

ACTUALIDAD EN URBANISMO, ARQUITECTURA Y CIUDAD / URBANISM, ARCHITECTURE AND CITIES NOW. A PROJECT OF THE BARCELONA URBANISM LABORATORY

MSM PRIZE 2025/12



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Jurat del Cinquè Premi Manuel de Solà-Morales 2025

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MSM PRIZE 2025/12

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Laboratori d'Urbanisme de Barcelona

www.lub.upc.edu

Impressió: Llar Digital

ISSN_2014-2196

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Aquesta publicació té per fi la transferència de coneixement acadèmic, sense finalitats comercials.

Laboratori d'Urbanisme de Barcelona



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D'UR continua **UR-Revista**,
fundada el 1985 per Manuel de Solà-Morales (1939-2012)

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Escola Tècnica Superior
d'Arquitectura de Barcelona

Departament d'Urbanisme, Territori i Paisatge
UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA DE CATALUNYA

With the collaboration of:

Generalitat de Catalunya
**Departament de Recerca
i Universitats**

Ref. 2021 SGR 00590

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1. OBJECTE

El Premi Europeu Manuel de Solà-Morales reconeix cada dos anys les millors recerques universitàries en el camp de la urbanística per obtenir el grau de doctor (PhD).

El premi honora la memòria del professor i arquitecte Manuel de Solà-Morales i Rubió (1939- 2012) que va ser mestre en l'urbanisme entès com una activitat intel·lectual i creativa, compromesa amb la millora de les ciutats a través del que ell anomenava “una recerca insistent”. El premi vol donar continuïtat i ampliar la seva visió tal com molts deixebles i admiradors han manifestat des de la publicació-homenatge *Papers D'UR* 03/ 2012.

El premi és una iniciativa acadèmica de l'Escola Tècnica Superior d'Arquitectura de Barcelona de la Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya on va impartir docència més de quaranta anys. El Laboratori d'Urbanisme de Barcelona que ell va fundar l'any 1968, assumeix l'organització, vetlla pel desenvolupament del premi i facilita la màxima difusió dels treballs guardonats

2. CANDIDATURES

Podran presentar-s'hi totes aquelles tesis doctorals que tenen l'urbanisme com a fons de la seva recerca, presentades i avaluades en una universitat i llengua europea entre l'1 de gener de 2020 i el 30 de setembre de 2024. Els treballs hauran de ser inèdits, per tant, que no hagin estat publicats en la

1. OBJETO

El Premio Europeo Manuel de Solà-Morales reconoce cada dos años las mejores investigaciones universitarias en el campo de la urbanística para obtener el título de doctor (PhD).

El premio honra la memoria del profesor y arquitecto Manuel de Solà-Morales i Rubió (1939-2012) que fue maestro en el urbanismo entendido como actividad intelectual y creativa, comprometida con la mejora de las ciudades a través de lo que él llamaba “una búsqueda insistente”. El premio quiere dar continuidad y ampliar su visión tal como muchos de sus discípulos y admiradores han manifestado desde la publicación-homenaje, *Papers D'UR* 03/2012.

El premio es una iniciativa académica de la Escuela Técnica Superior d'Arquitectura de Barcelona (ETSAB) de la Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) donde impartió docencia durante más de cuarenta años. El Laboratorio d'Urbanisme de Barcelona (LUB) que él fundó en 1968, asume la organización, vela por el desarrollo del premio y facilita la máxima difusión de los trabajos galardonados.

2. CANDIDATURAS

Podrán presentarse todas aquellas tesis doctorales que tengan el urbanismo como objeto de su investigación, y hayan sido presentadas y evaluadas en una

1. AIM

Every two years, the Manuel de Solà-Morales European Prize recognizes the best university research in the field of urbanism carried out by a student granted a PhD.

The award honours the memory of professor in urbanism, and architect, Manuel de Solà-Morales Rubió (1939-2012), who understood his subject as a creative and intellectual activity, committed to improving cities through what he called “persistent research.” The award seeks to give continuity to, and expand his vision of, the field; as many disciples and admirers have demonstrated since the first publication issued in tribute to him in *Papers D'UR* núm. 03/2012.

