

PLENARY LECTURE

SEARCHING THE RIGHT DISTANCE BETWEEN THE OBJECTIVITY OF THE HISTORY AND THE NEED OF THE CONTEMPORARY

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ABSTRACT

Starting from a brief introduction on the Italian theoretical approach in the architecture during the '70 and '80 so following the crisis of the "modernity" and at the beginning of the post-modernity, a short digression on the architectural experience in the renovation of historical buildings, in the 20th century Italian architecture. Then, a reflexion on this topics through some examples of my personal experience of designer.

Keywords: architecture, renovation, heritage, landscape

INTRODUCTION

It is known that in Italy the theme of the restoration of historical architectural heritage has been and is still one of the central themes not only of the debate on architecture but of the daily practice of the same. It is no coincidence that the reflection of Italian architects who participated actively in the events of the modern movement and then later after the end of the Second World War until all the years '60 has followed roads appreciably different from European peers of the time. The Italian way to modernity in architecture is much less distant from the tradition and the "classicism" than it is in the rest of the Western world. If in fact the long wave of the modern movement has continued in those countries protagonists of the modern breakthrough, first of all Germany, France and Holland, up to our days, in Italy such continuity has undergone a strong downsizing through the decisive accession of Italian architecture to post-modernity, acclaimed with the Venice Biennale of 1980, curated by Paolo Portoghesi, who has consecrated Italian architects, first of all Aldo Rossi, and in the background figures such as Franco Purini, Francesco Cellini, Alessandro Anselmi (GRAU), who made the continuity with The shapes of the past their own battle-horse.

The theoretical influence of these architects, not only in the architectural practice but especially in Italian schools of architecture has lasted until recent times, and only starting from twenty first century a new generation of architects has succeeded also thanks to a greater attention to the "construction" of architecture rather than to its representation, in order to find a direct relationship with modernity and abandon the false myth of the return to an architecture with archetypal forms impossible as anachronistic.

But it is precisely in the project of recovery and intervention on the existing since the post-war period, rather than in the albeit remarkable, but sporadic, experiences of architectures realized

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of the 20 's, and ' 30, by architects like Libera and Terragni above all, that the Italian architecture expresses an original and innovative way that puts it at the forefront of the western panorama, and which still today shows examples of absolute value.

The interventions on the historical heritage, museums above all, made by Carlo Scarpa and Franco Albini from the years ' 40 to the years ' 60 continued with the experience of Guido Canali operating up to our days, shows a particular sensitivity in the intervention on existing architectural historical heritage that has no equal in the Western world. For Italian architects "approaching" the ancient means to establish a strong and continuous relationship between the contemporary intervention and pre-existence.

The examples related to the architects mentioned above speak for themselves: the Castelvecchio Museum in Verona or Palazzo Abbatellis in Palermo by Carlo Scarpa; Palazzo Bianco and Palazzo Rosso, The Museum of the Treasure of San Lorenzo in Genoa by Franco Albini, up to the most recent Palazzo della Pilotta in Parma and in the complex of Santa Maria della Scala in Siena by Guido Canali, just to mention the most famous and striking examples, show a capacity for dialogue with the historical pre-existence. At the same time they using a language and materials that are absolutely contemporary and are referred to internationally for all those interventions carried out within historical buildings throughout Europe. In this sense, therefore, Italy, which, as before, has in some way lived with some difficulty the detachment "radical" from the tradition posed to manifest by the modern European movement covering in the architectural historiography positions not of first order, in the field of the recovery of historical architectural heritage, just by virtue of this pre-disposition/attention to the historical context lived as a value to which to refer in a reading but in a contemporary way of the new intervention that always communicates with the pre-historical existence, has instead gained a unique and avant-garde position like no other European country.

In connection with this assumption, in these almost thirty years of architectural research activity (1990-2018), carried out in many cases precisely in historical architectural contexts, I tried to work in continuity with this high tradition of architecture Italian, which I will now show in some examples, of course very distant for the outcomes of the great masters mentioned above, as it is right and proper that it is, for every work that follows the examples of the pioneers, but always carried out with the desire to "interpret the Time ", as Mies van der Rohe would say about the " good and just "architecture starting from the lessons of the masters who preceded us.



