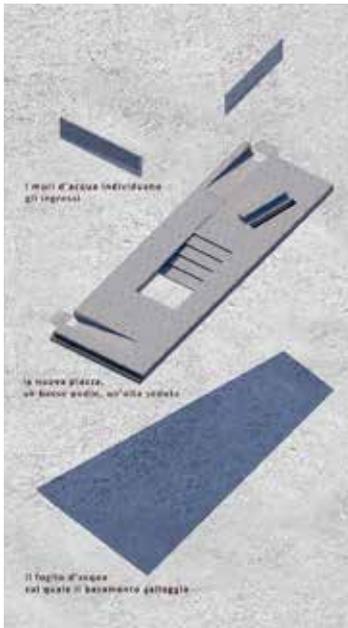


Fig. 6
The elements that compose the square.

The letters and signs that churn in the waves and scatter throughout the steady flow of water, gradually gather as they reach the plinth section. Along its perimeter – about 80 linear metres – the signs begin to chase each other in an orderly manner, forming an uninterrupted frieze where they join together in words, and words in sentences, and sentences in stories.

«What is the Mediterranean?» – one reads as one reaches the new square, either from Via Roma or from the transversal path that connects it to another public space, a children's playground hosting sculptor Lucio Olivieri's *Insieme*. «A thousand things at once» – one continues to read, to walk, and their eyes continue to move, and together with the eyes, their bodies also continue to move in space, a space that before the proposed intervention had no dimensions or definition but now identifies, just as if it were an atrium, the entrance to the building of *Museo archeologico delle Isole Pelagie e il Museo della fiducia e del dialogo del Mediterraneo*. «Not one landscape, but landscapes without number.» The text runs, pierces the damp blade, the letters fall to the ground, meet the sloping surface of the ramp and follow it to return in the blade cross-section.

«Not one sea, but a succession of seas. Not one civilisation, but a number of civilisations, superimposed one on top of the other. To travel in the Mediterranean region is to find the Roman world in Lebanon, prehistory in Sardinia, Greek cities in Sicily, the Arab presence in Spain, and Turkish Islam in Yugoslavia. It is to reach far back in time [...]» the cultural complexity that has always enlivened the Mediterranean and which is enshrined here in the building that stands in front of the sea, becomes almost a written invitation, a caption. «It is to encounter ancient things that still live on in juxtaposition with the ultra-modern [...]» A moment of rest, a long seat carved into the plinth overlooks the harbour, goes beyond the built-in city leans out to the open sea. «It is to plunge into the archaism of insular societies, and at the same time to wonder at the extreme youthfulness of very old cities which are exposed to all the winds of culture and profit and which for centuries have kept watch over the sea and lived on its resources. Back at the starting point, ready to board the raft or land in Lampedusa.

Che cos'è il Mediterraneo? What is the Mediterranean?, and again *Qu'est-ce que la Méditerranée?*, ¿*Qué es el Mediterráneo?*, *Τι είναι η Μεσόγειος*; *طسوتملا رحبل او ام*. The question opening this long reflection by Fernand Braudel, chosen to narrate this sea which is a means that separates and also, at the same time, a device that unites, resonates in all the languages that populate the Mediterranean, that are spoken and heard across it, from our Italian to the English of Malta, from the French of former colonies in Northern Africa to the Spanish of the Iberian peninsula, to Turkish, Greek and even Arabic, languages and customs that over the centuries, as Braudel pointed out, have contributed to define the complex stratigraphic cross-section of the culture of this part of the world. Latin letters, so precious to Giorgio Milani who employs them in his works – compositions of movable typefaces or, as in this case, albeit with a variation on the theme, *tozzetto* tiles, self-blocking polished concrete blocks with alphabets impressed on them – are conceived and designed by the artist for a series of public works, the *Poetari*, which inhabit squares and streets all over the world. As per the artist's design, the individual blocks used, all 14 cm in height but different in length, occupy the minimum space needed for each individual letter, punctuation mark, spacing between one compound word and the next, and they follow one another and stack up to define the height of the new 84 cm raised square, which geometrically takes up pre-existing

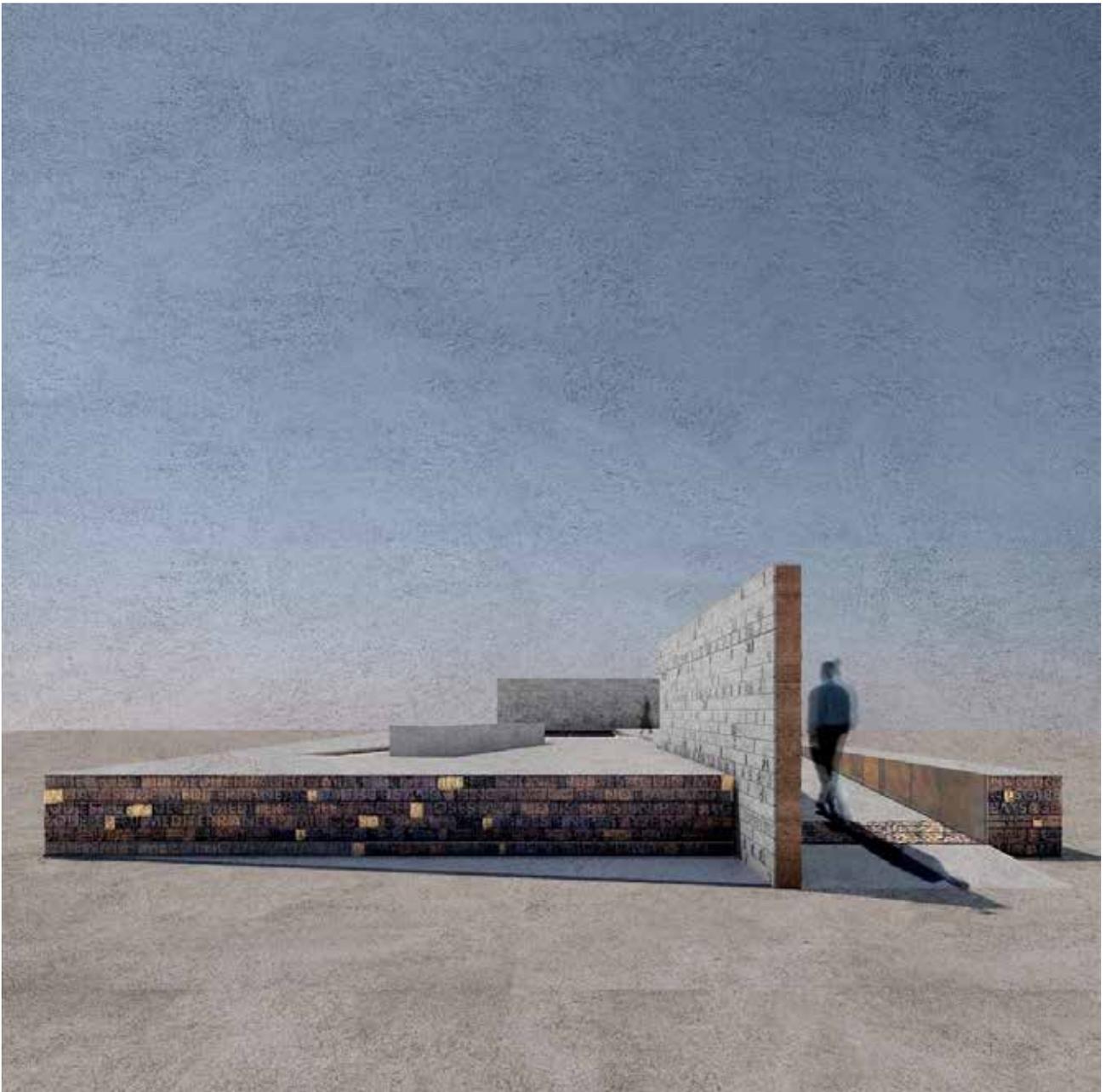
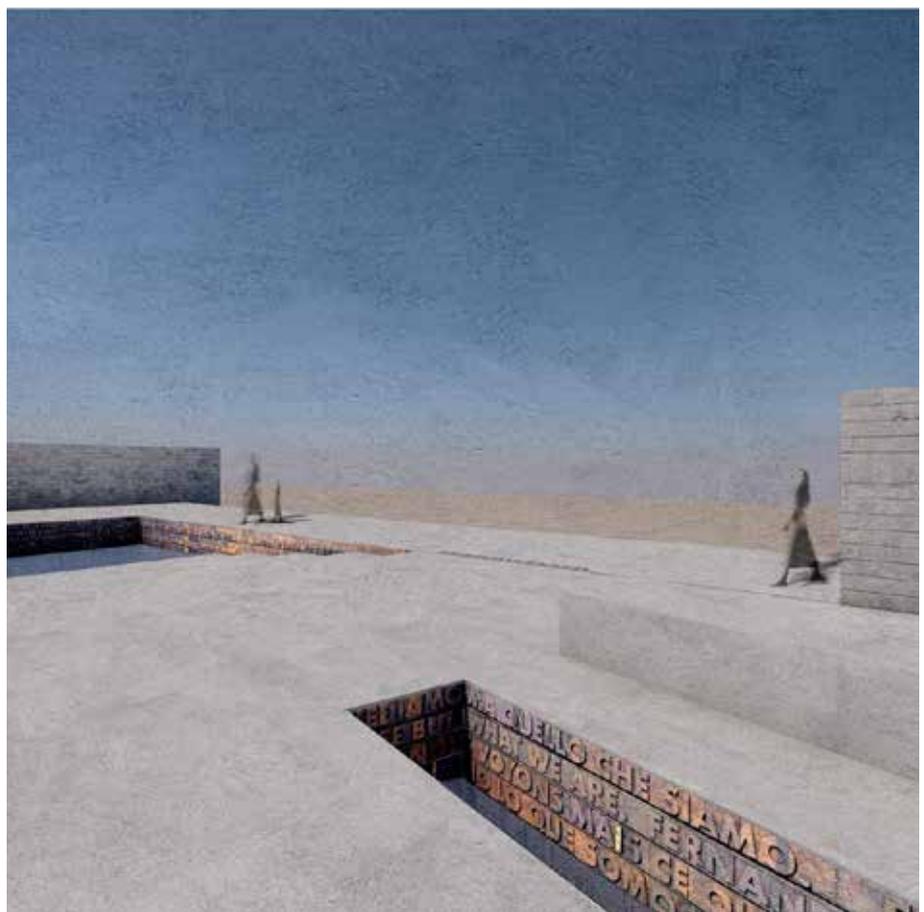
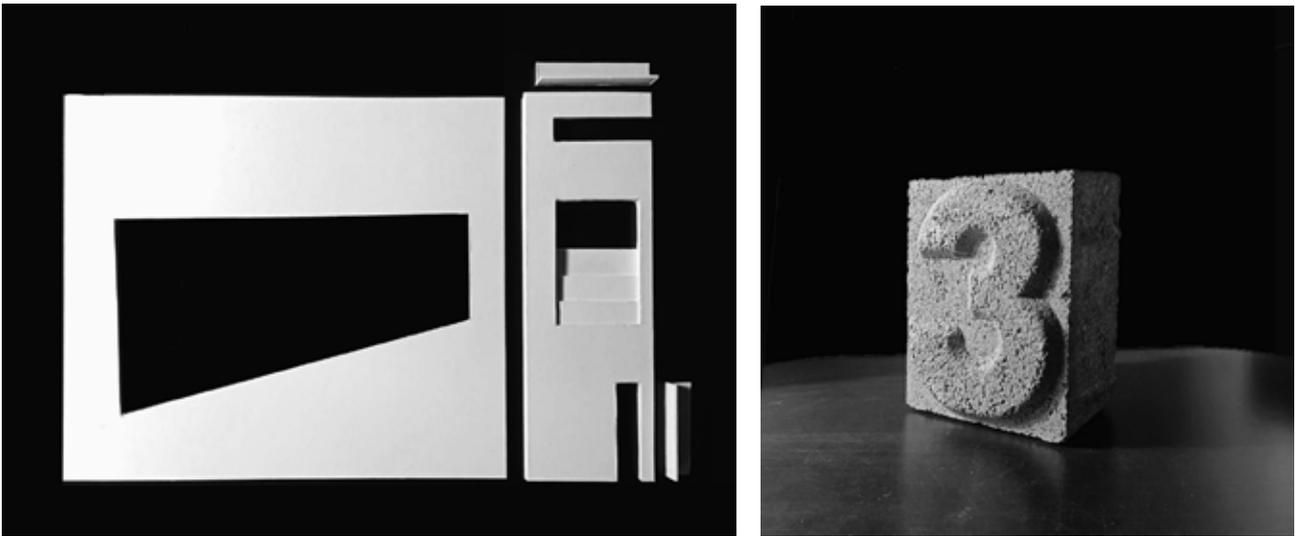


Fig. 7
Access to the monument from.

Figg. 8-9

View from the square.



**Fig. 10-11**

Study model scale 1:200; tozzetto tiles by Giorgio Milani for Paver.

alignments and through them seeks a dialogue with the existing city.

In Lampedusa, the tesserae designed by Milani and produced by *Paver* follow one another over the new square, where they are made precious by a bronze sheet that is modelled on the alphabet in the same way as a mask is modelled on the face of a dead person – from left to right, as the Greek letters designed purposely, according to the same principle. Similarly, the symbols representing the sounds and meanings of the Arabic translation of the text invite to move in the opposite direction, as the Arabic language requires. The encounter takes place in the words and physicality of the people who, conversely, move from right to left with both their eyes and bodies.

Therefore, the cross-section is the place of the written text; the outside is ideally the space of the sea, while the inside is the place of the life of humankind and their thoughts and actions. «Travel is the traveller. What we see isn't what we see but what we are» wrote Fernando Pessoa in *The Book of Disquiet* and to this we add a reflection, once again on travelling, from *Mestiere di vivere*, by Cesare Pavese, which seems an appropriate conclusion for this journey, a hope, an act of taking courage: «What world lies beyond | this sea I do not know, but every sea | has another shore, and I shall reach it.»

The short series of high steps in the arena takes you to the coordinates of the Belvedere – 35°30'01.7"N 12°36'19.4"E – set into the horizontal plane of the square. Numbers and letters are positioned as in Giorgio Milani's best-known Poetario: here in Lampedusa, letters and numbers gaze at the sky, as usual, while leaning towards the sea.

**Fig. 12**

Study model scale 1:200.

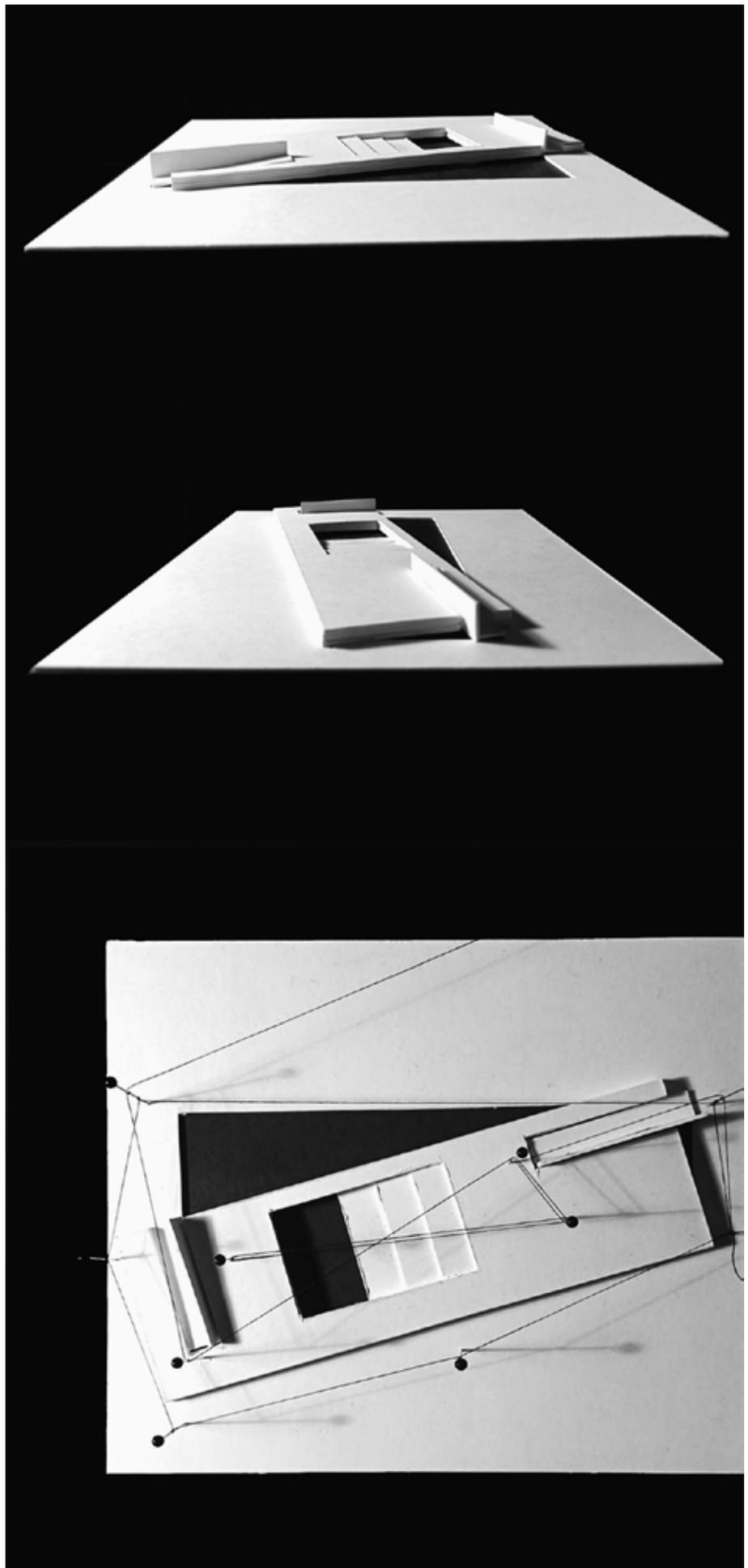
Notes

¹ Monument = Latin MONUMENTUM from MONERE to remember, to make known, anything that serves to recall a great event or illustrious personality, used especially for buildings; from the Etymological Dictionary.

² Definition from the Etymological Dictionary.

³ From obelisks to columns to triumphal arches, the architectural elements erected in cities have conveyed – through a narrative made up of images – the deeds of emperors and heroes. In more recent times – if we think of the post-war Italian context – it is mourning that has become the object of memory, a massive loss that needs to be recounted through memorials and shrines, often in the landscape of the sites where the tragedies occurred. Mourning the victims of con-

Figg. 13-14-15
Study model scale 1:200.



flicts or celebrating them? Between the Great War and World War II, numerous competitions invited architects and artists to interpret this theme, witnessing how the relation between form and meaning was evolving in those few years, with forms that were sometimes exploited for propaganda. The theme of the monument/memorial has continued to be investigated after World War II, to commemorate the struggle of the partisans and condemn the holocaust, up to the present day, to condemn conflicts and attacks.

⁴ Since it is a communication and trade route, the Mediterranean has often been a theatre of wars and journeys. The oldest shipwrecks are often recounted by archaeology or by literature. The Mediterranean is the setting for stories, from Odysseus' voyage to the battles narrated by Ariosto and set in Lampedusa, or the stories of Prospero and Miranda staged by Shakespeare.

⁵ This the name the Romans used for the Mediterranean; the Navy and Air Force used it for the rescue operation at sea carried out to save the migrants who from the days following 3 October to the end of the year, tried to cross the Strait of Sicily from the Libyan coast to reach Italy or Malta.

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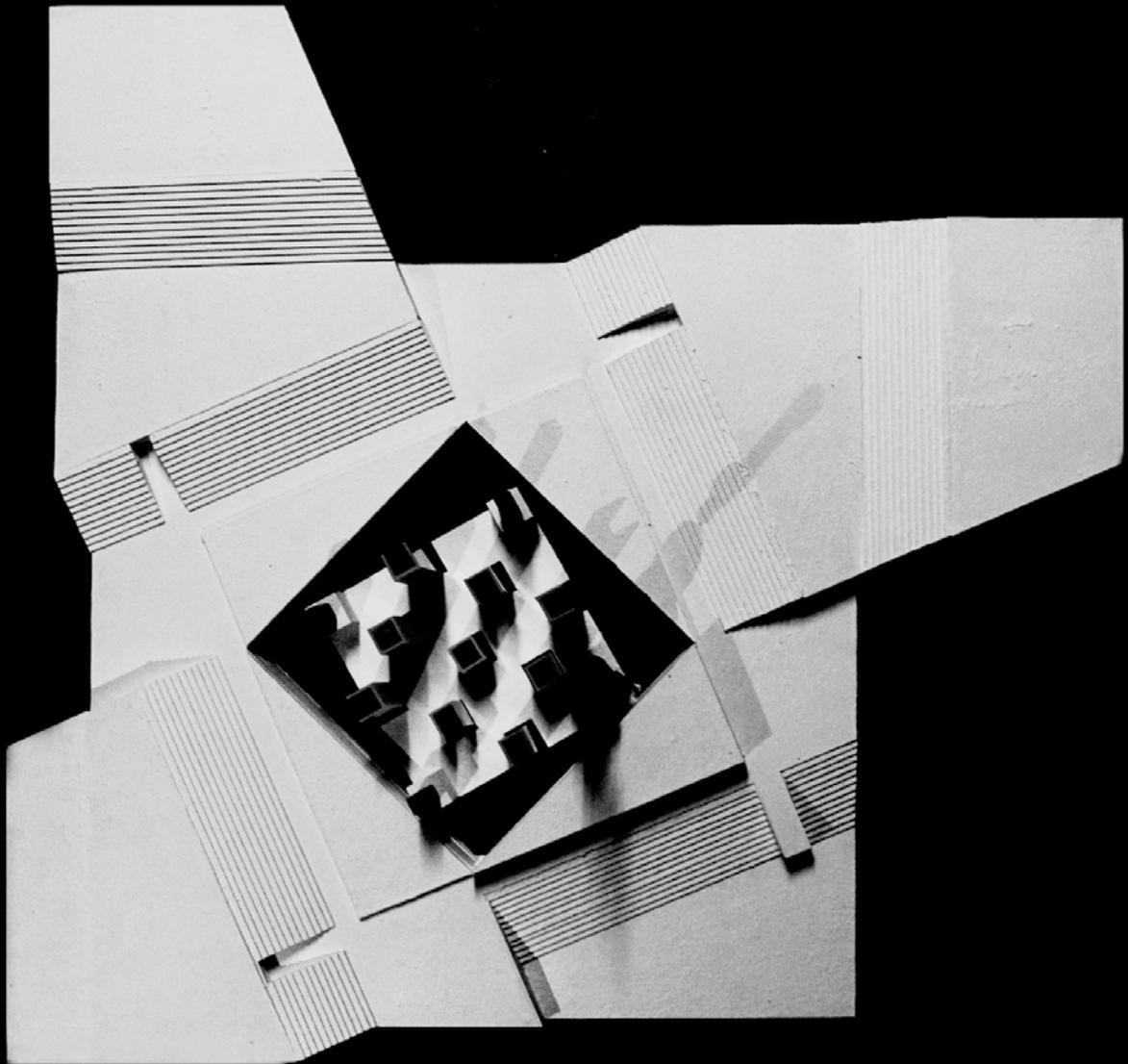
Annalucia D'Erchia (Taranto, 1989) architect, PhD student in Patrimoni archeologici, storici e architettonici del Mediterraneo at Università degli Studi di Bari and PhD in Architecture, Construction Engineering and Built Environment, sd Architectural Composition at Politecnico di Milano. Her theme of interest is the relationship between the ancient and the new, archaeology and architectural design. She carries out teaching support activities in the design laboratories of Facoltà di Architettura at Polimi.

Giorgio Milani (Piacenza, 1946) artist. His artistic research has always investigated the alphabet and writing, becoming known for his so-called Poetari, assemblages of wooden typefaces, which he developed from the second half of the 1960s and exhibited in Milan for the first time in 1997 in the exhibition Poetari di fine Gutenberg, organised by the Fondazione Stelline. Since then, he has been present in national and international contexts in numerous group and solo exhibitions.

Motto Mediterranean inspirations

Architectural project Nicola Campanile
Oreste Lubrano

Sculptor Sergio Portela



Nicola Campanile, Oreste Lubrano, Sergio Portela (Sculptor)
Mediterranean inspirations¹.
Proposal for a monument-memorial in the Mediterranean

Abstract

Starting from a reflection on the meaning of being a “migrant”, the proposal for a monument in memory of the massacre of the 368 migrants that occurred near the shores of Lampedusa on 3 October 2013, is re-signified in the more general idea of a monument to human reason, and thus to man himself, indistinct by race or origin. The monument is thus conceived first and foremost to reveal itself as a human work whose purpose is to welcome and celebrate man. In this sense, taking up a theme dear to the Enlightenment architecture, the proposal is in the first instance a possible response in formal terms to the theme of the *architectural-figurative monument*. Starting from a shapeless original mass, the figure of the monument is revealed through a process of roughing typical of sculptural art, “taking off” – to use Michelangelo’s words – the superfluous so as to liberate from the intact and monolithic block a shape that already exists in potential, carrier the human ratio that produced it.

Keywords

Excavation — Extrusion — Theatroid

Introduction

The theme of migration, although central to the global geopolitical agenda, often comes to take on the character of a drama, painfully perceived by every citizen of our community. The Mediterranean – which due to its geographical location has always represented the crossroads of millenary cultures motivated by the foundation, exploration, or knowledge of the *poleis* on its shores – in contemporary times has become, despite itself, the scene of frequent landings and dramatic shipwrecks, a place of despair and collective tragedies, also fuelling social inequalities and political and cultural divergences on a global scale.

The underlying ambiguity, in the writer’s opinion, consists in all too often considering the migration phenomenon only in reference to the contingent issues it raises. In truth, migration is to be understood first and foremost as a determining element both for the essence of the European landscape as an “Archipelago” (Cacciari 1997) – womb of all our *kósmoi*, of all our worlds and shapes – as much as for the genetic constitution of the man who inhabits and travels the routes of this Archipelago. One only has to think, as recent studies claim (Bortolini et al. 2021), that the genetic heritage of contemporary Europeans was also formed by the migrations of peoples who crossed the continent during prehistory. Man is therefore first and foremost a migrant, constantly on the move and, like Ulysses, curious about the multiple and an investigator of the *logos* that unites the many.

The compositional choices that underlie the shape of the monument are, therefore, entirely derived from the conviction that the essence of human activity, which naturally includes architecture, is first and foremost an expression of the principle of the autonomy of reason (Rossi 1958), the trans-

Fig. 1

On the previous page: The combined action of excavation and extrusion reveals the plan of the monument, an iterated construction of Pythagoras’ theorem. Zenithal photograph of the model.

**Fig. 2**

The location of the monument in front of the coast of the island of Lampedusa.

lation of which to the field of architecture manifests itself in the application of a rational method in architectural creation and the affirmation of the ability to transmit, through this method, a certain teaching.

From this point of view, the particular theme of a monument in memory of the massacre of the 368 migrants that occurred close to the shores of Lampedusa on 3 October 2013, is re-signified in the more general idea of a monument to human reason, and thus to man himself, indistinct by race or origin.

The monument is therefore designed first and foremost to reveal itself as a distinct human work whose purpose is to welcome and celebrate man.

In this sense, taking up a theme dear to Enlightenment architecture and set out in depth in Hans Sedlmayr's work (1948) – although with the reactionary spirit of the German *Kulturkritik* of which the Austrian historian is an authoritative exponent –, the proposal takes the form of a possible answer in formal terms to the theme of the *architectural-figurative monument*.

Hestia-Hermes: the idea of the monument

The original meaning of the term “monument” refers to memory-witnessing, the Latin root of *monumentum* derives from the verb *mònerè*, meaning “to make remember”. But remember what? If one thinks of the *monumenta* of our past, the answer is rather immediate. They bear witness to the highest creations of the spirit, in which it is possible to discern a meaning not only linked to *Thymos* – the emotional soul – inherent to the memory of an event, tragic or glorious, a hero or an eminent personage, but also to an ethical commitment, embodied in the need to educate future citizens on the shared values of civilised living, rooted in our culture but for this very reason still able to feed every man's sense of belonging in the contemporary world as feeling of inclusion in a given context.

In the case of specific interest, the monument being proposed is to be described starting with the pair of gods Hestia-Hermes, investigated as complementary polarities capable of “fixing” the essential reason for the architectural composition. It is not a problem to put myth alongside human reason. In fact, as Cacciari argues:

L'Arcipelago è il luogo dove la parola come *mythos* certamente ha origine – ma per iniziare il proprio tramonto. Con il primo viaggio lungo le sue rotte questo tramonto ha inizio, poiché con esso comincia necessariamente l'interrogazione intorno a ciò

che distingue, intorno all'elemento, alla forza, allo spirito che espone i molti al confronto – amicizia o inimicizia che sia (Cacciari 1997, p. 19).

Hestia, as pointed out by Jean-Pierre Vernant (1963), is the goddess of the hearth – of the home – a symbol of the “fixity” and immutability of space, while Hermes represents the messenger, the one who “moves” the domestic space, his place is on the threshold or more generally in all places where men gather publicly. The monument wants to assume the “maternal” characteristics of Hestia by associating with it the foundation of the Greek *òikos* (dwelling of life but also social and collective structure), capable of ensuring equality within the domestic group while also preserving the relationship with the “stranger” (*xénos*), integrating the guest into the domestic economy of the family space. However, the introduction of and contact with the other from oneself presupposes a change, a “mobility” of relations typical of Hermes since, as Károly Kerényi (1950) points out, «l'incontro e il ritrovamento sono una rivelazione essenziale di Hermes». Hestia – permanence – and Hermes – movement – become, as Vernant (1963, p. 200) argues: «i termini della relazione che oppone e insieme unisce, in una coppia di contrari legati da inseparabile “amicizia”, la dea che immobilizza lo spazio attorno a un centro fisso e il dio che lo rende indefinitamente mobile in tutte le parti», the archaic representation of space, capable of simultaneously “fixing” and “mobilising” it. The *raison d'être* of the monument thus resides in the definition of a “fixed centre”, guardian of the *Hestia koinè* – the common hearth – and capable of “mobilising” elements around it, symbolically alluding to the connection between individuals, who lose their status of singularity to qualify as equals, becoming collectivities. The people, therefore, gathered around the public hearth, represent in a broad sense a community, standing together around a “centre”, an *omphalos*, a stable point that builds the principle of man's rootedness on earth, but it also becomes a general *nomos* in which the arrangement of the masses unfolds from a well-localised focal point. Sinking its roots into the deepest “collective memory”, paraphrasing the title of a well-known essay by Maurice Halbwachs (1950), the monument aspires to evoke these general conditions linked to the formation of a place, determining a collected space, which relates to a centre, which becomes the source of a “cosmic” order capable of dis-veiling the human reason that informs the compositional relations of the architectural work.

Excavation-extrusion: the composition of the monument

The monument is formally understood as a large massif that emerged from the Mediterranean.

The compositional procedure assumes as a starting hypothesis the presence of the big intact artificial rock, a large pure prism on which two compositional operations are essentially carried out in order to make it inhabitable by man, excavation and extrusion. Starting from a shapeless original mass, the figure of the monument is revealed through a process of roughing typical of sculptural art, “taking off” – to use Michelangelo's words – the superfluous so as to liberate from the intact and monolithic block a shape that already exists in potential, carrier the human ratio that produced it.

The joint action of excavation and extrusion reveals the plan of the monument, an iterated construction of the Pythagorean theorem whose syntax is governed by a pole of gravitation that offers itself as the effective centre of the plan, from which the “spiral” that regulates the development of the

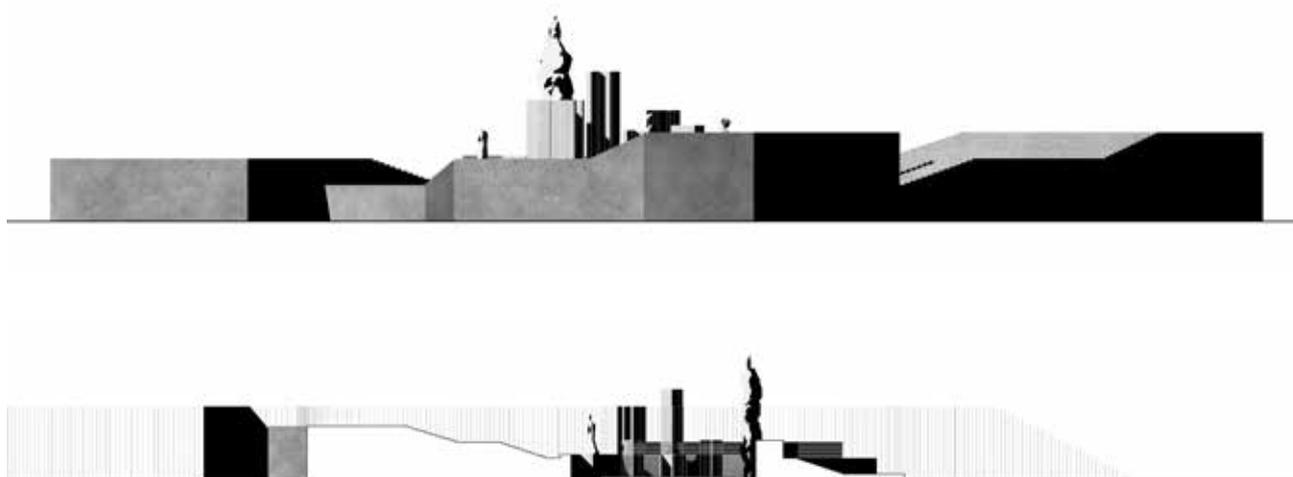


Fig. 3

The approach to the monument from the sea. In the foreground the presence of Capitán Nemo. In the background the figures of Paula, Vida and Ofrenda.

Figg. 4-5

Project sections.



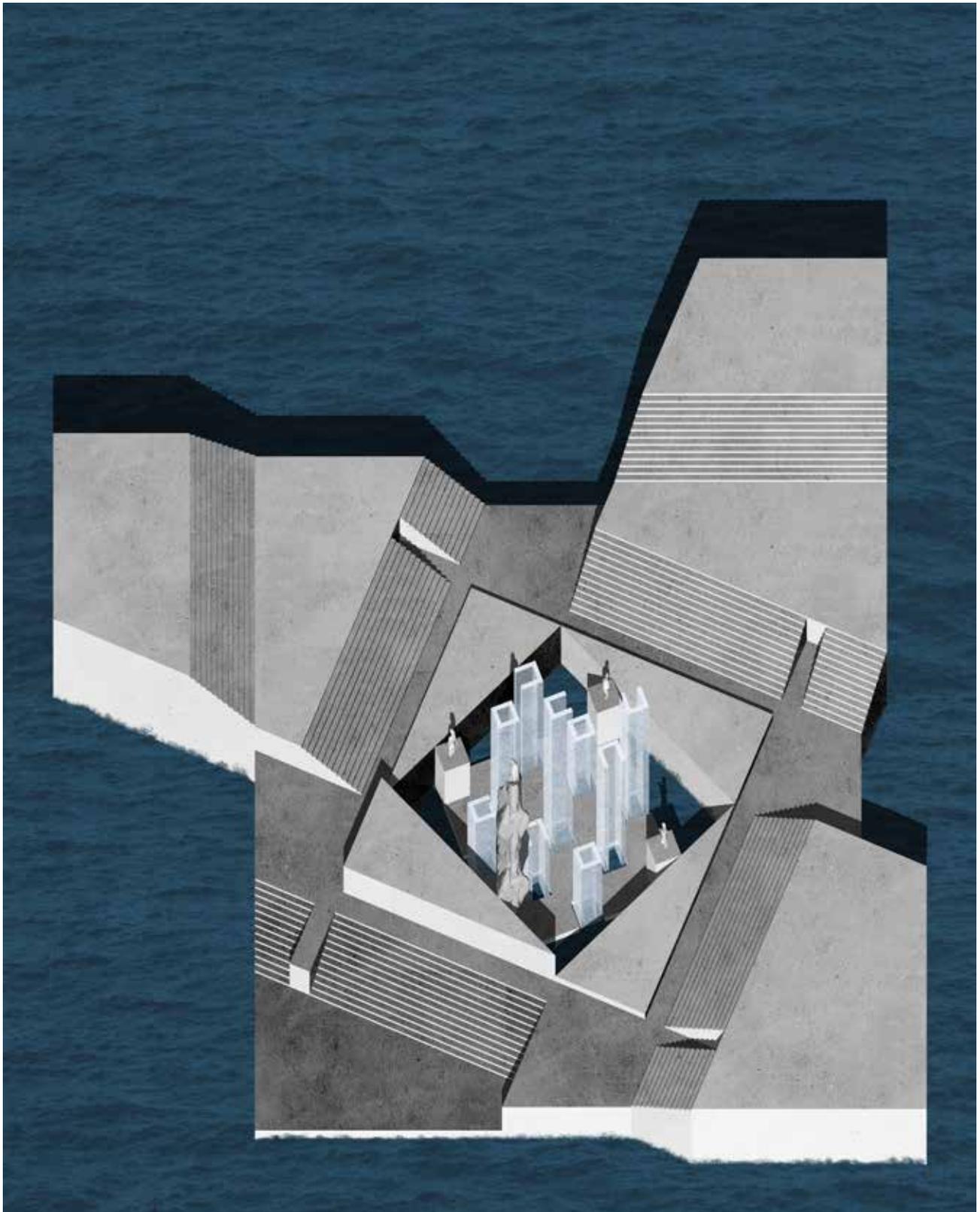


Fig. 6
Project axonometry.