The award is an academic initiative of the Barcelona School of Architecture (ETSAB) at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC) where he taught for more than forty years. The Barcelona Urbanism Laboratory (LUB) which he founded in 1969, organizes, oversees and facilitates the development of the award and the maximum dissemination of the works which receive it.

2. CANDIDATURES

Candidates can present any PhD thesis that has urbanism as the object of the candidate's research. The thesis must have been written in a European language and must have been presented and qualified in a European university between 1st January 2020 and 30th September 2024. The completed thesis should not have been fully

seva totalitat. S'exclouen articles científics i acadèmics publicats en revistes indexades.

3. JURAT INTERNACIONAL.

El Jurat del Cinquè Premi Europeu Manuel de Solà-Morales estarà compostat per:

- Han Meyer, Arquitecte i Professor de Disseny Urbà a la TU Delft. President del jurat.
- Virginie Picon-Lefebvre, Arquitecta i Professora a la HDR at Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture Paris-Belleville.
- Naiara Montero Viar, Arquitecta i Professora a CESUGA, en representació de la Fundación Arquia.
- Álvaro Clua Uceda, Arquitecte i Professor d'Urbanisme a l'Escola d'Arquitectura de Barcelona, secretari del jurat i representant del LUB.

4. PROCEDIMENT D'INSCRIPCIÓ

Els autors de les tesis, per iniciativa pròpia, del director o altri, hauran de registrar-se a l'aplicatiu www.lub.upc.edu/msmprize i aportar la documentació detallada al portal web. La inscripció és lliure i gratuïta.

5. DOCUMENTACIÓ A PRESENTAR

- Dades identificatives: Títol de la tesi; Dades bàsiques de l'autor i breu CV de 2000 caràcters (amb espais); Dades bàsiques del director; data i centre de lectura i membres del tribunal o comissió que la va valorar. Abstract de 5.000 caràcters (amb espais).

universidad y lengua europea entre el 1 de enero de 2020 y el 30 de setiembre de 2024. Los trabajos deberán ser inéditos, por tanto, que no hayan sido publicados en su totalidad. Se excluyen artículos académicos y científicos en revistas indexadas.

3. JURADO INTERNACIONAL

El jurado del Quinto Premio Europeo Manuel de Solà-Morales estará compuesto por:

- Han Meyer, Arquitecto y Profesor de Diseño Urbano en la TU Delft. Presidente del jurado.
- Virginie Picon-Lefebvre, Arquitecta y Profesora a la HDR at Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture Paris-Belleville.
- Naiara Montero Viar, Arquitecta y Profesora en CESUGA, en representación de la Fundación Arquia.
- Álvaro Clua Uceda, Arquitecto y Profesor de Urbanismo en la Escuela de Arquitectura de Barcelona, secretario del jurado y representante del LUB.

4. PROCESO DE INSCRIPCIÓN

Los autores de las tesis doctorales, ya sea por iniciativa propia, del director u otro, deberán registrarse en www.lub.upc.edu/msmprize y aportar la documentación detallada en el portal web. La inscripción es libre y gratuita.

published yet. Scientific and academic papers in indexed journals are excluded.

3. INTERNATIONAL JURY

The jury for the Fifth Manuel de Solà-Morales European Prize will comprise:

- Han Meyer, Architect and Professor of Urban Design at the Technische Universiteit Delft, who will act as chairman of the jury.
- Virginie Picon-Lefebvre, Architect and Professor at the HDR at Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture Paris-Belleville.
- Naiara Montero Viar, Architect, Professor at CESUGA and trustee of Arquia Foundation.
- Álvaro Clua, Architect and Professor of Urbanism at the Barcelona School of Architecture, who will act as the jury's secretary and as the LUB's representative.

4. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The authors of the theses, either through their own initiative or through that of their thesis director or another qualified person, should register using the application procedure on www.lub.upc.edu/msmprize and providing the detailed documentation requested on the website. Registration is free.

5. DOCUMENTS TO BE PRESENTED

- Identification details: Title of the thesis; Basic information about the author and a brief CV (2000 characters, counting spaces); Basic information about the thesis Director and about the centre where reading of the thesis took place along with the panel members or the committee who evaluated it. An abstract 5,000 characters long (counting spaces).

