



BBPR

Il gruppo di Politecnico di Milano, fondato nel 1932 da Giuseppe BBPR, protagonista del Razionalismo italiano, elaborò la sua idea di architettura e urbanistica durante la guerra, che portò la città a essere interpretata e messa nel corso di un'opera di ricostruzione e sviluppo. In questo periodo BBPR si occupò di progettare e realizzare il piano urbanistico di Milano, che diventò il "Cambiamento" di Milano, e in seguito il piano urbanistico della città di Roma, che diventò il "Cambiamento" di Roma. I progetti di BBPR furono realizzati in Italia e all'estero, tra cui il piano urbanistico di Milano (1932-1935) e il piano urbanistico di Roma (1935-1937).

After graduating from the Politecnico di Milano, the four architects founded BBPR in 1932. In the years of the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini, they designed the first urban plan for Rome (1932-1935) and the first urban plan for Milan (1935-1937). BBPR was the first group of architects to propose a modern urban plan in Italy. Their contribution to post-war Italian architecture is reflected in the design of the "Cambiamento" of Milan and the design of the "Cambiamento" of Rome. The activity of the group continued until the death of Giuseppe BBPR in 1958.

BBPR - Gian Luigi Barbis (1902 - 1984), Ludovico Enrico Falsonetti (1902 - 1976), Ernesto Nathan...

Negli anni dell'occupazione di Milano BBPR è stato particolarmente attivo nel campo dell'architettura e dell'urbanistica. In questo periodo BBPR si occupò di progettare e realizzare il piano urbanistico di Milano, che diventò il "Cambiamento" di Milano, e in seguito il piano urbanistico della città di Roma, che diventò il "Cambiamento" di Roma. I progetti di BBPR furono realizzati in Italia e all'estero, tra cui il piano urbanistico di Milano (1932-1935) e il piano urbanistico di Roma (1935-1937).

In the years of the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini, BBPR was particularly active in the field of architecture and urban planning. In this period BBPR was responsible for the design of the urban plan of Milan, which became the "Cambiamento" of Milan, and the design of the urban plan of Rome, which became the "Cambiamento" of Rome. The activity of the group continued until the death of Giuseppe BBPR in 1958.

These activities reflected the response and set up of the BBPR group in the years of the fascist regime. BBPR was particularly active in the field of architecture and urban planning. In this period BBPR was responsible for the design of the urban plan of Milan, which became the "Cambiamento" of Milan, and the design of the urban plan of Rome, which became the "Cambiamento" of Rome. The activity of the group continued until the death of Giuseppe BBPR in 1958.

Archives, Art, and Architecture at MAXXI: Interview with Luca Galofaro

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ABSTRACT:

For this column dedicated to architecture and display topics, in the thematic dossier of the first issue of MMD, the decision was made to interview with Luca Galofaro, architect and curator of the exhibition *Architettura a regola d'arte*, held at the MAXXI in Rome from December 7th 2022, through to October 15th, 2023.

Per questa rubrica dedicata ai temi dell'architettura e del display, nel dossier tematico del primo numero di MMD, si è deciso di intervistare Luca Galofaro, architetto e curatore della mostra *Architettura a regola d'arte*, ospitata al MAXXI di Roma dal 7 dicembre 2022 al 15 ottobre 2023.

Opening Picture:

Fig. 01: A reproduction of the Pietà Rondanini is the starting point of the exposition *Architettura a regola d'arte*. (Photo of the author).

Luca Galofaro

Luca Galofaro is an architect and university lecturer, with an extensive and internationally recognized experience in the field of the relationship between architecture and curatorial practice. A gold medal winner for Italian architecture in 2006, he curated the 2017-2019 architecture biennial at the FRAC Center (Fond Régional d'Art Contemporain) in Orleans, where the MAXXI's collection played a fundamental role.

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Archives, Art, and Architecture at MAXXI: interview with Luca Galofaro

by Federico Maria Giorgi

For this column dedicated to architecture and display topics, in the thematic dossier of the first issue of MMD, the decision was made to interview with Luca Galofaro, architect and curator of the exhibition *Architettura a regola d'arte*, held at the MAXXI in Rome from December 7th 2022, through to October 15th, 2023.