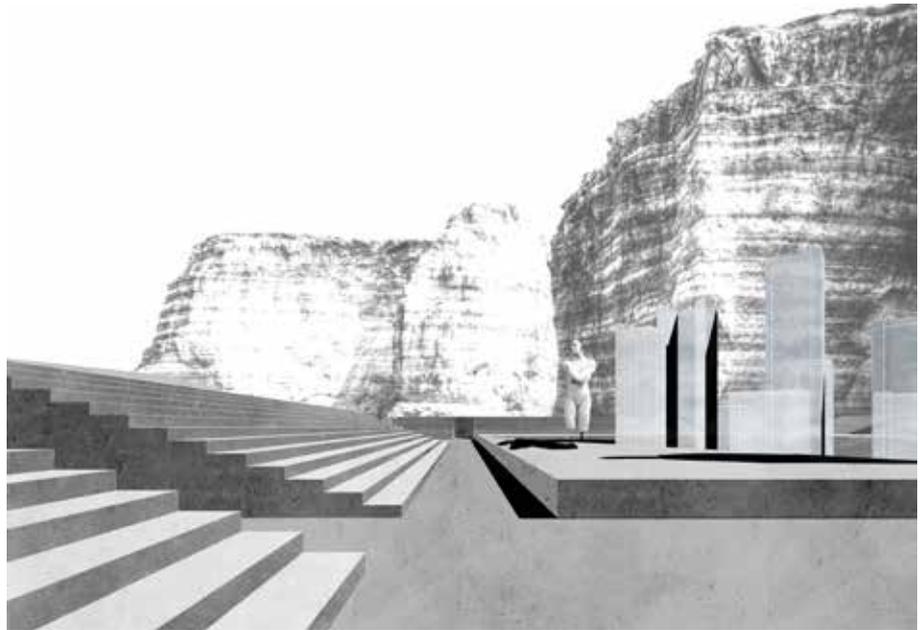


Fig. 7

The platforms are only accessible from the central space, further punctuated by the syntactic order of the semi-transparent columns.

different volumes unfolds. The central space – obtained by subtraction of mass and “inhabited” by a group of four sculptures and a hypostyle of open-air columns – distributes a series of platforms, obtained by extrusion, that are arranged peripherally with respect to the central void.

The sculptures, with their human features, represent the far more numerous victims of 3 October 2013. It is as if the monument, by making “space” in the sea, has made the bodies of those people re-emerge, in memory of those who, visiting the monument, recognise in those faces their fellow human beings. *Paula*, *Vida* and *Ofrenda* are the names of the three statues that inhabit – in a quincunx composition – the centre of the monument, works by sculptor Sergio Portela, son of architect César Portela.

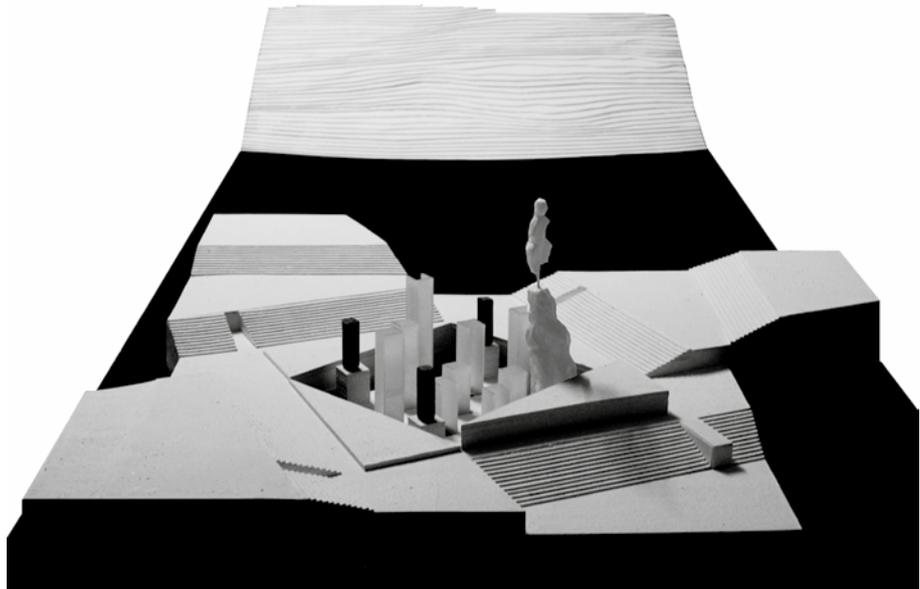
The platforms, conformed by stereotomy, are not connected to each other but are only accessible from the central space, which is further identified by the syntactic order of the semi-transparent columns, as an expedient that aims to “multiply” countless times the contact between different peoples: inherent diversity between peers based on “ciascunità” – neologism proposed by James Hillman – of citizens in relation to a common sense of the world. The platform has a double significance: depending on where you look, it identifies the place to stop, sit, and observe – turning your gaze towards the centre of the monument – the power of human reason, expressed by the three triangular stages presided over by the three Portela statues. Or, climbing the steps and turning towards the Mediterranean, confirming the transience of human nature compared to the eternity of the mountains and the sea.

Evidently the centre assumes a fundamental syntactic role for the entire artefact, capable of determining an aggregation of architectural masses around it, but also capable of welcoming people who, as in a large open-air theatre, are arranged according to a precise configuration, which makes it possible to observe fragments of the surrounding landscape.

And it is precisely near the shores of Lampedusa, a place in the middle between Europe and Africa, that it was imagined placing the monument, a space to commemorate the tragic events of the migratory crossings but also capable of “making people think”, of imposing a reflection that aims to exorcise the death and anguish of living frequently attributed to this place.

Fig. 8

The syntactic role of the centre determines an aggregative logic of architectural masses around it.



The architecture of the monument, though isolated, reaches out towards the emergences of the site by means of a calibrated system of distant relations with which to “resonate” the morphology of the surrounding nature. The offshoots of the monument head towards the Isle of Rabbits to the east, the cliff punctuated by coves to the north, and the placid Mediterranean to the west, registering the different weights through the varying degrees of extrusion of its platforms. An artificial island that reveals its “second nature” by means of its pure form, distinct and isolated from its surroundings as a compact and elemental mass, and yet reaching out for contact with “first nature”. A contact that, however, does not take place except by geometric triangulations, seeking a landing on dry land that fails, leaving the immensity of nature with its silence and “inaccessibility” that give man a sense of his limitation.

The Monument as Theatre: conclusions

With respect to these considerations, the monument determines its theatrical character as an architecture that «looks far and is seen from afar». In fact, among the four sculptures that inhabit the monument, only one is unbalanced in its composition, rising higher than the others. This is the *Monument to Capitán Nemo*, another work by Portela which, in the logic of our design proposal, re-signifies itself as a tall vertical element of reference. Not only a real beacon to signal in the night the presence of the artificial island, but also a beacon of reason, a warning for the past and a hope for the future.

This is how one wants to elevate the monument to a symbol of equality, where the drama of the individual is averted in order to embrace the idea of plurality, reified in an effective social and cultural place where heterogeneous people come together: a device capable of making men interact with each other, confronting and clashing to claim their place in the world, actively participating in the development of civilisation, which thus aspires to become a community of *Isoi*.

Fig. 9-10

The platforms welcome people as in a large open-air theatre, making it possible to observe fragments of the surrounding landscape.

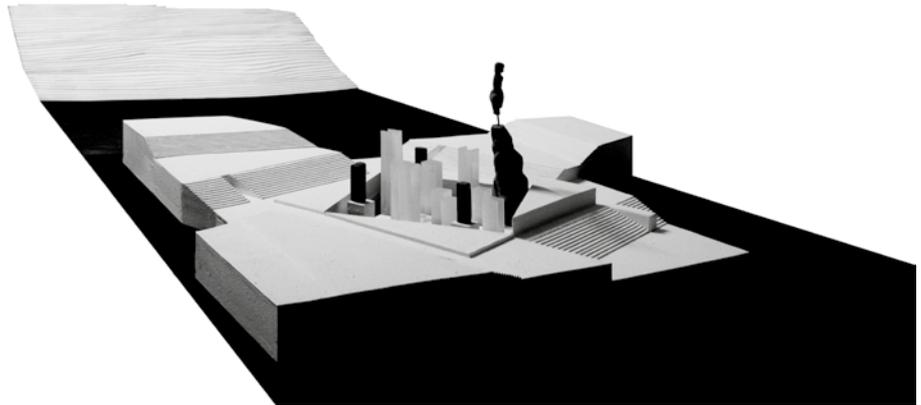
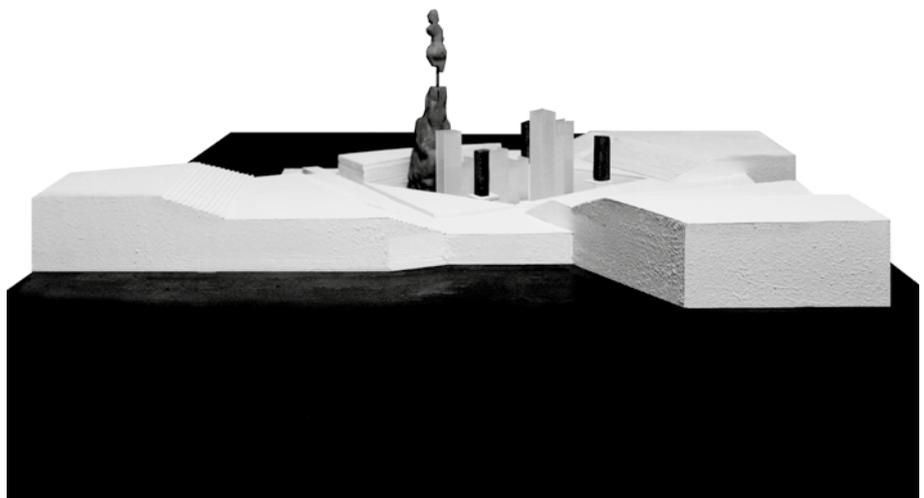


Fig. 11

The monument determines its theatrical character as an architecture that "looks far and is seen from afar".



Notes

¹ The title echoes Paul Valéry's well-known essay, *Inspirations Méditerranéennes*. Below is the interesting incipit by Maria Teresa Giaveri introducing the Italian edition of the essay: «Marmi il cui candore è sottolineato dalla luce ed esaltato dall'ombra; forme architettoniche nitide e pure sotto il sole; azzurri profondi fino al nero, fiammati dall'oro solare: ecco il Mediterraneo, demone meridiano che ossessiona i popoli nordici» (Valery 1957, p. 5).

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Nicola Campanile (Napoli, 1994) architect, graduated with honours and dignity of publication from the University of Naples “Federico II”, he is currently PhD Candidate at the DARCoD of the Politecnico di Bari. He edited, together with E. Di Chiara, the volume *Figure urbane nell'antico. Projects for Akragas*, Aión, Firenze 2021. Subject expert in Architectural and Urban Composition, within the framework of his PhD studies, his research focuses on the compositional modes of architectural and urban *ansambl'*.

Oreste Lubrano (Napoli, 1995) architect and PhD candidate at DRACo, Doctorate in Architecture and Construction at Sapienza University of Rome. He edited with C. Orfeo the volume *Immaginare la città antica: progetti per Tindari*, Thymos Books, Napoli 2023. An expert in the subject of Architectural and Urban Composition, his research activity focuses on issues relating to the relationship between architecture and archaeology, in particular on the possible ways in which the settlement nature of ancient Greek cities found in the territory of present-day Turkey can be made intelligible again.

Sergio Portela Campos (Madrid, 1970) is a Spanish artist who practices painting, sculpture, photography and, since 2006, architecture. Son of architects César Portela and Pascuala Campos de Michelena, he lives and practices in Pontevedra (Galicia). His works can be seen in many cities in Galicia and the rest of Spain.

In 1991 he began his two-year research on ancient techniques at the Prado Museum in Madrid. In 2006 he founded the company PHIArtquitectura to develop architecture that is sensitive to environmental, social, economic and landscape parameters. Since 2022 he has been a doctoral student in Arte y Patrimonio at the Universidad de Sevilla.

Motto Every creature is an island by the sea

Architectural project Paolo Fortini
Ana Muñoz-López
Nicola Catella

Sculptor Sergio Portela



Paolo Fortini, Ana Muñoz-López, Nicola Catella, Sergio Portela
(Sculptor)

Every creature is an island by the sea¹

Abstract

The Mediterranean, in its emerged and submerged geography, has been over time a “witness” territory, from conflicts to natural disasters, to the migration crisis of our day. Scenarios that show this place of the earth, as a “threshold” that highlights the differences and injustices. The Mediterranean could be considered a “memorial in itself”. An “archive” that preserves the true history of peoples, from origins to contemporaneity, and continues to expand, stratifying itself in a palimpsest of contradictions. The project aims to reflect on the theme of the monument as an interpretation of the topography of the Mediterranean, in the relationship between place, ritual and memory.

Keywords

Memorial — Topography — Ritual

Although the tragedy of the shipwreck of 2013, like similar recurring events, belongs to present days, it is linked to an ancient history, which originated with the very idea of “Sea in the middle of the land”.

The idea of the Mediterranean was born with navigation. In structured forms, already starting from 11,000 years ago, man moves, along the coasts, between the islands and the continents, in search of congenial places that allow protection and landing.

The Mediterranean is therefore based on moving. The migration or diaspora provides critical knowledge of the territory in an attempt to establish a relationship with the natural forms of geography.

«The first use of a territory, the first awareness that man assumes, is constituted by the possibility of going through it, in the most direct way related to the oro-hydrographic structure» (Caniggia 1976).

What shape does the Mediterranean have? We wonder if the tragedy of the sinking of 368 migrants, has to do with the measure, with the physical distance that exists between Lampedusa and the coasts of Libya, between Europe and Africa, shores of the same “sea surrounded by continents”.

The composition entitled *Méditerranée(s)* by Lucas Monsaingeon² reconstructs a taxonomic drawing comparing many “impossible Mediterranean”. A progressive metamorphosis, starting from a round sea, to a perfectly rectangular basin. These paradoxical forms question the definition of the border, the boundary signs, and what is right to belong to the Mediterranean world and what is not. Where does the Mediterranean end? In the course of history, many have wondered about the precise and correct configuration of the *Mare Nostrum*.

Borders on cards overlap, often finding inconsistencies. What belongs on

Fig. 1

On the previous page: Relationship of the monument/memorial with the marine topography. Model in scale 1:500, made by the authors.

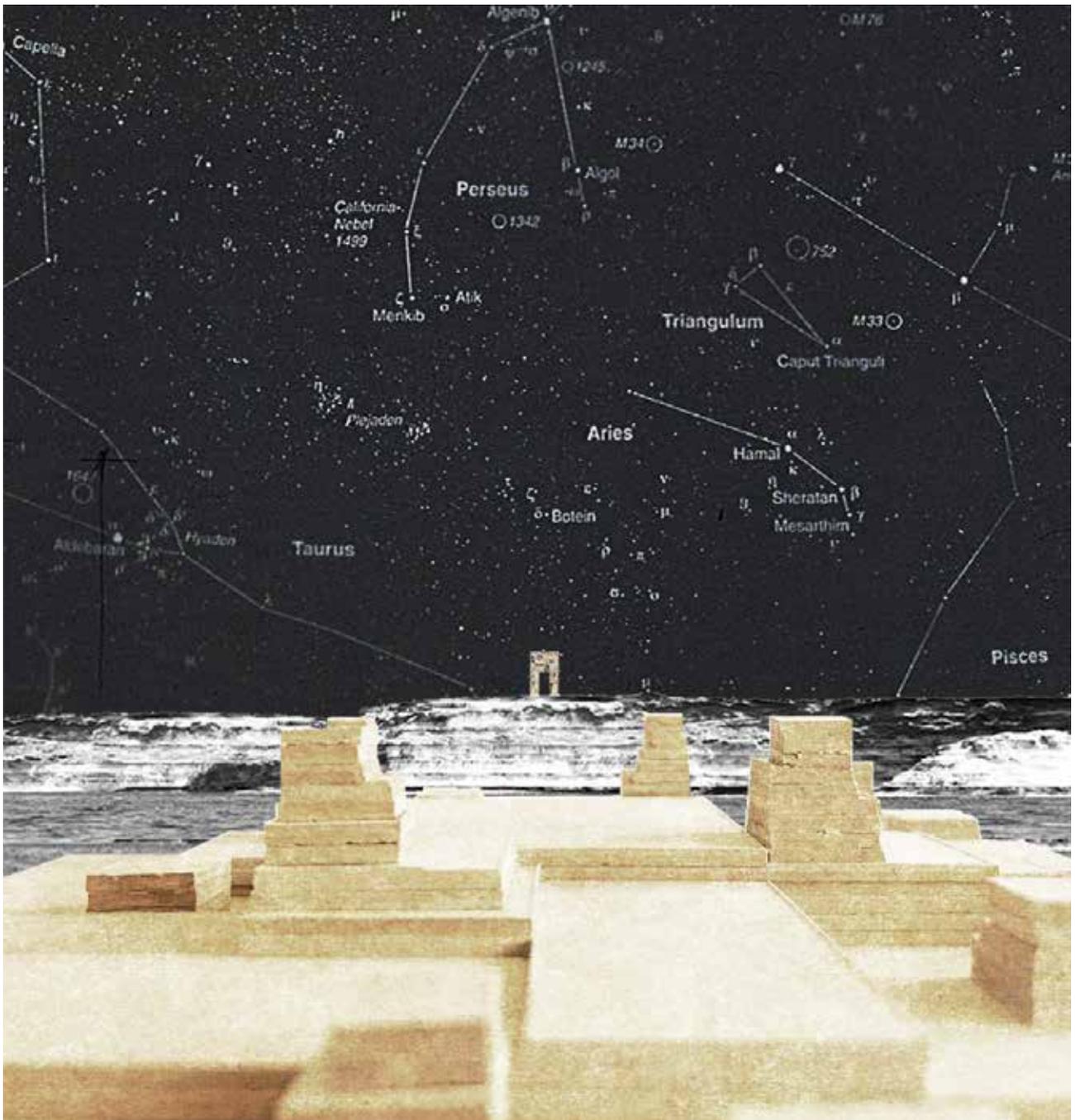


Fig. 2
Image of the sketch.

the surface to the European coasts, under the water level is geologically part of the African plate.

Plenty of cartographs, which have followed one another over time, describe a distance that exists between the lands as never more than three hundred kilometers. In a geographical sense, therefore, there is no measure of “remoteness”, because everything is in a condition of relative “closeness”.

A closeness expressed in the relationship between nature and artifice, which is realized in the architecture and in the characters of the construction of cities and landscapes. An association of characters that holds together a very vast territory that makes the Mediterranean in the strict sense, a sounding board.

Braudel defines the presence of a “space unity” of the Mediterranean, built on a network of sea and land routes, and therefore of cities that “hold hands” together (Braudel 1987).

A world-system enclosed in a narrow space that reports situations and events even far away. “Diaspora” in fact comes from the Greek *διασπορά* “dispersion”, which in turn comes from the verb *διασπείρω* “disseminate”. «In a certain way, on the edge of the greater Mediterranean, the importance and influence of the sea can be perceived» (Braudel 1987).

In this sense it is possible to think of «“Mediterraneanism” as a key for transmigrations, metamorphoses, quotations of words and ideas from one language to another» (Semerani 1991).

One of the characteristics that distinguishes this “unity of space”, is the sense of “uncertainty”³, caused by overwhelming environmental, seismic or volcanic conditions, which condition a «human life aimed to transformation».

Many diasporas whose historical reality has been staged, not only in Europe but throughout the world, include those of exodus, flight, emigration, exile. They are involuntary, forced journeys, often with no possibility of return, and which involve experiences of disorientation, eradication, disintegration, loss of one’s identity. For their negative aspects are distinguished from travel in general (Braudel 1987).

In fact, the Mediterranean, in its emerged and submerged geography, has been over time a territory “witness” of events of destruction and death, from war conflicts to natural disasters, to the migration crisis of our day. Scenarios that show this place of the earth, as a “threshold” that highlights the differences and injustices.

The Mediterranean could be considered a “memorial in itself”. A “archive” (Matvejevic 1992), that preserves the true history of peoples, from origins to contemporaneity, and continues to expand, stratifying itself in a palimpsest of contradictions.

The design idea was to build a monument “in” the sea, the middle space, “terrain” of the order of events.

To build an island, off the coast of Lampedusa, which, like a sediment of natural geography, through a geological process “by invention”, emerges from the seabed of marine topography.

It affirms itself on the surface as a witness, of the victims of the shipwreck, and of all the other stories hidden under the water.

The act of “bringing to light” a further fragment of land emerged is an attempt to ensure that the monument is «participant in the events of the living element of the island, or the water»⁴.



Fig. 3
Insertion of the monument/memorial in the coastline of Lampedusa. PLA and resin model, made by the authors.

Building in water offers the possibility of experiencing a “duration” of the monument, as it manifests itself in different forms, interacting with the material in which it insists, through the natural rising of the tide.

A condition of instability, which defines a “moving monument”, forcing to a double experience: at first, a feeling of remoteness, through the visual tension that is established from the earth to the island, in the observation of sculptural bodies, shaped by currents, immersed in water. Then, the possibility of reaching the isolated space at sea, almost in processional form, as a place of reflection and memory.

The observer takes on the role of actor, as he crosses and “inhabits” the memorial space.

The memorial leaves the “function” of “image” to be contemplated, to be a monument in-becoming, which changes several times during the day.

The composition for “topographic levels” leads to the approach «with difficulty and sacredness».

The project, as for a tectonic phenomenon, models the floor through vertical displacements. It is defined as a morphotype that wants to appear as “part” of an imaginary archipelago. It alludes to the figure of Lampedusa itself, in its entirety, with the stone walls “cut” alive, which is manifested as a “clod” of a more complex geographical system.

The relationship of the monument with the place is based on the rite.

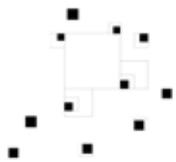
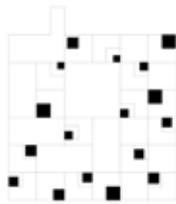
In correspondence of the promontory of Punta Spada, the memorial island is oriented in axis with respect to the Porta d’Europa. It identifies a “ritual path”, that from the door goes down on the rock, continuing in water like a “bridge” that, with the low tide, connects the island to the mainland.

The project intends to “physically describe” the place of the “southernmost point of Italy”: a linear walkway is set on the threshold of the sculpture of



Figg. 4-5
Insertion of the monument in the
coastline of Lampedusa. Model
in scale 1:500 made by the au-
thors.



**Fig. 6**

Compositional diagram of the monument in low and high tide. Drawing made by the authors.

Fig. 7-8

Monument/memorial. Top view. Model in scale 1/100 made by the authors.



Paladino and marks the crossing for about 50m, up to a podium in an elevated position. It is flanked by a ramp, which solves the altitude jump from the rock to the shore, where the pier continues over the sea, for a hundred meters, until you reach the monument-site.

«The rite, in the two moments, contributes to the permanence of memory»⁵, reconstructing by analogy, but on the contrary, the experience of the victims of the tragic events.

The composition of the sculptural bodies in the space-monument belongs to a “nocturnal writing”, taking up the words of Magris.

If the “diurnal” writing of the topography of the platform coincides with the truth of an “order”, the “nocturnal” one of the vertical “witnesses” corresponds to a state of mind. Another order, which is guided by the truth of the moment.

The destinies of Magrisian exiles from different regions, in one way or another, are victims of the lies and betrayals of modern society, fallen into the illusory perspectives of promised lands.

So also in the project, what seems like a destination is dispersed to the rise of water, and returns, with a new form, to be walking space a few hours later.

Nocturnal writing also refers to the character of sculpted volumes. Silent bodies, devoid of expressive dimension.

The project “accepts” an incompleteness of the form in the construction, which is only a fragment.

An emerged fragment that is a topographical interpretation of the morphology of the Mediterranean territory.

The shape of the platform and the sculptural elements is given by a “geological” process. In the sense that volumes are shaped by sedimentation and erosion, imitating not the forms of nature itself, but the “technique” with which time has changed them.

From this point of view, the project reflects on the relationship between matter and time. The stones that make up the surface of the Earth appear to us as unitary forms, while preserving inside and outside of them all the layers of time that has passed through them. In this the sculptural bodies tend to a figurativeness, in the sense that they intend to put “in figure” some elements of the physical reality of the Lampedusa coast.

What scale has a monument? Although the monument does not have a geometric scale of reference, it somehow “inherits” the proportions, from

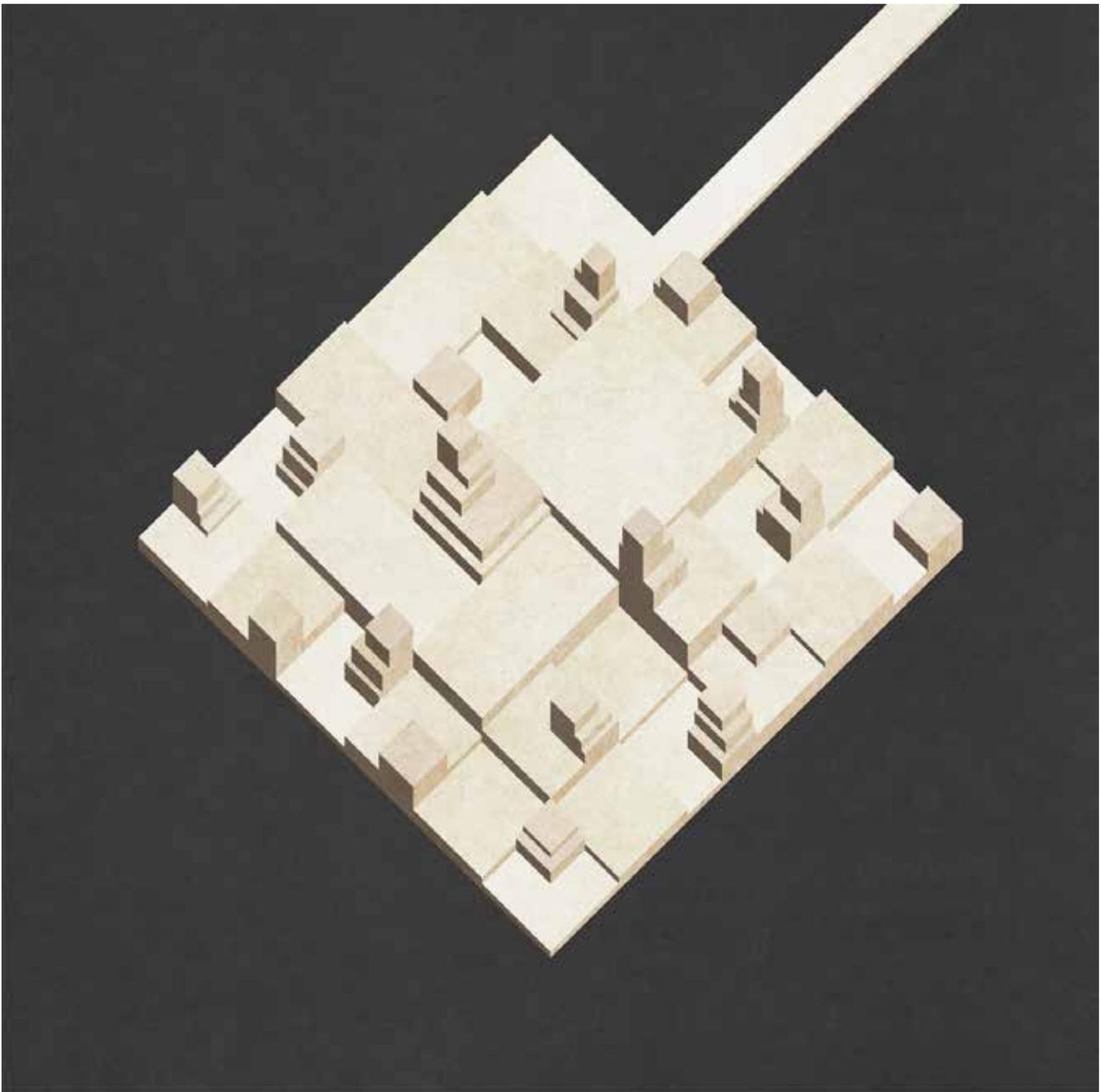


Fig. 9-10
Axonometry of the monument/
memorial in low and high tide.
Drawing made by the authors.



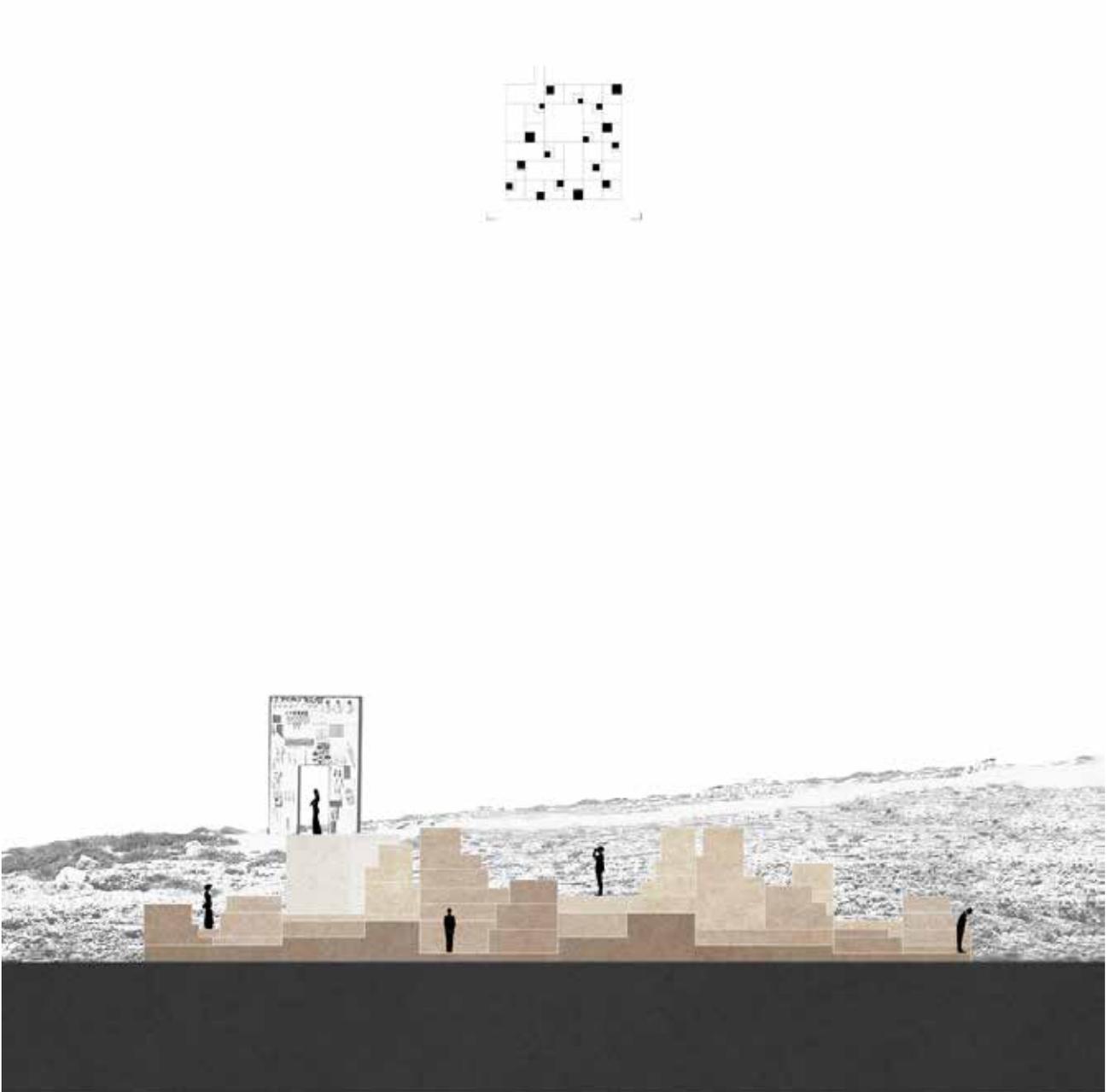


Fig. 11
Elevation of the memorial monument towards the mainland.

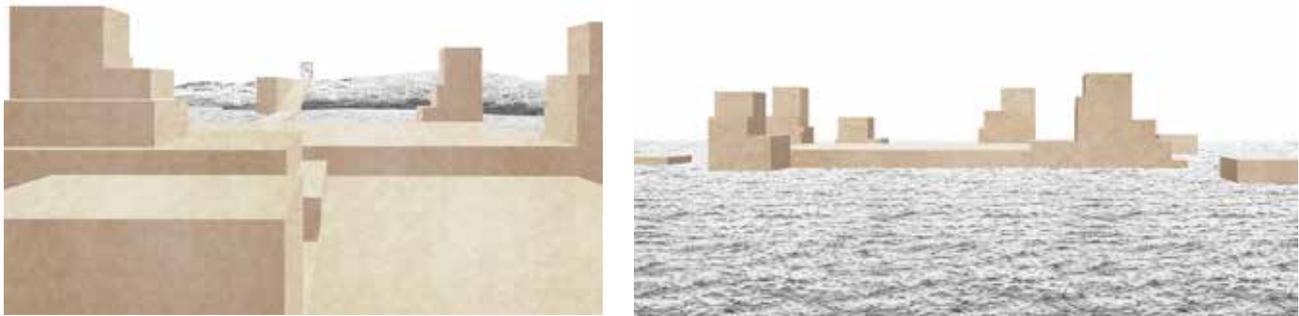


Fig. 12-13

Perspective views of the memorial monument, toward the land and facing the horizon. Drawing by the authors.

the “type” of construction, architecture to which it looks in the definition of its character. In this case, the place of the memorial is considered a public space, “resembling” the type of the Mediterranean “piazza”. A square, however, all exterior, which is compared only, on the one hand, with the limits of the coast of Lampedusa, and the horizon, on the other.

The island is measured in a square of thirty meters per side, modulated in a grid of five meters by five.

The grid-elements diversify with small height shifts, simulating the tectonic movement of the topography, as described above.

The system is “broken” by a series of double modules that together constitute the *promenade* towards the center of the space, defined in a square of ten meters to the side, which like a raised podium that allows observation. On a second grid, of doubled matrix, rest bodies of the same material of the soil that, as for a process of sedimentation, rise in more vertical proportions, modelling themselves plastically in their development. As witnesses of quarry, these “symbolic” volumes are arranged in precise positions and according to a swastika design around the central podium, in order to orient the view and guide the contemplation towards the four cardinal points. As the tide rises, the “witnesses” emerge, moving away from each other, revealing a new and unexpected composition. A constellation, that in the isolation of the “floating” bodies, reminds us by analogy the tragedy of the shipwreck of 3 October 2013.

Notes

¹ The title of the essay is a quote from the text of the song *Attraverso l’acqua* by Enzo Avitabile and Francesco De Gregori, 2016.

² The drawing is a screen printing in Monseigneur 2017.

³ The sense of “uncertainty” is, together with the “fragmentation” of the landscapes of land and sea, and the incredible ease of movement, one of the three peculiar characteristics of the Mediterranean life, identified by Horden and Purcell (2000).

⁴ Resuming the report of Carlo Scarpa exposed to the city council of Venice in “defense” of the position of the Monumento alla Partigiana. (Scarpa 1968).

⁵ In the relationship between ritual, monument and myth Aldo Rossi resumes some considerations of Fustel de Coulanges. (Rossi 1995, p.16).

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Paolo Fortini (Bari, 1995). Architect, PhD student at Ar.co.D, Poliba. He graduated with honors, at the Politecnico di Bari, with a thesis on the reform of the Apulian districts of public housing, after a collaboration with the LAN studio in Paris. Currently he is carrying on a doctoral thesis in composition, on the relationship between port and city in the Mediterranean (Poliba/ETSA Sevilla).

Ana Muñoz-López (Valladolid, 1995). Graduated in Architecture at the University of Valladolid in 2018 with Master in Architecture took in the same seat in 2019. She starts his PhD in architectural composition in 2021 at the Polytechnic of Bari in co-direction with the University of Valladolid, where he is an integral member of the GIR research group “Laboratorio de Paisaje arquitectónico y patrimonial”.

Nicola Catella (Bari, 1986) Graduated with honors (Ar.Co.D/Politecnico di Bari) with a thesis on settlement dispersion on the apulian coast. He has participated in several international design competitions, some of which have won awards and mentions (Linkeroever Antwerpen, with Moccia, Schroeder, Van den Berg). Since 2022, he's a Ph.D. candidate at the Politecnico di Bari with a research on the transformation of public housing.

Sergio Portela (sculptor) (Madrid, 1970). Born into a family of artists and scientists, he immediately came into contact with architecture and art. In 1990 he began his studies in Fine Arts, which he abandoned to travel from Asia to America, learning the different techniques of the creative process and art “in situ”. In 1991 he began his biennial research on ancient techniques at the Prado Museum in Madrid. In 2015 he studied Architecture and Urbanism in Portugal. Since 2022 he conducts a PhD thesis in Art and Heritage at the University of Seville. His work as a sculptor is present in several internationally recognized locations in Galicia, with several participations and exhibitions in Europe, including Art Basel 2022.