- Resum de la tesi en llengua anglesa, que sigui una síntesi explicativa dels seus continguts. La seva extensió màxima serà de 16 pàgines (en format PDF horitzontal) podent incloure la presentació de materials gràfics.

- S'hi annexarà una còpia digital complerta de la tesi en format PDF en l'idioma original.

- Un certificat expedit per la Universitat/ Centre de Recerca on consti la qualificació i la data de presentació de la tesi.

En base a aquesta documentació el Jurat Internacional seleccionarà els treballs finalistes i s'informarà als candidats seleccionats. D'aquests, se sol·licitarà un exemplar complert de la tesi doctoral, a més de qualsevol informació addicional que el jurat consideri per la seva adequada valoració.

6. CALENDARI

15 d'abril al 30 de setembre de 2024

Admissió de candidatures.

Mitjans de desembre de 2024

Selecció de finalistes i

comunicació personal als candidats seleccionats.

19 de març de 2025

Acte públic de lliurament i proclamació del veredict del jurat.

7. PREMIS

El millor PhD rebrà un premi dotat en 7.000

5. DOCUMENTACIÓN A PRESENTAR

- Datos identificativos: Título de la tesis; Datos básicos del autor y breve CV de 2000 caracteres (con espacios); Datos básicos del director; Fecha y centro de lectura y miembros del tribunal o comisión que la valoró. Resumen de 5000 caracteres (con espacios).

- Resumen de la tesis en lengua inglesa, que sea una síntesis explicativa de sus contenidos. Su extensión máxima será de 16 páginas (en formato PDF horizontal) y pueden ser incluidos materiales gráficos.

- Se anexará una copia digital completa de la tesis en PDF en el idioma original.

- Un certificado expedido por la Universidad/ Centro de Investigación dónde conste la calificación y la fecha de presentación de la tesis.

En base a esta documentación aportada, el Jurado Internacional seleccionará los trabajos finalistas e informará únicamente a los candidatos seleccionados. Se les solicitará un ejemplar completo de la tesis doctoral, además de cualquier información adicional que el jurado considere para su adecuada valoración.

6. CALENDARIO

15 de abril al 30 de setiembre de 2024

Admisión de candidaturas.

Mediados de Diciembre de 2024

Selección de finalistas y comunicación personal a los seleccionados.

- A summary of the thesis in English, which should provide a synopsis of the work and an explanation of its contents. The maximum length of this summary should be 16 pages (in horizontal PDF format). You may include illustrations.

- A complete digital copy of the thesis should be attached in the original language and in PDF format.

- A certificate granted by the University/ Research Centre declaring the qualification and date of presentation of the thesis..

Based on these documents, the international jury will draw up a short-list of finalists and the selected candidates will be informed in person. The short-listed candidates might be expected to provide a hard copy of their complete theses, in addition to any further information that the jury deems appropriate to aid it in its deliberations.

6. TIMETABLE

15th April to 30th September, 2024

Acceptance of Nominations.

Mid-December, 2024

Preliminary selection of finalists. Only selected candidates will be informed.

19th of March, 2025

Ceremony - Publication of the jury's verdict.

AWARDS

The best PhD will receive a prize of 7,000. Depending on the quality of the work submitted, the first prize may be shared ex aequo or might even be declared void.

euros i la publicació del treball. D'acord amb la qualitat dels treballs, es podran concedir el nombre d'accèssits que consideri el jurat. Premi i accèssits rebran una distinció.

8. DIFUSIÓ

La tesi doctoral guanyadora serà publicada per la Fundació Arquia en la col·lecció *arquia/tesis*. La publicació serà coordinada pel LUB. Aquest compromís està condicionat al compliment dels requisits establerts per l'editorial: 1. L'autor revisarà l'obra i farà els canvis posteriors que siguin necessaris; 2. L'autor haurà de lliurar el manuscrit en anglès o castellà (traduir de l'original si cal); 3. Els criteris editorials establerts exigeixen que l'obra no sigui superior a 50.000 paraules (incloses notes a peu de pàgina, bibliografia i biografia, etc.) i que no contingui més de 300 il·lustracions (sense drets d'autor).