Luca Galofaro is an architect and university lecturer, with an extensive and internationally recognized experience in the field of the relationship between architecture and curatorial practice. A gold medal winner for Italian architecture in 2006, he curated the 2017-2019 architecture biennial at the FRAC Center (Fond Régional d'Art Contemporain) in Orleans, where the MAXXI's collection played a fundamental role.

The aim of the Roman exhibition was to present four new archives dedicated to the professional work of BBPR, Costantino Dardi, Vincenzo Monaco and Amedeo Luccichenti, and Luigi Moretti – all of them now hosted in the MAXXI. The common ground shared by these very different creators is the importance they gave to the relationship between art and architecture, as highlighted by the exhibition.

Its first, prominent theme was the attention paid by the curatorial team to provide an exhibition accessible to a non-professional audience. Making architecture available to a broader audience is a challenge common to many architecture ex-

hibitions. Original works cannot be displayed, so the latter are instead forced to show technical and specialized materials, like drawings and models, whose language is not always clear to a non-professional audience. In this respect, the design of this exhibition was an excellent example of the best practices that can be developed in similar situations, i.e. temporary exhibition design in museums. In each room, it was decided to create reworkings of installations previously realized by the architects protagonists of the exhibition, in order to give voice to their different design languages. Avoiding to fall into the trap of forging banal copies, such installations became both didactic materials and evidence of the fertility and actuality of the design ideas developed by these celebrated 20th-century masters. In addition, original technical drawings, texts, and photographs have been recovered from their archives to offer visitors a gateway into the imagination of each architect involved. Even the decision to divide the exhibition into four monographic sections, although dictated by the need to focus on the singular material in each new archive, had the positive implication of introducing visitors not only to the architectural work itself but also to the cultural world and biographical history of the individual designers. By highlighting the materials in each archive, the exhibition gave visitors an understanding of the creative process behind the architectural work and the context of the designers' biographies. This helped create a more complete picture of the designers and their designs, allowing a deeper appreciation of their work.

The relationship to the imaginary and to the design process are themes Luca Galofaro has been studying for a long time. They were brought to the forefront in this exhibition, in particular highlighting how art and its relationship with the design process were central elements in the design and work of each of the aforesaid architects.

The first questions I asked concerned the creative choices on which the design of the exhibition was based upon. In particular, I was interested in how to approach the creation of previous spaces anew on a one-to-one scale. This curatorial proposal, aiming to help visitors immerse themselves into the otherwise bidimensional spaces of drawings, is not as straightforward as one might think. Recreating a building/design always entails a readjustment to a new space both in dimensions and materials so as not to stand as a mere copy, a fake, but to become a new entity instead, that can be used to better explain the original design.

F.G: In this exhibition, you play a dual role, being both its curator and its architectural designer. How did this double perspective, this short-circuit so to speak, have an impact on your project?

L.G: For me, it is very difficult to distinguish between curating an exhibition and designing it, because for me the way of telling a theme is closely related to how this theme is subsequently set up and how it is placed within a given space. For this reason, the large gallery of the Maxxi has been divided into four rooms, precisely to create a break and separate the work of one architect from another's. Those walls are actually a double wall¹. They create narrow passages that prepare us for a change of pace, a change of vision. Many of the rooms have seats because for me the museum is also a place where to stay, not just a place to pass through. So, the four rooms are divided by interspaces or *Wunderkammern*, inside which we are prepared to showcase what I call



Fig. 02
Exposition *Architettura a regola d'arte*. (Photo of the author).



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“micro-museums”, that put on display a bit of the imagination of the architects. They are also a crossing space that prepares you for the next space. The other key element is that in each room we tried to think of an object, of a device capable of telling the ways that these architects used to show architecture. In the BBPR room, we built a fragment of one of their Exhibitions: not the original installation, but one of the tests made by BBPR during the project for the Castello Sforzesco. So, we didn’t build a model of what was achieved, but we have recreated one of the tests, adapting it to the space of the MAXXI in height and size, as well as in the angle of the individual parts, using poor and raw materials, to bring back a piece of the historical exhibition to visitors. In Dardi’s room, we have reconstructed a grid, a reticular structure that Dardi often used within its design, but readjusted its dimensions to the new space and with a different form, precisely so that visitors