Motto Made by man and sculpt by the sea

Architectural project Marco Rosati

Sculptor Francesco Arena



Marco Rosati, Francesco Arena (Sculptor)
Piazza Mediterraneo made by man and sculpt by the sea

Abstract

The memorial-Monument in Lampedusa, built by man to be sculpted by the sea, is configured in the Favaro wharf, the last artefact when leaving and the first when arriving, a landing place for migrants, imbued with high symbolic value. The memorial originates from the relationship between the natural and the artificial, between the sea and the port, to give it a meaning charged with emotion, reflection and perception of the dramas consumed. The Monument, in memory of the shipwreck of 3 October 2013, reconfigures the wharf on an urban scale, redesigns the open space through new breakwaters that, in addition to their mere technical function, become elements with an evocative sculptural value, spatial and temporal in co-evolution with the water so as to return changing images and fruitions.

Keywords

Historic Landscape — monument-Memorial — waterfront

The memorial-Monument for the 368 victims of the shipwreck that occurred on 3rd October 2013 off the coast of the island of Lampedusa assumes symbolic, figurative and spatial relevance in a historical landscape already dense with relations between cultural, sculptural, archaeological, architectural and natural elements. The project is structured between *rigour and poetry* in a place of passage and rest stop, of arrivals and departures, of hopes and anguish: the *port*. It represents the first landing place for those arriving from the sea and the last strip of dry land for those leaving.

The Piazza Mediterraneo memorial, in the Favaro pier, stimulates a continuous and intense reading of meanings, perceptions, suggestions and new interpretations of the coastal landscape and particularly of past events as a *memoir* of past tragedies. The pier is much more than a mere barrier of protection and safety from the waves of the sea; it is a place imbued with a high symbolic value in itself; it is here where the migrants who have just landed on the island and those rescued at sea are welcomed to receive first aid, it is also where the painful recognition of the victims takes place. The memorial intends to celebrate this specific event and at the same time stands as an emblem to affirm the universal value of dignity and human rights; the absence or lack of which in some nations induces large masses of the population to flee desperately, clandestinely and dangerously to other countries, increasing the constant flow of migration with all too often consequent massacres.

The new Piazza Mediterraneo also reveals other isolated punctiform elements scattered along the coastal strip: archaeological traces, remains of neolithic settlement, early christian necropolises, bunkers and forts dating back to the second world war. These places tell stories and events, through

Fig. 1

On the previous page: Physical design model.



Fig. 2
Overall axonometry.

the figurative experience they can induce reflections, awake consciousness, moreover they can constitute a contribution to support the formation of an inclusive vision of the world, respectful towards diversity.

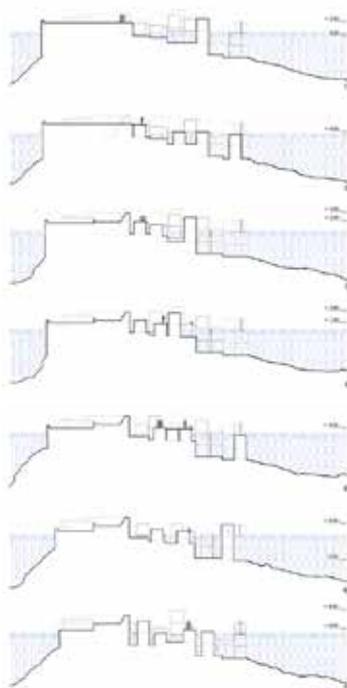
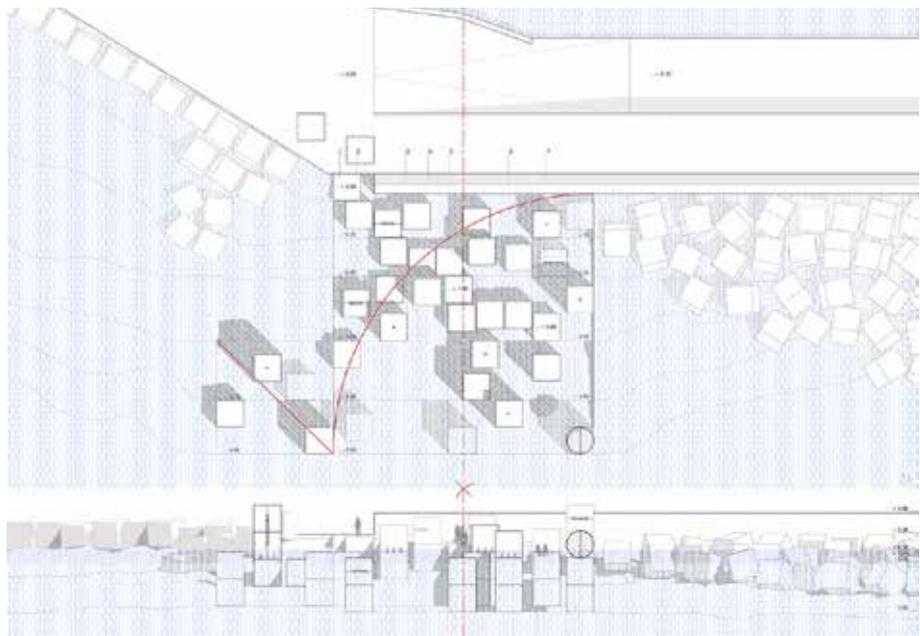
On a territorial scale, the project is configured in close correlation with the existing sculptural elements: to the north-east, the belvedere, the end of via Roma on which stands the Cassadoro obelisk, a tribute to the fallen of the wars, by the artist Arnaldo Pomodoro; to the east on Punta O' Spada, the Porta d'Europa by the artist Mimmo Paladino; to the west on Punta Guitgia, the recent panoramic square, towards the city).

On an urban scale, it reconfigures the harbour, redefines the pier and aims to establish a physical relationship, through the complexity of liveable public open space, between the city, the pier and the sea, enjoying evocative views towards the horizon, of smells and sounds generated by the crashing of the waves. It is not usual for a memorial to appear also as an image of everyday life, expressing a confident impulse towards the future. This is made possible through the articulation of a path, a real public square, on different heights towards the historical landscape, thus making a new space in co-evolution with water. The memorial in fact originates from the relationship between nature and human imprint, between the sea, the reef and the port: so the naturalness and the artificiality of the matter and architectural form coexist in a symbiotic relationship involving past sense and current perception, in order to give back the image of a sculpture that rises onto the reef of the emerging pier, in different forms from the water, as if it were an archaeological find, a ruin from time immemorial, integrated in this place.

The existing *breakwaters*, purely functional engineering elements for port security, take on a new value and a new identity that goes beyond their technical function. Some of them are replaced and supplemented by sculptural elements with a high symbolic value, consisting of large cubes (2.5 m side size) of local limestone, split-cut, ochre-coloured, in chromatic and material continuity with the widespread existing tradition, harmoniously integrated in the context. The faces of the breakwaters, left sculpted by the natural, temporal erosion of the waves of the sea and evoking the impossibility of man to dominate nature, are engraved, in a sculptural manner, with artistic words and signs to induce reflection in memory of the indel-

Fig. 3

Plan (average water level condition $q. \pm 0.00$ m) and elevation of the memorial-Monument in the Favaro pier.

**Fig. 4**

Project sections.

ible tragic event. The new breakwaters are placed by dry superimposition on a basin, obtained from an excavation on the rock, evoking an archaeological one, and by material subtraction of the limestone rock. It is the same basin, modulated in steps of different heights and depths, that makes the planivolumetric configuration of the Monument more variable, starting from specific alignments on an orthogonal grid, the different aggregation and superimposition of the individual cubic elements defines different areas, solids and voids, to determine specific and targeted views in close correlation with the emotional landscape context. The architecture of the memorial, with the expressive symbolism of the rigorous layout in which the repetition and elevation of the new breakwaters is articulated, is the exact image of the tragedies consumed off the coast, fixed in time, so much so that the missing parts, as the absence of breakwaters, apparently leave unresolved voids of perceptible lacks, which in opposition to the full ones exalt the figure of the *proto-ruins*, fitting harmoniously into the historical, artistic and archaeological context of the island. The project questions this human correspondence to the absence of something and it does so by attributing to the hollow space the value of an element capable of defining the presence of what the space itself contains.

The elements are concentrated at the nodal point, currently unresolved and unliveable, between the road and the walkway, mediated by a gate, of the Favaro wharf. The sediment area of the basin, a square-shaped platform (24 m side size) with a square-shaped “tail” (10.5 m on a side) towards the sea of Cala Guitgia, guarantees a spatial continuity that mediates between the wharf’s planimetric layout and the road’s different layout, allowing the continuity of the wharf itself through the use of breakwaters that become figurative, sculptural and material elements structuring the project and characterising the port.

The memorial-Monument is completed with a rough spherical sculpture, placed on the upper surface of the most extreme cube towards the south-east, obtained by subtraction and polishing of material from a breakwater, to evoke the terrestrial sphere, a metaphor of an infinite welcoming embrace of solidarity between the people of the world.

The memorial slopes down towards the sea with its stepped platforms and the cubic masses of the new breakwaters, the latter appearing as bulwarks

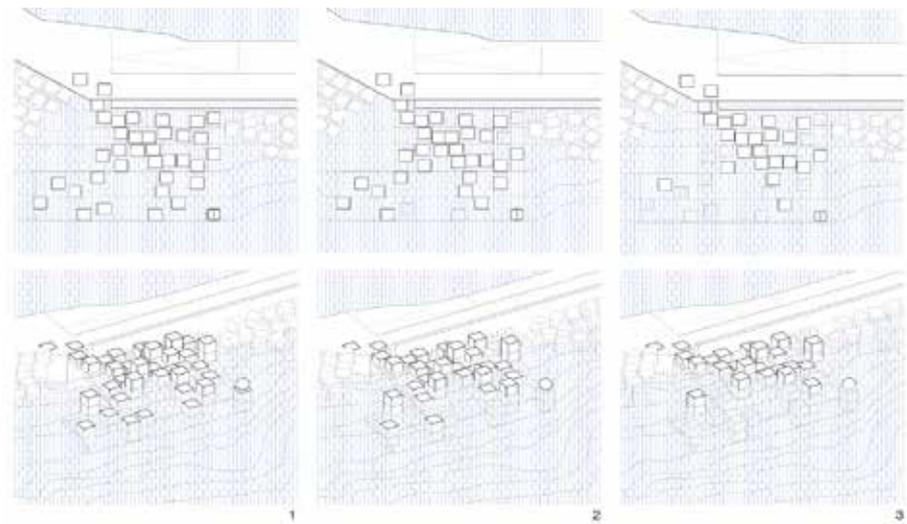


Fig. 5

Plans and axonometries of the possible configurations at varying water levels: 1. low tide condition (q. -0.50 m); 2. mean water level condition (q. ± 0.00 m); 3. high tide condition (q. +0.50 m).

of fragmentary and discontinuous ruins, eroded by time and the force of nature expressed by the sea and the weather.

The new breakwaters never collide, often arranged close together, almost adjacent but not joined (minimum distance of 10 cm), with a perceived autonomy in a unity of design, so that water can also pass between the interstices and erode the rock faces of the breakwaters, naturally continuing the initial human sculptural work (Figg. 3-4).

The changing effect that the design attributes to the memorial is synergistically combined with the natural element of the relationship with the sea, returning ever-changing spatial visions with visual effects generated by the transparencies and chromatic reflections of the water on the faces of the breakwaters. In fact, the varying level of the water's presence reveals or hides the breakwaters that can be glimpsed below the sea level, thus referring to an image that is always moving and evolving, correlating with the historical context of the island. The changing nature of the memorial, in relation to the water level, constitutes the metaphor of the sea that gives regenerating new life and at the same time takes it away. During high tide, it submerges, removing it from view while at low tide, it is unveiled, restoring it. In relation to the fluctuations of the sea, three different possible configurations are hypothesised: the low tide condition (q. -0.50 m) leaves all the breakwaters and the sphere visible; the high tide condition (q. +0.50 m) covers the majority of the breakwaters, submerging a part of the sphere; during the medium water level condition (q. ± 0.00 m) many of them are visible and the sphere seems to float on the water. The connective and allegorical naturalness of water – life, death and rebirth – contributes to the solidarity between old and new, unveils the surfaced figures of architecture and recalls them as objects of a lost past.

The memorial, in its new breakwaters, has engraved words and sculptural signs towards the water, towards the shoreline and on the walking surface, to be read by those arriving from the sea, those walking on the pier and those walking along the Monument, to arouse emotions, feelings of solidarity and cooperation, to induce reflections on the human correspondence between the sense of the uniqueness of life and the memory of the events that took place. They are engravings of ambivalent words (forgive, suffer, remain, plot, indifference, join), with often opposite or different meanings if a prefix is deleted, to emphasise that issues with the proactive and purposeful intervention of man, as happens with certain words, conceal different perspectives and resolutions, open up the future and hope. Some

Fig. 6-7

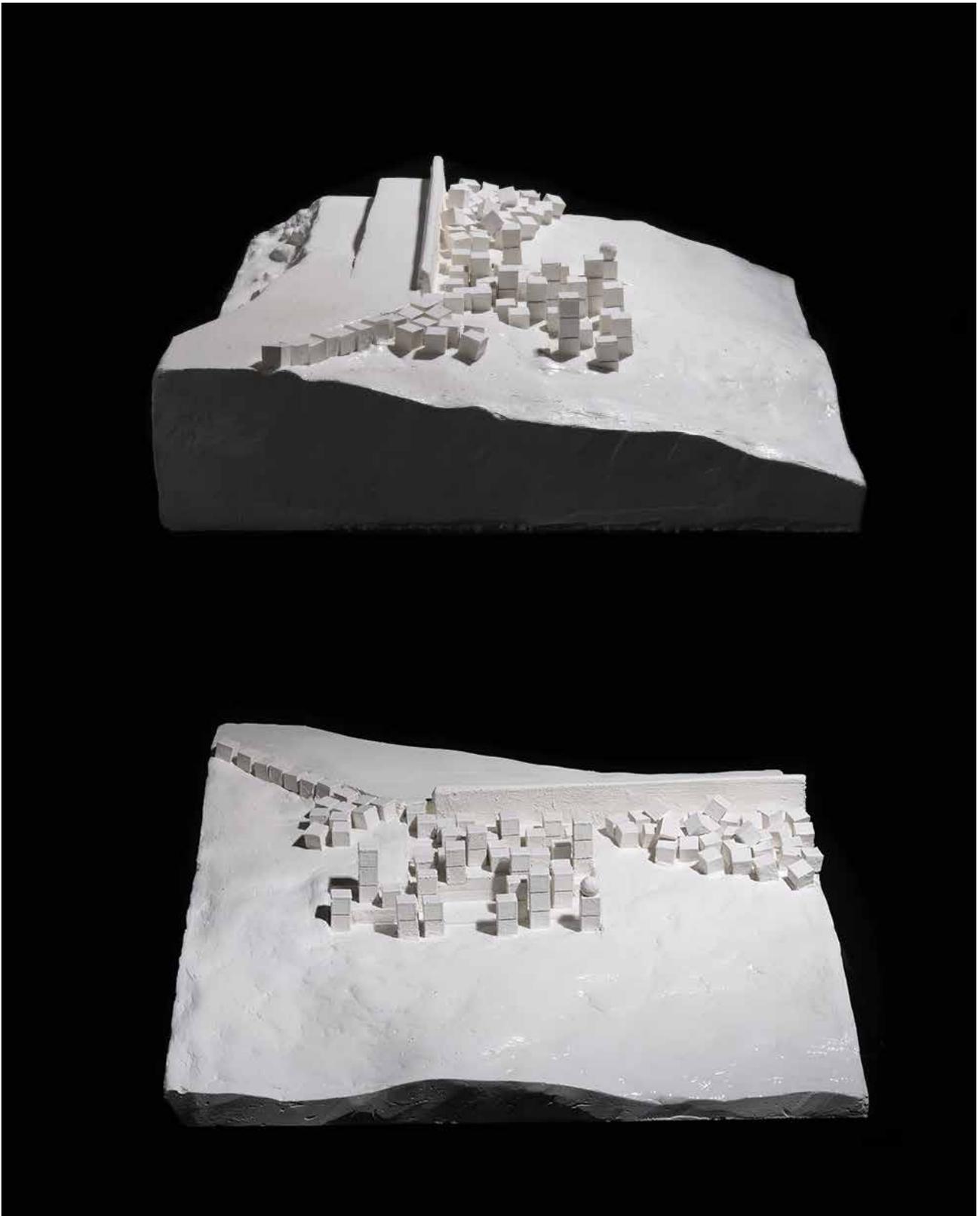
View of the memorial-Monument towards the sea; View of Piazza Mediterraneo from the Favarolo pier.



breakwaters, those reached by the rising water level during high tide, become natural “musical instruments” that produce pleasant sound effects in addition to the changing auditory perceptions. The faces facing the sea and the sky have incisions and continuous communicating holes: the pressure caused by the movement of the waves causes the liquid to rise over the holes, thus compressing the air and producing the sound given by the venting generated by the recess. The work during the high tide, mainly linked to sunset, becomes an evocative and unprecedented “organ” of the sea.

The *material* used for the Monument is the local limestone, present on the island, which possesses intermediate characteristics compared to other stones found there, such as dolomite, which is harder and more compact, and sandstone, which, on the other hand, has lower hardness characteristics. Depending on the weather, limestone lends itself to a natural erosion effect, typical of the island’s northern coastline. The choice of limestone is also dictated by the desire to give the Monument durability over time, avoiding rapid deterioration and at the same time the need to resort to the local construction technique, overlapping and juxtaposition of limestone, and the involvement of specific craftsmen for the execution of a handcrafted work.

Light plays an important role in the architecture of the memorial; the rhythm of the design of the breakwaters causes a diffusion of shadows arranged differently depending on the movement of the sun during the day. The sun’s rays are absorbed by the surfaces of the breakwaters, which reflect and send back different lights and colours according to the varying presence or absence of water, algae and salt encrustations; those that are submerged more frequently become darker in colour, and in low tide



Figg. 8-9
Physical design model.

conditions a chromatic stratification from wet to dry, from light to dark, is shown. The lunar night light, which gives the memorial a global image of mystery, is integrated by visually highlighting the single spherical geometric element on which a luminous vertical cut is made, visible from the different belvederes of the city and the coast, becoming a true sculptural fulcrum, visible in the area.

The intervention is integrated into the naturalness of the context with equally natural elements first sculpted by man and then destined to be sculpted by the sea, hence the evocative power and emotional beauty of the project. A play of the parts that continuously transforms the memorial, whose intervention excludes the use of iconic expressions that are extraneous to the essentiality of the work and the place, linked to the vicissitudes of migrants and the eternal mysteries of the sea.

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Marco Rosati (Rieti, 1994), architect, graduated with honours, with a thesis in Architectural Design, at the Tor Vergata University in Rome. He obtained a second-level Master's degree with honours in Architectural Design for the Recovery of Historic Buildings and Public Spaces at the Sapienza University in Rome. Undertook an internship at Mibact at the Superintendence of Archaeology, Fine Arts and Landscape for the metropolitan area of Rome and the province of Rieti. Collaborates with architectural and urban design studios. He has received prizes and mentions in international competitions of ideas and design. He is currently a PhD student in Landscape and Environment at the Department of Architecture and Design, Sapienza University in Rome.

Francesco Arena (Brindisi, 1978), artist, sculptor. His works include: *Colonna* (2023); *Daily Stone* (Bangkok 2022); *Anello* (Rome 2020); *Ardesia con minuto* (2019); *Angolo stanco (hommage à la mort de Walter Benjamin)* (2018); *Passaggio* (2017). His exhibitions include: *Ten Minutes and a Breath* (Milan 2022); *Measured Stones* (Madrid 2022); *Eight Corners* (Naples 2021); *Cubic metre of sea water as diagonal* (London 2019). Award recipients: Italian Council, Parco Colosseo, Rome, MIBACT (2019); Frescobaldi Prize, Milan (2018); Henraux Prize (2018).

Motto Transits

Architectural project Thomas Pepino

Sculptor Elio Garis



Thomas Pepino, Elio Garis (Sculptor)
Transits. Overseas Abysses

Abstract

The project for the island of Lampedusa is articulated on the idea of a strong sign that cuts into the earth's crust, whose formal expressiveness can be traced back to interventions such as Burri's Cretto and Eisenman's memorial in Berlin. The intervention is conceived as a work of land art that dialogues with the territory through the analytical devices of architecture and defines itself with the system of travel. The architectural-territorial form of the *memorial-monument* identifies and recognises in the character of the architectural project the value of meaning that the lemma *transit* is able to transfer and express through the art form. The path, carving into the earth's crust, leaves an indelible mark on the ground which refers to the theme of the labyrinth and rock carvings.

Keywords

Territory — Project — Memorial-monument

The architecture of the *memorial-monument*

The memorial, as architecture, is the place of remembrance of the dead. Designed to be a tangible testimony of the Lampedusa tragedy, which on 3 October 2013 indelibly marked human history, the memorial, dedicated to the 368 victims of the shipwreck, including children, women, and men, commemorates and remembers.

Through the engraving of the earth's crust, it keeps the memory of the tragedy alive for future generations as a warning and aims to preserve and honour the memory of the victims, transferring a profound and lasting significance into the permanence of the sign.¹ Embodying memory through form, sign and symbol is an operation of architecture. This type of operation traces the meaning of the values of the *memorial-monument* back to the Ancient World,² in which the system of memorialization served to express through the body of architecture what the remains of the essence semantically transferred from the bodily figure to the architectural-monumental figure, whose purpose was to preserve the mortal remains.³

The tomb, originally made of earth and stone, corridors and central spaces, whose forms refer to an archaic origin made up of relations between Man, Earth and celestial vault, is, through the project for the island of Lampedusa, in line with the idea of a *memorial-monument* that everyone possesses. The passage between life and death is expressed in the relationships of meaning that are defined and constructed within the very idea of the monument and, the formal expression of commemoration – past, present and future – is intertwined in the tragic epilogue of the migrants, defining through the physical space of the project the relationship of values between the sacred, historical and cultural.

Fig. 1

On the previous page: Thomas Pepino, gate Pax, model in cardboard paper, Lampedusa, 2023.

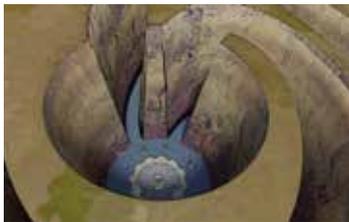
Fig. 2

Elio Garis, gate Pax, watercolour, Lampedusa, 2023.



The project idea for the island of Lampedusa is the topological space that constitutes memory through the analytical process and monument in the tectonic act, formally establishing a burial place for all the victims of the Mediterranean Sea.⁴

Through the process of memorialization,⁵ the earth's crust becomes a geographical reference and a place of pilgrimage. A light in the deep abyss of the Mediterranean Sea (Fig. 1-2-3).

**Fig. 3-4**

Elio Garis, gate Pax, watercolour, Lampedusa, 2023; Elio Garis, The labyrinth, watercolour, Lampedusa, 2023.

**Fig. 5**

Elio Garis, The mausoleum, watercolour, Lampedusa, 2023.

Project description

The form of the *memorial-monument* is characterised by a curvilinear sign⁶ that literally digs into the earth's crust until it reaches sea level. The succession of meanders with which the marine journey within the earth's surface is divided, hinders and slows down the path like the rivers of the underworld that obstruct the road that leads to the afterlife. [Fig. 4-5-6]

At the center of the route is the house of the dead and of memory: the mausoleum, the landing place, the raft (Fig. 7-8-9).

The waterway, which is entirely navigable, develops in a trench, inside a gorge carved into the Earth. The track is inscribed in an inverted trapezium in the shape of a canyon that runs from the Libyan coast overseas up the Mediterranean towards the Water Valley⁷(Fig. 10).

At the far end of this route, the *Overseas* entrance gate is located to the south and the *Pax* exit gate to the north; both are located at the natural inlets of the cliff and dialogue with the geographical features of the island of Lampedusa (Fig. 11-12).

The route refers to the labyrinth and its primordial meaning, to the intricate character of the series of meanders of which it is composed, in analogy with the impassable difficulties that the *transited* face in the dark of night in order to reach new destinies, to the meaning of life, made up of hardships and hope.

The southern gate is the gate of remembrance; it corresponds to the beginning of the route and represents the destination of the sea route that boats set sailed from the Libyan coast to reach the shore of the island of Lampedusa.

The pattern on the ground that cuts into the earth's crust is an obligatory *transit* that can be followed in only one direction, which from the open-air sea enters the entrance gorge of the route in the middle of the night (Fig. 13-14).

The one-way *transit* to the opposite end of the island's crust causes disquiet and disorientation. Here the human condition, the tragedy itself, becomes

Fig. 6

Thomas Pepino, gate Pax, model in cardboard paper, Lampedusa, 2023.



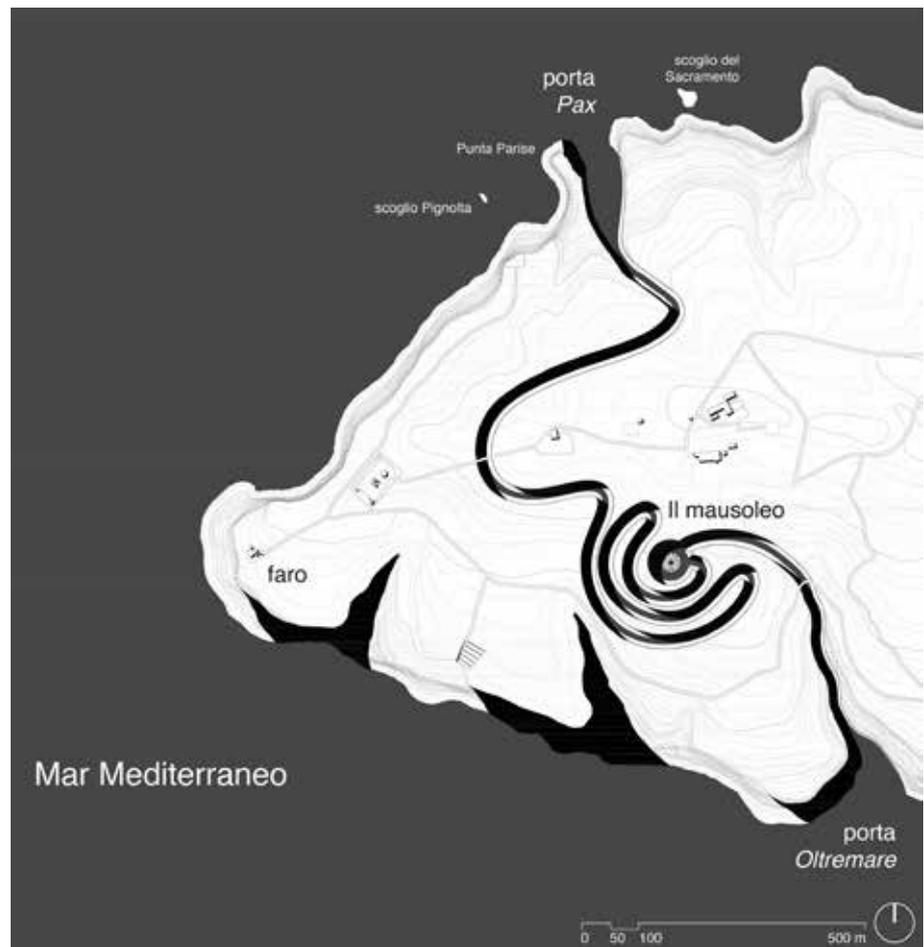
Fig. 7

Thomas Pepino, gate Overseas, model in cardboard paper, Lampedusa, 2023.

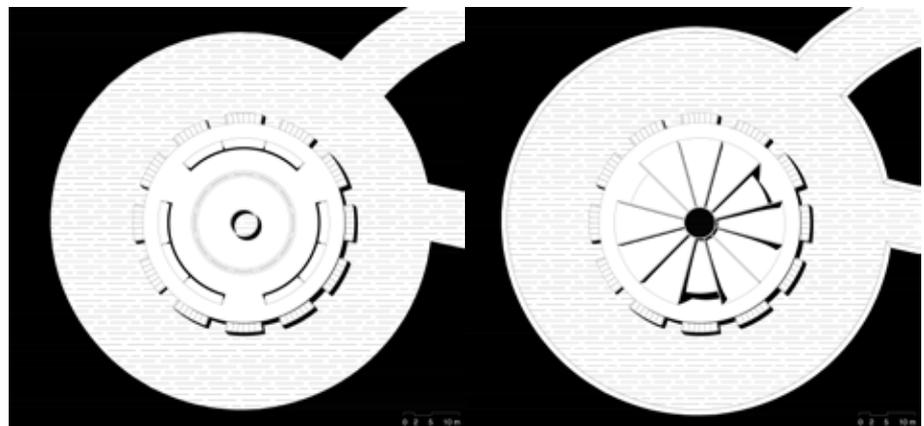


Fig. 8

Thomas Pepino, The memorial-monument for the island of Lampedusa, planivolumetry, Lampedusa, 2023.

**Figg. 9-10**

Thomas Pepino, The mausoleum, plant at elevation 1.20m asl and plant at elevation 10m asl, Lampedusa, 2023.



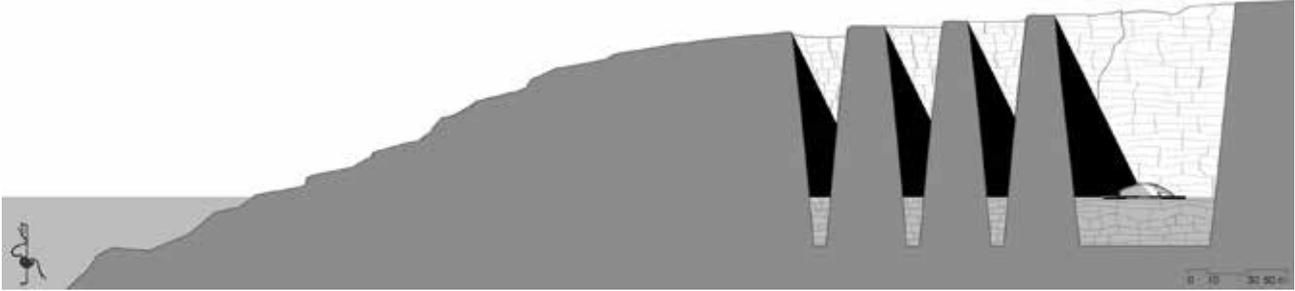


Fig. 11
Thomas Pepino, The labyrinth and mausoleum. Section of the project machine, Lampedusa, 2023.

monumental, becomes experience when the problem of the figure description means death and remembrance. The mark on the ground, in carving the earth's crust, structurally opens a wound in the earth. This wound is the internalisation of the human condition: tragedy.

The track, in addition to deliberately provoking a reaction in the broadest sense of the term, operates timelessly in a domain of anthropic and social transitions which, in addition to manifesting the fatigue and the impossibility of controlling destiny, needs to express the unspeakable in its journey: suffering, death, mourning and, at the same time, rebirth in the landing of new horizons (Fig. 15).

The mausoleum

The architecture of the mausoleum is composed of two elements: the raft and the dome. The first is floating and supports the weight of the second; terraced halfway towards the center with the space for mooring boats at the end of the circumference. The second is characterized by three openings. The threshold that defines access to this space is lowered, forcing one to genuflect before entering below the hemisphere. The three thresholds are seven and twenty meters wide by one and a half metres high, and to these correspond the entrances to the mausoleum. This place is the house of memory (Fig. 16-17).

At the top of the hemisphere, corresponding to the zenith, there is the *oculus* which symmetrically communicates with the respective one of the raft. The *oculus* of the raft is the same size as that of the roof. Inside this place, ceremonial functions take place.

The mausoleum is a work that belongs to the community, in the same way as the navigable path that cuts through the earth's crust.

From the center of the dome, the natural light that passes through the *oculus* of the hemisphere is reflected in the surface layer of water that resurfaces from the *oculus* of the raft, irradiating the perimeter surfaces of the mausoleum and reflecting the blue overseas from the center outwards.

The center of the mausoleum architecture has a very deep meaning. This place is designed for the purification of the community's sins; the water flush with the *oculus* represents the bath of rebirth after the tragedy. The two overlapping architectural figures generate a beam of light five and forty meters wide (Fig. 18).

The mausoleum is a floating architecture that rises and falls according to the tide. The hemispherical structure is thirty-three meters wide and rests on a raft forty-five meters wide. The raft has three drops in altitude halfway before reaching the *oculus*. The building is set on corten steel alloy ribs fixed to the raft floor (Fig. 19-20).

The mausoleum is covered with 368 bush-hammered sheets of metal; each

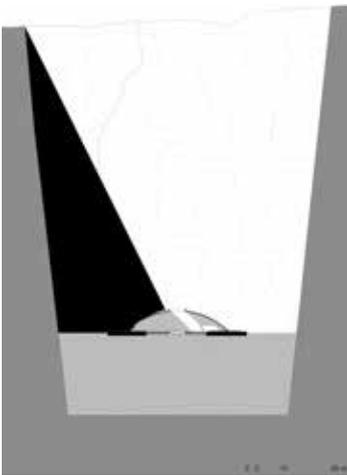


Fig. 12
Thomas Pepino, The mausoleum, section, Lampedusa, 2023.

**Figg. 13-14**

Thomas pepino, The mausoleum, model in PLA, Lampedusa, 2023.



sheet of metal, if known, has the name of the person who passed through, victim of the tragedy, engraved by hand. The design of the surface covering of the house of the dead and of memory allows additional metal sheets to be added over time. Hoping that this type of operation will never happen, the *memorial-monument* is configured as an open work. The interior of the mausoleum is made of smooth light-coloured concrete.

Incision. Meaning of the *transit*

The choice to physically pierce the earth's crust is an act of denunciation. The scar that crosses the island of Lampedusa from one end to the other, scratches, engraves, operates at the scale of the land, leaving an indelible mark visible from space.

Transit, composed of *transitus*, comes from *transire*, whose meaning is to pass, and is composed of *trans* which means beyond, through, and *ire* meaning to go. The memorial *Transits. Overseas Abysses*, specifies and identifies the need to go beyond, in sign and meaning.

To go beyond is the condition to which one is subjected in the experience of the *memorial-monument*; also leading the meaning back to the tragedy, to earthly and extracorporeal life, to the need to abandon oneself, to get lost in the labyrinth, ferried inside the earth, to Hades, in the oblivion of memories made of memory and architecture⁸ (Figg. 21-22-23-24).

The physical, navigable passage retraces the tragedy, the sky dialogues with the water and the celestial vault reflects the light of the stars in the *oculus* and along the terrestrial incision. In the darkness of the night, the lights of the stars constitute the only orientation of the *transients*; their only hope is to entrust their existence to the unknown.

Abyss brings back the theme of waters; the narrative begins from the Mediterranean Sea, from the literal and literary depths that the unfathomability of suffering, reaches deep and dark regions; physical with death, restless with the drama of the tragedy that the survivors will carry in their memory for the rest of their existence.

Overseas brings the question of exodus to center of the discussion, the endless human drama of disorientation and the biblical journey, the last song of the chorus, the voice of emigration towards new routes.

Overseas raises the gaze on the theme of migrants, it represents the politics of the Western world looking beyond a border, a geographical and cultural distance, recognizing and identifying beyond the sea the borderline and the

Fig. 15

Elio Garis, The mausoleum, watercolour, Lampedusa, 2023.

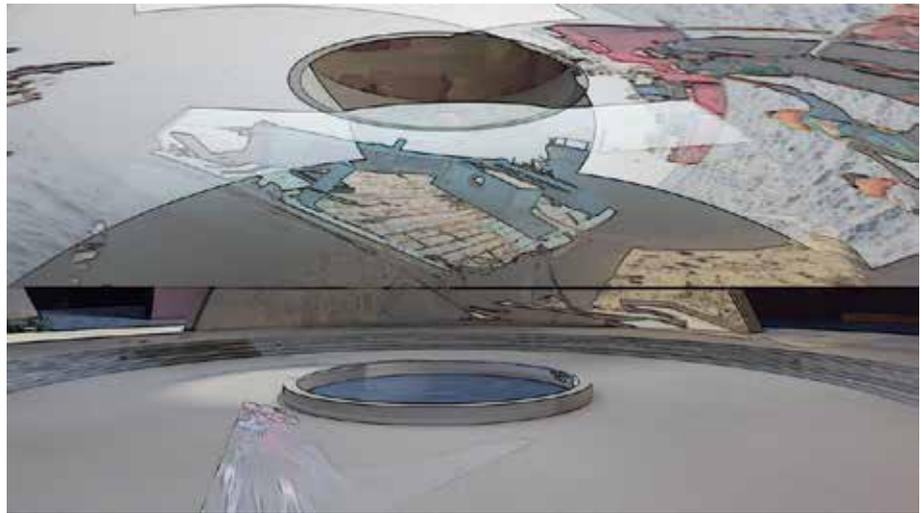


figure of diversity and, at the same time, the recognizable. The *Overseas* gate is a symbol; it cleaves the earth, engulfs migrants, opens a chasm along the cliff and constitutes the indissoluble scar of the world.

An imagined world. Technological features

The bewilderment one perceives as one traverses the architectural space of the excavation, seemingly with no way out, constitutes the great theme of migrants: the exodus of humankind, the transit, the flight into the unknown.