9. PROPIETAT INTEL·LECTUAL

Els originals dels finalistes es retornaran als autors que ho sol·licitin. L'acceptació del Premi Europeu Manuel de Solà-Morales implica la cessió gratuïta per part del premiat dels drets de publicació de l'original en les dues llengües.

19 de marzo de 2025

Acto público de entrega y proclamación del veredicto del jurado.

7. PREMIOS

El primer premio está dotado de 7.000 euros y la publicación del trabajo. De acuerdo con la calidad de los trabajos se podrán conceder el número de accésits que el jurado considere. Tanto el Premio como los accésits recibirán una distinción.

8. DIFUSIÓN

La tesis doctoral ganadora será publicada por la Fundación Arquia, con la coordinación de LUB. Este compromiso está condicionado al cumplimiento de los requisitos establecidos por la editorial: 1. El autor revisará la obra y hará los cambios posteriores que sean necesarios; 2. El autor deberá entregar el manuscrito en inglés o castellano (traduciendo del original si es necesario); 3. Los criterios editoriales establecidos exigen que la obra no sea superior a 50.000 palabras (incluidas notas a pie de página, bibliografía y biografía, etc.) y que no contenga más de 300 ilustraciones (sin derechos de autor).

9. PROPIEDAD INTELECTUAL

Los originales aportados por los finalistas se devolverán a los autores que lo soliciten. La aceptación del Premio Europeo Manuel de Solà-Morales implica la cesión gratuita por parte del premiado de los derechos de publicación del original en las dos lenguas.

Additionally, the jury may consider issuing a number of runners-up. The Prize winner and finalists will receive a diploma.

8. DIFFUSION

The winning doctoral thesis will be published by Arquia Foundation at *arquia/tesis* collection series. This will be coordinated by the LUB. This commitment is subject to compliance with the conditions established by the publisher: 1. The author shall revise the work and makes any subsequent changes that are necessary; 2. The author must deliver the finished manuscript in English or Spanish (and translate from the original if necessary); 3. The established editorial criteria require the work to be no longer than 50,000 words (including footnotes, bibliography and biography, etc.) and contain no more than 300 illustrations (copyright free).

9. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

The acceptance of the Manuel de Solà-Morales European Prize implies the candidate's agreement to cede, free of charge, any rights of exploitation of the original in those two languages.

THE FIFTH
MANUEL DE SOLÀ-MORALES
EUROPEAN PRIZE
2025

1. AIM
Every two years, the Manuel de Solà-Morales European Prize recognises the best university research in the field of urbanism carried out by a student granted a PhD. The award honours the memory of professor in urbanism, and architect, Manuel de Solà-Morales Ribó (1939-2012), who understood his subject as a creative and intellectual activity, committed to improving cities through what he called 'persistent research'. The award seeks to give continuity to, and expand his vision of, the field; as

many disciples and admirers have demonstrated since the first publication issued in tribute to him **PIW 03/2012**.

The award is an academic initiative of the Barcelona School of Architecture (ETSAB) at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC) where he taught for more than forty years. The Barcelona Urbanism Laboratory (LUB) which he founded in 1969, organizes, oversees and facilitates the development of the award and the nomination and dissemination of the works which receive it.

The first MSM Prize in 2017 was won by *Excellence de la ville*, a collection of 14 stories by the author with Antoine Picon and Sébastien Maest as Supervisors, from the University of Paris-Est, France.

The second MSM Prize in 2019 was won by *Plages*, *Intercrues entre les nouveaux centres littéraires*, *Et d'une ville à l'autre*, by Antoine Picon, with Sébastien Maest, with Estelinda Roca as Supervisor, from the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain.

The third MSM Prize in 2021 was won by *Forest Urbanisme in the Supervised Finnish Territory* by Wijn Willem van Erven, with Sébastien Maest as Supervisor from Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium.

The fourth MSM Prize in 2023 was won by a reading of an Atlantic territory, *Cartas* by Elina Gaceta Picaz, with José Luis García Gordillo as Supervisor from the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Spain.