Figure 1: Museum of Castelvecchio, Verona, by Carlo Scarpa 1958-1974

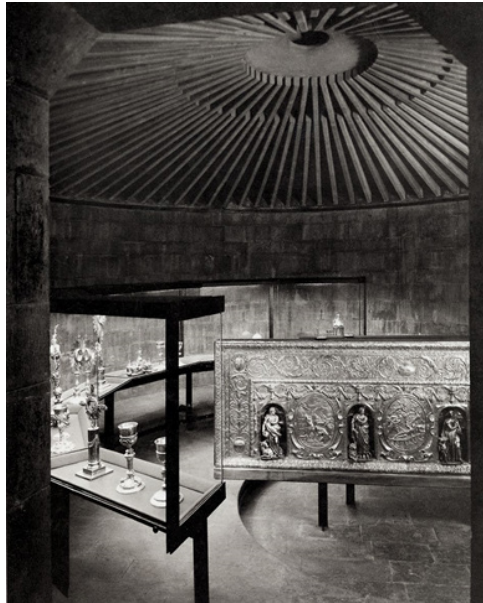


Figure 2: Museum of the Tesoro of San Lorenzo, Genova, by Franco Albini 1952-1956 (Photo by Paolo Monti)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM IN PITIGLIANO, 1991-1992

The Archaeological Museum of Pitigliano, an ancient medieval village placed on the sum of a rocky spur long and narrow in southern Tuscany called "Maremma Toscana" is located inside the Castle Orsini real geographic center of the city. It is an archaeological museum dedicated to the Etruscan civilization, which occupied these territories in pre-Roman times. The exhibits come from the various excavations carried out in the territory. The main functions are, in addition to the permanent exhibition space, the archaeological deposit/laboratory and the offices of the direction placed at the second level.

The pre-existing spaces have a peculiarity: they were originally, at the time of the original nucleus of the medieval period of the castle, of the external spaces, then became spaces of closed storage of service to the castle itself, in the 17th century. this character of "external", marked also by the presence in the main space of entrance of a large portal with a staircase in front of bricks, has influenced the choices of project.

The long staircase with a gallery present in the first large access room, has not in fact an internal scale character but rather, as a whole, almost a character from urban space.

All the exhibition design is a continuous reference and dialogue with the pre-existence, starting from the steel staircase constituted by the primary element of the box of dimensions 40x40 mm which repeated "n" times measures the same size of the scale but also the existing space, up to the window that divides the exhibition space from the warehouse/archaeological laboratory, which does not resume the shape of the existing arc showing itself in total autonomy with respect to the ancient, while dialodiing with the ancient wall in a relationship of proximity. Everything in the new intervention has no value in itself, but only if compared with the existing.



Figure 3: View of city of Pitigliano. (Photo by the author)



Figure 4: Archelological museum in Pitigliano. The steel stairs. (Photo by Alberto Muciaccia)



Figure 5: Archeological museum in Pitigliano. The big showcase of the deposit-laboratory. (Photo by Alberto Muciaccia)



Figure 6: Archeological museum in Pitigliano. A special showcase (Photo by Alberto Muciaccia)

RIVER MUSEM IN NAZZANO (ROME) 1994-1996

The museum is built in the Savelli Castle Complex in Nazzano, 40 km north of the capital city of Rome, a medieval village on the hills along the Tiber River. This is an eco-museum with educational purposes dedicated to understanding the river Tiber ecosystem and is very visited by local schools. Also in this case, as in the example of the Archaeological Museum of Pitigliano, the exhibit interacts strongly with the existing building, but while at Pitigliano the object of the exposition were archaeological finds with intrinsic value, in this case prevails a story, a narrative, around a theme, that of the natural ecosystem.

The set-up follows then the metaphor of the pages of a book that becoming solid material (panels in opaque crystal) are flanked parallel to the existing walls as in a second "skin" inside and on which, through writings, images, retroprojections, and transparent windows cut out on the opaque bottom that show internal showcases with reconstructions of river settings.

The visitor walking along the walls of the ground floor then perceives as if he were scrolling the pages of a Story (book) until he meets the ladder of access to the second level, also an architectural metaphor of a natural cane field that is It materializes through large circular tubular stainless steel, the structure of the staircase supporting the steps in non-slip glass and hiding inside the showcases with stuffed animals that seem to inhabit this artificial reed field.

On the second floor the visitor makes an even more "immersive" experience. Instead of making windows, with some material inside, between a room and the other of the museum are made of real "showcases-rooms" where instead of observing from outside you enter into large crystal room where to make a real and sensory experience on environment of the river ecosystem.