The navigable path leads to the *en plein air* temple of reminiscence, the house of the dead, the cherished place where memory, like Ariadne's thread, leads the narrative and the destiny of mankind back to the interrupted point where every epilogue comes to a confrontation. In it, the stories of the people of the sea become fragments narrated by sounds and moving images that, as in a planisphere, bring the place of the landing back to the centre of the discourse, both in its etymological sense and in its extensive and transitive possibility of an archetypal figure in which the image of the voyage, the origin, the end, the emotion and the tragedy meet to set off again towards another unknown: the exit. Hence the idea of making advanced use of technology, in which the walls of the excavation, one hundred meters high, nine metres wide at water level and twenty-seven at ground level, lend themselves to projections of the world imagined by the art of video mapping. Immersive projections that during the transit through the canyon describe and transcribe on the surface of the water and along the walls of the earth's crust, the history and memory of the men of the sea. Moving images of an imagined world, to make the *transit* experience even more engaging and immersive (Figg. 25-26-27).

The landing place becomes the Homeric symbolic element, Ulysses' raft, and as such symbolizes the ability to adapt and the insatiable desire to return home. This place, obscured by sliding walls at the three thresholds, combined with performance art and 3D video mapping, is transformed into a multisensory artwork, in which architecture and technology transform the spectator's experience.

The project combines figurativeness with an ethical commitment to social denunciation: the silent and disorienting path becomes a space for the memory of the living. As such, the work is configured not only as a place of passage and fruition for the entire community, but also as a deeply tangible fracture destined to constitute a significant legacy for future generations.

Notes

¹ The use of the terms *permanence* and *sign* is addressed to their geographical extension, to the territorial question, not necessarily definable through the anthropic condition. However, through the work of man, as in the case of the project for the *memorial-monument*, they constitute the possibility of establishing reasoning on form from terrestrial figures. This takes the form of a reworking of a subjugated object, the possibility of reading in the geographical features the plausible transfer of an archaeological knowledge. Geographical facts, together with those of Man, make themselves available to an analytical reading to define semantically and formally what lies above the memory of the underground, establishing the relationship between architecture and geography, text and figure, transferring meaning and memory to things. On the importance of sign and signification, see Carlo Sini (1985, 46-50).

² On the significance of monument values over time and how society perceives and evaluates monuments, see the work of Alois Riegl (2011, 11-29).

³ The lemma memorisation belongs to the field of *memory places*. The meaning leads to the possibility of transferring a form of memory into the body of architecture, carrying the memory of a significant event through time. One form of memorisation is the construction of physical monuments and the creation of memorial sites, with the aim of honouring and remembering what has been, aiming to keep alive the collective memory of events or individuals that have had an impact on history. On the concept of memory and memorisation, see the three-volume work under the direction of Pierre Nora (1984-1992).

⁴ The project formalises the place of memory through the modality of the narrative, in which the body of the text identifies, transfers and signifies in the body of the architecture and in the distributive characters the form of a mnemonic and figurative identity made of archetypes. The project for the island of Lampedusa constructs mnemonic processes by fragments starting from the figures of antiquity and leads through the system of circulation to a topology of memory. On memory and the topological question, see Frances A. Yates (1966).

⁵ On memorisation as an action of transferring and configuring the sign function of the object of remembrance in the figure of the memorial-monument, see the examples described and provided by Michela Bassanelli (2014, 2-7). For the definition and construction of the meaning of the sign function, see Louis Hjelmslev (1968, 52).

⁶ The sign of the memorial – formalised in the distributive character – is the outcome of a «recognition that takes place when an object or event, produced by nature or human action [...] is understood by the recipient as the expression of a given content [...]». Moreover, in order to become connected between signifier and signified «the object must be seen as having been produced by display, replication or invention, and related by a given kind of ratio. Thus the act of recognition reconstitutes the object as IMPRINT, SYMPTOM or INDEX. To interpret the recognised object is to correlate it with a possible physical cause that functions as its content – it having been conventionally accepted that the physical cause acts as the sign's intentional producer» (Eco 1998, 289).

⁷ The Water Valley is a small valley located along the south coast of the island. The layout for the island of Lampedusa, originates from the reading of the geographical features.

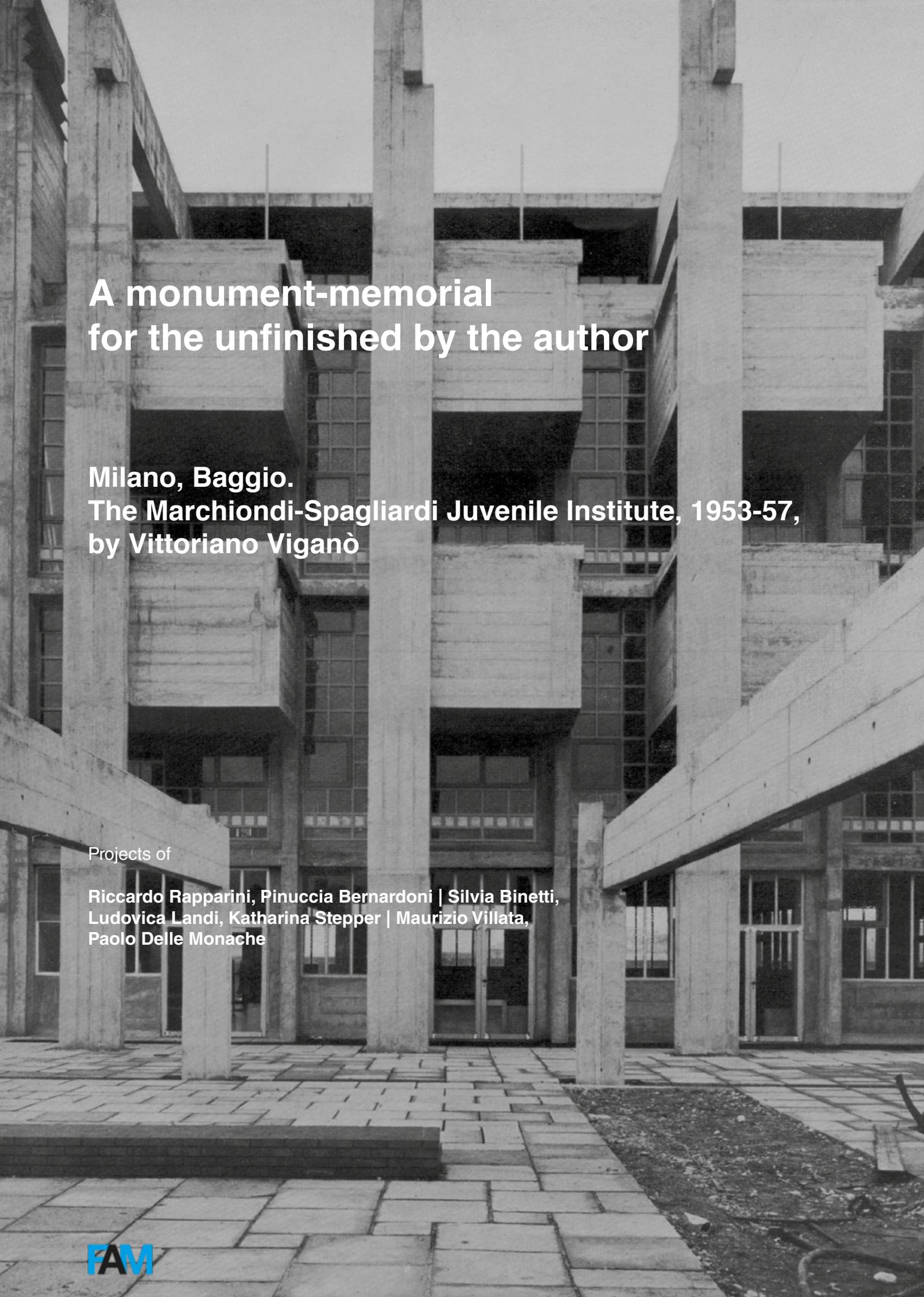
⁸ Like the architecture of which a book is composed, the matter of cross-references to which the memorial monument for Lampedusa is subjected – on an architectural and territorial scale – is expressed between rhetorical and linguistic figures. This passage corresponds to the articulated composition of «lines of articulation or segmentarity, layers, territoriality; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialisation and de-stratification [...] a *concatenation*» as explained by Deleuze and Guattari (2003, 35), and «is itself only in connection with other concatenations, in relation to other bodies without organs» (Deleuze and Guattari 2003, 36).

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Thomas Pepino, (Cuneo, 1984), architect, graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at Turin Polytechnic with Carlo Ravagnati, with whom he carried out teaching and research activities. He obtained a 2nd level Interateneo Master's degree in Architectural and Urban Design at the University of Padua and the University of Catania - SDS Architettura. He holds a PhD in Architectural and Urban Composition from the Polytechnic University of Turin, obtaining the title in 2023. Winner of the Renzo Piano Foundation's international award Art of Construction: the importance of structural details. He is currently a teaching assistant in Architectural and Urban Composition at the Department of Architecture and Design of the Politecnico di Torino.

Elio Garis, (Vigone, 1954), sculptor, after his artistic maturity he exhibited for the first time with a personal exhibition in 1975 at the Galleria Floriana in Cossato (BI). He alternated his activity as a ceramist with that of a painter until 1978, the year in which he set up Mastro Mahel's workshop. In 1984 he was chosen by J.C. Penny of New York to represent Italian craftsmanship in the USA. He worked in Dallas, Kansas City, St. Louis and New York. From 1989 to 2021 he created 30 public works. His last solo exhibitions were at the Charlick and Piero Passet Gallery in London, the Losano and Storello Galleries in Pinerolo, the Galleria la Nave in Grugliasco and the Conte Verde Museum in Rivoli. He was invited to participate in the Sixth Biennial International Sculpture in Racconigi.



**A monument-memorial
for the unfinished by the author**

**Milano, Baggio.
The Marchiondi-Spagliardi Juvenile Institute, 1953-57,
by Vittoriano Viganò**

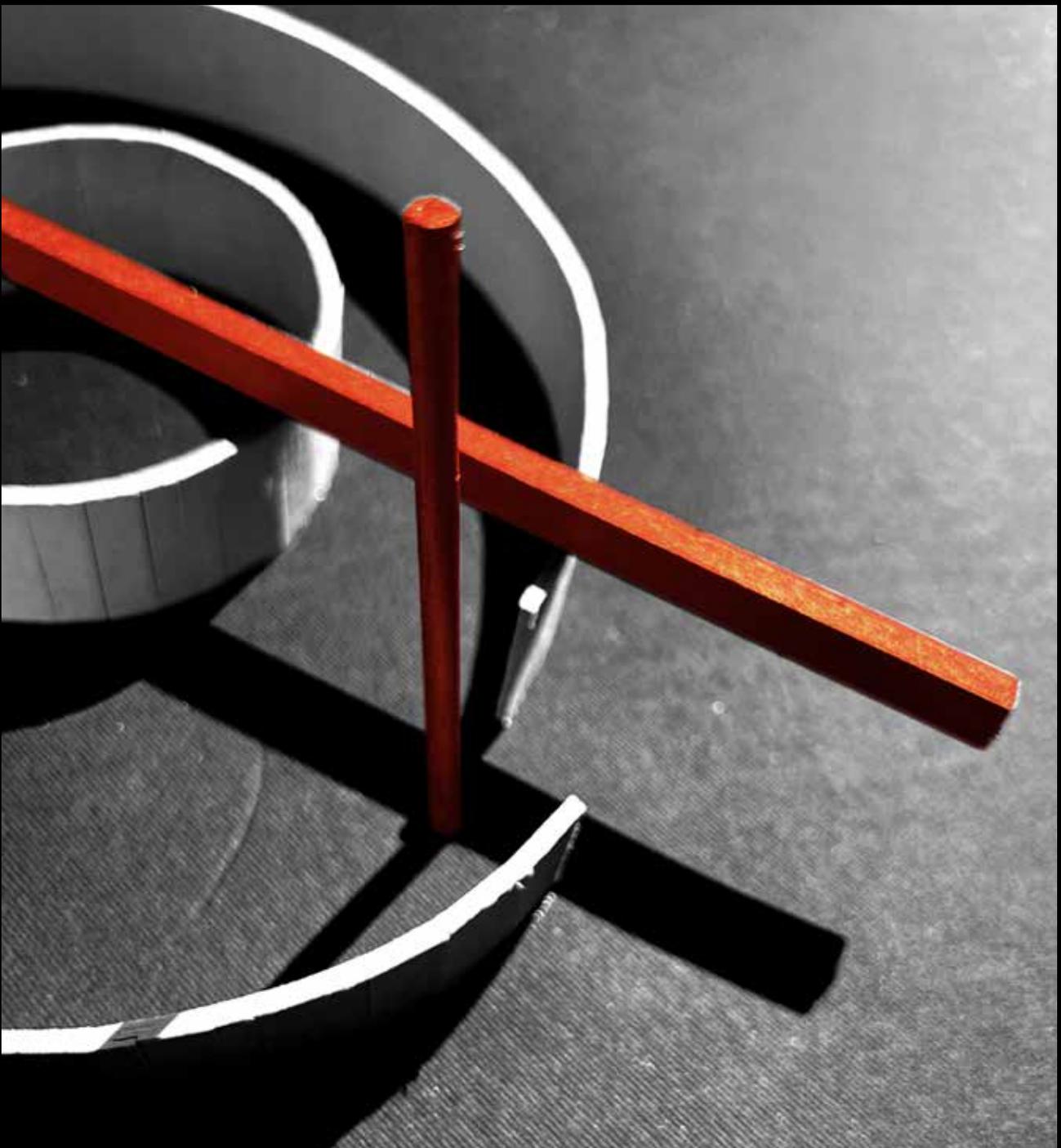
Projects of

**Riccardo Rapparini, Pinuccia Bernardoni | Silvia Binetti,
Ludovica Landi, Katharina Stepper | Maurizio Villata,
Paolo Delle Monache**

Motto «Without title»

Architectural project Riccardo Rapparini

Sculptor Pinuccia Bernardoni



Riccardo Rapparini, Pinuccia Bernardoni (Sculptor) Per Fantasmata

Abstract

The project of the memorial monument 'Per fantasmata' explores the concept of the *unfinished* within its intersections of architecture and art, relating it to the idea of the unfinished as both a characteristic of Vittoriano Viganò's design process and a term capable of summarising the vicissitudes that led one of his most renowned projects, the Istituto Marchiondi Spagliardi, to be simultaneously considered a *ruin* and *incomplete* project. The *unfinished* is a life choice, an 'open value' (tba), a tool for poetic reaction that translates into a fluid, disorienting architecture and a raw material that allows itself to be shaped by time. Material, form, and space, as well as place and context, become an opportunity to establish a profound connection between the *unfinished* nature of the memorial and that of Viganò's project, creating a place of spirituality, envisaged but never realized, capable of stimulating individual interpretation and awareness, transforming spectators into authors of the experience itself.

Parole Chiave

Monument — Memorial — Marchiondi — Viganò

Dico a ti, chi del mestiero vole imparare, bisogna danzare per fantasmata. (Domenico da Piacenza, *De la arte di ballare et danzare*, 1425)

It is easy to get lost in the intricacies of definitions, in the anxiety of classification... We start with questioning what is meant by *ruin* and what by *unfinished*, and from there, we take but a moment to delve into the works of Walter Benjamin, Georg Simmel, Marc Augè, Didi-Huberman. Someone will inevitably refer to the visions of Piranesi, while others may go as far as Ruskin's *seven lamps*. Those who enjoy intersecting architecture with other disciplines cannot ignore Michelangelo or Rodin. An interesting attempt to overcome this difficulty, this theoretical uncertainty, was proposed by Francesco Venezia (2011, p. 92) when, during a preliminary lecture to a didactic exercise, he argued that «the 'unfinished' is like 'a broken shell: the revealed interior makes us discover a fascinating world'». From Venezia's mystery of the *unfinished*, we arrive *in medias res* at the *unfinished* as a 'choice of life', which Attilio Stocchi (1999) defines as a fundamental component of Viganò's poetics, a reference figure in the elaboration of this project. Stocchi continues:

Fig. 1

On the previous page: Photograph of the model.

the unfinished is a choice of life, apparently in opposition to the desire to define. It is an open value. It is the voice of the shadow that approaches vitality, feeling the abyss of a dark attraction exerted by the fear that reveals itself – perhaps as a counterpoint in a broad, extended stage... the unfinished represents freedom, the possibility that space and matter are not complete and the disillusion that there is a finite, a perfect completion. The result is an unfinished in space: fluid architecture, continuing, having a moment of arrest, marrying the air; and an unfinished in matter: raw, opaque matter, shaped by time (Stocchi 1999, p. 7, tba).

Fig. 2
Sketches.



Similarly to Venezia, Viganò recognizes in the *unfinished* a condition to be exalted, to be sought and stimulated through the project, a trigger for a poetic reaction capable of revealing new fascinating worlds, reflecting simultaneously on space, time, and matter.

These initial thoughts on the theme of the *unfinished* have been projected onto the 'Marchiondi', whose non-finality is complicated by assuming the dual condition of *incomplete* and *ruin*, a condition that has produced in us a deep state of fascination. Is the mystery and ambiguity of this industrial archaeology invaded by spontaneous vegetation that continually hides and reveals itself not even more suggestive than the completed project? Is it possible to separate poetry from reality? Charm from the drama of abandonment? Indeed, can we not find poetry in the scarlet spiral staircases, once guiding children to their rooms but now reduced to vertebrae that heroically bear the weight of the entire structure? Are not the shattered windows on the facade, bathed in the glow of an orange sunset, a reflection of the rich tapestry of history woven through the threads of a project, a place, and countless adventures – in essence, the poetry of architecture?

The first preparatory drawings

We chose to immerse ourselves in these initial enchantments, seeking a shared purpose and a common ground for the convergence of sculpture and architecture. As we delved into the sketches of Pinuccia Bernardoni, discovering overlooked preparatory studies that time had forgotten, they unexpectedly entered into a dialogue, specifically with those scarlet staircases that had captured our attention from the very outset. Consequently, we resolved to delve further into this interplay between the two elements, casting them as protagonists in a *pièce* [Fig. 1], akin to the text juxtaposed with an original composition, fostering novel avenues of exploration. These preliminary endeavors guided us towards a series of compositions [Fig. 2], characterized by delicate elements intricately folded like sheets of paper, featuring an ascending concentricity that seamlessly engaged with Viganò's staircase element. These endeavors, as will be demonstrated, proved indispensable in the formal evolution of the project, serving as a pivotal moment to pay homage to the architectural element of the Milanese architect that had initially sparked our reflections.

The path, spatial suggestions

The analogical and emotional first approach, brought out, in addition to the mentioned formal considerations, some characteristics that would become constants in the subsequent phases of our work. Firstly, the definition of

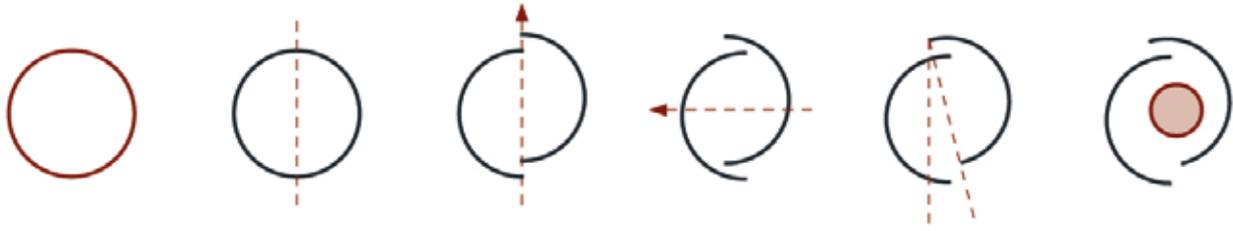


Fig. 3
Diagrams which show the formal genesis of the project.

the *unfinished* as a field capable of refer to multiple interpretations, an act of awareness and self-awareness that leads the spectator, through their active participation, from a mere observer to an author themselves. The *unfinished*, again, as an ‘open value’ (Stocchi). From these considerations, it immediately seemed crucial that this path of individual interpretation and self-awareness should take on a truly physical dimension through the design of the monument-memorial not only as an enlarged sculpture on an architectural scale but as a place with a spatiality that can be experienced internally. In this regard, we advanced in refining the initial sketches, acknowledging that they already hinted at an internal permeability designed for circular movements, delineated by vertical elements capable of shaping both curvilinear and ascending spatial configurations, as well as disorienting and dizzying experiences. The crafting of space through the forces of gravity, energy, and material tension, along with the capacity to centralize space to elicit varied experiences for spectators, inevitably leads us to acknowledge Richard Serra as a distinct reference and an undisputed master. However, the influence extends to Constantin Brancusi as well, particularly his infinite columns, prompting contemplation on the potential interplay between sculpture and spatial experience through elements such as composition, form, and emptiness – an endeavor that has historically resonated with figures like Tatlin, Malevich, and El Lissitzky.

The Definition of form

Proceeding with the description of the project’s genesis, the sketches found their natural definition in a planimetric drawing in which we rationalized the system of sails that, in the initial experiments, was assuming a metaphysical image too close to the world of plants and flowers. Similarly, we decided to stimulate the theme of the *unfinished* through the arbitrary alteration of the circle, a geometric figure that more than any other refers to completeness, the finished, unity, and perfection. The starting circumference [Fig. 3, a], with a diameter of 20 meters, is divided on the vertical axis into two semicircles [Fig. 3, b]. The one on the left remains fixed while the one on the right is subjected to a vertical translation of 2 meters [Fig. 3, c]. This gesture generates two interstices, one upper and one lower, which will become the entrances to the monument-memorial. Subsequently, the vertically translated semicircle undergoes a further displacement of 3 meters along the horizontal axis [Fig. 3, d] to approach its double, and a subsequent rotation of 15 degrees [Fig. 3, e], generating a triangular space, a perspective cone, as well as an opportunity to differentiate the two entrances described previously. From the plan, we move to the volume, the arches of the circumferences generated geometrically thicken, become concrete walls, a muscular exhibition whose excess needs to be limited through the smoothing of the profile that becomes ascending from the plane, the greater apex reaches a height of 3 meters, the lower one 2.4 meters. The two curvilinear sails, confronting each other, generate a tension that led us

Fig. 4

Perspective view which illustrates the monument and its relationship with the Marchiondi Institute.



Fig. 5

Perspective view of the main entrance to the monument along Via Noale.



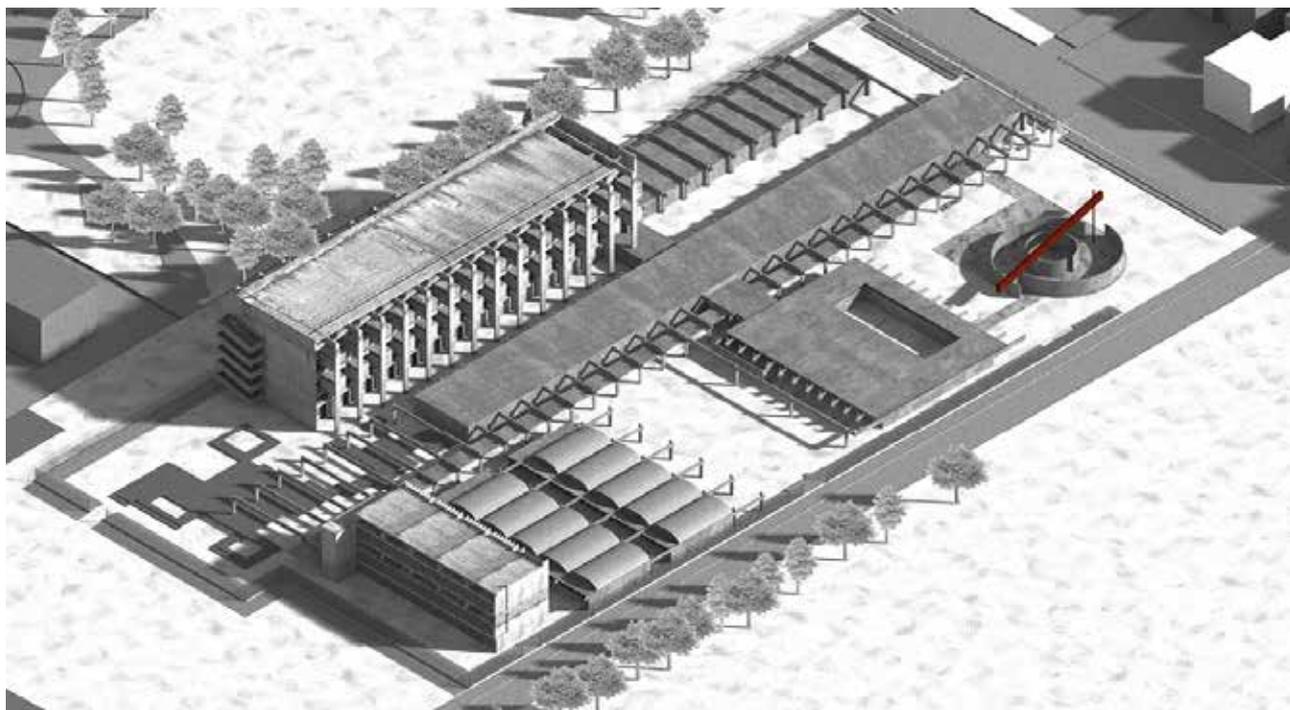


Fig. 6
General axonometry.

Fig. 7
Perspective cross-section of the volume originally intended for 'guest quarters and psychotechnical centre'.



Fig. 8
Perspective cross-section of the volume originally intended for 'presidency and management'.



to insert an additional element in the central space that was created [Fig. 3, f], a curvilinear element, an inert body, a heart to be revealed, experienceable only by traversing the interior of the monument-memorial. One might think that the marked concentricity alludes to the theme of the labyrinth, to the one designed, for example, by BBPR and then painted by Saul Steinberg, but we wanted to distance ourselves from this misunderstanding immediately by introducing a strong, horizontal sign, constructivist memory. A steel beam rests obliquely on the curvilinear sails (at the higher elevation of 3 meters) along a diagonal axis of 15 degrees, the same angle responsible for the earlier rotation of one of the two semicircles. This element confronts the gravitational pull of the sails by balancing gracefully above them, revealing its vibratile essence. Moreover, this element, beyond enhancing the complexity of the internal spatial encounter, extending beyond mere vertical elements, serves as a conspicuous guide, marking the entrances to the monument-memorial like a red thread and dispelling any potential misconceptions of a labyrinth.

Materials

Discussions have touched upon form, composition, and space, yet material considerations have received less attention. Initial discussions foresaw the sails crafted from reinforced concrete, although early in the study, we explored alternative solutions involving steel. Some conceptualizations even delved into perforated sheet metal, and certain sketches explored the theme of opaque glass. Moreover, there were ventures into plastic materials with milky hues, as if conjuring a phantasmagoric image. Alternatives that, however, did not seem capable of returning that character of the *unfinished* later found in concrete, especially in its ability to be shaped by time, to assume a heroic and timeless character especially when left to itself, in ruin. A raw material that becomes inevitable when faced with Vittoriano Viganò's work, particularly within the context of the Marchiondi Spagliardi Institute. Reinforced concrete is accompanied by corten steel, a material displaying signs of oxidation as it shields itself from the corrosive impact of atmospheric agents, acquiring a rough surface and a burnt red hue. Red has always played a fundamental role in Vittoriano Viganò's oeuvre, predominantly paired with black, as deemed a «necessary interlocutor» of black «to give it life and plasticity like a flame with soot» (Viganò in Stocchi 1999, tba). While not directly resorting to black, the selection of a red chroma for the beam element and the vertical element, to be discussed later, was motivated by the same desire to impart energy and vigor capable of engaging in a chromatic dialogue with the stark and cold cement.

Place Finally, a consideration concerning the relationship with the context. The interaction between the monument-memorial and the 'Marchiondi' has been examined from various perspectives: figurative (such as the relationship between the initial sketches and the spiral staircase), evocative (exploring the theme of the *unfinished* between ruin and incompleteness), and material (concrete in conversation with the red color). Yet, our attention was also drawn to the selection of the physical location within the Institute to stage the project. We chose to position the monument in a specific area of the Marchiondi grounds, precisely in the strip of land along Via Noale where the Church of the Institute was initially planned. This decision was driven by the desire to reconcile Viganò's original design by engaging the *unfinished incompleteness* of the project with that of our monument. This

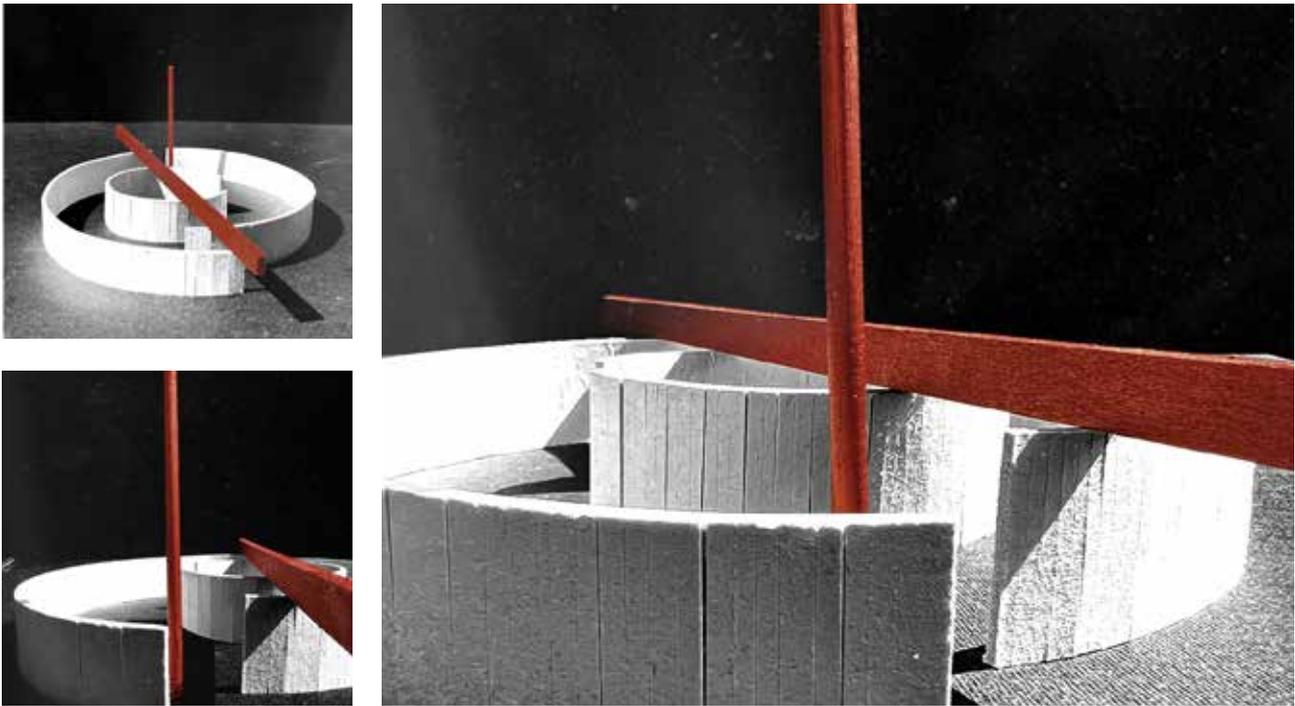


Fig. 9
Photos from various angles of the model.

operation, beyond addressing physical and mnemonic aspects, operates on a semantic level, reinstating a space for reflection and sacredness, albeit secular, to the original project. This intention is further underscored by the introduction of a vertical element, a tubular Corten steel, which not only marks the main entrance of the monument-memorial but also asserts a verticality seemingly denied by the horizontal beam, harkening back to the bell tower envisioned in the preliminary project.

Note about the Title

The concept of ‘fantasmata’ originates from a theoretical framework by Domenico da Piacenza, as documented in his treatise ‘De la arte di ballare et danzare’ (1441-1450). Among the six elements defining the art – measure, memory, agility, manner, and measure of the ground – Domenichino introduces ‘fantasmata’ a nuanced concept recently expounded upon by Giorgio Agamben (2007, p. 12) as a «sudden halt between two movements, designed to contract within its internal tension the measure and memory of the entire choreographic series» (tba). This ability to encapsulate the memory of a choreography in a solitary, suspended, and interrupted movement resonates with our project. *Unfinished* as it may be, it aspires to encapsulate in a singular spatial experience the memory of a place, encompassing its past, present, and future.

Note about the Title

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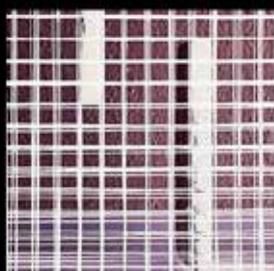
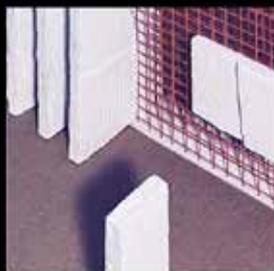
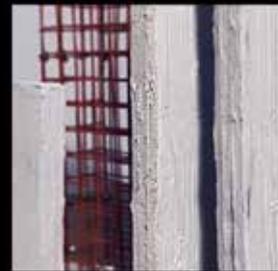
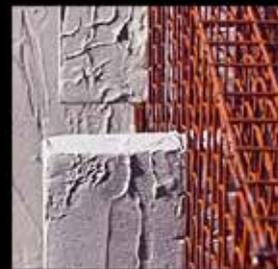
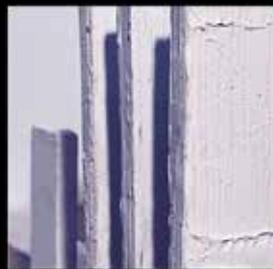
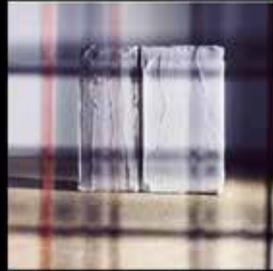
Riccardo Rapparini, 1995, is an architect and Ph.D. student in “Architecture and City” at the University of Parma. He earned his degree in “Architecture, Built Environment, and Interiors” from the Polytechnic Institute of Milan with a thesis entitled “Fragments of an architectural and urban discourse” which deals with the theme of the regeneration of urban suburbs through the dialogue between urban and architectural design. He has been a teaching assistant in architectural composition at the Polytechnic Institute of Milan since 2017 and at the University of Parma since 2020. He has also been a tutor in international workshops such as Archea (2020) and MIAW (2021). His research activity currently focuses on the issues of the transmissibility of architectural design through historical criticism, theory, and teaching.

Pinuccia Bernardoni, born in 1953, graduated in sculpture from the “Accademia di Belle Arti di Firenze”, under the guidance of Quinto Ghermandi. In 1976, she moved to Bologna as an assistant in the chair of “Anatomia Artistica” at the “Accademia di Belle Arti” in the city, where she later taught “Disegno contemporaneo” from 1997 to 2017. She made her debut in 1975 at the X Quadriennale dei Giovani in Rome with an installation titled “Segno come Segno” (Sign as Sign). Her first solo exhibition, “La torre e i suoi doppi” (The Tower and its Doubles), took place in Bologna in 1978 at the Galleria 2000. From 1982, she began collaborating regularly with the Galleria Studio G7 in Bologna and Primo Piano in Rome. She has exhibited in various cities in Italy, including Bologna, Bolzano, Catania, Ferrara, Forlì, Milan, Parma, Ravenna, Rome, Turin, Trieste, and Venice. Internationally, she has exhibited in Brussels, Innsbruck, Thessaloniki, Stuttgart, Vaduz, and Vienna. Some bibliographic references include: *Pinuccia Bernardoni* (monograph), Ginevra Grigolo Edizioni, 1984; *Bernardoni* (monograph), Essegi, 1991; P. Bernardoni, *Scolpire geometrie*, Danilo Montanari editore, 2021.

Motto Free dimension

Architectural project Silvia Binetti
Ludovica Landi

Sculptor Katharina Stepper



Silvia Binetti, Ludovica Landi, Katharina Stepper (Sculptor)
Free dimension

Abstract

The opportunity to design a monument to an author's 'unfinished' introduces many themes to the debate at different scales: this paper intends to describe the ideation process along its path – from generally questioning what is truly an 'unfinished' in art, to spotlighting the project itself and the building the monument is dedicated, the Marchiondi Spagliardi Institute by Vittoriano Viganò. We propose a comparison between the structure of the Institute and the Pietà Rondanini, the quintessence of the unfinished, aiming at outlining the defining principles of representing the 'unfinished'. The analysis of the composition of Viganò's building and that of the monument are carried out in parallel, in a persistent relationship of continuity. The theme of the unfinished was also investigated in the graphic experimentation of representing the project.

Keywords

Monument — Marchiondi Spagliardi Institute — unfinished

Fig. 1

On the previous page: Sculptural detail. Photographs of the model.



Fig. 2

Michelangelo's Rondanini Pietà. Zöllner F., Thoenes C. (2022) - Michelangelo. Pittura, scultura, architettura. Taschen. Solvent printing.

Sculpture would be the embodiment of places that, opening a neighborhood and guarding it, gather around them something of freedom that grants a home to all things and to men a dwelling among things (Heidegger 1979).