The fourth MSM Prize in 2023 was won by *A reading of an Atlantic territory*, *Galicia* by Elisa Gallego Picard, with José Luis García Grieda as Supervisor, from the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Spain.

2. CANDIDATURES

Candidates can present any PhD thesis that has undergone as the object of the candidate's research. The thesis must have been written in a European language and must have been presented and qualified at a European university between 1st January 2020 and 30th September 2024. The completed thesis should not have been fully published yet. Scientific and academic papers in indexed journals are excluded.

3. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

The authors of the theses, either through their own initiative or through that of their thesis director or another qualified person, should register using the application procedure on www.lad.spa.educationeuropea.eu/procuring.htm

3. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

4. INTERNATIONAL JURY
The jury for the Fifth Manuel de Solà-Morales European Prize will comprise:

- **Hans Mayer**, Architect and Professor of Urban Design of the Technische Universität Delft, Chairman.

The jury for the Fifth Manuel de Solà-Morales European Prize will comprise:

- **Hans Mayer**, Architect and Professor of Urban Design at the Technische Universität Delft, Chairman.
- **Virginie Picon-Lefebvre**, Architect and Professor at the HDR at Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture Paris-Belleville.
- **Nazira Monser-War**, Architect, Professor at CESUGA and trustee of Aquila Foundation.
- **Alejo José**, Architect and Professor of Urbanism at the Barcelona School of Architecture. Secretary of the jury and LUR's representative.

5. DOCUMENTS TO BE PRESENTED

- **Identification details:** Title of the thesis;
- **Basic information about the author and a brief CV (2008 characters, counting spaces).** Basic information about the author should include the centre where reading of the thesis took place along with the panel members or the committee who evaluated it. An abstract (5,000 characters long including spaces) should be included in the CV.
- **Abstract of the thesis.** The abstract should present a synopsis of the work and an explanation of its contents. The maximum length of this summary should be 16 pages (including spaces).
- **Thesis.** It should include digital and a complete digital copy of the thesis should be attached in the original language.
- **A certificate granted by the University** declaring the qualification and date of

Based on these documents, the international jury will draw up a short list of finalists and the selected candidates will be informed in person. The short-listed candidates might be expected to provide a hard copy of their complete thesis, in addition to any further information that the jury deems appropriate to aid it in its deliberations.

6. TIMETABLE
15th April to 30th September, 2024: Acceptance of Nominations
Mid-December, 2024: Selection of Finalists. Only the selected candidates will be informed.
Mid-March, 2025: Ceremony - Publication

15th April to 30th September, 2024: Acceptance of Nominations.
Mid-December, 2024: Selection of finalists. Only the selected candidates will be informed.
Mid-March, 2025: Ceremony - Publication of the jury's verdict.

The first prize is an award of £7000 and the publication of the work. Depending on the quality of the works submitted, the jury may consider issuing a number of finalists. The Prize winner and finalists will receive a

The winning doctoral thesis will be published by the Asquia Foundation at *aspiafeats* collection in two differentiated volumes corresponding to Spanish and English. This will be coordinated by the IJSE.

See more information at:
www.jub.upc.edu/msmprize

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European Prize
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Jurat · Jurado · Jury



Han Meyer

Architect and Professor of Urban Design at TU-Delft. Chairman of the jury.

Han Meyer (1951) graduated as an urbanist at TU Delft and completed his PhD thesis on transformations of port cities in 1997. He was working in the urban renewal process at the Rotterdam City Planning Department from 1980 to 1990. Since 1990 he was employed at TU Delft, first as an Associate Professor Urban Design, from 2001 until 2019 as a Full Professor Urban Design Theories and Methods. He published on the fundamentals of urbanism and on the special conditions for urban design in delta regions. Currently he is director of Deltastad, focusing on the design of sustainable relations between complex water systems and urban development.



Virginie Picon-Lefebvre

Architect and Professor at Architect and Professor at the HDR at Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture Paris-Belleville.

Virginie Picon-Lefebvre is an architect and urban planner who holds a PhD from Université de Paris I-Sorbonne. After teaching at the École d'architecture de Versailles and Harvard University, she is now professor at the École d'architecture de Paris-Belleville. She was the co-founder of the Groupe de Recherche Architecture et Infrastructure.