In this case of museum-narrative, setting up and existing building really have a strong spatial and perceptual relationship.

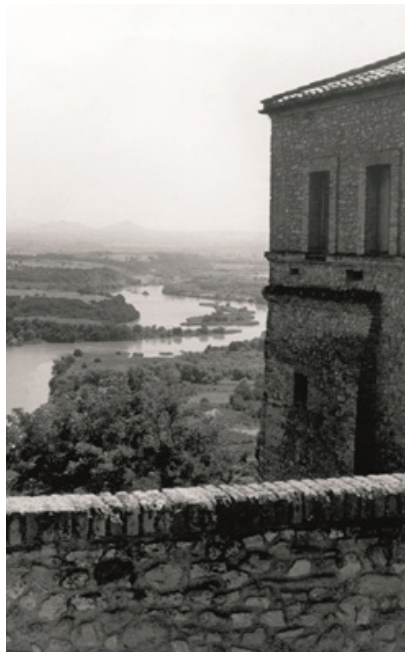


Figure 7: The Natural Park of Nazzano view from the Castle (Photo by the Author)



Figure 8: The Museum of the River, Nazzano. The new "skin" of the museum layout (Photo by Luigi Filetici)



Figure 9: The stair (Photo by Luigi Filetici)



Figure 10: The big showcases (Photo by Luigi Filetici)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL STORAGE AND LABORATORY AT THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK OF THE "VILLA DEI QUINTILI", ROME 2002

An intervention in a very particular and full of history context: an Archaeological Park, the "Villa dei Quintili" with the ruins of a Roman republican villa along the Via Appia Antica in Rome. The theme was the construction of a small storage and laboratory for the archaeological finds of the park. The building, located near the ruins of the villa, dialogues visually and directly with these. To the materiality represented by the brick walls of the Roman ruins, the contemporary building responds, not by opposition but to establish a dialogue "at a distance" without ambiguity, the lightness of the metal structure and the cor-ten coating rising even slightly from the ground. The new building dialogues with the chiaroscuro of archaeological pre-existences through the decomposition of the two main facades whose cladding is on the one hand made with a cor-ten sheet with vertical folds and horizontal cuts, while on the other side with panels composed of c-shaped press-bent sheets 5x5x5 cm in the horizontal direction. The will was therefore that of a continuous dialogue-comparison with the ruins of ancient architecture and the landscape of the Roman countryside



Figure 11: The relationship between the storage-laboratory, the ruins and the landscape (Photo by the Author)



Figure 12: other View(Photo by the author)



Figure 13: General view of the building (Photo by the author)

MUSEUM OF THE INNOCENTS, FLORENCE, 2003

It is a project of competition classified in second place, for the requalification of the complex of the hospital of the Innocents, famous building founded in the XV century with a portico designed by Filippo Brunelleschi, and became museum around the middle Of the 19th century. The theme was the redevelopment of the museum and the realization of the services to the museum.

Also in this case the comparison between the new set-up and the existing building is centred on the clear detachment between the new intervention and the existing architectural structure, but always in a continuous game of references and relations.

The Museum layout resumes in some way the existing geometries but differs clearly for the used materials.



Figure 14: Project View of the new entrance



Figure 15: The museum layout

ARTUSI MUSEUM IN FORLIMPOPOLI 2055-2006

A 17th century convent is purchased in the years 2000 by the municipality of Forlimpopoli and transformed into a museum dedicated to the person of Pellegrino Artusi, born in this city. Pellegrino Artusi, literate who lived in the 19th century (lived most of his life in Florence where he died in 1911) has become famous for having written a cookbook, translated into many languages, which codified for the first time the main dishes of Italian traditionally cuisine.

The museum in this case becomes the real story of Artusi's life and famous cooking recipes, even with spaces dedicated to the restaurant and to a cooking school. This "tale" transforms itself into matter and traverses all the space of the existing building, reconverting it and at the same time becoming a new "text" that overlaps, without obfuscating it, to the architecture of the ancient convent.