Observations on the Unfinished in Art

The Marchiondi Spagliardi Institute, designed by Vittoriano Viganò, was built between 1953 and 1957. The church, theater, and sports center were never built from the original plan, but only the buildings for classrooms and laboratories, the dining room, and the administrative offices, which allowed the institute to operate for more than twenty years. Despite the fact that the construction of the complex does not fully correspond to the plan, the architecture presents itself as a finished work, «a 'small modern world', the successful attempt to build for a community not only the house but a small city» (Portoghesi 2021).

The condition of non-finiteness of architecture is determined by the interruption of an artistic process, which returns an unfinished work. However, the transmission of the meaning of a work does not seem to be inextricably linked to its formal finiteness. Consider, for example, Michelangelo's Pietà Rondanini: the image of the Pietà, although sculpted in rough strokes, is very clear and with it the meaning of the work. The incomplete elaboration and the fragmentary composition do not detract from the power of the transmission of meaning, but rather amplify the story, emphasizing the expressiveness.

According to G.C. Argan, «the unfinished of many parts» gives the work a lyrical height that the artist «achieves through extreme torment documented by the pentimenti and destructions left in sight [...]. And here the value

is given precisely by its being presented as a fragment: almost a thought that can only be expressed in broken phrases and for truncated accents, for sudden rhythmic attacks that just as suddenly die out.»

On the basis of this reasoning, in a similar way, it is believed that the un-built parts of the Marchiondi Spagliardi do not detract from the completeness of the architecture, described by Portoghesi (2021) as «a masterpiece, [...] a building capable of telling its reason for being through its form and – fundamental thing – to speak to us convincingly about how architecture can contribute to improving the life of man».

The unfinished is considered a value, a condition that can focus attention on the creative process, to reflect in the flesh – in its making – on the expressiveness of a work, leaving room for freedom on its experience. And always thinking of the Rondanini, precisely because it is left hanging, the unfinished work is able to tell in the edges, in the neglected furrows, the way the artist worked, invisible in other (re-)finished works. On the other hand, this condition translates into a quality that places it on a more general level of meaning than any other Pietà: the abstraction of the figure, as a process of reduction to the essential of the form, is a principle capable of leading to a character of generality, recognizable and shared by the members of a community, which arouses a feeling¹. In this way, a work acquires a character of historical continuity, that is capable of transcending the particular historical moment of its production to express a continuous value of modernity. A significant form becomes stable communication of a value over time, and in this way it assumes an *infinity* that is its quality of *non-finiteness* taken to the limit.

These reasonings are all the more significant if we consider the design of a monument, a work not designed for a practical purpose, whose presence reminds man of a need: to remember something.

Composition Principles

The value of author's unfinishedness represents the general theme of the monument's narrative; at the same time, as a particular testimony, it is intended to refer to the specific architecture of the Marchiondi Spagliardi. The intention is to understand in the design the passage from general to particular and to return the two levels of meaning distinct; therefore, the reasoning behind the composition is based on principles of abstraction and analogy.

The general character is sought in the application of a principle of abstraction by reporting in the form of some essential features, able to comprehend and summarize the unfinished in a broad sense².

A possible representation can be a path, intended as a translation into spatial properties of the temporal dimension³, a fragment of time along which different events follow one another, also translated into spaces.

With the will to express a deep bond with architecture, the reasons for the composition of the Marchiondi are sought, the rules for the arrangement of volumes and the combination of the elements of the construction, up to the geometric figure, regulatory module of uniformity as well as of variation of the ratios. The design of the monument proceeds according to a relationship of analogy of principles.

In the Marchiondi Spagliardi Institute, great importance is attached to the formal articulation of the school complex, significant of the proper meaning of architecture⁴; in the alternation of the different buildings dedicated to the necessary functions, in the voids generated by the distance between

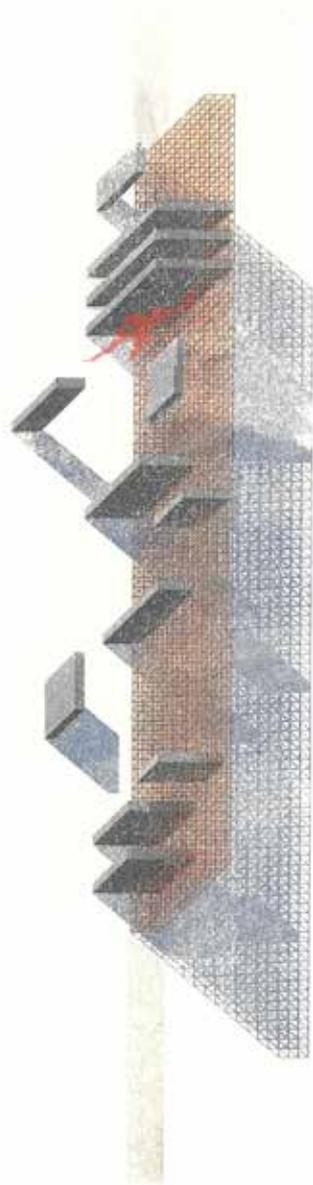
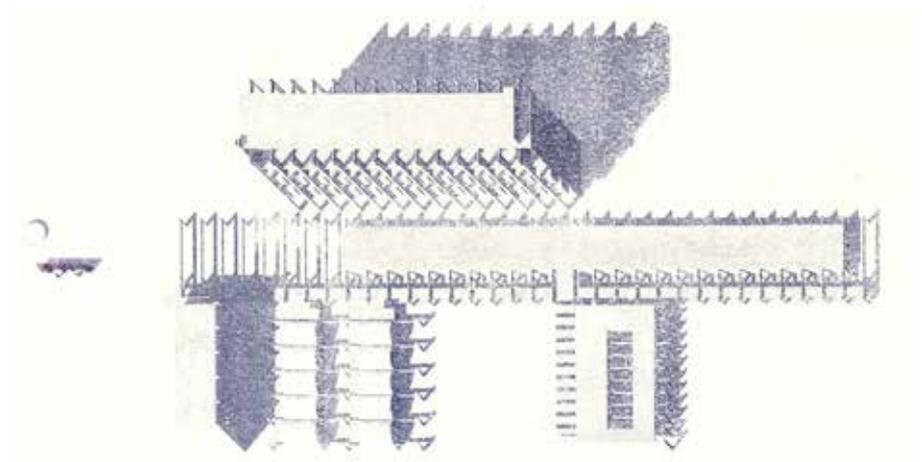


Fig. 3
Sequence of distinct places.
Solvent printing.

Fig. 4

Placement of the monument to the Unfinished in the space of the Marchiondi Spagliardi Institute. Solvent printing.



them that become green spaces, in the continuous variation contained in a measured whole, the common life of educators and educators is carried out and expressed⁵.

Finally, the analogical procedure is mediated, once again, by a strong will of abstraction: on the one hand to avoid a formal re-proposal, on the other hand to seek a reduction to the essential⁶.

Free Dimension

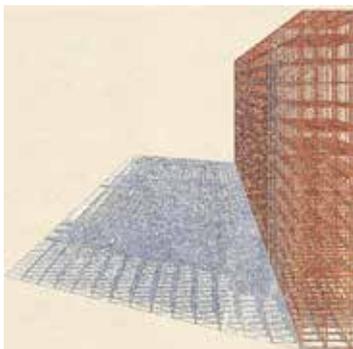
In the monument, a linear element defines a path that orders the alternating arrangement of the parts, the full and the empty of the composition. Similarly, to the reference architecture, a direction is traced, a road that becomes an element of relationships between different places. The path is concretized by this linear element built in steel rods, to form the spatial grid, a visible volume⁷. The grid accompanies the visitor's pace, whose gaze observes the surrounding environment through the metal mesh. Along the path, solid volumes are arranged close and far, transversal or parallel to the grid, to define a succession capable of giving shape to spaces evocative of different experiences, events along the path.

The proportions of the monument are related to the human scale (modulor) and the solid volumes in their arrangement and sizing define internal spaces, in continuity with the exterior⁸.

The monument is placed in continuity with the Marchiondi architecture, along the linear path, the ordering element of the entire composition, as its continuation. When the end of the covered road is reached, it is possible to see the monument, arranged to mark the extension of the path. It is in this relationship of continuity, wanting to make the monument the recognizable continuation of the Marchiondi, and at the same time of alterity, since it is an abstract construction of the idea of the consequentiality of space, that a sense of non-finiteness is expressed.

In the construction of the Marchiondi Institute, the building system makes the whole unitary and characterizes each part as an independently defined element. The portal becomes a support for the roofs of the buildings and an interval of the empty spaces; in its different articulations, it is a source of variation throughout the project. It is an elementary part that, by virtue of its repetition, becomes strongly identifiable with the entire building⁹.

An analogous principle of combination and repetition generates variation in the project and represents the logic capable of ordering the plastic tension, the energy that characterizes and becomes identifiable with the work. The contrast between the void included in the reticular element and the full

**Fig. 5**

Front of the monument facing the garden. Solvent printing.

Fig. 6
Point of view at the beginning of the path. Solvent printing.

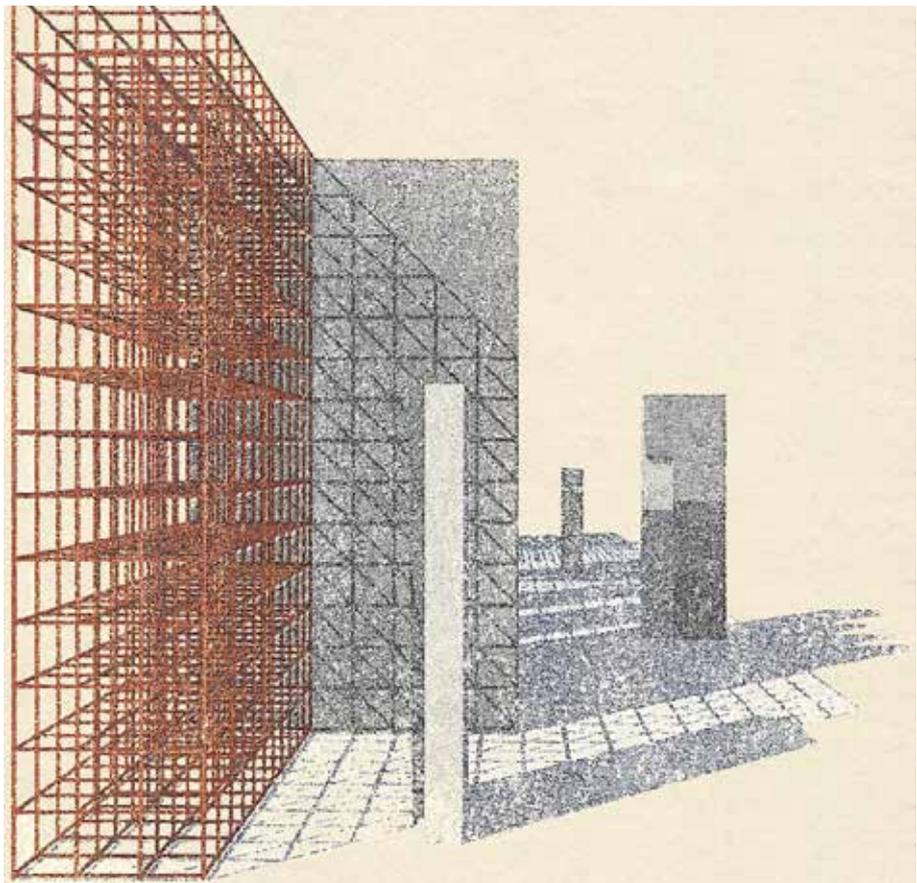
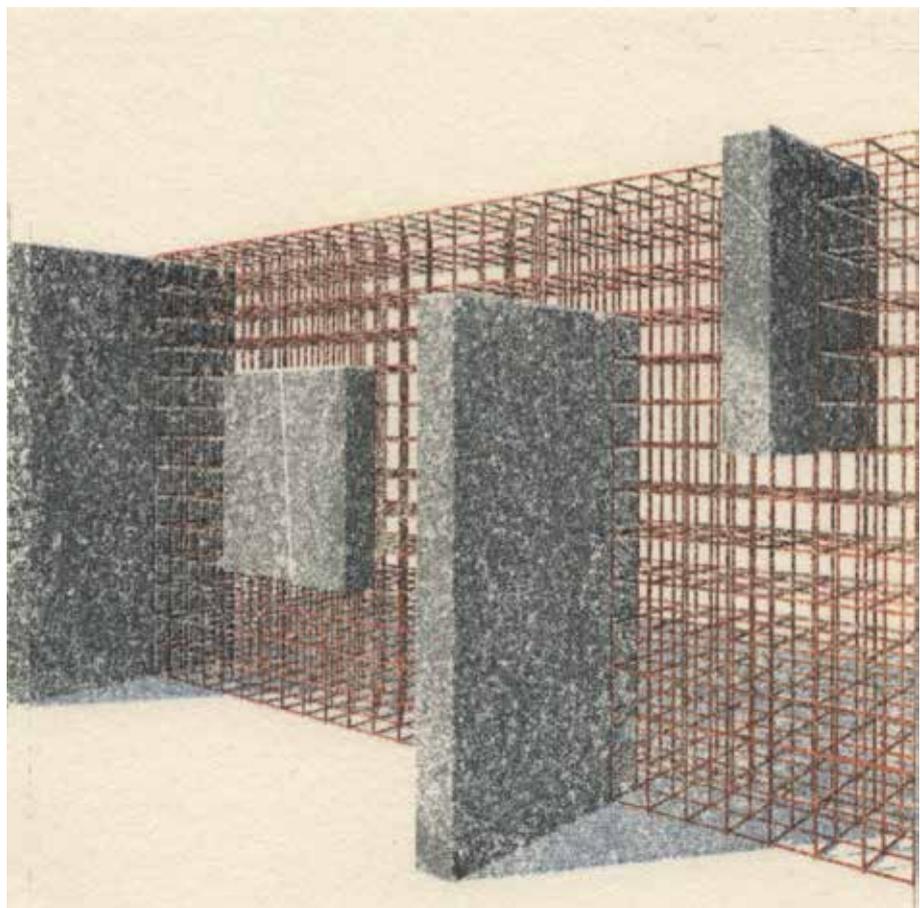


Fig. 7
View of a gathered moment. Solvent printing.



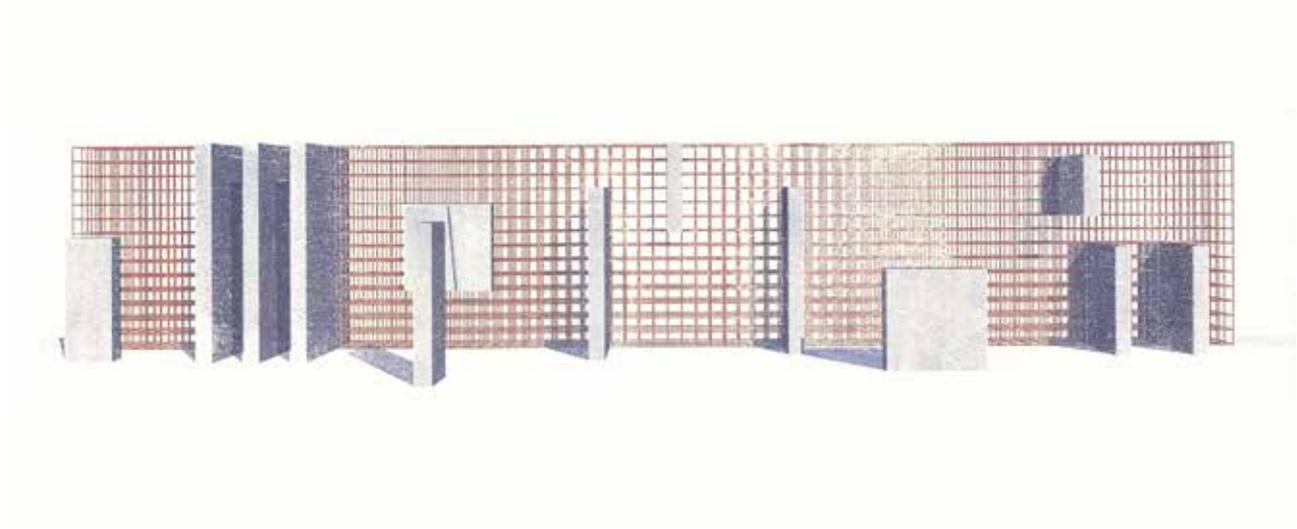


Fig. 8
Overall view of composition. Solvent printing.

of the stone solids, embedded or arranged in relation to it (Figs. 8 and 9), underlines a first hierarchy between the elements. In the arrangement of the solids, a second hierarchy can be found, based on a “significant order of distinct individual places” (Norberg-Schulz 1979), which scan the path in defined moments. An expressiveness analogous to that of the Marchiondi is sought, where «the protagonist becomes the space as a humanized void through rhythm, color, proportions, capable of overwhelming any closure of the volumetric envelope» (Portoghesi 2021).

The sculptural quality of the monument is first appreciable in the use of the rough material; secondly, the marks of the work are recognized on the surface of the volumes. The bare surface of the exposed concrete, the marks impressed by the formwork, the aggregates not perfectly sunk, the oxidation of the mesh at the joints are recognized: these are details that enrich the plasticity of the element and tell its story. Like semi-finished blocks, abandoned in the quarry, manifestation of a working process, in some points left in suspense.

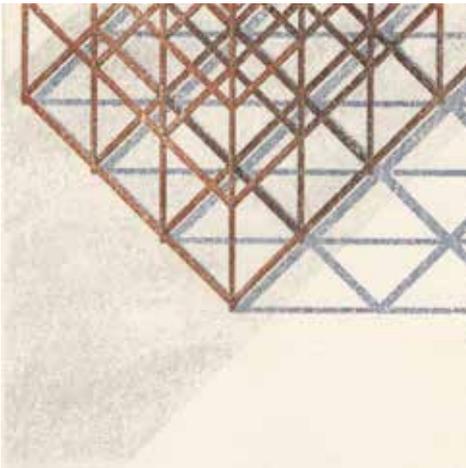
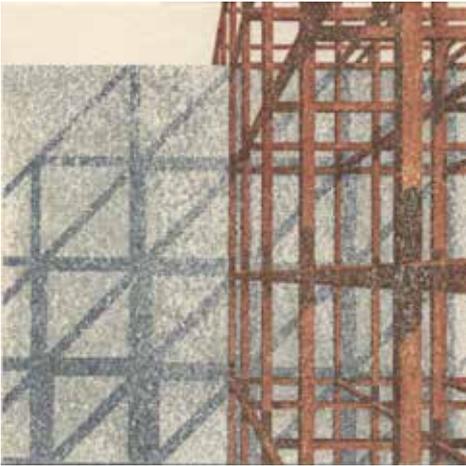
Finally, some subtractions are made, which model the pure volumes by giving them chiaroscuro and geometric correspondences.

In this way, the expression is originated from the specific character of the material and, as stated by Vittoriano Viganò (1982), «the way of treating space, as it can be seen from the reading of the Marchiondi Institute, [...] probably comes from: [...] the trust in the beauty and nobility of every material, even the humble ones» a quality that always in the author’s opinion, belongs to that poetics of «Brutalism: as a direct, explicit fact, not spatial and material fiction».

Note on representation

The continuous reflection on the artistic process, a parallel theme to the investigation of the unfinished, has deeply inspired the methods of representation of the project. The drawings are constructed according to an assembly procedure, using a solvent printing technique. This technique neglects precision in detail, making it possible to transfer an essential image, of immediate communication. The image vibrates, enriching itself with each new impression of an additional level of depth.

The photographs frame fragments of the composition, points to focus on;

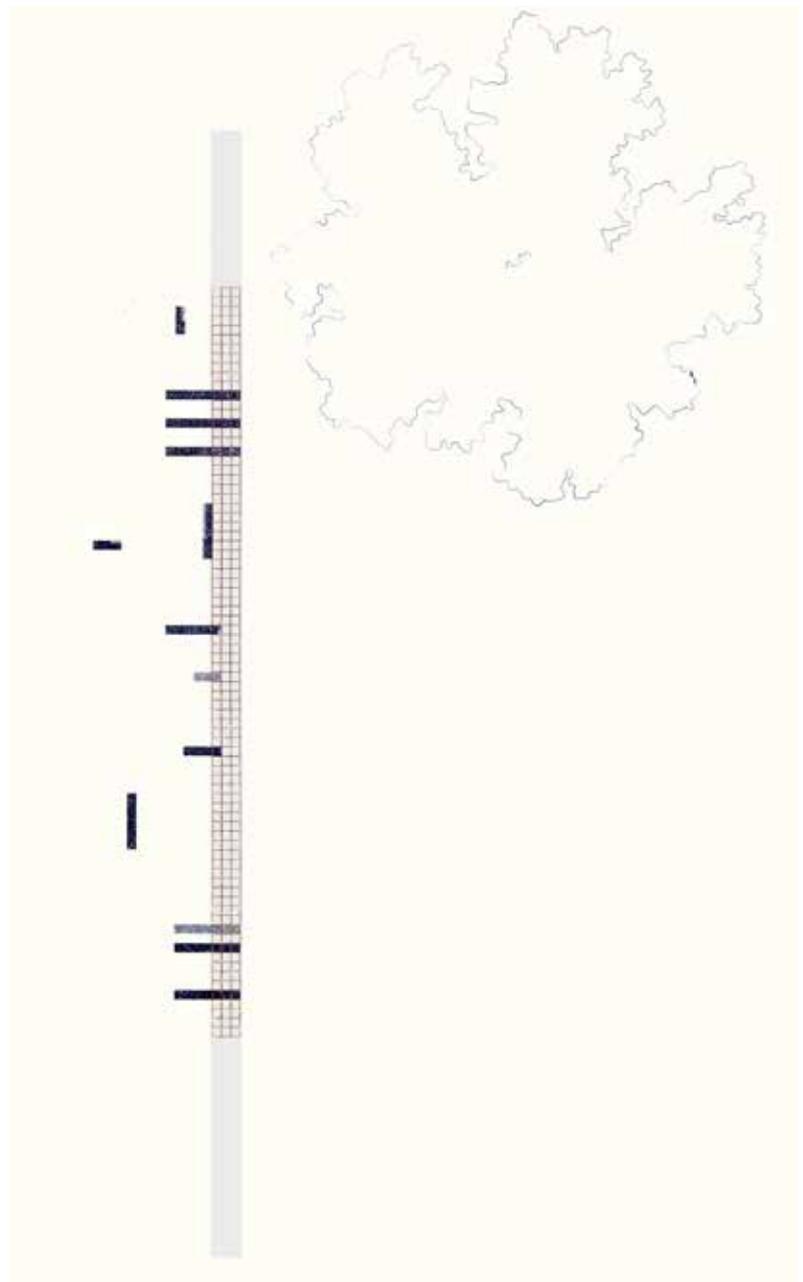


Figg. 9-10

Detail of the connection point between elements of the composition. Solvent printing; Detail of the junction between the network and the foundations; axonometric view from above. Solvent printing.

Fig. 11

Rhythmic variation along the path. Solvent printing.



the frames tell the story of the action of walking through the monument through individual moments.

Notes

¹ «It is necessary to start from scratch, from simplicity, from the essentiality of things. Also from abstraction, because abstraction for modern Western culture means generality, the possibility of enunciating concepts and ideas with greater essentiality» quote by Arturo Martini published in Neri R. (2020) – “La modernità del classico”. In: *Il filo di un pensiero: scritti, appunti, lezioni*. CLEAN, Naples, p. 29.

² A principle of abstraction that operates a «reduction of the phenomena of nature to some essential traits that do not belong to any of those phenomena, but include and represent them all» (Monestiroli 2002, p. 118).

³ «Nevertheless, man has succeeded in building time, translating fundamental temporal structures into spatial properties. Life is primarily movement, and as such it has direction and rhythm. The path is therefore a basic existential symbol, which concretizes the dimension of time» (Norberg-Schulz 1979, p. 56).

⁴ «The principle of proportion is the general principle on which architecture is founded; it is understood as a system of relationships between the parts, revealing the meaning of the building» (Monestiroli 2002, p. 17).

⁵ «Convinced that in architecture the forms must make it possible to recognize the general sense of the elements, just as in the temple, where the skill of the sculptor consists in defining the exact expression of such elements» (Monestiroli 2002 p. 91).

⁶ According to that procedure of "monumental simplification" of which Giorgio Grassi speaks in the essay *La costruzione logica dell'architettura* (Padova, 1967), understood as «a process that leads to the knowledge of the essential quality of the work, a quality that lasts over time, a quality that makes the work monumental» (Monestiroli 2010, p. 13).

⁷ «A volume is wrapped in a surface, a surface that is divided according to the generating and guiding lines of the volume, highlighting the individuality of this volume» (Le Corbusier 2013, p. 23).

⁸ «Space as such and not the sum of surfaces – it is never finished, it is a continuum – the interior is a fragment of space, of a larger space – and hence the economy of the elements, of the constructive items», quote by Vittoriano Viganò published in Pedio R. (1969) – “Itinerario di Vittoriano Viganò: il Marchiondi a Milano”. *Architettura. Cronache e storia*, 166, 231.

⁹ The principle of repetition of the essential element, the constructive element, which makes the architecture of the Marchiondi Spagliardi Institute unitary, is assumed in the project as a tool for ordering the composition of the monument, which allows us to detect the variations that occur along its development, and enrich the path with always different places. «In a work based on the uniformity of the elements, the subtlest shades of our inventiveness have the space they need to express themselves» (Tessenow 2003, p. 94).

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Silvia Binetti (Milan, 1991), architect, graduated with top marks from the Faculty of Architecture of the Polytechnic of Milan with Raffaella Neri, with whom she carried out teaching and research activities. She has a PhD in Architectural Composition at the IUAV University of Venice (2023) with a thesis "Tall buildings and composition of places. Three projects by Ivan Leonidov for the city of Moscow".

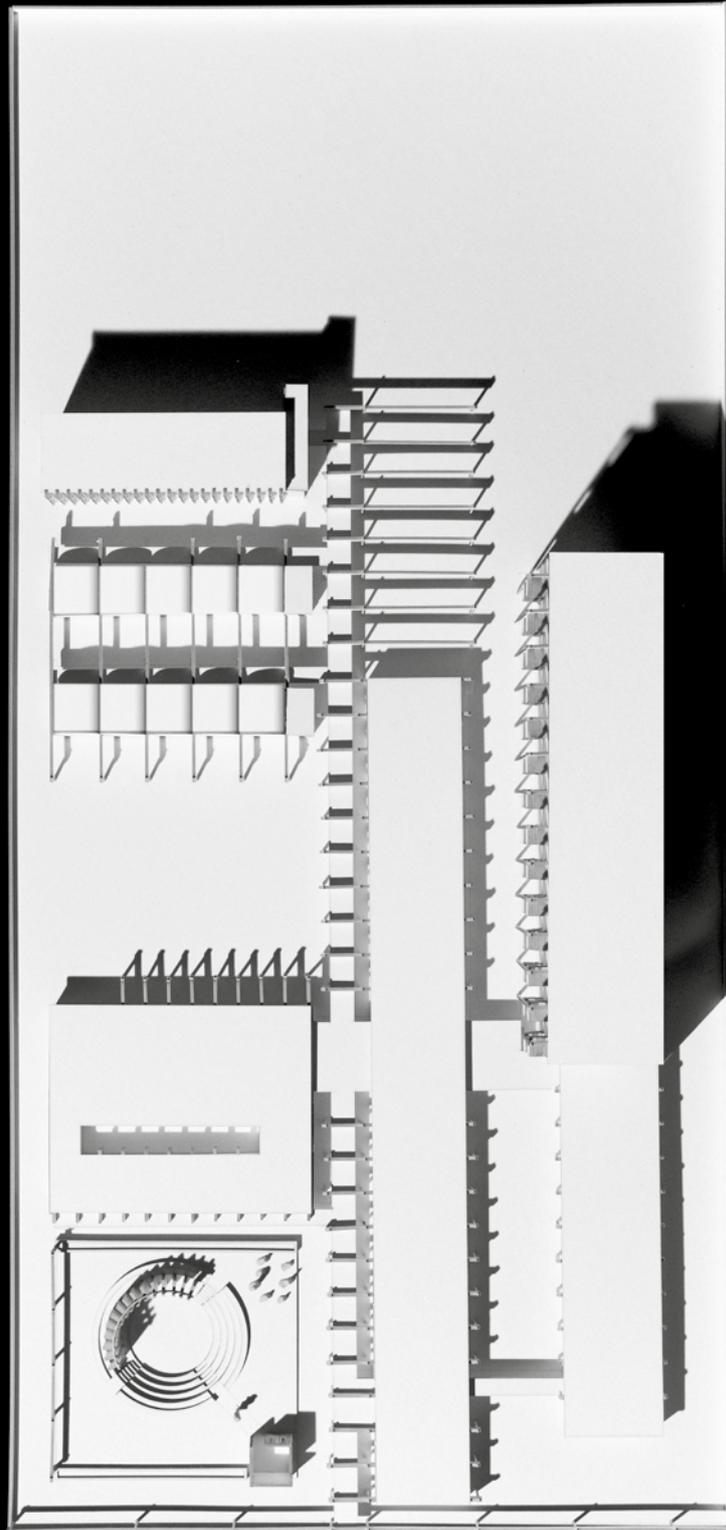
Ludovica Landi (Milan, 1995), architect, graduated with top marks from the Faculty of Architecture of the Polytechnic of Milan with Raffaella Neri, with whom she carried out teaching and research activities. She is a PhD student (XXXVIIIth cycle) in Architectural Composition at the IUAV University of Venice, with a thesis dedicated to the architecture built by Luigi Carlo Daneri in the city of Genoa.

Katharina Stepper (Pforzheim, DE, 1991), architect, graduated with top marks from the Faculty of Architecture of the Polytechnic of Milan with Raffaella Neri, with whom she carries out teaching and research activities. Katharina developed her Bachelor thesis at the Universität Stuttgart, 'Formverschneidung am römischen Brutalismus' with prof. Sybil Kohl. She exhibited in the solo exhibitions "D'ISTANTE" in 2021 in Milan and "Sichtweisen" in 2023 in Germany.

Motto The symmetry of the non-specular

Architectural project Maurizio Villata

Sculptor Paolo Delle Monache



Maurizio Villata, Paolo Delle Monache (Sculptor)
An *extra-place* as a monument-memorial for the unfinished work of an author

Abstract

The project for a memorial monument for the former Istituto minorile Marchiondi-Spagliardi by Vittoriano Viganò has been developed from the desire to be configured as a symbolic exaltation and evocative expression of those parts of the Institute, such as the church or the gym-theatre, designed by Viganò but never built. The objective was to define an *extra-place* capable of hosting both the active role of the observer who lives and walks in these spaces, and the contemplative function through a sculptural presence spread in the free areas of the site. The open-air theater with the propylaea and the sculptures define a new urban space which is the result of a design process structured around five fundamental points: the forest, the sculptures, an *extra-place*, the greenery and the communication.

Keywords

Unfinished — Monument — Sculpture

Not a monument to satisfy artistic ambition, but a space to be handed over to the citizens so that they can take possession of it personally and as a community¹.

Vittoriano Viganò and the sculptor Nino Franchina suggest and express through the project the tension, dialogue, and complementarity between the sculptural and architectural contributions within the context of the project admitted to the second phase for the “Concorso nazionale per il Monumento alla Resistenza di Cuneo” in 1962-63, mentioned here in the epigraph. The ethically and firmly oriented choice to define a space for both the individual and a community of people represents the will and premise of the project, elaborated below, for a monument-memorial for the unfinished work of art.

The dual condition of incompleteness and abandonment invites consideration of the former Istituto minorile Marchiondi-Spagliardi by Vittoriano Viganò as an emblematic case of the unfinished. It is an “open” work, both in terms of the interpretative possibilities of those spaces not yet realized according to the project and initial intentions and in terms of the value it conveys through its civic mandate. However, it currently awaits overcoming the state of stagnation and neglect in which it finds itself.

The imperative of security is reflected primarily in the system of load-bearing structures, with exposed reinforced concrete, both on the exterior and interior. A rigid alternation of pillars and unshuttered beams covers the entire ground, conveying values of simplicity and primitiveness that psychiatrists consider stimulating for the structuring of personality. [...] directing not so much towards compensating for the lack of a family, but rather, vigorously encouraging the *misplaced* boy to become a citizen (Zevi 1971, p. 42).



Fig. 1

View from the access to the square towards the statue "Tra memoria e oblio".

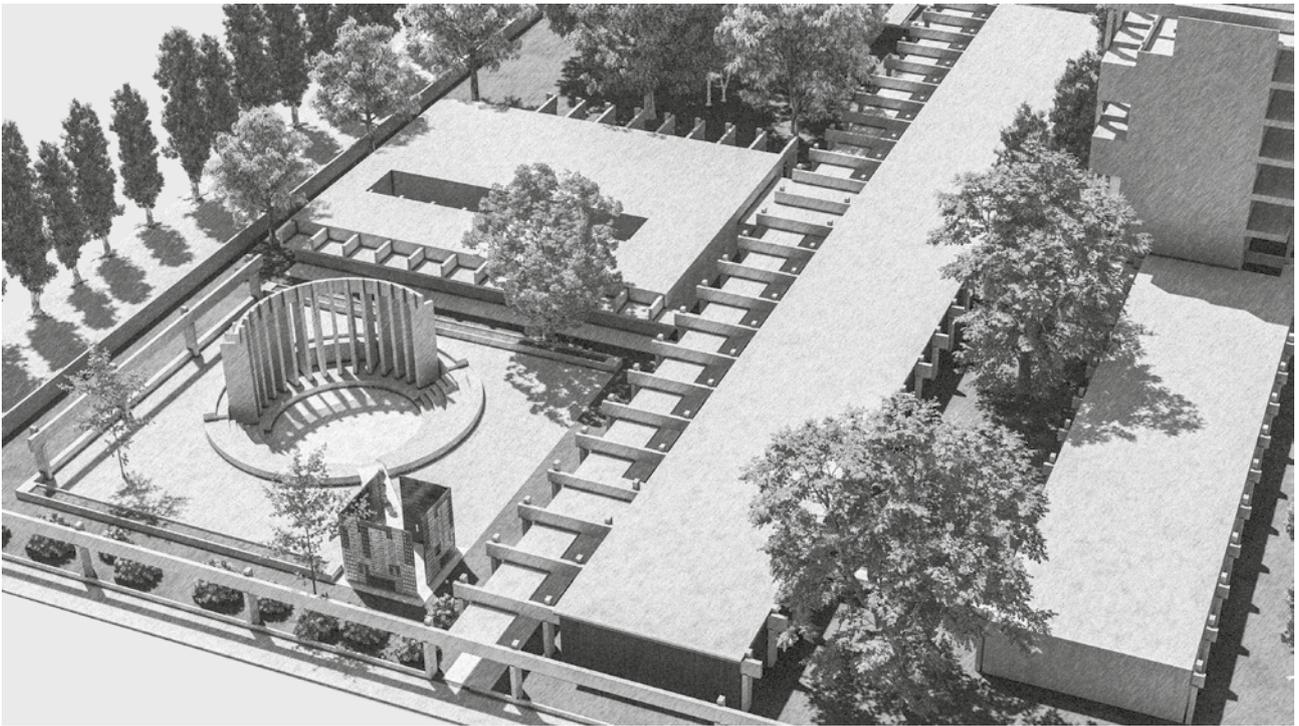


Fig. 2-3

Bird's eye view (from the north-east and from the south-west) of the square with access-propylaea and an open-air theater on the site of the never-built chapel.

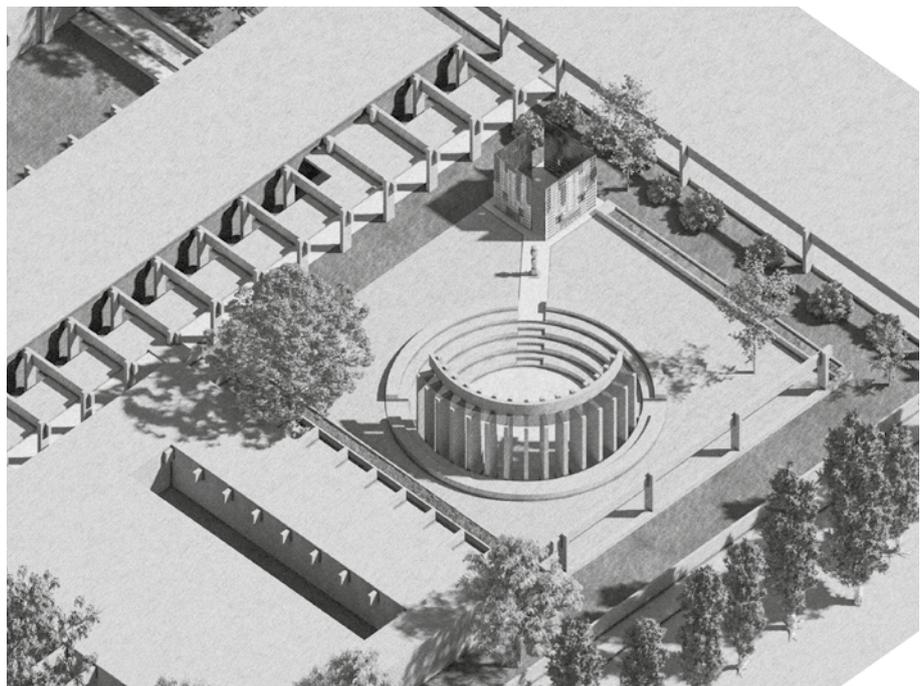




Fig. 4
View of the open-air theater located below the site's ground level.

