



Edited by Michel Carlana, Simone Gobbo

Labor. Geographies of Work

Quaderni luav. Ricerche

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**Labor.
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Quaderni luav. Ricerche *luav at Work*

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Edited by Michel Carlana, Simone Gobbo

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Before being a product of expression or inspiration,
architecture is a job. — Bernard Huet

Clues

«The spirit of industrial mechanization took a century to express itself morphologically in architecture in an accomplished manner with modernity». This sentence by Jean François Lyotard¹ condenses two essential issues. Firstly, it represents the essence of a design theme that certainly did not end with the experiments of the Modern Movement: the impact that mechanization, and with it the factory as the emblem of the workspace par excellence, continues to exert on the architect's imagination, keeping alive the fascination of the machine as a 'magical agent'². Moreover, the space of the factory implies conceiving time as the material of the project³: the dimension of duration presides over the elaboration of architectural models transmissible through the idea of the coincidence between space and production, the working environment with work itself. But the historical factory also condenses within itself a third aspect: the dimension of decommissioning which, in addition to constituting itself as an aesthetic phenomenon, has consolidated itself as a possibility of reuse for new relationships between space and work.

Beyond the 'Functional Tradition'

Italian architecture continued to produce prototypes and models of new-concept factories⁴ that, while reflecting the updates of the

Producing the Factory: Architecture and Space of Industrial Work in Italy

1 The sentence is quoted in V. Gregotti, *Autobiografia del XX secolo*, Skira, Milan, 2005, p. 176.

2 Cf. K.G. Pontus Hultén, *Introduction*, in Id., *The Machine as seen at the end of the mechanical age*, Museum of Modern Art, New York 1968, pp. 6-13.

3 V. Gregotti, *Il tempo come materiale del progetto di architettura*, in id., *Tempo e progetto*, Skira, Milan 2020, pp. 61-67.

4 This is the case of the Pirelli high-tech factory in Settimo torinese designed by Renzo Piano's studio (2007-2012). Articulated in two buildings «interspersed and connected by the plug, a central body dedicated to offices, research and development laboratories [...] common areas serving employees and processes shared by the two pro-

‘civilization of machines’ and with them the idea of ‘functional tradition’⁵, it redesigned industrial buildings according to the uses introduced by the integration of new types of activities linked to the need for service spaces for employees. In the best cases, as is the case for the industries designed by Guido Canali, the realization of innovative ‘cathedrals of work’ is marked by the architectural quality that reinterprets the theme of the rationalist frame, as well as by the dialogue with the surrounding context, shaped by the very principle of factory settlement. The architectural conjugation between site and interior spaces thus guarantees the conditions of ‘spatial happiness’ necessary for the working environment and the consolidation of the corporate image⁶.

The structural changes underlying the renewed relationships between technical, economic, and product philosophy aspects have therefore introduced formal codes and repertoires capable of translating the condensation of the relationship between space and *labor* triggered by the new production processes.

The materials and expressive languages were consequently profoundly changed by a representation of industrial work that sought to translate the new symbolic meanings in which the new Italian corporate culture recognized itself. The most advanced seems to have reconfirmed what the research of the Modern had already understood and elaborated over a hundred years ago: «The Brunnenstrasse is the first [...] project of a unitary corporate image that embraces all aspects of a large company. It was an example [...] of how the dreary workplaces of 19th-century factories could be transformed into the bright surroundings of an industry producing large machines»⁷.

Indeed, some of the innovative features introduced by the design culture of the Modern – including the Olivettian epic of

duction lines». www.fondazioneerenzopiano.org/it/project/pirelli-tyre-factory-expansion.

5 J.M. Richards, *Functional Tradition in early industrial buildings*, The Architectural Press, London 1958.

6 I. Lupi (edited by), *Guido Canali. Prada Architecture by Guido Canali*, Prada, Milan 2018.

7 T. Buddensieg, *Lo smantellamento della AEG di Behrens. Immortali oppure antiquati?*, «Casabella», 485, November 1985, p.36.

Ivrea interpreted by Figini and Pollini⁸ – survive in the new genealogy of Italian industrial architecture. It therefore seems legitimate to ask whether the spatial paradigms of the modern factory still represent a reusable foundation for architectural design.