Naiara Montero Viar

Architect, Professor at CESUGA and trustee of Arquia Foundation.

Architect PhD in architecture (Cum Laude) from ETSAB-UPC, specializing in energy and environmental research in architecture. She leads the Montero Arquitectes studio, teaches at CESUGA, and serves as a board member and trustee of the Arquia Foundation. She has worked in international studios such as Moneo&Brook in New York and Grimshaw Architects in London, where she was responsible for the Caixa Galicia Foundation in A Coruña. Her projects include stations, renovations, schools, and restaurants which have received multiple awards and been widely published.



Álvaro Clua

Architect and Professor of Urbanism at the Barcelona School of Architecture, jury's secretary and LUB's representative.

Architect and urbanist, lecturer in urban design at the Barcelona School of Architecture (Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya) and a researcher at the Barcelona Laboratory of Urbanism (LUB). He is the author of several essays on infrastructural landscapes, urban projects, urban history, active mobility, and city mapping.

Candidatures · Candidaturas · Entries

68 ENTRIES

43 EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

from

17 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES



Veredicte · Veredicto · Verdict

Han Meyer

Virginie Picon-Lefebvre

Naiara Montero Viar

Álvaro Clua

The Reading of the Verdict: ETSAB, 19th March 2025, Barcelona

The jury of the fifth Manuel de Solà-Morales European Prize for the best PhD thesis on Urbanism was confronted with a record number of 68 PhD theses submitted to the call. We were surprised and challenged by this large number of theses, and by the wide range of subjects, themes and regional backgrounds, from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean and from the United Kingdom to Bulgaria and Poland. It shows that urbanism, that is, the city and urban life, is a subject that is deeply rooted and explored in universities throughout Europe.

As a result of the wide range of countries in which the theses were developed, there was also considerable variety in the interpretations of what is *urbanism*. Many theses were based on urban studies, with a focus on social, political or governance-related issues, and the participation of local people. Another group of theses addressed the large-scale dynamics and changes in economy and transport, and tried to define the consequences for spatial development, often at a regional and geographical scale. Finally, of course, climate change was identified as a growing, appealing topic for city research, including questions like adaptation to changing water systems, heat stress and the energy transition. For this edition of the Manuel de Solà-Morales Prize, the jury decided to emphasise and encourage approaches that focus on the

core discipline of urbanism as the knowledge, analysis and design of the city's spatial form and structure, on the understanding that it creates the essential conditions for urban life, and can be used, accepted, enjoyed and loved by people. The jury aimed to highlight that one of the keys and special strengths of our discipline is finding ways in which *design* can lead to innovative solutions for urban space. We were glad to discover that many submissions shared this idea of what urbanism is about. We noted that a wide variety of themes and topics had been examined within this common framework: studies on the historic development of cities, monographs on the work of excellent urbanists, and a modest number of theses that show how design can work as a form of exploration, as a voyage of discovery, to identify new possibilities for urban compositions, with new conditions for economic, social and cultural life.

After conveying this essential approach and quality selection criteria, the jury worked intensively to review all the submitted theses. During the process, the exceptional value of the work was revealed, which enriched our vision of the field. We shared clear optimism on the value of research developed in European universities. Finally, after careful deliberation, the jury unanimously selected three finalists, four special mentions and one first prize.

The jury would like to award the distinction of **FINALIST** to three doctoral theses, described here in alphabetical order:

CLAUDIA CAVALLO

Title: *Ignazio Gardella. Costruire nel costruito. Dialettica della storia carattere dell'architettura [Ignazio Gardella: Building Within The Built: Dialectics Of History, Character Of Architecture]*

Supervisor: Antonella Gallo (IUAV)

Co-Supervisors: Raffaella Neri (POLIMI), Maria Grazia Eccheli (UNIFI), Andrea Iorio (IUAV)

University: Università IUAV di Venezia (IUAV)