This is how Bruno Zevi describes the new Institute for underaged and troubled boys, highlighting its innovative values translated into an urban experience that actively welcomes and shapes the inhabitants of this “city of boys”: «From this comes the urban sense of the complex, its human scale, its artistic allure, all determined by the intention to spur freedom» (Zevi 1971, p. 42).

The project for a memorial-monument draws from these premises the intention to configure itself as a symbolic exaltation and evocative expression of those parts of the Institute that were never realized: the church, the gym-theater, the centers of interest, group accommodations, the school administration, and the workshops. In this perspective, it aims to reinterpret especially the unfinished space of the chapel, located adjacent to the southeast entrance of the complex, through the exploration of new relationships between the fragments of the work and its use by the community that now inhabits these abandoned places. The resulting attempt is to define *extra-places* that accommodate both the active role of the observer who lives these spaces and their contemplative act directed towards a sculptural presence scattered in the still open areas of the site.

The memorial-monument thus becomes an urban square: a traversable and accessible sculpture by Paolo Delle Monache defines the entrance. From these propylaea people enter in the small outdoor theater located at a lower elevation than the foundation of the never-realized chapel of the Institute. This evokes its memory, framing a portion of the sky, shifting the line of the horizon. The bronze works (*Tempio*, 2003; *Tra memoria e oblio*, 2004) recall the suspended time inherent in the unfinished work, placed on the axes between the complex and the outdoor theater. The widespread presence of terracotta works (*Soffio*, *Animula*, *Sole*, *Vertigine*, *Stelle*, *Infinito*, *Luna*, *Orizzonte*, *Tramonto*, 2021) throughout the Marchiondi area, like stumbling stones, allows and invites an infinite possibility of addition.

The outdoor theater with the propylaea and sculptures defines a new urban space that is able to welcome the young people who currently live the modern ruins of the Marchiondi. The pillars define the stage area become supports for screens for evening video projections.

Fig. 5

View of the open-air theatre, detail of the sheets for night-time video projections.



New shrubs, perennial herbs, and fruit trees join the spontaneous vegetation that prevails throughout the complex area, following the same iterative plastic process. A *horizontal forest* of expanding sculptures, both in form and imagination, emerges – a *hortus conclusus* – for isolation: echoing the disorienting overwhelm that renews itself, similar to the dream world of the Sacro Bosco in Bomarzo.

Five points for an *extra-place*

The project is characterized by five fundamental points:

1. The grove
2. The sculptures
3. An *extra-place*
4. The greenery
5. The communication

1. The grove

Imagining the Marchiondi Institute as the miniature equivalent of an abandoned city, we hypothesized that Time, the great sculptor (and architect), would return to redesign it through vegetation and the composition of a forest. Through this open work we aim to suggest a reality in progress, something alive that expands, involving the grafting of plants over time and the cultivation of a botanical garden. In other words, the scents and sensations of nature: the creation of a forest composed of spices, flowers, plants, and new trees. The goal is to teach people who will enjoy this area to know and care for them, hopefully interacting with a Faculty of Biology or Agriculture.

2. The sculptures

We have identified some of my sculptures to create a pathway in the area of the Institute. *Tra memoria e oblio*, *Temple*, and a group of large faces with closed and open eyes form the thread of Arianna to follow within the park, aspiring to be a contemporary echo of the Sacred Grove of Bomarzo. The titles of these works are crucial for grasping their meaning. I consider the title of one of my works (or an exhibition) a dialogue with the observer, a key to interpret my work that connect it with the viewer. You cannot clap with one hand alone. The work and the spectator are the two hands. It is not a coincidence that one of these works is titled *Tempio*.

The Temple was once a space of the sky, an imaginary space marked by the

**Fig. 6**

View of the entrance sculpture in perforated and treated steel and the statue *Tra memoria e oblio*.

augure with his wand, the *lituus*. Within this imaginary space, the *augure* would interpret the arabesques drawn by the birds, foreseeing, predicting, and wishing for the future based on whether the patterns unfolded on a section deemed favorable or unfavorable. A corresponding identical space on earth was delineated, consecrated, or in other words, set apart (as it is known that *sacro* means separate) from the rest. Within this space, the activity of *con-templating*, or gazing longingly at the sky, took place. All this is to say that we have sought to delineate an intimate space of silence and contemplation, an observation of the sky suggested and evoked by the sculptures that encircle some areas and characterize others. We have also considered placing an additional sculptural presence at the entrance –a city as an open book to traverse, marking the beginning and end of the journey. A kind of threshold filter, a *limen* to denote the *extramoenia* and the *intramoenia*.

3. *An extra-place*

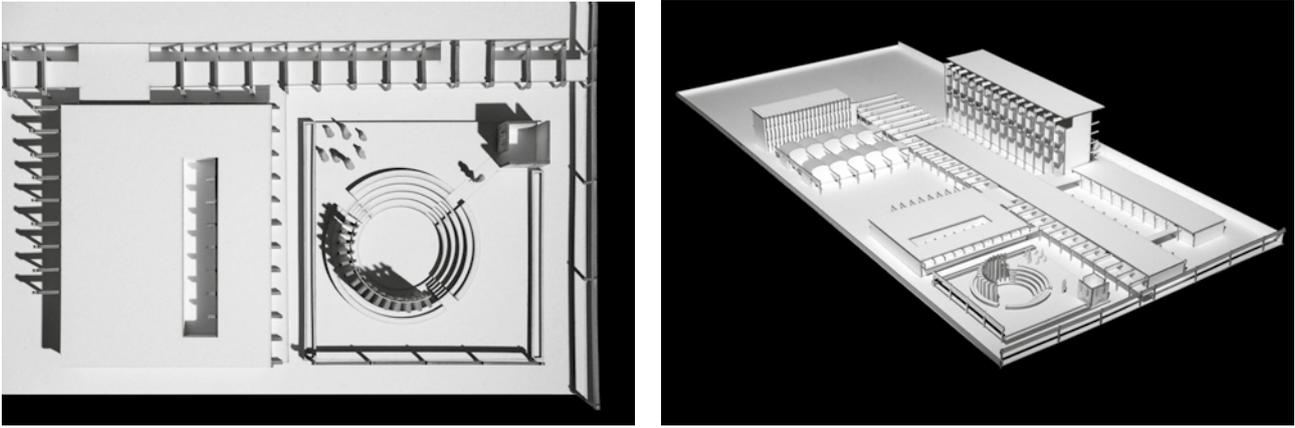
When, many years ago, I encountered the term *non-luogo*, I thought there must be non-humans there, with non-desires, non-sense, non-love. The “non-place” is indeed a passage where it is impossible to establish a connection. I write this because our idea of a memorial-monument is the exact opposite: an *extra-place*, a place where one goes to stay and think, to experience extraordinary thoughts.

The question we asked ourselves was: What is truly missing for each of us in contemporary times? Our answer and the essence of the concept for the memorial-monument is: a place that separates us from the calm chaos (which envelops us in a continuously hyperconnected present) and gives us a pause of silence and intimacy with ourselves, in contact with nature, with the binocular sculptures², and with a masterpiece of architecture such as the Marchiondi Institute.

4. *The greenery*

The idea, in a nutshell, is to boldly enter into a place like the Marchiondi Institute area with the goal of planting trees (it is scientifically proven that a forest enhances a person’s well-being). Where and what to do? Certainly, introduce trees with a logical criterion, but also:

- Alternate abandoned areas and cultivated zones to create a contrast between free nature and “educated” nature.
- Entrust a selected and prepared area to children, providing them with a

**Figg. 7-8**

Views of the model (zenithal and from the south-east).

100x100 cm plot of land to plant seeds and teach them how to cultivate, aiming to impart the real meaning of the word “Culture.”

- Develop a system for collecting rainwater to self-sustain and irrigate the plants, educating on not wasting this fundamental and precious resource.

5. *The communication*

The concept of the *open work* also involves communication with the visitors. Video projections with introductory and explanatory texts can be projected on the ground, on the sculptures, or on the walls, depending on the case, to provide the visitor with various directions and peculiarities of this space. These are evolving phrases, not fixed, which may also contain fragments of this same concept to narrate the meaning of the *extra-place*. Furthermore, additional signage could be placed, created by a sequence of embedded pebbles on the ground, to be followed like Hansel and Gretel’s breadcrumbs, indicating the path from one sculpture to another – the thread of Ariadne to be followed within the space.

* The first introductory paragraph has been written by Maurizio Villata, and the second, titled “Five Points for an Extra-Place,” by Paolo Delle Monache.

Notes

¹ The project relating to the national competition for the Monumento alla Resistenza a Cuneo by Vittoriano Viganò and Nino Franchina, sculptor, admitted to the second degree as showed in «L’architettura. Cronache e storia» (1963), p. 815.

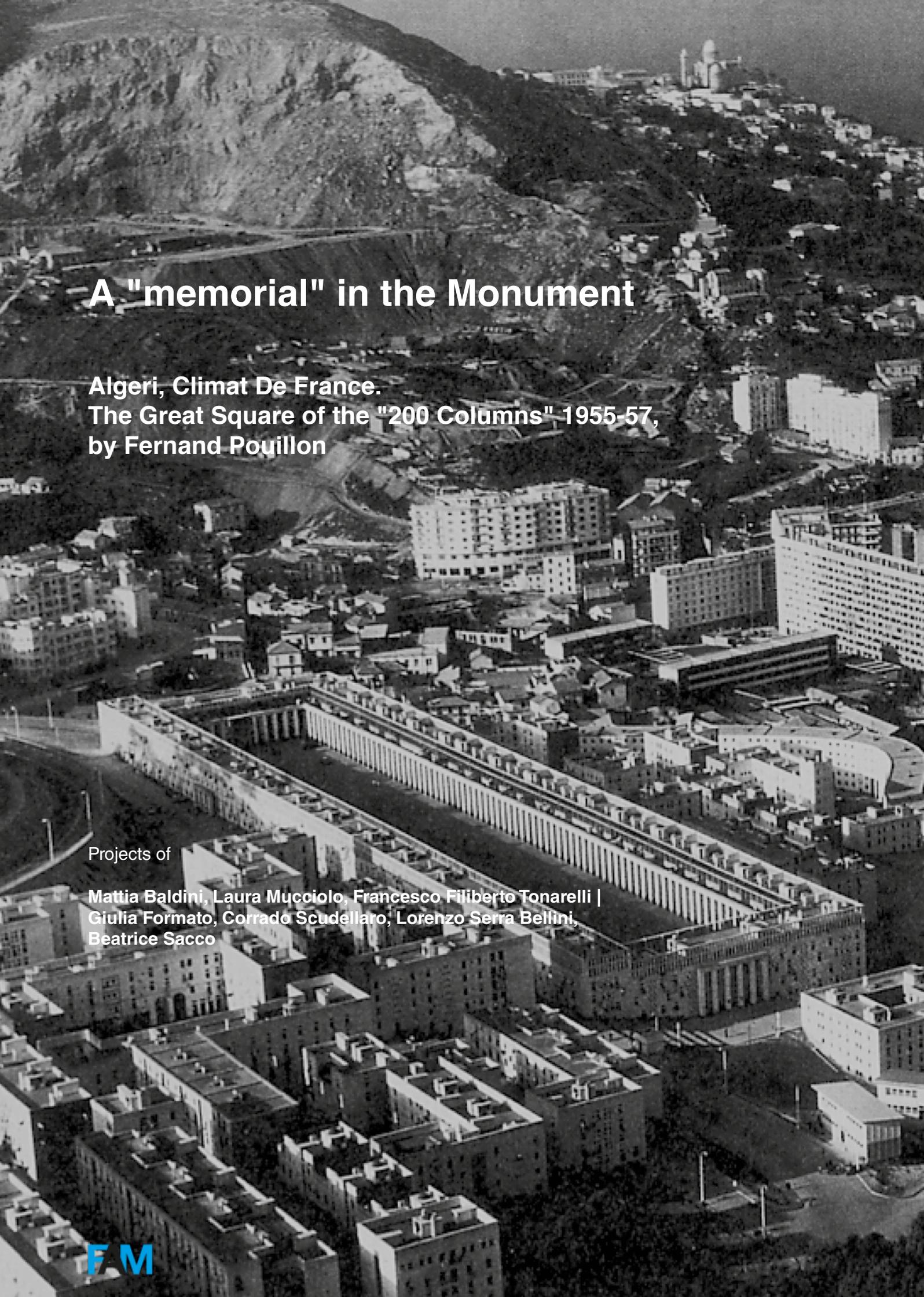
² Binocular sculptures: with my research, I aim to create a sculpture to place in front of the eyes like binoculars, allowing people to see something that exists but is not visible or perceptible to the naked eye. It is not a simple game, and not everyone can achieve it. Peering into a sculpture requires an effort similar to finding silence within oneself. Binoculars can also be artifacts not necessarily satisfying or aesthetically pleasing externally, but inside, you may find the sea, a star, or a distant landscape. With my work, I seek to suggest that sculpture does not end with its outline but is a projection beyond form: a launching pad for reflection. Sculpture is both binoculars and a compass to orient oneself, giving meaning to what surrounds us. «Art teaches nothing except the sense of life,» Henry Miller.

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Maurizio Villata (Turin, 1991) is an architect who graduated from the Specialization School in Architectural and Landscape Heritage at the Polytechnic University of Turin. After completing the Master's level program "Museography, Architecture, and Archaeology, Strategic Design, and Innovative Management of Archaeological Areas" at the Adrianea Academy of Architecture and Archaeology Onlus, he enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Architectural and Landscape Heritage at the same university. His interests lie in restoration themes focused on the preservation of 20th-century architectural heritage, conducting research on contemporary phenomena of authorship, transmissibility, and inheritance in the transformation and restoration interventions of such heritage.

Paolo Delle Monache (Rome, 1969) studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna, graduating in 1992 under the guidance of Franco Mauro Franchi. In 1993, he won the First Prize in Sculpture H.C. Andersen at the National Academy of San Luca in Rome. In 2007, 2010, and 2019, he won a national competition for artworks and created three large bronze sculptures for the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport. In 2010, he was invited to the exhibition "La scultura italiana del XXI secolo" at the Pomodoro Foundation in Milan. In 2013, he exhibited "Non-finito, infinito" at the Terme di Diocleziano in Rome with director Benoît Felici. In 2014, again with Benoît Felici, he realized the exhibition Fragments at the Base sous-marine in Bordeaux. In 2017, he was invited to the exhibition Sculture Moderne at the Venaria Reale, where he exhibited the sculpture Diario. He's teaching Plastica Ornamentale at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in Milan.



A "memorial" in the Monument

Algeri, Climat De France.
The Great Square of the "200 Columns" 1955-57,
by Fernand Pouillon

Projects of

Mattia Baldini, Laura Mucciolo, Francesco Filiberto Tonarelli |
Giulia Formato, Corrado Scudellaro, Lorenzo Serra Bellini,
Beatrice Sacco

Motto Plan Oblique

Architectural project Mattia Baldini
Laura Mucciolo

Sculptor Francesco Filiberto Tonarelli



Mattia Baldini, Laura Mucciolo,
 Francesco Filiberto Tonarelli (Sculptor)
Plan Oblique

Abstract

The design exercise on the theme of the memorial-monument identifies in the choice of the “closed field” of Climat de France a terrain for reflecting on the role of the monument, detecting and revealing, through a “subversive” strategy, incongruities, limits, strains of the symmetrical layout. An oblique, walkable blade, rotated with respect to the symmetry of the monument’s enclosure, slices through the inner space of the “square of two hundred columns” as if it were a large wound. The aim of the traversable memorial is the exit from the fence and the use of the square as a part of project made by shadows. The adoption of the “*puntello*” as the “shown” part of the memorial contributes to making the design as “sculpture” and the sculpture as “technical” matter, exchanging the parts and roles that the areas have usually occupied over time.

Keywords

Fracture — Oblique — Puntello

Climat de France¹, originally situated in the Climat de France district, now Oued Koriche, refers to a public housing complex. It was intentionally named with geographical-political homonymy during the French colonization of Algeria to affirm France’s necessity, if not indispensability, in the political and daily choices of the country. Built during the years of the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962)², it was conceived as a “civilizing” project to provide homes for the Muslim populations (then referred to as *indigene* in French) overcrowding the shantytowns of Algiers. Climat de France employed design strategies such as structural rigidity, serial repetition of elements in compositional syntax, the closed form of the “enclosure,” and an urban scale mismatch, assertively shaping the resolution of a space that accommodates living out of necessity, assigning civic tasks to architecture that surpass private ones.

From these premises, the project of a *memorial within the monument* emerges, reflecting a desire to engage with the strategies outlined in the project. This paradoxical approach aims to reveal incongruities, limitations, and constraints within the symmetrical structure. An oblique and walkable blade rotated concerning the symmetry of the monument’s enclosure (Fig. 1), cuts through the internal space of the “square of two hundred columns” (also known as *meidan*) like a great wound, allegorically attempting to represent the difficult and conflictual relationship between Algeria and the Muslim populations. The goal of the inhabited and traversable memorial is to exit the enclosure, use the square as both shade and conquer the horizon, both celestial and chthonic, in opposition to the static composition of the facade and thus the entire architecture of Climat de France.

Fig. 1

On the previous page: Marble model in its final version. Axonometric view.



Fig. 2
Planimetric Overview of the Climat de France, Algiers.

The Existing: the Monument

Within the square of two hundred columns of Climat de France, the stone colonnade unfolds with a one-meter module, while the internal facade, made of red bricks and featuring openings, is structured on a sixty-centimeter module. The spans of both reconnect every three meters. From the square, the rhythm of the bricks triumphantly emerges above the stone colonnade. Pouillon has reactualized other ancient composition systems. This is not negligible, as it provides a free source of architectural and urban quality improvement (Sayen 2018, p. 31). As confirmed by Catherine Sayen's words, the compositional tactics of the monument resurface, highlighting the architectural value of the enclosed space, including its contemporary relevance.

The square of two hundred columns, though conceived with private intentions, is the empty part of Climat de France that constructs both the project and the public part of the construction. Paradoxically, if one were to consider erasing the enormous project, it would result in the annulment of a secondary system of squares, accesses, spaces, and typological-morphological variations that anchor themselves to exist. It is the destiny of a public building to become a monument for these reasons, i.e., for the degree of relationship it imposes on the surrounding design relationships. Climat de France establishes another curious paradox, admitting, within its space of existence, a percentage of domestic everyday life that opposes, by nature, the monument:

The monument 'Climat de France' was born. It encompassed thirty hectares. What to think today of this composition? Is it a success or a failure? I could not say... Nevertheless, I am certain that this architecture was without contempt. Perhaps for the first time in modern times, we have installed human beings in a monument (Pouillon 1968, p. 207).

The internal space, the *paysage intérieur* (Pouillon 1968, p. 207), becomes the center of Pouillon's reflection: the large square conceived as a space of interaction, two hundred thirty-three by thirty-eight meters, turns out to be



Fig. 3
Design Collage of the Internal Memorial at the Climat de France, Algiers.

dominated by the horizontal dimension, drastically restricting the inhabitant's perceptual field, enclosing them within a highly regulated perimeter. The extremely precise geometric proportions, based on the numbers one, three, five, seven, establish, for the courtyard of Climat de France in a limited rectangle, as described by the author himself:

The composition of this monumental "meidan" of the humblest settlement in the world can be described by the numbers 1 to 9... 1 was the side of the columns and the height of the base. 2, the space in between the columns. 3, the dimension of the monolithic lintel. 4, the width of the portico. 5, that is multiplied by 8, the dimensions of the square. 6, that is multiplied by 40 (the dimension of the square) the length. 7, that is multiplied by 40, the overall length. 8, the height of the columns. 9, the height of the portico (Lucan 2003, p. 26).

Climat de France is also an architecture of numerology and therefore properly monumental: the two hundred columns contrast with the four thousand five hundred housing units³, the two meters in height of each interior, and the fifteen thousand square meters of the square translating into overcrowded domesticity hidden within the "Ottoman"⁴ fortress in Algiers. In the idea that the symbol-monument has civic functions, Climat de France goes beyond this univocal definition and admits public and domestic presence in the monument, downgrading its authority and simultaneously elevating its uses. According to Pouillon's words, calling the residential area a monument, a fundamental countertendency emerges, undermining Climat de France's main characteristics: the domesticity of the anti-monument. The hung white sheets, the parabolic antennas for television signal reception (almost one for each of the two hundred columns), the structure of a network determining the end of an ideal temporary football field set up inside the square, and the numerous cars contribute to the disruption of the solemnity of an inhabited monument. These internal paradoxes within the monument project have contributed to outlining the moves for the design of a memorial (Fig. 2) that insisted on the square and attempted to bring out, even in harmony with reality, the same short circuits.

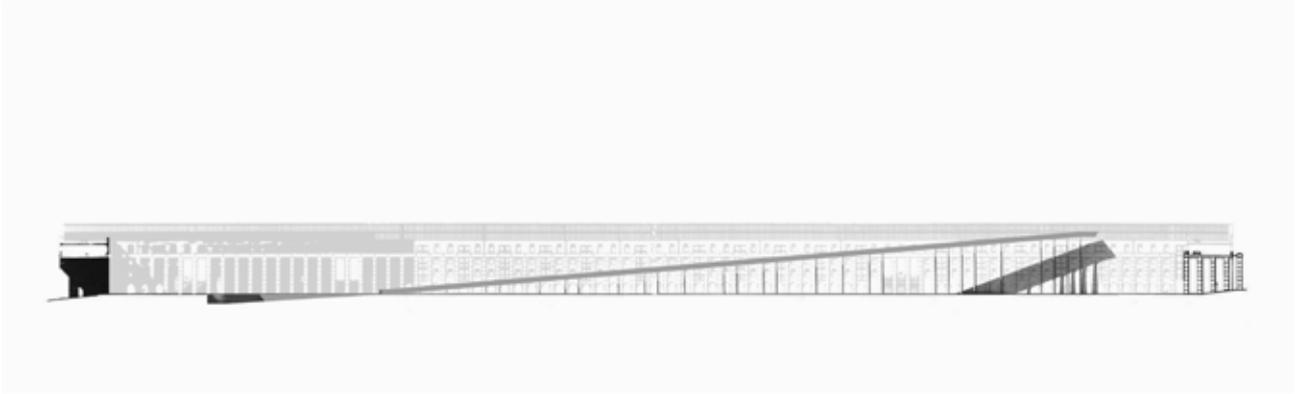


Fig. 4
Design Section of the Internal Memorial at the Climat de France, Algiers.

To the Oblique: a Memorial

A few years ago, with this phenomenon not yet existing – author Claude Parent refers to the phenomenon of crowd migrations – the small closed worlds of the agora, the forum, and the public square were sufficient to contain the crowd. There was discipline in space. Currently, the crowd overflows. Its daily or seasonal deployment must not and cannot be obstructed. Channeling it is a temporary makeshift solution, absolutely unacceptable and insufficient under the pressure of popular dynamics (Parent 1978, p. 65).

Parent’s imaginative words contribute to building an imaginary reference for the “memorial” project. Consolidated urban spaces, such as the square, will need to exceed their capacities with the increasing population. Parent argues that the square, as a space that blocks rather than opens, becomes an obsolete urban configuration, even as a social model. Similar conditions have also affected the square of two hundred columns, currently used as a private storage space by the inhabitants, who do not use it as a square, probably also due to the absence of shade conditions. In 1970, Parent supported the idea of pedestrian circulation as the new main engine for inhabiting space, especially urban space. Extending circulation, and therefore urban exploration as well as living on facades⁵, allows considering urban space as a territory completely controllable, where, with no other tools but one’s body, it would have been possible to go, know, and possibly live.

The most interesting consequence of this space contraction is to allow finding the CALM of the linear path of the pedestrian while still within possible travel times, less than half an hour. Speed is no longer the essential vector of our cities. Movement can be LIVED again and not JUST endured as a fate, as lost time (Parent 1978, p. 69).



Fig. 5
Draft of the Physical Marble Model in the Laboratory, Massa (IT).

The memorial proposal embraces Parent’s considerations by identifying in the obliquity of the walking plane, in the exploratory use of the body, and in the reinterpretation of existing architecture as a “traversable” tool the key points of the reflection on the square of two hundred columns of Climat de France. An oblique plane, rotated fourteen degrees concerning the longitudinal symmetry axis, crosses the entire square’s length, reaching the summit level reached by the horizontal arm of the enclosure facing west. The oblique plane, besides extending along the entire length of the square, establishes a horizontal crossing of the ground at the southeast-facing angle, working the section with excavation, thus defining exploratory subterranean spatial coordinates (Fig. 3). From the roof plane, the oblique and rotated blade sharply contrasts with the monument’s rigorous compositional articulation, almost touching the sacred enclosure. From above, the memorial reveals something of its antithetical compositional nature:

Fig. 6

Measurement Phase of the Physical Model.



a walkable pedestrian surface starts from the ground level of the square to reach the neighborhood's summit level, while, conversely, also starting from ground level, a pedestrian path five times smaller than the above-ground one reaches the subterranean level and anchors to the sky through an oculus, which in plan becomes the ideal head of the silent *cadavre exquis* lying inside Climat de France. The reaching of the sky, its conquest, and the construction of alternative points to reach the blue become the project's pretext for the composition of the walkway.

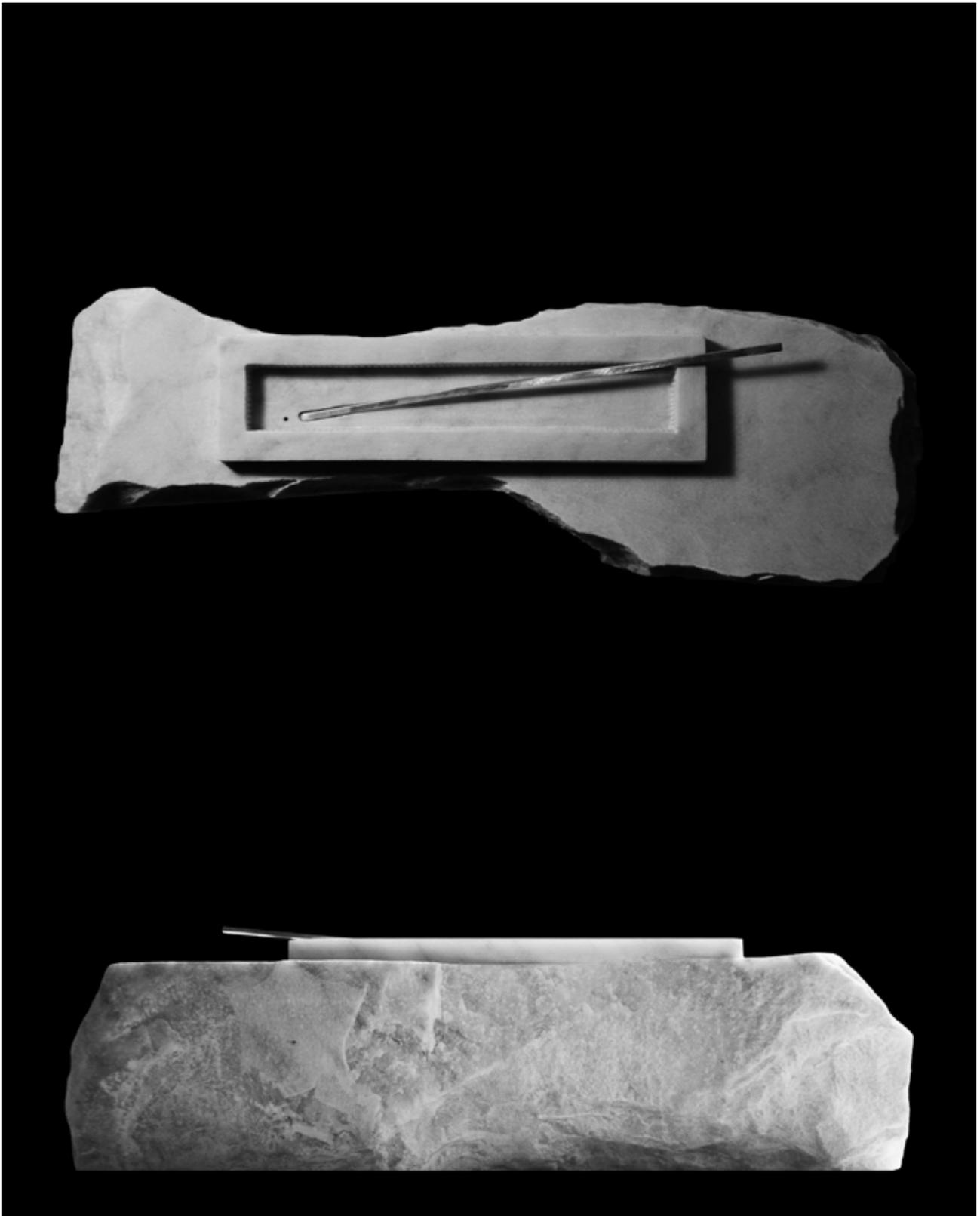
The plan, drawn on the repetition of a constantly tripartite module based on the number three, cuts through the internal space like a large wound, allegorically emphasizing both Algeria's definitive independence from France and the contradictions and conflicting dynamics within the Algerian and Muslim community.

The above-ground walkway, consisting of a walkable and flared "C" –profile metal structure, is opacified and reflective: it continuously reflects life inside the building, the surrounding colonnade, and the sky. This structure is interrupted exclusively at the exit holes towards the outside, constantly reminding of the divisive function of the colonnade, which, contrary to its original purpose, effectively reduces to an impermeable wall. The ascent to the top is slow and obstacle-free, the slope is gentle, the path is gradual. Once the summit is reached, beyond Climat de France's imposing walls, the view towards the outside is regained, rediscovering the relationship with the natural element, the external space. On the opposite side, however, the walkway intercepts the ground level, identifying a ground crossing and reaching a chthonic space, which, like the Nuragic well of Santa Cristina, unfolds a section that reflects through the water deposited at the bottom, the sky.

The memorial, fitting into a vast enclosure that excludes everything outside, through its obliqueness attempts to denounce the fall of such an obsessively precise and schematic system.

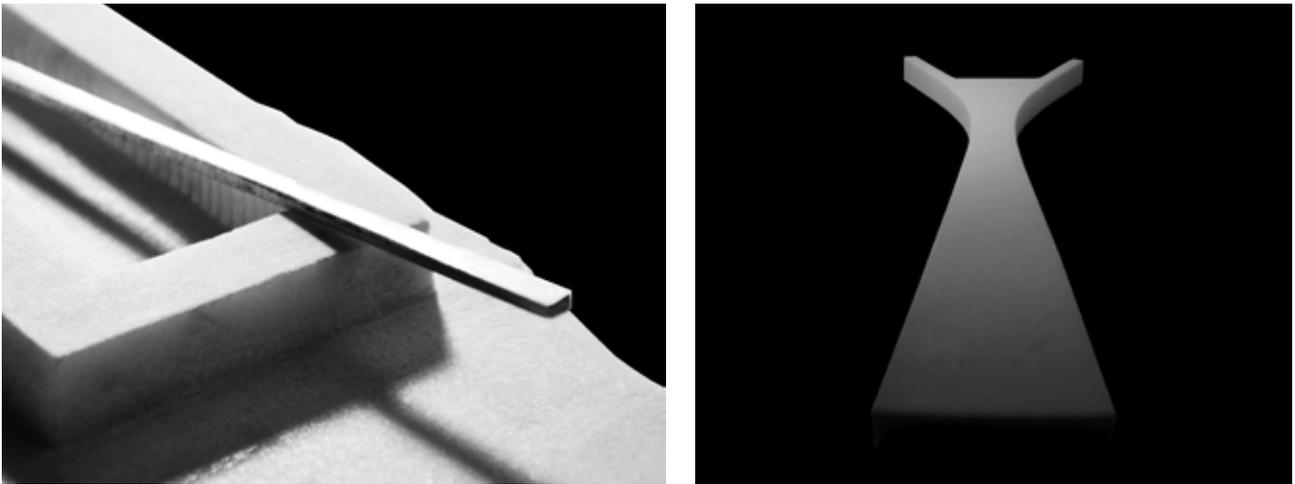
Sculptural *Puntelli* as Architectural Technique

The support system governing the walkway and enabling its existence are conceived from the use of sculptural props. The *puntello*⁶, the idea of an autonomous part in marble made up of deliberately left excess material for



Figg. 7-8

The Marble Model in its Definitive Version. Zenithal view, front elevation.



Figg. 9-10

Memorial's Marble Model in its Corner Detail; view of the structural *puntello*.

support and masked (see the hand touching the knee in Myron's *Discobolus* or the drapery in Bernini's *David*) or left exposed (as in Praxiteles' *Hermes with Dionysus*), becomes the technical component allowing the walkway's support. The props take on a Y-shaped form in elevation, through a broad support base that, in the central body of the prop, narrows almost to strangulation and widens again towards the top, accommodating the walkway's silhouette inside. The rhythm of the *puntelli* in plan is dictated by the technical support needs, generating a curious case of random rhythmic alternation unrelated to Pouillon's design. The *puntello*, thus freed from the need to become a mask for something, reveals its technical component through architectural application. Sculptural supports, long ignored by sources as such or camouflaged even in the name, have often tended towards invisibility, to «rettificare l'immagine dell'opera» (Anguissola 2018, pp. 596). The *puntello*, supporting the walkway, ideally connects the ground with the inclined plane, making the square's ground an integral part of the memorial. The adoption of the support as a visible and “shown” part of the memorial contributes to making the project “sculptural” and “sculpture” technical, exchanging the parts and roles that the fields have usually occupied over time.

*In memory of Alessandro Mosti “Indian”.

Notes

¹ Geographic coordinates of the project area: 36.78409840917006, 3.0470636861083786.

² The cultural events that affected the independence of Algiers and the conflictual relationship with the Muslim populations and with the French regime were represented by the director Gillo Pontecorvo in *The Battle of Algiers* (1966).

³ French journalist and anti-colonialist critic Albert-Paul Lentin provides an accurate description of the units: «deux pièces à plafond bas (2 m de haut), l'une de 2 x 3 m, l'autre de 3 x 3 m, une cuisine minuscule, un cabinet d'aisance, des fenêtres étroites» (Lentin 1963, pp. 146-147).

⁴ The scale and relationships between the Algerian architecture built during the Ottoman domination became a design reference for Pouillon (Pouillon 1968, p. 205).

⁵ Also note: «L'habitant, circulant sur la ville, sur les façades, non seulement n'est plus canalisé, mais bénéficie de connexions si directes qu'il peut choisir la voie piétonne sans être handicapé, car le temps de parcours diminue» (Parent 1978, p. 69).

⁶ «Puntello. Bastone o trave di legno da puntarsi, ossia mettersi a contrasto per l'UNTA, cioè per ritto, onde serva di sostegno (v. Puntare)» (Pianigiani 1907, voce puntello).

Also: «Puntello. Sbarra di legno o di metallo, opera muraria e, in genere, elemento ad asse verticale, o anche inclinato alquanto rispetto alla verticale, che, fissato a un solido punto d'appoggio, serve come sostegno di strutture (muri, armature di gallerie, scavi ecc.), soprattutto quando esse si trovino in condizioni statiche incerte, usato anche in nautica.» Enciclopedia Treccani online, consulted on 15/07/2023.

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Mattia Baldini (Pietrasanta, 1995), architect, graduated with honors and the right to publication from the Faculty of Architecture in Florence under the guidance of Professor Michelangelo Pivetta. He has been actively involved in teaching and research for several years, serving as a tutor. Currently a doctoral student in the XXXVIII cycle in Architecture. Theories and Design (SSD: ICAR/14) at La Sapienza, University of Rome. He has conducted research in Italy (Florence, Rome, Venice) and abroad (Seville). The main focus of the research concerns the relationship between the theoretical premises of the project and their practical applications in compositional practice. Among his publications, there are numerous contributions in various volumes.