A research direction: the span as a spatial figure of work

We know that ‘type’ as a formal design structure has definitively lost its original meaning. In the case of industrial architecture – in its meaning as a production-oriented spatial program – the ‘type’ has entered a crisis due to the redefinition of how production itself had become substantially autonomous from the need to be represented as a univocal relationship between form and meaning and, ultimately, between the type itself and its symbolic aspects. And yet, the traditional industrial type seems to be endowed with a kind of openness to possible reuses and declinations of use that do not necessarily coincide with its primal distributive reason: to arrange machines and workers according to the linear principle of the assembly line.

It is therefore possible to attempt to reread the theme by reversing its assumption: provisionally adopting Gubler’s intuition that it is the bay in its ‘initiating valence’ that can be considered a type⁹, that is, a sort of reusable spatial preform.

As is well known, the span as a theme of planimetric organization – as a modular space produced by the repetition of the geometric figure of the structural square – acquires formal significance through juxtaposition. The principle of ‘the primordial repetitive use of the bay’ thus takes on compositional value, generating large undivided surfaces, punctuated by supporting columns. The juxtaposed bay thus constructs a reinterpretable modern archetype, expressed by its transversal section: a direction for the architectural research for industry buildings, based on the «figurative coexistence of the plan and the constructional system» as generating morphological order of the project.

8 V. Gregotti, G. Marzari, *Figini e Pollini. Opera completa*, Electa, Milan 2002.

9 J. Gubler, *La campata è un tipo?*, «Casabella», 509-510, January-February 1985, pp. 76-83.

Profiles

WAVE 2025, with the *Labor* edition, saw the involvement of many international geographies with the intention of initiating a debate between schools and territories. The photographic and artistic contribution of Armin Linke and Riccardo Miotto completed, with different gazes, a hypothetical mapping that has no defined boundaries, both human and imaginary.

Armin Linke

Armin Linke (1966) is a photographer and filmmaker who investigates the formation – the ‘Gestaltung’ – of the natural, technological, and urban environment, perceived as a diversified space of continuous interaction. His practice is carried out with aesthetic, anthropological and sociological criteria, and combines various image-processing technologies to analyze the relationships between the collective and individual dimensions.

Riccardo Miotto

Riccardo Miotto (1982) is an architect and visual artist. His work explores the space of the format through the relationship between drawing – recto – and its shroud – verso – investigating the tension between the rational and irrational components hidden in the production of images, objects, and spaces.

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Venezia. A multiplicity of institutions wrote and reflected through many scholars from different parts of the world (and with very different backgrounds), so as to begin to draw a shared picture of the different realities of schools of architecture and the transversal teaching and working methodologies that distinguish each of these very specific approaches.

Bartlett School of Architecture, London, United Kingdom

The Bartlett School of Architecture at UCL is a world-leading centre for architecture and design. Its MA/MLA Landscape Architecture programme explores how landscapes shape cities, ecosystems, and communities. Students engage in design-led research, tackling issues like climate change and biodiversity. With London as a laboratory, they develop skills in sustainable design, urban planning, and ecological restoration, preparing for careers in landscape architecture, environmental planning, and research.

Alberto Campagnoli

Alberto Campagnoli (1988) is an architect focused on regenerative processes and the civic role of landscape architecture. An Università Iuav di Venezia graduate with the thesis Tokyo Re-Edit, he has worked at award-winning firms and explores the interaction of built form, nature, and human activity.

Günther Galligioni

Günther Galligioni (1984) is an Iuav Venice grad in Architecture & Landscape. With extensive experience at top international firms, his work champions innovative design and fosters inclusive, sustainable communities.

Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Germany

The close connection between architecture and urban studies characterize the work at the faculty and promotes an interdisciplinary culture of study and exchange. The urgent future issues of ecologically and socially sustainable development are at the center of a holistic view of the built and designed environment. The interdisciplinary work is based on working together on a small campus, in studios and workshops as part of the project study programme.

Christian Felgendreher

Christian Felgendreher (1980) founding partner of 'Felgendreher Olf Köchling' is also a member of the design committee Bremen. After his studies at the UdK Berlin he worked at David Chipperfield, London and Kuehn Malvezzi, Berlin. Until 2018 he was teaching assistant at Hilde Leons Chair at Leibniz University Hannover.