The jury considered Claudia Cavallo's thesis highly stimulating and of great interest. It is part of a series of theses on Italian urban design architects of the twentieth century. The thesis focuses on the understanding of reconstruction after the war and the rewriting of the existing city as the unveiling of essential features of a living space. However, it is also a reflection on the meaning of Gardella's architecture. The research takes the theme of 'building on the built' as an intellectual attitude and a paradigmatic condition of the project. This is illustrated through the study of Ignazio Gardella's works. Reconstruction implies attention to existing buildings and the ancient part of the city as active elements of the composition. For the author, a reconstruction project enables operational reflections on architecture questions. This study's methodology seamlessly integrates two distinct approaches. The first is based on archival research through different sources and state-of-the-art knowledge. The second critically redraws Gardella's works, to break down the system that he used and compare design hypotheses.

The comparison between the design and the actual stage of the reconstruction is particularly compelling and serves as an excellent example of the type of research *by* or *on* design that the jury was seeking. As the Italian architect adopts an approach to reconstruction that is difficult to classify and understand, Claudia Cavallo has named Gardella's proposals for different conditions of the city, for example, reconstruction projects are dubbed 'strongholds' or 'new soils'. She noticed that Gardella's attitude to the ancient city is very far from the Enlightenment concept of the monument as an isolated object. Gardella's project creates a new relationship between monuments and urban fabric that establishes a form of continuity. The second part of the thesis focuses on the Contemporary Art Pavilion (PAC) in Milan, which Claudia Cavallo considers to be a manifesto. She follows the 'myriad sketches, design versions' of the PAC. The project's vastly different scales provide valuable insight into Gardella's creative process.

finalist

Ignazio Gardella: Building Within The Built: Dialectics Of History, Character Of Architecture

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At the heart of this doctoral research lies an interest in a way of understanding the reconstruction and rewriting of the existing city as the unveiling of the essential features of living in a place.

The research adopts the theme of “building on the built” both as an intellectual attitude and as a recurrent and paradigmatic condition of the project, exploring it through an interpretive reading of some “exemplary” works by Ignazio Gardella. Projects capable of involving parts of the city, buildings, architectural elements and ancient objects as active elements of the composition.

The study of an urban reconstruction project is the starting point for a critical and operational reflection on architecture, delving into some emblematic works that exemplify a dialectical comparison with the built to investigate architecture in its “making” as a tool for relationship with the environment, both in physical and meaningful terms.

1. Gardella: Genova, ruins of San Silvestro area, Site inspections, 1969-70, Archivio CSAC.





2. Author: Genova, Palinsesto, interpretive drawing: Overlapping of the planivolumetric plan of the Piano Particolareggiato di San Donato e San Silvestro on the survey of the old town centre made by Luigi Vagnetti in the same years. Destroyed or modified tracks in blue.

The thesis, therefore, does not aim to provide an exhaustive treatment of the theme in all its various and potential interpretations, nor a complete reading of the author's overall work. Instead, it chooses and adopts a specific and oblique perspective on the relationship that architecture can establish with the existing world. The underlying goal is to affirm the role of architectural experience as the foundation for all construction.

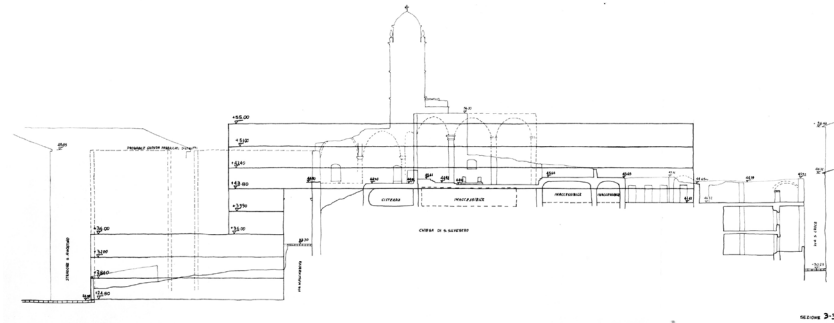
Methodology

Abandoning any claim of completeness, this thesis is thus an attempt to delve into the specific theme and, above all, into the particular "ways" in which the author's intentions are translated into the forms of his projects, in order to return an operative reflection on architecture.