could see what the language used by Dardi was like. For Monaco and Luccichenti, we gave the opportunity to make people understand their work, not via a display, but by commissioning a photographer, Giovanna Silva, to photograph-fragments of art pieces reproduced inside Luccichenti’s architecture: from handles to chimney pots to flooring designed by Capogrossi, Consagra and Nino Franchina. The exhibition layout is no longer a matter of staging the design in which I, as an architect, redesign certain elements, but an opportunity where I ask an outside gaze to look at these architectures. And then in Moretti’s room, we redesigned tables that were in fact from Moretti’s studio: they became display objects and the bases for architectural models with a built-in showcase. In a way, it is a collage of fragments of existing installations that emphasize and also characterize the ways that these different architects used to exhibit themselves.

Fig. 03
Exposition *Architettura a regola d’arte*. (Photo of the author).

F.G: In general, architecture exhibitions are often faced with the challenge of engaging an audience that does not know architecture or cannot read plans or elevations. In your opinion, what were the strategies to engage the viewer in this exhibition?

L.G: This is an exhibition based on archive materials, so there were some wonderful drawings. In addition, we also chose to present lists drawn up by the architects, such as BBPR's list of objects shown in an exhibition at the Triennale, or Cos-

for these architects. Finally, another extremely important element was that we relied on photographs from the archives. For BBPR there are extraordinary photographs from the archive of the Musei Civici in Milan, and alternatively the photographs present in the archive of the ICCD² in Rome. Besides, the exhibition includes Paolo Monti's photographs, which depict the real BBPR exhibition setup for the Castello Sforzesco, but also all the photos that were taken at the exhibition rehearsals. As for Dardi, we decided



Fig. 04
Exposition Architettura a regola d'arte. (Photo of the author).

tantino Dardi's list of artists, that he positioned, through drawing, within the spaces. But in my opinion, what helped us a lot were two other elements. First of all, texts. We extrapolated quotes from sentences written by these architects. Then we accompanied the objects in the exhibition with these quotes, precisely to make it clear what the value of art was

to show some of his travel photos, namely those of his trip to the island of Djerba in Tunisia, which he mentions so often in his writings, to create a short circuit between the architect's ideas and his texts. In my opinion photography and text, i.e. the very words of the selected architects, were two essential tools to complete the iconographic part pro-

vided by the drawings preserved in the MAXXI archive.

F.G: What made it possible to find a balance between these different elements?

L.G: In my opinion, it was light, as we recreated a different light condition in each of the four rooms. In an exhibition design, the light of the individual rooms is extremely important to hold all parts together. But the contribution of the museum's curatorial team was fundamental, the MAXXI has a very well-prepared team from this point of view, they were able to control my exuberance to look for too many images. The people who curated the exhibition with me were essential, especially the team working directly on the archives cataloguing the individual works. They were fundamental in the choice of the exact number of pieces so that they would neither exceed nor compete with the photographic material. By the way, all the original materials are framed, while the materials reproduced from other archives are simply nailed to the walls, in order to have visitors perceive the difference between the original materials kept in the archives and reproductions.

The following questions revolved around the concept of an exhibition as a living being evolving and changing during the months when it stays open. Some artworks might be changed, some new displays might be created. More importantly, the exposition becomes more than a simple showcase of the museum's collections, it is also perceived as an educational and didactic event. It is the chance to give new meanings and a new perspective to a given field of study, but also to create new mate-

rials for the archives themselves. Following a recent trend that emerged from the field of contemporary art, they might be considered as dynamic archives³.

F.G: This exhibition has elements that are still in the making and might be described as "alive". How important is this form of vitality to you?