Christina Köchling

Christina Köchling (1979) Juniorprofessor at the Bauhaus-University Weimar is originally a carpenter and graduated in architecture at the University of Arts in Berlin. She worked for Christ Gantenbein in Basel and Krucker Bates in Munich. In 2015 she founded her office together with Christian Felgendreher and Johannes Olf in Berlin.

CEPT University, Ahmedabad, India

Faculty of Architecture, CEPT University, is one of the vital centres of thought and education in the field of Architecture in India. It aims for excellence in its teaching and research

programs. It aims to give its students a breadth of cultural exposure that shapes a reflective and critical outlook based on social and environmental awareness and responsiveness. The faculty enjoys an excellent reputation nationally as well as internationally.

Smit Vyas

Smit Vyas is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Architecture, CEPT. He offers design studios for the undergraduate and master's program and courses in architectural history, theory, drawing and documentation. Smit heads STUDIO 4000, an award-winning design practice based out of Ahmedabad.

Feng Chia University, Taichung City, Taiwan

Feng Chia University, located in Taichung City, Taiwan, is a long-established and vibrant private university. Feng Chia University offers a diverse range of colleges. The establishment of the School of Architecture at Feng Chia University aims to break through traditional architectural education models and cultivate the architectural-related 'professional talents' needed by society. The school emphasizes the integration of theory and practice, cultivating students' practical skills and innovative thinking through design workshops, internships, and industry-academia collaborations.

Lorena Alessio

Lorena Alessio graduated from the Politecnico di Torino, she got a Master of Architecture at Pratt Institute, New York and a Ph.D. at Nihon University in Tokyo. She is a professor at Feng Chia University in Taichung. Since 1999, she

has been leading LAA architectural office, with several international works.

ITESO, Universidad Jesuita de Guadalajara, Tlaquepaque, Mexico

With 60 years of tradition, the ITESO School of Architecture is part of Guadalajara's rich architectural heritage, influenced by Luis Barragán. Its humanistic and sustainable approach shapes critical and creative architects committed to their social and environmental context. Through community engagement, experimentation, and innovation, it integrates technology and design with an ethical vision. Its faculty and academic events foster dialogue and reflection on the role of architecture in society.

Sandra Valdés Valdés

Sandra Valdés Valdés, architect and coordinator of the ITESO Architecture program, is the founder of Anillo Primavera AC, focused on the conservation of the La Primavera Forest. With a master's in history and as a PhD candidate, she integrates research, teaching, and environmental management in her academic and professional work.

School of Architecture at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), Beijing, China

The School of Architecture at the Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA) was officially established in 2003. Rooted in the century-old artistic heritage of CAFA, a world-renowned institution for fine arts, the school has developed an architectural education system aimed at cultivating «creative architectural talents with artistic

and humanistic qualities». It comprises four departments and five divisions: the Department of Architecture, the Department of Interior Design, the Department of Urban Design and Planning, the Department of Landscape Architecture, the Foundation Division, the Graduate Division, the Academic Division, the External Relations Division, and the Exhibition and Publishing Division.

Zhu Pei

Zhu Pei, born in Beijing and studied at Tsinghua University and UC Berkeley, founded Studio Zhu Pei in 2005, and from there he has produced an extraordinary corpus of cultural works that have made him one of the leading figures of his generation. Marked by his American experience, which includes teaching at Harvard and Columbia, he is the current Dean and professor of the School of Architecture at Central Academy of Fine Arts in China, and visiting professor at Yale University. He was recognized with Honorary Fellow of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for his contribution to architecture.

School of Architecture La Salle Barcelona (ETSALS), Spain

The learning experience in Architecture at La Salle combines practical work with technical and humanistic courses through a learning-by-doing approach. With Barcelona as a classroom, the campus as a living lab, and an international network as a global workspace, students engage with renowned architects. Moreover, the personalized methodology allows them to tailor their studies to their individual sensitivities, offering multiple paths to explore architecture.

Josep Ferrando

Barcelona architect and director of Josep Ferrando Architecture, he embraces a multifaceted vision of architecture, combining his roles as a craftsman, academic – dean of ETSALS – and cultural manager – former director of the Open Architecture Center at COAC.