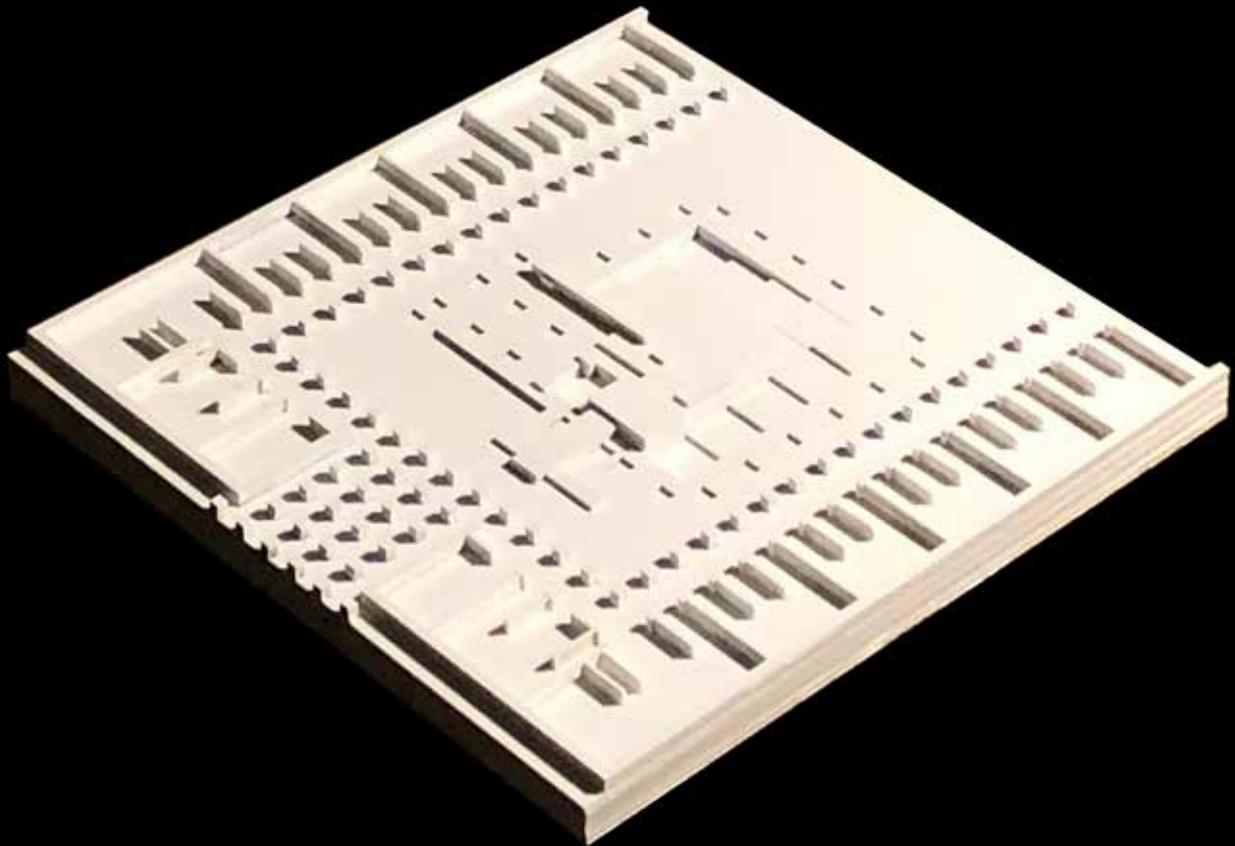
Laura Mucciolo, architect, is currently Ph.D. Candidate in Architecture. Theories and Project course, Sapienza University of Rome. From 2022 to 2023, she was P.I. of the research Journey to Europe. Suburban Grand Tour to the discovery of an altered domesticity (pending publication of the results). She published *Terzo Paradiso* for Libria (2022), and as part of the book project of the Tedeo Research Unit of the Department of Architecture and Arts, Università Iuav di Venezia, *Architetture di carta e grandi rivolgimenti*, she contributed with *Raccontare il panico. Una teoria di spostamenti: Pan e l'ammassamento* (Quodlibet, 2023).

Francesco F. Tonarelli is a versatile artist who has engaged in both painting and sculpture. He graduated from the renowned Marble School P. Tacca in Carrara, and furthered his studies at the sculpture workshop of Mosti Alessandro “Indian,” refining his skills and acquiring traditional sculpture techniques. The artist personally oversees all stages of sculpture, primarily utilizing Carrara Marble. He has participated in numerous exhibitions locally and currently showcases his work titled *David-19* at the Moco Museum in Amsterdam.

Motto Antimonument

Architectural project Giulia Formato
Corrado Scudellaro
Lorenzo Serra Bellini

Sculptor Beatrice Sacco



Giulia Formato, Corrado Scudellaro, Lorenzo Serra Bellini,
Beatrice Sacco (Sculptor)
Climat de France, Algiers. Memory is where things happen for the second time

Abstract

The project for a memorial at the *Climat de France* in Algiers develops from reading, breaking down and recomposing the archetypal forms of Fernand Pouillon's building. From the given and recognized elements, the goal is to create a new formal composition contained within the courtyard, the heart of the community that inhabits the building. The placement in the middle of the monumental space of the Two Hundred Columns Square brings it back into the daily life of its inhabitants. The memorial is not conceived as an object of contemplation, but as an accessible spatial element, alive and malleable, in which the users are invited to leave their mark, with a continuous reappropriation of the space. The project is an anti-monument, reversing the object/observer relationship through an archaeological interpretation of the architecture.

Keywords

Antimonument — Sgraffito — Archaeology of project

Anti-monument

When its construction was completed, Fernand Pouillon described the *Climat de France* in these terms, «I wanted men to have a kind of monument. Given that these were very small apartments, made for very poor people, I wanted the monumental spirit to enter their lives» (Utting et al. 2022). Born with the intention of rationalizing the Algerian suburbs, with notable monumental and architectural values, the *Climat* is now a monument for itself, with no relationship to the city and its urban context. It no longer has the values it once embodied, but ended up enclosing that banlieue it was intended to restore (Lagarde, Allik 2011).

The monumentality of the building has thus lost its *monitum*, its institutional symbolism linked to the values of modern architecture and French power in Algeria. It is no longer celebratory of the order and rationalization of Algiers' suburbs, nor is it a "warning" about the city's colonial past. The memorial at the *Climat*, then, is to be configured as an anti-monument, embodying the social and communitarian values to which it refers, rather than the values previously discussed: as expressed by Mechtild Widrich (2019, p. 57), it is a concept that entails «a more democratic ethos of engaging individuals subjectively rather than authoritatively instilling moral lessons».

So, anti-monument is not a negative concept: it is a form of expression that allows the emergence of alternative narratives (Stevens et alii 2018), a theoretical basis and reasoning cue for the project proposal. Thus, the central core of the memorial lies in focusing on the Other, on all that has altered and adapted the use, functions, and perception of the building. The *Climat*, a true palimpsest of designing action, is thus taken as the starting

Fig. 1
On the previous page: Model view.

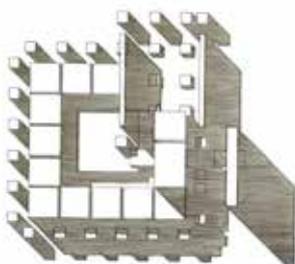
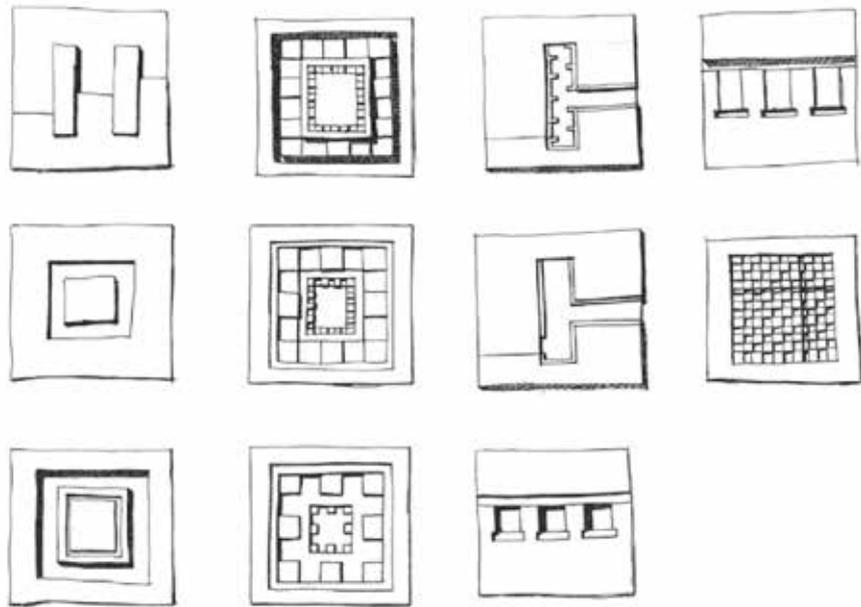


Fig. 2
Sketch of project.

Fig. 3

Sketches for a formal analysis of *Climat de France*.



point of a logical mechanism at the end of which it is transformed into negative forms etched into the ground. The *Climat*, such a strongly connoted architectural object, thus becomes a set of further forms, which are finally available for reuse.

An archaeological analysis for an architecture project

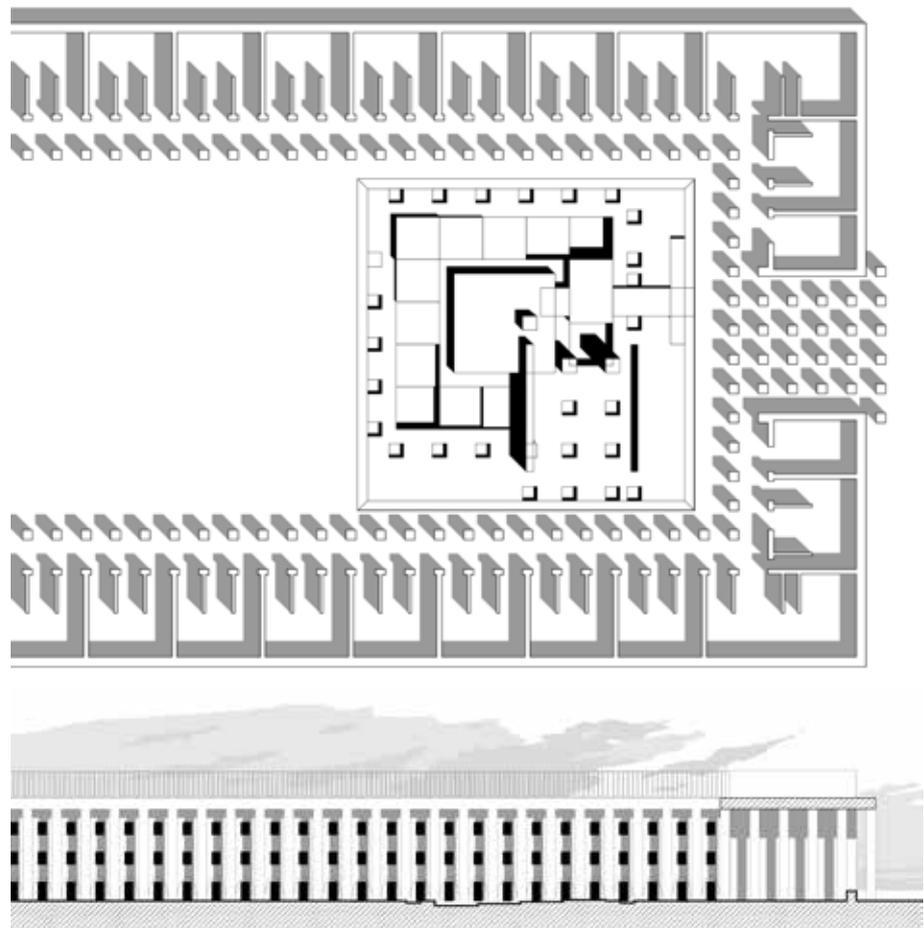
The project is constructed as an archaeology of architectural forms, extracting the logic behind its construction and assembling the simple elements identified in it (Motta, 1992). And if the project, and the building in which it is embedded, are designed by analogy, then the Memorial will bring the logic of their forms to maximum clarity, becoming a key to read the *Climat*.

An attempt was made to identify the logic of its composition according to the categories of geography, typology, distribution, geometry and facade. For each one, having identified a specific representation, in plan, section or elevation, the current forms were stripped of their attributes, down to their structure: by removing further forms they would no longer be recognizable. As a geographic object, the two longest bodies of the building are actual terracing walls of the hillside facing the sea, identifying three floors at different elevations (first sketch in the upper right corner of the table). As a building type, it is a courtyard, but there are a series of enclosures formed by different architectural objects: the building body and the colonnade, which in turn can be composed into further elements that cannot be further reduced – the simple elements of architecture. As a distributive object, the staircase is regularly repeated in the plan, creating a homogeneous rhythm; in section it connects the different terraced floors. As a geometric object, the *Climat* is built from the repetition of a unit, the column, which gives a precise grid of proportioning, where sometimes irregularities take over, making the proportions shift. Finally, as an object of decoration, the façade has a colonnade, which is the public part, the real unchangeable and composed façade, and a wall behind it, that can be changed without altering the architectural design of the court.

An architecture project for an archaeological analysis

Achieving the lowest degree of recognizability means arriving at forms

Fig. 4-5
Masterplan; Sections.



that no longer have the external attributes of the real object, but formal logics that can be found in other construction projects. That is the highest degree of universality of the project. As mentioned, the *Climat* breaks down into simple elements: court, enclosure, column and volume, which combine to create living units, peristyles and hypostyle rooms. In the design, these forms are taken up in their ground-level footprint, as negatives, conceiving the building bodies as basins around a raised central element. Similarly, the distribution leads from the level of the square to the center of the memorial through the series of basins, just as in the *Climat* the stairs lead from the lower terrace to the center of the court.

The construction type of the complex and the project is the courtyard building. The former consists of a building enclosure and a colonnade toward the court. These two enclosures are constructed in the same way, with one element that identifies an inner and an outer space, and another that, repeating itself, gives the architectural measure of the court space. The column fulfills the two functions for the peristyle, while for the building body the wall of the outer face is the separating element, and the septa of the housing units are the repetitive one. In the design, the columns are taken up in their footprint on the ground as *impluviums* around a central podium. However, both in the *Climat* and in the project, a second type intervenes to break the courtyard building, the hypostyle hall, denying it continuity. The building then becomes the frame, the edge, the *passerpartout* that frames and gives meaning to what is contained within it, arriving at a dialectical relationship of recognizability between center and edge. At the same time, the project is to be understood as an incision of the earth's crust, revealing forms that have always been there waiting: the *espace lisse* of the

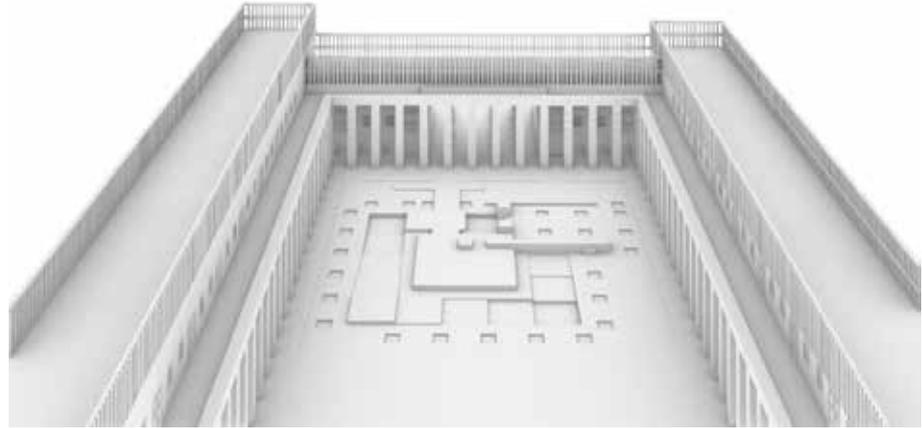
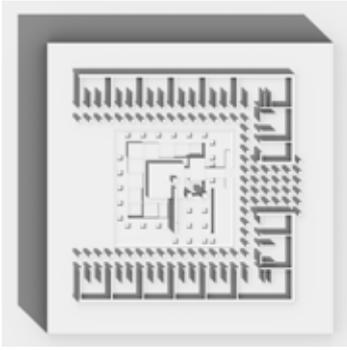


Fig. 6-7
Zeital view and perspective view.

Climat de France courtyard is revealed as a *espace strié*, an engraved space.

An ethnological analysis for a sculpture project

A further level beyond *Climat's* geometric and compositional reading is the programmatic and social spirit of the building. Although out of scale, it is possible to read in its geometric and geographical conformation the traditional building type of the Arab-Muslim city: the *mahalla*, in Arabic *مَحَلَّة*. Historically autonomous social institutions built around family ties and Islamic rituals, they are now, by a kind of metonymy, commonly known as neighborhoods in large cities and Muslim-majority towns (Dahmani 1983). The *mahalla* stood on an intermediate plane between private family life and the public sphere: through the solidarity of the *mahalla*, ceremonies, religious rituals, resource management, and conflict resolution were carried out, as well as simple community life and leisure time (Cresti 2015). It is in the context of the *mahalla* that the square of the Two Hundred Columns takes on additional significance. Today, the *Climat* represents a housing complex of monumental dimensions, secluded and thus with a strong idea of a closed and cohesive community within it. Thus one can speculate to give back such a large, impersonal and disorienting space to the function as a central point and gathering place for the community that it once had.

The art of space

The design therefore acts on the conformation of the ground, in order to create spaces for those who live in this monumental reality. The participatory conception – not so much of the design, but of the life of the memorial itself – has illustrious precedents.

Isamu Noguchi's *earthworks*, his creations of *Zen* gardens and the incorporation of the natural element into man-made and monumental spaces, are clear examples of the need to create new approaches to space management with a strong influence of sculpture and a subjective and personal relationship with open space. A significant example is the *Jardin de la Paix* at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, where the grandeur and rigid geometry of the large building is almost in contrast with the intimate spaces of the garden (Weilacher 1999).

Louis Kahn's *landscape architecture* works, on the other hand, are a deep and intrinsic blending of architecture and landscape (Ashraf 2007), where indeed the architecture is a phenomenon of the landscape, as with the project for the *Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial* in New York (Brownlee,

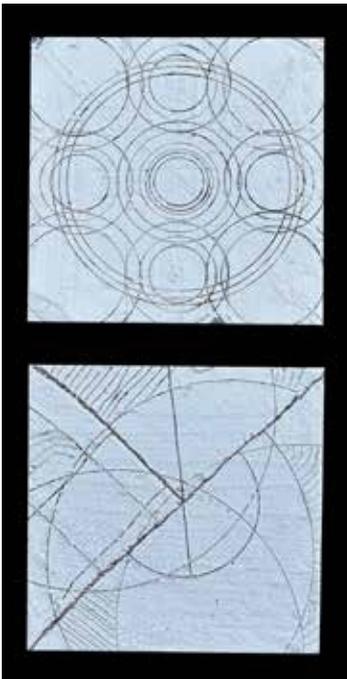


Fig. 8
Example of sgraffito.

De Long 1995). Finally, Luis Barragan's outdoor spaces also reconnect with the human dimension and the intermingling of the plastic arts and the architecture of lived spaces (Ambasz 1984).

The cues included, then, serve to treat the spaces of the *Climat de France* with the same gaze: on the one hand, combining the architectural form with the spatial and landscape component, and on the other hand, giving back to the *Climat's* residents the use of the square with the creation of new spaces on a human scale.

In all the cases mentioned above, the relationship between the project and the observer is crucial to understanding its forms and geometries. Going beyond the subject-object relationship of the visual connection, the use of the space and its new forms – even in unorthodox ways, by the visitor/habitant/subject – is necessary to the very formation of the monument/memorial.

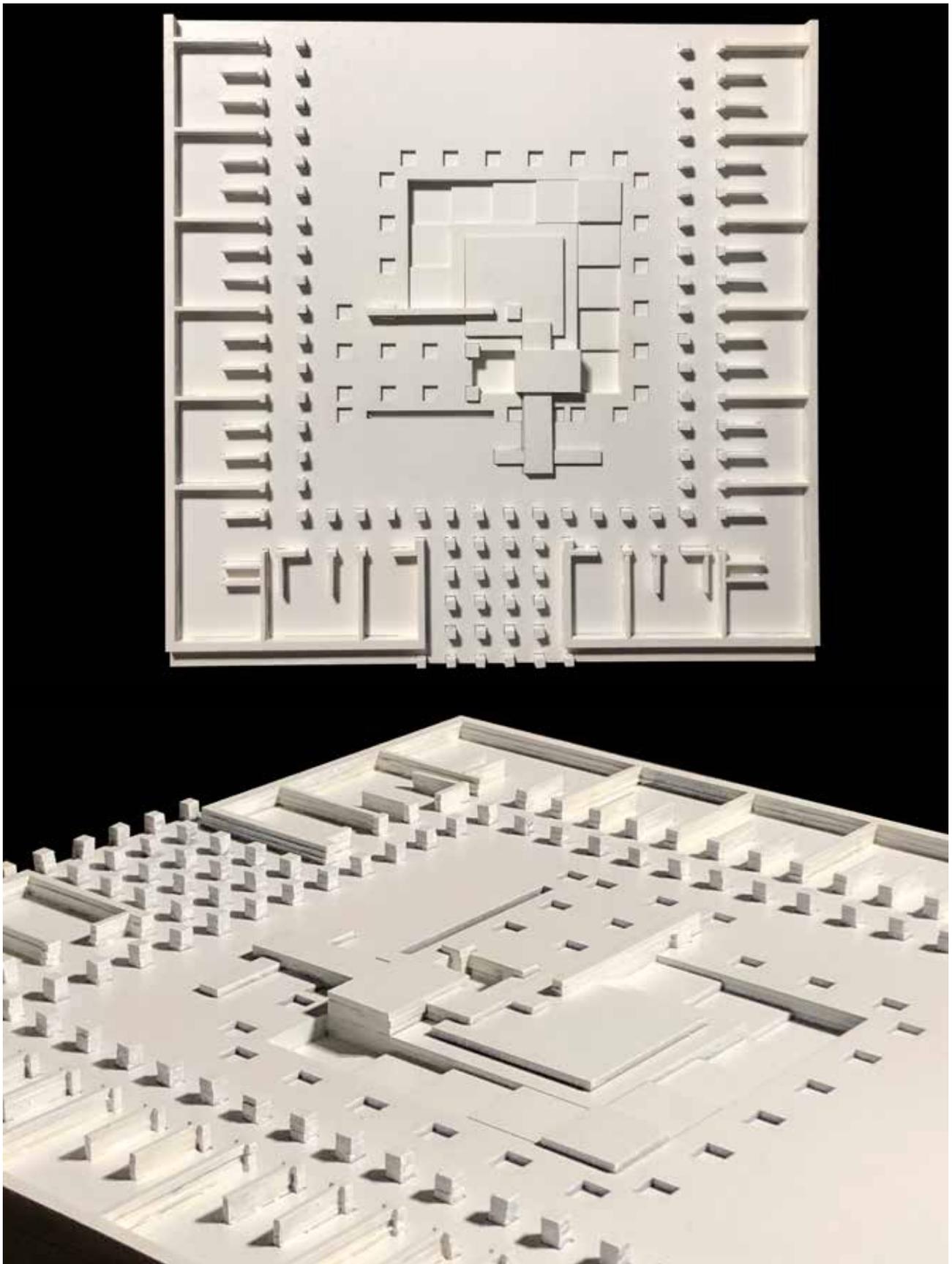
Live monuments

The project focuses on the need, exacerbated in contemporary times, to release the monument from a celebratory figure or intent and instead delivers it directly into the hands of the people who share space with it (Alfano et al 2022). The preconceived attribution of celebratory meanings to places and monuments has clashed in recent years with the growing awareness of the arbitrariness and temporariness of such interpretations, which have often turned out to be fallacious and biased. It therefore becomes necessary to think about a monument that is intended for the people who experience it on a daily basis (Ng 2023).

The project thus stands as an attempt to open the monument to a direct dialogue with the Other and with others. The surface finishing is in lime, a material that is widely used in the southern and eastern Mediterranean to refine buildings; thus, a vernacular sensibility is brought back to the interior of the *Climat* complex (Piernas Medina 2022). The monument acts as a means for interaction between the architectural object and the people through the technique of the *sgraffito* on lime, through which users are invited from the beginning to act and interact with it, by creating new layers, lettering, and bas-reliefs made with simple tools that everyone may have at their disposal (Lime Bank 2018).

Sgraffito is a masonry decoration technique of ancient origins, used since the Middle Ages in Europe and also widespread in Africa, which involves the application of two layers of plaster (one colored with natural materials and one with white lime) who are then engraved to reveal the underlying material. The *sgraffito* links an ancient technique to a rather widespread contemporary practice of engraving public surfaces with names, symbols or messages. Through it, people who inhabit the place are invited to intervene on the surface of the monument, creating drawings or texts that mark their passage within the space.

This triggers an ever-evolving narrative, a reversal of the passivity of classical and celebratory monuments at the center of squares: here the monument is immediately conceived, from its design, to be freely modified. A monument no longer made only to be looked at with detachment and reverence, but to be experienced, used and written, echoing the great debate on art as a shared gesture. Anyone, at any time, intervening, participates in the monument, making it active with his or her addition, in a process of democratizing art.



Figg. 9-10
Model views.

Towards a manifesto

The project does not detach itself from its connotation as a memorial but becomes so, in this case, as a shared and historical memory that coexists on the same object, continuously, without temporal hierarchies. It is a memory made up of continuous and infinite stratifications, and that finally lends itself to being a memorial of all and everyone, no longer only of a specific event or person.

A monument thus created to be “consumed,” no longer a motionless and static symbol, but a monument that is “alive,” in a continuous attribution of meanings by the people who interact with it in their daily lives. The actual and material action exercised by residents on the monument, whether through its use as a public and gathering space or through the technique of the *sgraffito*, is configured as a reappropriation of the space of the court of the Two Hundred Columns. The memorial thus goes from being a static object, created to be observed, to a dynamic and usable element in the lives of residents.

The project is an attempt to bring together different reflections. The reinterpretation from the positive to the negative of the structure becomes its opposite on a conceptual and practical level, handing the courtyard back to the people who live in it. The monument becomes in its continuous interaction a perpetual memorial – a memorial of anything and anyone – freed from its being a static object. The archaeology of forms disassembles and reassembles it into something else: an anti-monument.

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Giulia Formato (Potenza, 1996) is a PhD candidate in Architectural and Landscape Heritage at the Polytechnic University of Turin. After earning her bachelor’s degree from IUAV in Venice, she completed her master’s degree in Architecture for Restoration and Enhancement of Heritage at the Polytechnic University of Turin with a thesis on hydroelectric heritage in the Occitan valleys of the Cuneo area. Her research focuses on the protection and enhancement of industrial and contemporary heritage, particularly in mountainous regions and Southern Italy.

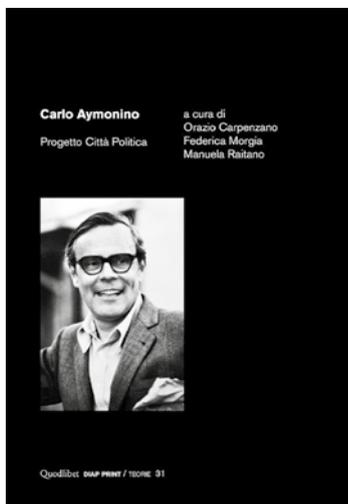
Corrado Scudellaro (Biella, 1996) is a PhD candidate in Architectural and Landscape Heritage at the Polytechnic University of Turin. He has conducted research abroad in Belgium and Cyprus, focusing his thesis on the social impact of heritage conservation in contexts of geopolitical uncertainty, with particular attention to shared historical memory and “dissonant heritage.” His interests include shared approaches to architectural conservation, and he conducts research on at-risk heritage due to the lack of recognition of architectural heritage in historic centers of Latin America, including themes of memory, identity, and the narrative of “minor” architectural heritage.

Lorenzo Serra Bellini (Rome, 1997) graduated in Architecture for Sustainable Design at the Polytechnic University of Turin in 2021 and in Construction Architecture at the Polytechnic University of Milan the following year. His project thesis, with Professor Carlo Ravagnati as the main advisor, focused on urban analysis of certain events related to the collection and management of water in the city of Agrigento and on the possibility of designing as a legend of these urban events. In 2022, he won a scholarship for the National Doctorate in Heritage Science (Sapienza University of Rome). His research interests include cartography as a design tool and water infrastructures.

Beatrice Sacco (Turin, 1993), after classical studies and two degrees in sculpture, began exploring analog and digital photography. She has also worked with engraving and various media, striving never to become fixed on a single material. Her practice investigates the harmony of opposites and, more generally, the subtle interconnectedness of contrasts. She also seeks to analyze the impact of violence and the role of memory both in the past and in contemporary society. She has participated in exhibitions and residencies in Italy and other European countries.

Carlo Quintelli
Rereading Carlo Aymonino: a difficult but useful exegesis

Editors: *Orazio Carpenzano, Federico Morgia, Manuela Raitano*
 Title: *Carlo Aymonino. Progetto, Città, Politica*
 Language: *Italiano*
 Publisher: *Quodlibet Diap Print*
 Serie: *Teorie*
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 ISBN: *978-88-229-2063-8*
 Year: *2023*



Even at first glance, the volume *Carlo Aymonino. Progetto, Città, Politica* seems to spring from the climate of cultural effervescence promoted by Orazio Carpenzano at La Sapienza and in the Roman context, in particular regarding the themes of design research concerning the city, with respect to which Carlo Aymonino himself was a great promoter, inside and outside the academy. This is a complex book, the result of a twelve-tone chorus, specifically designed to capture the polysemy of the case through written essays, photographs of works, drawings, historical photos, and essays drawn in the key of a tribute to this important Italian master, a Roman lent to the Venetian school. The only thing missing, of course, are the video contributions, the sources of which are, however, reported, capable of corroborating the conference and the exhibitions that constitute the book's antecedents.

We are certainly facing a critical project capable, in the meantime, of bringing the figure of this master back into the realm of scientific perspective after the narrative and spectacular exhibition in 2021 at the Milan Triennale "Carlo Aymonino. Loyalty to betrayal". An idea of "betrayal" that also seems to resurface at times in this case but which in reality, as Luca Reale indirectly emphasises, I believe should be traced back to "a process of evolution and refinement" carried out by Carlo Aymonino's design research through an open dialectic between history, contexts, society, politics and obviously experimentation with form that becomes language but looking at the city, therefore free of self-referential drifts and eclectic reversals of direction.

The kaleidoscope of the 26 gazes turned to the Carlo Aymonino phenomenon stimulates curiosity to detect the orientation and consistency of the critical confrontation through the pre-ordained thematic sections given: "project, city and politics", certainly with blurred boundaries and even more so in this case.

The incipit is delineated by the sequence of key words dictated by Carpenzano where, not by chance, the first is "city, and the last, perhaps with less conviction, is "betrayal", almost as if to trace an initial series of clues useful for orientation, a viaticum for the design of a reasoned critical geography to be made.

After explaining the stimulating reasons for the invitation to “draw for Carlo Aymonino” in the form of a figurative homage, addressed to several no-longer-young Italian academics, the curator Manuela Raitano seems to adhere to Eisenman’s analytical sentiment that sees in Aymonino a drawing devoid of theoretical substance (unlike Rossi). An interpretation that leaves room for the hypothesis of an instrument that would be reduced to “playful insubstantiality” or at most to a moment of “intellectual curiosity”, perhaps failing to note that that *drawing-thinking* has often been an integral part of his most consistent theoretical essay.

The other co-curator, Federica Morgia, highlights the mine of experiences and materials that Carlo Aymonino’s life has given us and immediately emphasises his three fundamental theoretical texts: *Origini e sviluppo della città moderna*, *Il significato delle città*, and *Progettare Roma capitale*, to which I would add *La città di Padova*, a work no less decisive in Aymonino’s career, also because of how it affected the IUAV school and demonstrated his ability to organise his research activity in a collective key, that is, in a school key. As Caterina Padoa Schioppa emphasises, moreover, when she grasps Carlo Aymonino’s propensity to express a “group competence” in terms not only of research and school but also of project if we think of the Gallaratese or the laboratory for Roma Capitale.

Still in the preface, among the questions posed to the invited essayists regarding theoretical production, political commitment, and the search for language, the question of “betrayal”, inertia of the Milanese exhibition, emerges again, which from a debatable “alteration of the code” by Carpenzano comes to determine, according to Morgia “with respect to each completed project or to the feeling of disappointment with certain realisations” from which would derive the impossibility of producing epigones, according to a causal link that seems to me unproven even for other masters of his generation who have made the project a hermeneutic tool even before being a linguistic model.

In this volume, Rome, it must be said as well as expected, prevails over Venice in the essayistic arguments that attempt to explain Carlo Aymonino. Beginning with a Valerio Paolo Mosco who traces back to his uncle Piacentini the identity of an art nephew among the “last Italian architects to have had the courage to manifest an explicit figurative monumentality”, one that we struggle to see, however, as entirely internal to the dialectic of a plastic, artistic research derived from the references of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe. Luca Porqueddu’s essay perhaps seems to better contemplate the degree of complexity that substantiates the figure of Carlo Aymonino, where he reverses the perspective starting from the datum of a studied city that “appears as the sediment of a problematic dialogue between politics, context, and project” within which the albeit significant “sculptural and objectual presence” of Aymonino’s project certainly does not renounce being “architecture as a critical moment” through which “to refine the dialectical sensitivity between reading and writing about the city”. As if to say, Rome is not enough, Venice is needed to understand Carlo Aymonino.

But the Venetian lesson Carlo Aymonino also invests in his political-administrative experience for Rome’s historic centre. I would almost say aware of the design paradox that Samonà uses to design the Venice of the future through the island Venice of the past, that of the ‘Novissime’ project for the Sacca del Tronchetto competition. A dialectical issue between the modernisation of the city and the preservation of its historical dimension

emphasised by Jean-Louis Cohen and taken up by Patrizia Gabellini when she recalls how Carlo Aymonino wanted in the case of Rome “to make the historical delay the occasion for the future progress of a different capital”. That of the Special Office for the Historical Centre, with the generous contribution of Raffaele Panella, was in fact a great participatory workshop, at the same time of political and planning elaboration, with an evident university derivation, capable of searching for a new authoritativeness of public government over the city, and therefore able to move, as Fabrizio Toppetti rightly points out, between ‘general inertia’, ‘maximalist benculturalism’, ‘mannerist environmentalism’ and ‘strong powers’. Then, of course, such a determined policy, Gabellini observes, cannot fail to make use of ‘vision’, the exercise of ‘power’ and last but not least the ability to ‘pilot’, and it is perhaps because of this last failing that an intellectual who does not betray himself like Carlo Aymonino will see most of the design proposals for Rome’s historic centre unimplemented. In this sense, I would not entirely agree with Rafael Moneo that the ideological political substratum of Carlo Aymonino, and of his generation, would have limited its scope in terms of architectural outcomes; on the contrary, it characterised its character of a critical operation in history, in the concrete not only physical and formal of the city, obviously with greater difficulties in terms of consensus and even more so in terms of the market.

The varied framework of the volume’s essayistic contributions is not lacking in curious and perhaps at times eccentric glances. The refined exegesis with a literary flavour developed by Pippo Ciorra to understand the expressive hedonism of Aymonino’s design brings us back to the Sheaffer fountain pens of Quaronian memory as the “distinctive sign” of a “way of thinking about architecture” that will direct the postmodernist figure between the north and south of Italian design culture. The comparison proposed by Sara Marini between Aymonino and De Carlo is difficult to make, and even more so between Pesaro and Urbino, for which the fact that they share a common administrative district is certainly not enough, due to the obvious differences in context, history and themes. Better is the comparison with Ungers of the “archipelago city” outlined by Gabriele Mastrigli, of a West Berlin that, notwithstanding “certain Koolhaasian scripts”, relates to the project-collage of East Rome by Carlo Aymonino and companions in terms of palimpsestic reality and dialectic of the parts.

Manuel Orazi’s reading of Aymonino’s speech and Rossi’s silence from the Gallaratese is no less than reductive, worse if traced back to the reasons of their professional fortune inversely proportional to their rate of eloquence (paradoxes of communication technique).

Finally, the essayistic task that should have argued the ambitious title ‘Fragile Colossi. The idea of monument in the work of Aymonino, Rossi and Canella’ by Luca Molinari, who indulges between the Cinecittà of ‘The Colossus of Rhodes’ talking about Aymonino’s Colossus, the ‘donchisottesque condition’ on the part of these masters when faced with a contemporary city they would not have understood, as far as that they were faced with the “need to give recognisable form to the new public architecture required by a political and social demand for new civil monuments to represent the Italy of the economic boom and uncontrolled urban growth”, as if civil values and economic boom could give rise to a common idea of monument all the more so in that historical ideological context. The ideas of monument in Rossi and especially in Canella seem to be postponed to another essay.

On a merely critical interpretative level, the drawings “for Carlo Aymonino” dedicated to the master add little, as they are either too homageable with refined Aymonino oleographies, including colossi, Gallaratese, archaeological oneiricism and Pesaro enclosures, or self-homage through celebration. A parade of beautiful drawings that would have amused CA but also, I think, pissed him off a bit for using the slang he was allowed to use. In any case, an attempt that is as promising as it is difficult, and certainly to be repeated with added direction.

In conclusion, what does this substantial critical restitution on Carlo Aymonino and his work tell us? It seems to me that Franco Purini sees it first and foremost as a good starting point for “outlining an exhaustive and carefully structured thematic map” of that master, involving a historical context to which he intensely related and in which he became a protagonist. But, adds Purini, starting from his formative genesis in relation to Muratorian theory, urban analysis, and the relationship between typology and morphology, he sought a “fruitful coincidence between architecture and the city”. Coming from him, who in the 1990s in his Venetian experience could be understood as the anti-Aymonino, this seems to me a credible statement that has certainly matured. All the more so today when the false currency, both ideological and architectural, of the *smart city* rather than the *urban jungle* to the point of preaching *the end of the city* requires tried and tested disciplinary antibodies of which Aymonino, among others of his generation, is certainly still a good repository. For an architecture-city relationship to be rediscovered, without which both terms lose their meaning, become something else.

Maria Clara Ghia
Luigi Vietti. Un eccentric journey through Twentieth-century history

Authors: Paola Veronica Dell'Aria, Enrico Prandi
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There are certain architects who, due to various reasons and circumstances, are only marginally remembered in the dominant narratives of Italian historiography of the 20th century. The book by Paola Veronica Dell'Aria and Enrico Prandi fits within the context of studies that are filling one of these gaps, concerning the figure of Luigi Vietti.