Figure 16: Artusi museum , external view (photo by Alessandro Ciampi)



Figure 17: Detail of the porch. (photo by Alessandro Ciampi)



Figure 18: The interactive panels with the Artusi's cooking recipe (photo by Alessandro Ciampi)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM IN FROISSY ,FRANCE 2010-2011

In this case it is not a recovery of a historical building but a new construction always with functions of museum and storage-archaeological laboratory inserted however in a landscape of great value. In this case the "right" distance sought is not with a historical artifact, but with a natural context characterized by hills with gentle and elongated slopes and with few vertical signs. Thus the building tends to adapt to the characteristics of the landscape in which it is inserted, distinguishing itself only for the more ortho dimensional geometry of the lines, to emphasize its artificiality with respect to the sinuosity of the lines of the landscape.



Figure 19: The museum of Froissy in the landscape (photo by Filippo Vinardi)



Figure 20: The museum of Froissy in the landscape (photo by Filippo Vinardi)

EXTENSION OF PALAZZO DIAMANTI (DIAMOND PALACE) FERRARA, 2016

This is an unrealised competition project that I think is particularly interesting because of the importance of the theme, namely the extension of a building considered a masterpiece of the Italian Renaissance architecture, designed by Biagio Rossetti in Ferrara, a city that at that time was enlarged on the project of Rossetti, who also designed and built several public buildings and churches including, precisely this Palace of Diamonds, so called for the particular covering

in ashlar Pyramidal façade on the road. The main body of the building and the façade has arrived unchanged until our days, but in its innermost part the building has undergone over time and until the whole 20th century of transformations and alterations.

Nonetheless the competition has aroused much controversy in Italy, contrasting the two parties of traditionalists "conservatives at all costs" and "innovators" where at the end, under the media pressure very strong of the first, in February of this year the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, with the project winner of the competition already in the executive phase has blocked the same, disavowing among other things the local Superintendency that had followed and approved the whole process of the project.

This episode is paradigmatic of how in Italy today is still very strong resistance to contemporary architecture and very difficult to achieve quality interventions in historical contexts, despite the strong tradition in this sense of which I spoke At the beginning of my speech. The project presented here, a simple rectangular exhibition pavilion that closes on the missing side the court of the historical building, as required by the notice of competition, manages with the existing architecture through the lining Reflective of the building a perceptive play of continuous references between new and ancient.



Figure 21: View of the extension from the courtyard

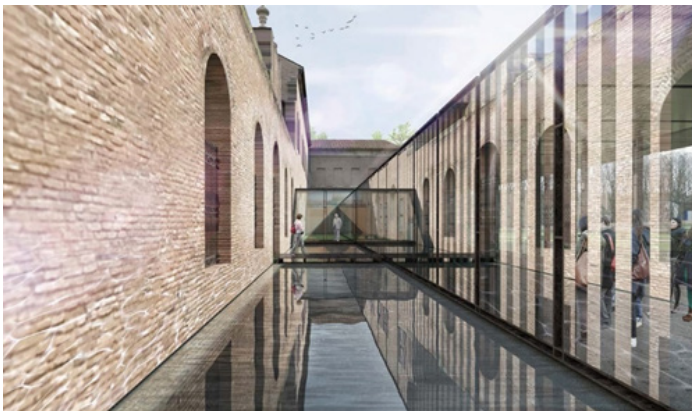


Figure 22: Detail view of the connexion with the existing building

CULTURAL CENTER AND AUDITORIUM IN THE AREA OF THE ANCIENT CONVENT OF S.AGOSTINO, COMACCHIO (FERRARA) 2018 ON-GOING

The project, winner of a competition and currently in the design phase, is part of a historical context particularly important in the urban fabric of the city of Comacchio constituted by a

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monastic complex founded in the 15th century and deeply changed over the centuries, until its transformation in the school in the twenties of the twentieth century and its abandonment in the years ' 70 and currently in ruin. The project involves inserting inside the nave of the church, of which only the façade remains and some pieces of lateral walls, a new auditorium that incorporates, with an interpretation and with contemporary materials, the volume of the church gone destroyed , All the services annexed to the auditorium always find space within the perimeter of the existing buildings that are rebuilt maintaining the original plant but with a contemporary language. The old church tower is kept and restored instead. Also important is the project of the outdoor green area that becomes a park in the service of the city.