**Thomas Jefferson University,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,
United States**

Thomas Jefferson University, founded in 1824, is a preeminent national doctoral university delivering high-impact education in 160 undergraduate and graduate programs in the sixth largest city in the USA. Jefferson is a top-ranked National Research University, and hosts extensive pioneering research institutes, centers and labs. These facilities enable interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty, students and researchers to tackle urgent issues like climate change and social justice.

Lisa Phillips

Lisa Phillips, NCIDQ graduated from Temple University and is an Associate Professor of Interior Design at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. Her areas of research focus on design pedagogy and the study of the senses as they relate to the user experience in built environments.

David Breiner

David Breiner graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture (University of Notre Dame) and a Ph.D. in the History of Architecture & Urbanism (Cornell University). An Associate Professor at Thomas Jefferson University, his scholarship focuses on architectural history in the USA and in Renaissance Italy.

**TU Delft, Faculty of Architecture and
the Built Environment, Belgium**

The Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment at TU Delft plays a leading role in education and research worldwide. The driving force behind the faculty's success is its robust research profile combined with the passion and creativity of its academic community, which is dedicated to improving the built environment through a broad set of disciplines. The faculty works closely with other faculties, universities, private parties, and the public sector, and has an extensive network in the Netherlands as well as internationally.

Georg Vrachliotis

Georg Vrachliotis is Professor and Head of the Department of Architecture at TU Delft, where he leads the pioneering Design, Data, and Society Group. His research and curatorial work explore the intersections of architecture, media, and technology. He previously served as Dean at KIT and as senior researcher at ETH Zurich.

Università Iuav di Venezia, Italy

Born in 1926 as the Higher School of Architecture of Venice, Università Iuav di Venezia is today a small-sized university with a strong experimental vocation: the first among Italian universities to introduce design laboratories, its didactic model combines theoretical training in the humanities with laboratory work oriented towards making and experimentation, coordinated by architects, artists and designers.

Benno Albrecht

Benno Albrecht has been rector of Università Iuav di Venezia since 2021.

He completed his studies at Iuav with Vittorio de Feo and he then worked with Vittorio Gregotti and Leonardo Benevolo. He received architectural prizes for his projects and buildings, he won design competitions and his projects were shown in Italy and abroad.

Angelo Maggi

Angelo Maggi is professor of Architectural History, History of Architectural photography at Università Iuav di Venezia. He earned his PhD in Architecture and Visual Studies at the Edinburgh College of Art. He is full member of the PhD School in History of the Arts (Ca' Foscari University Venice) and he is acting as Vice-Rector Iuav for International Relations.

Roberta Albiero

Roberta Albiero (1965) is a professor of Architectural and Urban Design at the University Iuav of Venice. Her current research focuses on Italian architecture of the late 19th century, particularly on museography and exhibitions, as well as the relationship between architecture, archaeology, art, and the landscape of the Venice lagoon.

Michel Carlana

Michel Carlana (1980) graduated from the Università Iuav di Venezia, where he currently carry out collaborative and research activities. With Luca Mezzalana and Curzio Pentimalli, in 2010, he founded the architectural office Carlana Mezzalana Pentimalli based in Treviso, Italy.

Fernanda De Maio

Fernanda De Maio (1967) Architect and PhD in Urban Design, graduated from the Università di Napoli Federico II. She is currently Full Professor of Architectural Design at the Università Iuav di Venezia. She was co-founder

of the architectural office Na.o Mi. and from 2008 Consultant for Architecture of the Im.Ing Engineering based in Naples.

Antonella Gallo

Antonella Gallo, architect, PhD in Architectural Composition, is a Full Professor of Architectural and Urban Composition. She is the Coordinator of the PhD program in Architectural Composition at the Doctoral School of the Università Iuav di Venezia.

Simone Gobbo

Simone Gobbo (1980) graduated from the Università Iuav di Venezia, where he currently carry out collaborative and research activities. With Alberto Mottola and Davide De Marchi, in 2007, he founded the architectural office DEMOGO based in Treviso, Italy.

Guido Morpurgo

Architect and National Academician of San Luca, he is an associate professor of interior and exhibition design at Iuav. After having been associate in the firm Gregotti Associati, he founded in Milan the studio Morpurgo de Curtis Architetti whose works have received several awards.

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