L.G: In my opinion, an exhibition is a living being. This exhibition has produced original materials, such as the photographs made by Giovanna Silva: they will become part of the museum's collection. Besides, we are still re-making another small section of an exhibition made by BBPR for the Triennale in Milan, *Architettura a misura d'uomo*. The current exhibition lasts a long time. This enables us to replace materials that will not be present throughout the exhibition, giving them a new meaning. In turn, this allows the exhibition to change the way we emphasize certain characteristics of the architects' work. Therefore, this project will become an educational workshop. A cast of the *Pietà Rondanini* is part of the collection of the Omero Museum in Ancona⁴, a museum for the blind. With my students at the University of Camerino, we will redraw part of the installations proposed in their exhibition. We will also carry on this exercise within the university. The exhibition will become a teaching exercise for students, who will work on tactile maps that can translate some of the works on display by using different characteristics of representation, to help users who have visual impairments. We will work closely with the Omero Museum. Before the end of the MAXXI exhibition, we



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would like to include this new material. An exhibition like this is not just a place to visit, and looking at dead objects. In my opinion, it is a place where some traces, some elements pick up life to be studied, and reinterpreted, thus influencing an audience of young students. Logically, all this is a work of re-interpretation. This is why in the main rooms we show individual projects from a historical perspective, while in the in-between corridors, we stage architectural imagination at work. The fundamental theme of this project is how the imaginary world of architects takes form, and how art influences different architects. Therefore, I do not analyse language, but rather what comes before the construction of a project.

This exhibition corroborates the widespread idea that the museum is a place where it is possible to connect the past, the present and the future. It offers a way to analyze reality in a way that enables old stylistic solutions to blossom again in the age of

tomorrow. The MAXXI in Rome and its collections are a recurring theme of interest for Luca Galofaro. His previous experience in France helped him consolidate his interest in the relationship between architectural archives and contemporary artworks.

F.G: *You have been the director of two editions of the Orléans Biennial, hosted inside the FRAC center. How has this experience influenced your current work here at the MAXXI in Rome?*

L.G: The two editions of the Biennale d'Orléans were a job that eventually lasted four years. It was intense research for an exhibition centered on the theme of a specific collection. The FRAC of Orléans is a museum that owns a collection of architectural drawings and models, especially experimental architecture from the 1950s. Logically, the studies I did on the collection for the Biennale worked precisely to put my research and the archive projects in relation to young contemporary architects,

Fig. 05
Exposition *Architettura a regola d'arte*. (Photo of the author).



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who were invited to dialogue with the projects inside the collection of the FRAC. In the second edition, the guest of honour wasn't an architect: it was the MAXXI collection itself. It was interesting, because, for the first time, I immersed myself in the MAXXI collection. The style was a little different, because I chose a series of architects, of the Italian scene, that might be labeled as experimental, such as Dardi, Franco Purini, Luigi Pellegrini, and Maurizio Sacripanti. Thus, I brought the MAXXI collection into the FRAC center. This created a short-circuit, a glance at two types of collections: radical architecture on the one side, and the experimentation hosted within the MAXXI on the other. It is an architecture that always sees construction as the last frontier. Accordingly, it was also interesting to see how these two worlds could meet. Now, here at MAXXI, there is an exhibition on Musmeci. At the time we took the famous bridge designed by Musmeci⁵ and brought it back

within the collection of the FRAC, which included many so-called digital architects. It was interesting to see how some of the experiments present in the FRAC collection as mere drawings were realized in Italy in the late 1960s. Understandably, this work about collections and archives is something I do, not only on my archives but also for an exhibition in which I am looking at both the theme of the archive and the theme of the imagination produced by architecture. I am not so interested in architectural exhibitions that put together a series of buildings. Rather, I am interested in watching the dynamics, that repeat themselves over the years in time and history and the tools for the construction of a project.

Finally, an element of interest was the sometimes-difficult debate created by an exhibition between the architecture of the hosting space and the art of the exposed objects. It is a particularly interesting short-circuit when these two elements are as dis-

Fig. 06
Exposition *Architettura a regola d'arte*. (Photo of the author).

tinctive as in this case. The organic work of Zaha Hadid⁶ might have clashed with the radical architecture of the different architects and artists in the exposition. On the contrary, the counterintuitive choice to separate the open space of the gallery into four small, enclosed spaces allowed the design to take full advantage of the peculiarities of Hadid's architecture.

F.G: The exhibition is hosted in an architecturally distinctive location. What was the relationship established between the artworks of the collection and Zaha Hadid's architecture?