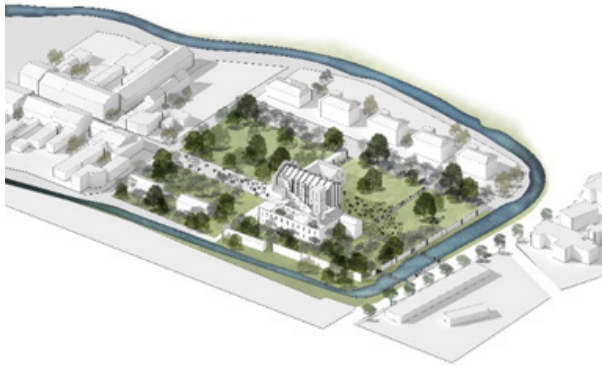


Figure 23: Aerial view of the project



Figure 24: View of the Auditorium

TRUFFLES MUSEUM IN ALBA AND MONTÀ, 2018 ON-GOING

Still a competition won and in the course of design, and relative, as in the case of home Artusi, to the topic of food (much felt in the Italian culture). This is the truffle museum, to be realized in the two nearby cities of Alba and Montà d'alba, famous in Italy and in the world for the collection of the most valuable existing quality of this mushroom. The museum will be realized in two places, one historical with Alba and one underground with Montà. In this case, as in Forlimpopoli in the museum dedicated to the figure of Artusi, the story of an important and

fascinating story through the exhibition tries to involve the visitor in a continuous reference between space arranged existing space where the Equipment of the exhibition reconfirms the space of the existing architecture in a tight dialogue with seniority. In this case compared to the previous one with a broader use of multimedia



Figure 25: View of the museum layout-Alba



Figure 26: View of the entrance at the museum -Montà



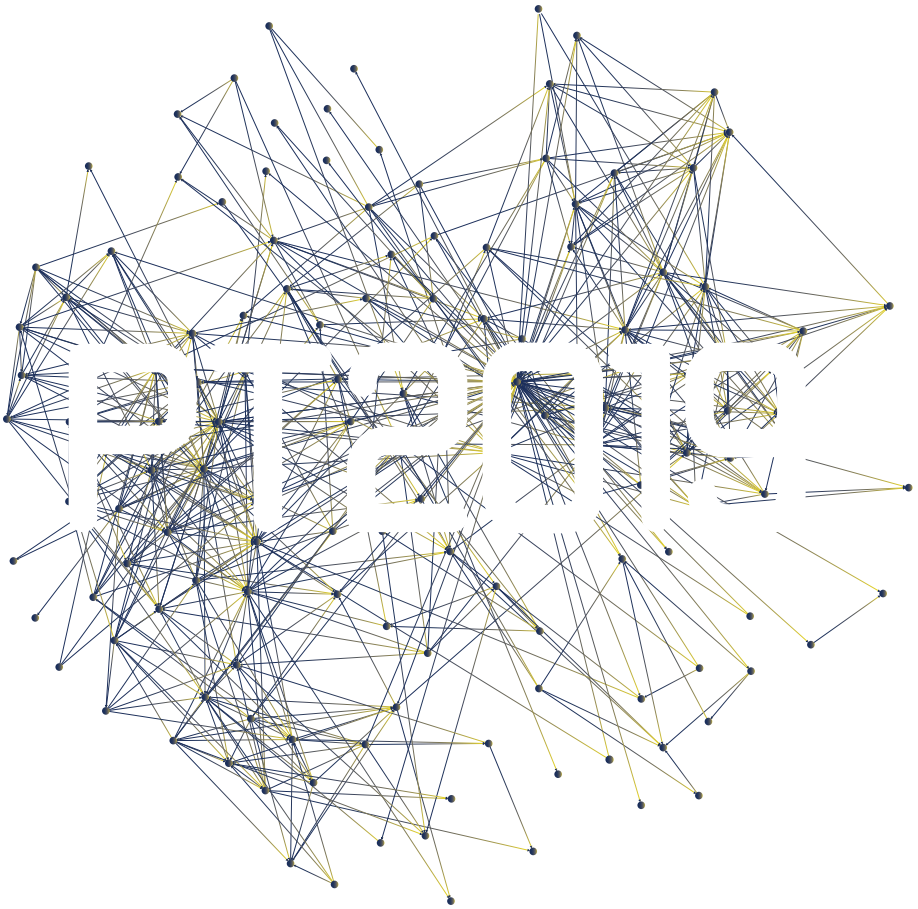
Figure 27: View of the museum layout-Montà

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, I want to place my position in continuity and coherences with the tradition of the Italian theory of the architectural restoration intervention, interpreted as attention to the context, both in terms of landscape and architecture, searching “the right distance” between historical context and needs of the contemporary architectural language with a rough and essential architecture.

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