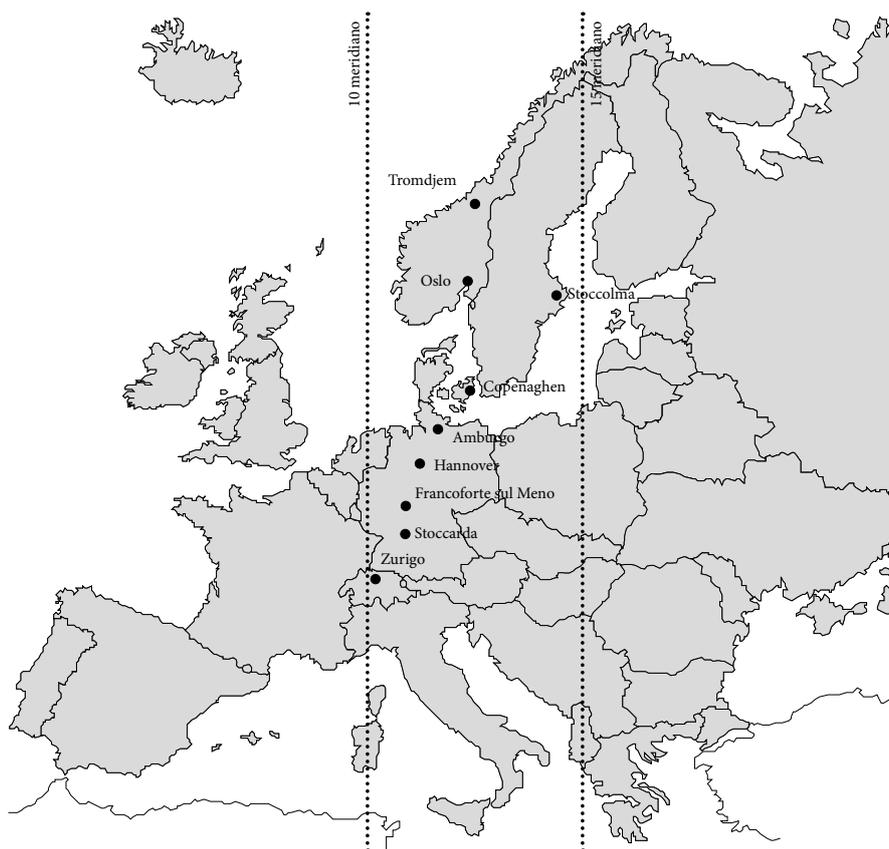
As Franco Purini notes in his *Preface*, this historiographical oversight stems from a number of aspects related to Vietti's *unconventional* character: he did not belong to the academic world, did not make explicit any ideological affiliation, and was not included among the members of what Purini calls the *architectural aristocracy*. Academic culture was often seen in opposition to professional practice, and those who engaged in the professional dimension of building were to some extent sidelined. An exploration into the work and thoughts of Vietti is vital in reconstituting the landscape of a century filled with heterodox paths that have left behind high-quality traces.

Vietti's writings, which are the subject of this study, were published in *Architettura*, *L'Economia Nazionale*, *Il Secolo XIX*, and *Il Messaggero* between 1932 and 1935. Thus, as Prandi points out¹, in a brief time span between the participation in the CIAM of 1930 in Brussels and the corollaries of the topics discussed at the VI Triennale of 1936. The themes are indeed consistent with the main topics of discussion: the *existenzminimum*, rational architecture, and the functional city. But before the anthology section, essays by Dell'Aria and Prandi provide the context to understand the arguments presented in these articles.

Vietti trained in Rationalism, was an active voice in MIAR, attended CIAM, and took on institutional roles. He participated in the first and second Exposition of Rational Architecture in Rome (1928 and 1931). In 1935, he entered the competition for the New Auditorium in Rome, and in collaboration with Antonio Carminati, Pietro Lingeri, Marcello Nizzoli, Mario Sironi, and Giuseppe Terragni, he participated in both phases of the competition for the Palazzo del Littorio on Via dell'Impero in 1934: here, one can already discern that *heterodox attitude* that distinguishes him from the proposal commonly attributed to Terragni, countering a linear approach with the proposal of the large curved facade plan. He also designed the Casa Littoria in Oleggio with Ignazio Gardella (1934), the Casa del

Fig. 1

Itinerary of the journey made by Luigi Vietti in Northern Europe: "Viaggio al Nord tra 10° e il 15° meridiano".



Fascio in Rapallo (1937), the Seaside Establishment in Santa Margherita Ligure (1932), the Restaurant alla Foce (1936), and various subsequent hotels in Portofino, San Fruttuoso, and Genoa.

Then came the opportunity of the Plan for the E42, for which he was appointed alongside Marcello Piacentini, Giuseppe Pagano, Luigi Piccinato, and Ettore Rossi. And Vietti made a masterstroke: he chose to handle a sector excluded from Piacentini's oversight, which nevertheless covered an area equivalent to a quarter of the entire intervention. This granted him the freedom to invent a piece of the city, the Amusement Park, and his designs are *fantastic*, showcasing planets, roller coasters, and a large statue wherein one could enter to explore the human body, always a great fascination for Vietti.

Roberto Secchi remarks: «His architectures starkly avoid not only all rhetoric and monumentality but also the strict rigor of many of his colleagues or the intellectualism of much contemporary architecture, testifying to the joy of a generous surrender to playful forms in harmony with the environment they belong to»².

Vietti's *inclination towards amusement* becomes evident, a theme that will reappear from 1962 in the designs for the Costa Smeralda. The opportunity provided by the Aga Khan is apt for blending rationalism and spontaneity. Vietti is respectful but not mimetic, after all the location does not have a well-established built environment. He photographs traditional architectures in Sardinia and he aligns his projects with the morphological lines of the territory. Along with Michele Busiri Vici and Jacques Couelle, he crafts the story of a landscape as if it had always been inhabited, even though it only came to be in the 1960s. The experience of the Costa Smeralda is a critical juncture, costing Vietti a silent condemnation in the politically committed period of the post-war era. He was accused of snobbery, but

Fig. 2

Itinerary of the journey made by Luigi Vietti in Southern Italy: "Romanzo delle verità architettoniche".



as Dell’Aira writes «Vietti never ceased to believe that there are serious or less serious themes and programs for a project»³. Hence, his decisions, deemed opportunistic at the time, now need reevaluation, understanding their deeper impetus: a rejection of understanding his tasks in an overly cerebral, strict, or abstract manner, and a desire to venture into realms that allowed him the freedom to roam imaginatively.

His *talent* emerges, as Purini also notes in the *Preface*: an untamed, unrestrained talent, enabling him to perceive reality as a «metamorphic field», directing him to engage specifically with the context in which he operates, interpreting places «as a combination of historical and topological-environmental elements activated precisely through his design process, identifying their implicit potential»⁴.

Where and when did Vietti learn to act so harmoniously with the landscape and the people inhabiting it? This book provides an answer: his approach stems from an *imprinting*, starting from what he learns right after graduation as an Inspector for the Monuments of Liguria for the Superintendency of Fine Arts and appointed for the application of the Panoramic Protection Law. Vietti discovers a teeming nature in a geologically and morphologically challenging territory, posing construction challenges and fueling the development of a predominantly technical-engineering interest. Moreover, the themes emerging during the 1936 Triennale resonate with him: Vietti aligns with Pagano’s perspective, expressed in *Architettura rurale italiana*, wherein «the knowledge of functional laws and artistic respect for our grand and little-known heritage of genuine and honest rural architecture will perhaps shield us from academic relapses, immunize us against pompous rhetoric, and above all, will instill in us the pride of knowing the true indigenous tradition of Italian architecture: clear, logical, linear, both morally and formally very close to contemporary taste»⁵.

In this perspective, among Vietti’s articles published in the book, there is a particularly striking interest in the reports published in 1933 and 1935

Fig. 3

Luigi Vietti, Palace in Corso Italia, Genova – Casa Zella, project, 1932.



in the *Messaggero* and the *Secolo XIX* journals, titled *Viaggio architettonico al nord sul 10 e 15 meridiano* (Architectural Journey to the North on the 10th and 15th Meridians) and *Romanzo delle verità architettoniche* (Novel of Architectural Truths). These articles reflect on two expeditions towards Northern Europe and Southern Italy. The two destinations tend to *short-circuit*, as while Vietti heads north, for example to visit the Weissenhof district in Stuttgart, he finds there a «ray of Mediterranean light»⁶ and, to confirm this, he publishes the famous postcard with the caption «the Weissenhofsiedlung with Arabs to demonstrate that rational constructions have a Mediterranean origin that is anti-German»⁷.

In particular, in the *Romanzo delle verità architettoniche*, there are reflections that shed light on the mature design choices of Vietti. The title itself is an oxymoron: it's a *novel*, but it deals with *truths*. Vietti speaks of real landscapes but seems immediately to declare his intention to grant himself poetic licenses. He establishes image parallels between the serial traditional constructions of Salemi and the houses in Dessau by Walter Gropius, or between a villa by Le Corbusier in Pessac and a house on the road to Pompeii: «our people», he writes, inspired with its «human measure, practical organization, economy of means, the global rationalist movement». Every unexpected event becomes an occasion to fantasize about design ideas. Heading towards the Ionian Sea, he describes road circulation, showcasing his irony when he writes about the donkeys: «The donkey, an eminently revolutionary type, chooses its grazing ground and will never fit into any organized arrangement[...]». The donkey encroaches on roads and slows automobile speed, and from this anecdote, Vietti's mind departs to imagine a project: separate the roads for cars from those for quadrupeds, arranging a cycle path and an unpaved road for mules⁸.

Crossing the Sila plateau, Vietti writes as if he is sketching, verbalizing the imaginative process with an engaging language: «If I were to paint the Ionian plains in the scorching summer, I would do so as follows: a brown expanse of earth, marked by parallel lines. I would then leave a void, above which I would craft a gradient dome with ever-deepening shades of blue. In the void, I would position a bubbling strip of bluish-violet to represent the sea». He showcases talent as a writer too, having a keen sense of consonance and a musical flow to his sentences: «Along the road, walls of prickly

pears parade by. Tangles of animalistic trunks and spiny paddles that catalyze water vapor to adorn themselves with purple crowns of juicy fruits». He commits himself personally, initiating a process of *Einführung*, a term frequently overused in contemporary theories but entirely relevant to the mechanisms that Vietti employs through his writing. As readers, we find ourselves in the position of journeying with him and understanding his psychic processes: «I accept the colt Sauro from the host. I set off, imbued with a sense of freshness, a novelty granted by the young horse that connects me with the life of the earth, the trees, and the springs». He sharpens all his senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch. He is so attentive that he measures the flowers: «Spring seeds the woods with colossal violets, with flowers I have measured up to 3 cm in length [...]. Streams sing amidst cushions of moss [...]. The abundant presence of Sila's red pines saturates the air with its resinous scent». And the customs of the people who inhabit these places intrigue him as much as the spaces themselves; he describes the procession of the Ecce Homo in Mesoraca that «hastily descends amid the clergy and women dressed in the most spontaneous colors [...]. The Ecce Homo passes proudly, carried aloft on a litter [...]. The people, overtaken by emotion, shout, scream, clap, and sob. [...] An old local woman offers me an oak branch, and I realize I'm moved!». His *pioneering attitude*, the same with which he will confront the uncharted territory of the Costa Smeralda, ignites him: «The Sila, although traversed by ancient mule tracks, gives a sense of discovery to those who venture through it»⁹. And Vietti envisions constructing interconnected urban centers there, harnessing the waters to produce energy, creating channels for land reclamation, promoting the area for tourism, establishing a university, a sanatorium center, and so on¹⁰.

From Vietti the writer, much can be discerned about Vietti the architect, and the same goes for Vietti the illustrator. In 2021, Dell'Aira and Prandi curated another book, titled *Luigi Vietti: Osteopaese*¹¹, in which his surrealist-inspired drawings, created between 1966 and 1977, are published. This imaginary land made of bones protruding from the landscape inevitably reminds us of the granitic formations of the Costa Smeralda, as if they were the *bones of giants*. Consequently, the intricate plans devised for those locations, like the one for the Hotel Cervo (1962-1963), resemble x-ray plates of gigantic bodies sprawled across the landscape¹². In the drawings for *Osteopaese*, Vietti's *non-authoritarian* mark and his *productive irony* emerge: «Anything but detachment. It's immense dedication, concreteness, and affection for whatever presents itself to be done, at that moment, in that place, for that cause, for that commission [...]»¹³.

Gustave Thibon, the *farmer philosopher*, was as distrustful of *-isms* as he was attached to reality. His figure is chosen by Dell'Aira to introduce topics dear to Vietti¹⁴. Similarly, in 1950, Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, while organizing the exhibition of Frank Lloyd Wright at Palazzo Strozzi, wrote to Bruno Zevi: «think of the events, *without mentioning all the nonsense -isms*, but organize something truly significant for the entire country»¹⁵. Ragghianti wanted to avoid sectoral divisions that constrain thought and create factions, choosing instead to address the plurality of reality. Many of his generation felt the same way, and so did Vietti, who shunned all specialization and found, in the openness to the multitude of things, the spark to ignite the design process. Dell'Aira concludes her essay: «Did he digress? Yes, he did. Was he talking about something else? The *else* is the true essence of our matter. [...] There are few architectural designs in Vietti's writings, but there is an abundance of architecture»¹⁶.

Notes

- ¹ Prandi E. (2022). Luigi Vietti, una breve ma intensa opera editoriale di divulgazione del Moderno. In Dell'Aira P. V., Prandi E., *Luigi Vietti. Scritti di architettura e urbanistica 1932-1935*, Altralinea, Florence, 39.
- ² Secchi R. (1997). Introduzione. in P. V. Dell'Aira, *Luigi Vietti, Progetti e realizzazioni degli anni '30*, Alinea, Florence, 9 (translation by the author).
- ³ Dell'Aira P. V. (2022). Dove l'architettura ci porta. In Dell'Aira, Prandi, op. cit., 22 (translation by the author).
- ⁴ Purini F. (2022). Un messaggio da lontano, in Dell'Aira, Prandi, op. cit., 8 (translation by the author).
- ⁵ Pagano G., Guarniero D. (1936). *Architettura rurale italiana*, Quaderni della Triennale, Hoepli editore, Milano, 6 (translation by the author).
- ⁶ Vietti L. (1933), Viaggio architettonico al nord sul 10 e 15 meridiano. *Il Secolo XIX*, 29 marzo – Anno XI (translation by the author).
- ⁷ Ivi, 3 (translation by the author).
- ⁸ L. Vietti (1935). Romanzo delle verità architettoniche. Verso il Mare Jonio. *Il Messaggero*, 27 febbraio – Anno XIII (translation by the author).
- ⁹ L. Vietti (1935). Romanzo delle verità architettoniche. La Sila come è. *Il Messaggero*, 8 marzo – Anno XIII (translation by the author).
- ¹⁰ L. Vietti (1935). Romanzo delle verità architettoniche. La Sila come potrà essere. *Il Messaggero*, 23 marzo – Anno XIII.
- ¹¹ Dell'Aira P. V., Prandi E. (2021). *Luigi Vietti. Osteopaese*, Timià, Rome.
- ¹² Posocco, P. (2019). Luigi Vietti e l'avventura della Costa Smeralda. *FAMagazine. Ricerche E Progetti sull'architettura E La Città*, (48/49), 59–72. <https://doi.org/10.12838/fam/issn2039-0491/n48/49-2019/287>
- ¹³ Dell'Aira P. V. (2021). Architetto inventore. In Dell'Aira, Prandi, op. cit., 55 (translation by the author).
- ¹⁴ Dell'Aira P. V. (2022). op. cit., 17.
- ¹⁵ Lettera di Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, Florence, 20 dicembre 1950. Fondazione Ragghianti, Archivio, Lucca, cit. in Ghia M.C. (2022) Due maestri italiani: Ragghianti e Zevi in corrispondenza. *AntiThesi. Giornale di Critica dell'Architettura*, 20 agosto (translation by the author).
- ¹⁶ Dell'Aira P. V. (2022). op. cit., 35 (translation by the author).

Author: *Alberto Calderoni*
 Title: *Il recinto di Kairós*
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Reading *Il recinto di Kairós. Sul modello e la sua autonomia* means returning to reflect on the profound issues of the discipline of architecture, understood here (without confusion) as art. Indeed, scrolling through the pages of the book we can appreciate the great effort made by the author in systematising certain reflections accumulated over time around the model of architecture. These reflections are the ones that daily question who are passionate pedagogues but also those who practice the art of building with dedication and consistency.

The essay opens with a quotation from the art critic Germano Celant, who reflects on the model of architecture by systematizing a set of words such as «desire», «research», «prediction», «utopia»¹, which anticipate the themes of the question contained in the *Premessa*: what is still the need to learn to think and design through models «that might appear [...] outdated and above all [...] replaceable d’emblée by more preforming, economical and easily shared practices?»².

The author, as he states in the book’s *incipit*, does not pretend to give an unequivocal answer to the question but, addressing students, researchers and architects, attempts to outline a reflection around models starting from the quality of time that marks their production. Models of architecture are understood as «precipitous *enclosures* [...] in which are condensed the energies that have been spent in their conception and realisation, and the traces of the slow time spent in living the experience of making»³; that time that the Greeks defined with the word *kairós*. Models, in the words of the writer, are «physical entities [...] – and at the same time – enclosures of experiences»⁴.

After the *Premessa*, the book continues with three paragraphs entitled *Definizioni*, *Il modello come cosa* and *Il Frammento* to close (before the bibliography and indexes) with the chapter *Immagini*, a text followed by a photographic sequence of architectural models: a visual synthesis of the essay’s theses.

The *Definizioni* allow the reader to approach the central theme of the book through the terms used in the narrative; the word «model» is preferred to the words «maquette» and «plastic» for its ambiguity of meaning: «the model can be paradigm, icastic representation [...] an autonomous, abstract object, manifestation through which to be inspired»⁵. In choosing the sec-



Fig. 1
Il recinto di Kairós. Sul modello e la sua autonomia, page 72.

ond meaning, the author understands the model as «a broad class of hypotheses [...] ideal, of [...] intuitive and creative origin [...]»⁶.

The model is thus understood «not as a means of representing or figuring out architecture [...], but [...] as an autonomous product by the architect -actor agent- synaesthetically immersed in the dynamics of creative work»⁷. Formal autonomy is thus, for the author, the character that distinguishes the model of architecture. This passage, in a parallelism with the plastic art of sculpture, could evoke an aphorism by the artist Alberto Giacometti who attributes to the “sculpted thing” the quality of being an «independent object [...], like organic beings»⁸.

The model (as an autonomous entity) is considered in the essay to be the product of the architect’s manual “doing”, in other words “experimenting by doing”. A definition that refers to the deepest sense of doing architecture, that is, to its *manière*; from the old French «that which is made by hands»⁹. In this line of thought of the author it is possible to trace the foundations of the Bauhaus didactics of the early 20th century; didactics that the historian Argan defined as: «the first concrete position of a theory of art, as the science of a particular human doing, against all aesthetic idealism»¹⁰. According to the author, that typical doing of the craftsman¹¹ produces those things with which «we can be physically involved [...], that is [...] in entities and with entities [...] we become physical bodies»¹².

The model, in the words of Alberto Calderoni, is thus an “entity” or the «conceptual equivalent of the Greek *pragma*»¹³ as defined by Remo Bodei (quoted by the author). This definition is the central issue of the essay as only «through thinking, building, and experiencing models – real entities [...] – we focus on reality outside ourselves [...]»¹⁴. Models of architecture are described as «physical entities, pregnant and dense, deep and open»¹⁵. The author of the essay guides us towards the open, allusive and lingering dimension of the model that does not claim to assert but is instead capable of generating emotions and multiple approximations. If at the Bauhaus the experimentation of ideas took place through the activity of drawing and modeling on an equal basis¹⁶, here the author declares the predominance of the model over the graphic sign. Architectural models, in addition to evoking multiple possibilities of action, maintain their supremacy over drawing as they are capable of manifesting themselves through surfaces understood as «the first point of contact in reality between things and us»¹⁷.

For the author, the most expressive surfaces that make up models are undoubtedly the fragments; understood here as portions of a more complex unity that on the one hand demand their completion but on the other deny it as autonomous parts capable of speaking for themselves¹⁸. In this vision of Calderoni one can undoubtedly trace the “aesthetics of the fragment”; aesthetics that characterizes our way of seeing things, in other words, the tradition inherited from the avant-gardes of the early 20th century which, by deflating the naturalist figure¹⁹, recomposed images for abstract (autonomous) signs without diminishing the «efficacy of the subject»²⁰ represented.

The author therefore prefers fragment-models for their ability to be activators and «the cause of the imaginative process and the formation of new images [...]. The fragment is an artefact whose *aesthetic fluidity* guarantees its autonomy»²¹.

The fluidity quoted by the author (which refers to a liquid context of Bauman’s memory) leads us to reflect on the infinite possibilities of recompo-



Fig. 2
Il recinto di Kairós. Sul modello e la sua autonomia, page 74.

sition of fragments carrying in *nuce* multiple meanings, possibilities that must necessarily relate to our aesthetic taste²² formed through all the artistic disciplines. Within this framework, architecture fully belongs to the domain of the arts in which, as the author states, techniques «contaminate and merge with the intention of constructing imagined landscapes that can be perceived synaesthetically»²³.

The twelve images that conclude the essay therefore relate to selected “model-fragments” from different architectural cultures: a demonstration of the theses made in the previous pages. The models of architecture portrayed in the photographs emphasise their being a “lingering thing”, evocative and non-descriptive. In the black-and-white images, in fact, we realize that material variation goes hand in hand with formal research (according to Michelangelo’s principle of putting and taking away²⁴), but each fragment nevertheless appears as a laceration of infinite paths that can be followed from the urban to the architectural scale. The massiveness of Takero Shimazaki Architects’ fragments and the bas-relief façades of Architecture Research Unit with Network in Architecture (NIA) contrast with the tectonics of Anne Holtrop, Nicolai Bo Andersen and Studio Mumbai.

The images of the models that complete the essay lead the reader to two paths: close the book and reflect on the theses already skimmed or go back and retrieve some paragraphs and notes. Alberto Calderoni’s book can be read horizontally and vertically as a model of architecture that is “crossable” in both directions²⁵. In fact, the reader can choose whether to continue the narration by proceeding with the succession of paragraphs, horizontally, or to enter into the depths of each chapter by dwelling on the notes that, like fragments of a model, allude to other reflections.

In an age without *kairós* (the quality time of the Greeks), returning to talk about the value of doing entities slowly (of producing-learning with the hands) brings us back to the world of art in contrast to the technology that, according to Rudolf Arnheim, brings «visual confusion [...] or excessive complexity»²⁶, especially in the learning phases of artistic disciplines.

Alberto Calderoni’s book, like a model of architecture, is an object to be experienced as capable of returning to the fundamental questions of the discipline; those questions linked to the archaic use of the hand as an irreplaceable means of making *entities*.

Notes

- ¹ Celant G. (1987) – “Il progetto è un oggetto”. *Rassegna*, 32, p.76
- ² Calderoni A. (2023) – *Il recinto di kairós. Sul modello e la sua autonomia*, Maggioli Editore, Santarcangelo di Romagna, p.12.
- ³ *Ivi*, pp.12-13.
- ⁴ *Ibidem*.
- ⁵ Calderoni A. (2023) – *Il recinto di kairós. Sul modello e la sua autonomia*, op. cit., p. 21.
- ⁶ *Ivi*, p. 22.
- ⁷ *Ivi*, p. 24.
- ⁸ Giacometti A. (2001) – “Taccuini e fogli sparsi”. In: *Alberto Giacometti. Scritti*, Abscondita, Milan, p. 150.
- ⁹ Brunelli A. (2023) – “Maniera”. In: Arrighi L., Canepa E., Lepratti C., Moretti B., Servente D. (edited by) *Decimo Forum ProArch Le parole e le forme. Book of Papers*, p. 756, Genova, 16-17-18 november 2023.
- ¹⁰ Argan, G. C. (2010) – *Walter Gropius e la Bauhaus*, Einaudi, Turin, p. 31.
- ¹¹ Cfr. Calderoni A. (2016) – *Appunti dal visivile*, Lettera Ventidue, Siracusa, pp. 137-139.
- ¹² Böhme G. (2010) – *Atmosfere, estasi messe in scena. L'estetica come teoria generale della percezione*, Marinotti, Milan, p. 239.
- ¹³ Bodei, R. (2010) – *La vita delle cose*, Laterza, Bari, p. 13.
- ¹⁴ Calderoni A. (2023) – *Il recinto di kairós. Sul modello e la sua autonomia*, op. cit., p. 34.
- ¹⁵ *Ibidem*.
- ¹⁶ Cfr. Argan, G. C. (2010) – *Walter Gropius e la Bauhaus*, op. cit, pp. 31-84.
- ¹⁷ Calderoni A. (2023) – *Il recinto di kairós. Sul modello e la sua autonomia*, op. cit., p. 39.
- ¹⁸ Cfr. *Ivi*, p. 54.
- ¹⁹ Anselmi A. (2019) – “Arte e figure della modernità”, In: Brunelli A., *Intuizioni sulla forma architettonica. Alessandro Anselmi dopo il GRAU*, Quodlibet, Macerata, p. 146.
- ²⁰ Arbheim R. (2017) – *Arte e percezione visiva*, Feltrinelli, Milan, p. 121.
- ²¹ Calderoni A. (2023) – *Il recinto di kairós. Sul modello e la sua autonomia*, op. cit., pp. 55-56.
- ²² Anselmi A. (1997) – Una didattica fondativa per la “Formazione del gusto”. *Groma*, 1/2, june, p. 22.
- ²³ *Ivi*, p. 52.
- ²⁴ Cfr. Eisenman P. (2009) – *La base formale dell'architettura moderna*, Pendragon, Bologna, p. 81.
- ²⁵ Calderoni A. (2023) – *Il recinto di kairós. Sul modello e la sua autonomia*, op. cit., p. 24.
- ²⁶ Arbheim R. (2017) – *Arte e percezione visiva*, op. cit., p. 176.

Valerio Tolve
Around (and within) 'Lo spazio al centro in Kahn'

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Lo spazio al centro in Kahn by Federica Visconti, part of LetteraVentidue's *Figure* series, stems from the author's elective and personal obsession with the thought and work of the "Estonian master from Philadelphia".

This obsession is not coincidental – elective to be precise, that is, knowingly identified among the many possible ones – it's a deliberately chosen focus that has deep roots going back to her doctoral thesis¹ and continues virtually unchanged in interest and intensity over time and in subsequent work. This book represents a kind of transcendence and sublimation of the initial thoughts formed during her doctoral research, which will undoubtedly continue to evolve towards new interpretations and readings.

The difficulty in identifying a true conclusion for this work and the sequence of analytical readings it presents is evident, leading Visconti to propose two different epilogues with some analogous traits: the first focusing on the *National Assembly Hall* of Sher-e-Banglanagar (with its primordial idea linked to the *Pantheon* in Rome), and the second on the *Four Freedoms Park* and the *Roosevelt Memorial* in New York, a posthumous work completed on the former Welfare Island nearly forty years after its conception, based on sketches and drawings found in Kahn's archive.

In the *incipit*, Federica Visconti traces her obsession with Kahn back to Livio Vacchini's thoughts on architectural 'masterpieces'². I, mindful of the ontological sense of this series based on the *correspondances*³ between architects separated only by space and time but aligned in thought, tend to attribute this persistent focus on Kahn's work and figure also to the obstinacy reminiscent of Rossi⁴. After all, Kahn's entire experience is marked by the same persistence in wanting to "center a theme to develop, make a choice within architecture, and always try to solve that problem" with varying solutions that demonstrate the refinement of variable responses against the constancy of the problems. One of these themes, according to Visconti, is the *Human Agreement*, the basic quality of any form of dwelling, private or better yet, civil and collective: "I think a plan is a society of rooms. A good project is one where the rooms have talked to each other", wrote Kahn himself⁵. In this sense, Kahn's civil and classical dimension – timeless and therefore always contemporary, not in terms of language but in its constant relevance – represents a universal, educational, and formative experience available to all and for all, genuinely operational as it is truly aimed at the

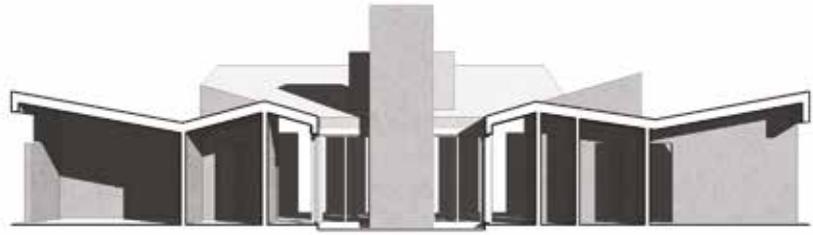


Fig. 1-2

Analytical Montage: National Parliament House Dhaka vs. Pantheon Rome
Redrawing coordinated by the author and her workgroup.

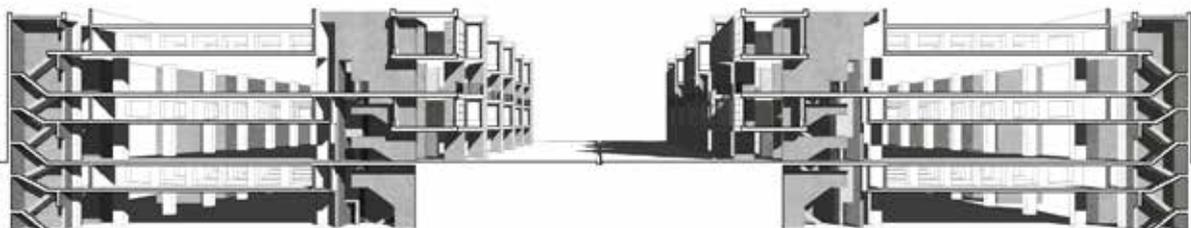
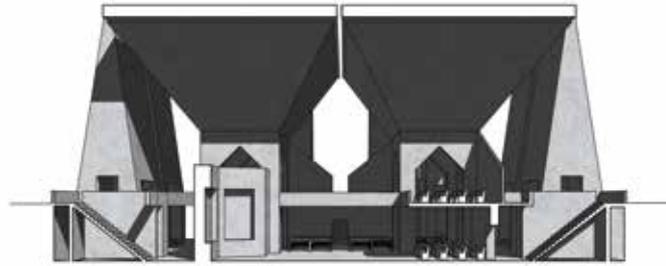


Fig. 3-4-5

Louis I. Kahn, National Parliament House, Dhaka (1962-1982); Louis I. Kahn, First Unitarian Church, Rochester (1959-1967); Louis I. Kahn, Salk Institute for Biological Studies, La Jolla (1959-1965). Redrawings coordinated by the author and her workgroup.

Fig. 6

Louis I. Kahn, Hurva Synagogue, Gerusalemme (1968-1974)
Redrawing coordinated by the author and her workgroup.



project and the possibility of its renewal.

Drawing is a fundamental tool in this investigation: sections and elevations, views and perspectives, and of course, plans and diagrams reconstruct and reveal the deep and intimate sense of the ‘central space’ around which the entire composition lies. Thus, drawing assumes an almost surgical tone, performing a precise dissection that penetrates the forms of solid and massive architecture.

The carefully selected works – certainly not exhaustive but not reductive either for the expected result – intertwine Kahn’s travel experiences in the early 1950s between Greece, Egypt, and Italy (especially), as well as his writings and theory, which are absolutely coherent and inseparable from the practical exercise of architectural design. Italy – and more broadly, ancient and particularly Roman architecture – represents a rich heritage of forms and principles for Kahn, available to feed the imaginative invention of the project: avoiding pure citation, Kahn chooses the more refined path of abstraction and analogy because “*pure forms have already been experimented with in all their variants*”⁶, as he wrote in a letter to his studio collaborators, legitimizing the natural attitude of the ancient to be interpreted and still interpretable today. Perhaps it is this constant and continuous reference to the ancient, to the expressive potential of ruined forms suspended in an immutable and motionless time, that is the basis for Kahn’s maturation of thought around the primary space of the ‘room’ in all its possible meanings, from the idea of the gathered and introverted patio of the unfinished *Morton Goldenberg House* in Rydal (1959) to the ‘summary’ space, gathered but open and oriented of the *Salk Institute for Biological Studies* in La Jolla (1959-1965), united by the same will for a relationship with nature but different in spatial conformation: closed/concluded or open/infinite; from the hall of the *First Unitarian Church* in Rochester (1959-1967) to the hall designed for the *Hurva Synagogue* in Jerusalem (1968-1974), united by the similar idea of community celebrated in the central space.

The critical readings of this selection of works – all notably from the late ‘50s to early ‘70s, a period of extreme maturation of Kahn’s architectural thought – aim to uncover the various compositional and expressive ways in which “*the theme of human institutions and representativeness*” has been developed and resolved. Kahn recognizes the “*real essence*” of contemporary architecture’s problem in the ontological concept of space: “*Our problems are all new, our spatial questions are new, and this is therefore the time that must strive to create better institutions than those that already exist. Our institutions are very modest today. They are not good institutions because the spaces that must serve them are outdated. We must find the realm of space that can serve these institutions well today [...] it is terribly important*”⁷.

The conclusion is deliberately left open by the author, who consciously

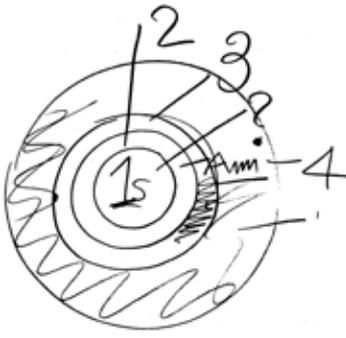


Fig. 7
 Loius I. Kahn, First Unitarian Church, Rochester, 1959-1967 (Kahn Collection, Philadelphia).

suspends judgment, almost waiting for other future developments. In the first epilogue, Federica Visconti explores the space of the *National Assembly Hall* in Sher-e-Banglanagar (1962-1974), recognizing it as corresponding to the Halls of Rochester and Jerusalem, all ideally underlying the grand domed space of the *Pantheon*. The second epilogue addresses the *Roosevelt Memorial* and the *Four Freedoms Park* in New York (1972), almost a sublimation of the long ‘canopy’ of the *Salk Institute* that here, however, closes – only seemingly – after a long journey in a ‘new’ nature with “*a place to stay*”: an open-air room facing the East River. This is a space of pure contemplation that abstracts from the rest of the world – here exemplified by bustling Manhattan – left behind. “*I had the idea that a memorial should be a room and a garden, that was all I had. [...] The garden is somehow a sort of personal control of nature. And the room was the beginning of architecture*”⁸ Kahn needed only these few words to describe an idea of landscape finely nuanced, all defined by perspective changes and slight movements of the ground that give a character of new theatricality to the journey into the renewed nature of the ancient *Welfare Island*⁹. And in the end, once again a room, because “*the room is the beginning of architecture*”¹⁰. Thus, certainly not by chance, “*I Love Beginnings*”¹¹ is the title chosen by Visconti for this last chapter. More than an epilogue, a new beginning.

Notes

¹ Federica Visconti, *L’Architettura per la Ricerca Scientifica*, Ph.D. Thesis in Urban Design, XIII cycle, Università degli Studi di Napoli “Federico II”.

² Livio Vacchini, *Capolavori. Dodici architetture fondamentali di tutti i tempi*, edited by B. Pedretti, R. Masiero, Umberto Allemandi & C., Turin 2007.

³ “*I was struck by the phrase in which Baudelaire states that there are correspondences*” Aldo Rossi, *Autobiografia scientifica*, Pratiche Editore, Parma 1990.

⁴ “*The first principle of a theory, I believe, is the persistence in certain themes, and it is precisely the artists and architects in particular who focus on a theme to develop, to make a choice within architecture, and to always try to solve that problem. This persistence is also the most evident sign of an artist’s validity and autobiographical coherence; just as Seneca stated that the fool is the one who always starts over and refuses to continuously follow the thread of their own experience.*” See Aldo Rossi, *Architettura per i Musei*, in Aa.Vv., *Teoria della progettazione architettonica*, introduction by Giuseppe Samonà, Edizioni Dedalo, Bari 1968.

⁵ Louis I. Kahn, “*The Room, the Street, the Human Agreement*” in A.I.A. Journal no. 56, September 1971.

⁶ See Maria Bonaiti, *Architettura è. Louis I. Kahn, gli scritti*, Electa Milan 2005.

⁷ Louis I. Kahn, *Talk at the Conclusion of the Otterlo Congress*, 1959; in id., *Essential Texts*, edited by R. Twombly, W.W. Norton & Company, New York-London 2003.

⁸ Louis I. Kahn, *1973: Brooklyn, New York*, in “*Perspecta*” n. 19, 1982.

⁹ Oliver Wainwright, *Dead man building: is Louis Kahn’s posthumous New York project his best?*, in “*The Guardian*”, 3 July 2014.

¹⁰ Louis I. Kahn, *Draft-AIA National Gold Medal*, Kahn Collection, folder 1971, Box LIK n. 52; in Loius I. Kahn, *The Room, the Street, and the Human Agreement*, in id., *Essential texts*, op. cit.

¹¹ Louis I. Kahn, Lecture at International Design Conference, Aspen, Colorado, 1962; in id., *Essential texts*, op. cit.