L.G: The space designed by Hadid is extremely distinctive, as is the natural light coming in from above. In the beginning, the most difficult thing for me was to almost interrupt the continuity of this space, fragmenting it with walls. But this was also an attempt to create a dialogue because in each room I changed the position of the walls with respect to the big curve. This gave us an opportunity to read the characteristics of the space, at the same time bringing a kind of order to it, slowing down the visit. Very often, when we are in museums like this, architecture distracts us from the space of the exhibition. In my opinion, reintroducing rooms restores a slow approach to the vision of the exposition, creating a cadence of repeating spaces, which expand and contract. Architecture does not distract-us here. Instead, it is the very works of art that give us a position within the space. And then at the end, in the last room, the inclined wall helped us in the display. The sloping wall was used precisely to make some of the works closer to

visitors. I even reproduced it in the layout of the exhibition because the screen on which we play Michelangelo's film is not vertical, but inclined. My layout controlled Zaha Hadid's creation in some places, but in other places, it captured its shape and brought it into the exhibition. Editing, the exploration of montage and collage are extremely important themes. I tried to use, to be influenced, to take some fragments and bring them back into the exhibition. At the same time, I have tried to avoid distractions when I needed to isolate spaces.

F.G: In the last room you decided not to exhibit any projects directly. What do you think was the strength of this peculiar choice from a conservation point of view?

L.G: Luigi Moretti is an architect who has created incredible works. In my opinion, the fact of not showing them was interesting. My idea was to work on an archive. The archive is not always the place where project drawings are organized: it also hides the architects' obsessions. Art was one of Moretti's great obsessions or rather one of the materials through which Moretti transformed his thoughts into architecture. There was a very close relationship between the two. He once declared that there is no such thing as an architect, but there is an artist. So doing an exhibition on Moretti without including his plans, but only his studies was important. There are the drawings on Michelangelo's architecture he made when he was still a student in '27, there are the collages he re-proposed years later, analyzing Michelangelo's architecture, and the panels he made



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for an exhibition in which he staged a visitor's movements within space and his perception of certain elements of Michelangelo's architecture. Finally, there is the film on Michelangelo. An architect who drew after Michelangelo as a student in the 1920s and then presented a film on Michelangelo in '64 at the Venice Film Festival has had Michelangelo as the object of his studies for more than 40 years. Therefore, I preferred not to dwell too much on the importance of Moretti's architecture in the history of Italian architecture to understand the theoretical value of some of Moretti's reflections on Michelangelo instead. Moreover, his beautiful drawings after Giotto had never appeared in any magazine or publication before. Moretti extrapolates the architectural elements from Giotto's frescoes, redrawing them on transparent paper. This is done precisely to show the desire to understand, study and translate an art form, the space of architecture. This was one of the characteristic traits of Moretti's culture. Perhaps after this exhibition, we will be able to read it even better.

This exhibition is a perfect example of how studying different archival materials and using them can help visitors understand architectural work. This possibility is based on a shift of interest, from the real space created to the history and motivation of its project. It allows the audience to create better connections between architecture, history, art, and the biography of an architect. As the American designer and historian Jeffrey Schnapp⁷ said during a recent interview, activating the notion of an archive within a museum also means shifting the meaning of the exhibition conceptually, focusing less on the product and more on the processes - not on the solutions, but rather on the problems as well. However, if archive materials are essential for the understanding of an architect's work, the use of re-constructions and re-interpretations of existing or fictional works on a one-to-one scale is still important for the immersion of the viewer and remains a major tool to spark his interest.

This interview was held at MAXXI on January 25th, 2023.

Fig. 07
Exposition *Architettura a regola d'arte*. (Photo of the author).

Endnotes

- 1 A reference might be made to Francesco Cacciatore's interpretation of Louis Kahn's work: *The Wall As Living Place, Hollow Structural Forms in Louis Kahn's Work*, LetteraVentidue, Syracuse, 2011.
- 2 Istituto Centrale Catalogo Documentazione.
- 3 See Archivi Dinamici proposed by Fondazione Massimo e Sonia Cirulli.
- 4 It is the Museo Tattile Statale Omero, Toccare l'Arte, opened in Ancona in 1993.
- 5 It is the Viadotto dell'industria over the Basento river (, also known as Ponte sul Basento), and is located in Southern Italy, in the city of Potenza.
- 6 Zaha Hadid designed the Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI secolo in 2010.
- 7 Jeffrey Schnapp is professor at Harvard University and granted an interview to Marco Scotti at the Cirulli Foundation in Bologna on December 19th, 2019.