In this sense, the "cut" of the thesis is not indifferent to the context of the Doctorate in Architectural Composition at the IUAV University of Venice, where the research matured.

A doctorate connoted by a precise cultural project consolidated over the years in a tradition of studies and research methods aimed at addressing architectural issues through the study and interpretative redrawing of an architect's works or incisive comparisons between exemplary cases.

The method of research has intertwined two complementary paths: on the one hand, archival research through direct sources, interviews, and state-of-the-art knowledge, to which was added the unforeseen tool of online magazine archives during the period of isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which offered a new possibility of research in the face of the disappearance of several other modes of study and comparison; on the other hand, the critical and interpretative redrawing of works, aimed at decomposing them into syntagmas and systems of elements, or at comparing different design hypotheses.



3. Gardella: Genova, defining the figure of the Architecture University building, Archivio CSAC.



4. Genova, photo aerea, the areas of the plan, 1973-74, Regione Liguria.

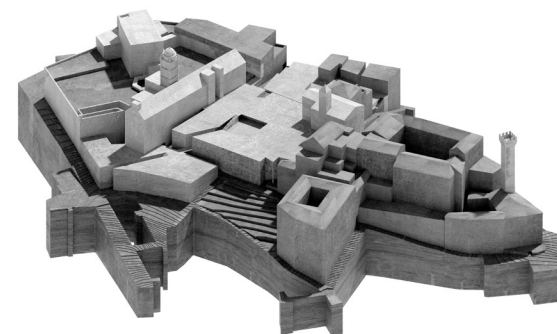
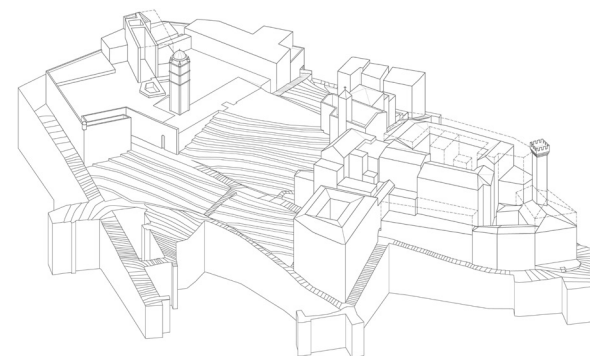
Due to the subject of investigation, comparative readings between the actual state and the reconstruction hypotheses have taken on particular importance, with overlaps aimed at understanding the author's choices in relation to the pre-existences.

The direct interrogation of the architectural “text”, its decomposition into significant parts and categories and its subsequent “recomposition” has here “a manifest objective: to reconstruct, to retrace the design process, on the one hand, in order to understand and describe ‘the how’ of making, and on the other to explore ‘the sense’, the ‘why’, the ‘aim’ of that making” ¹¹. A complex of operations aimed at entering deeply into the study of architecture's forms and creative processes to appropriate an author's techniques and compositional strategies and unleash their current value and transmissibility.

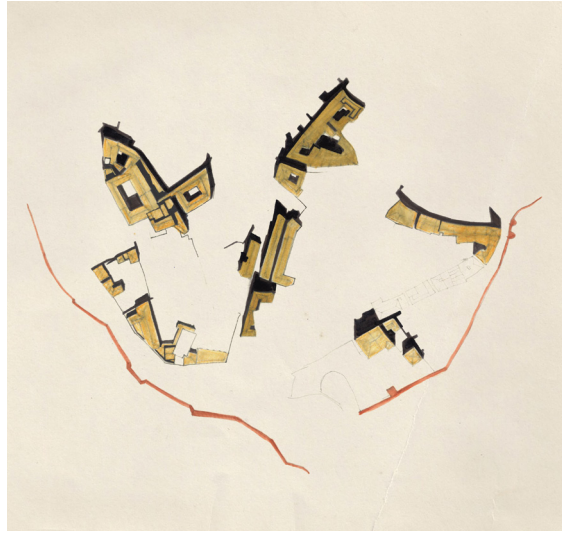
Structure of the thesis

Starting from the study of a little-known urban project, the Piano Particolareggiato di S. Donato e S. Silvestro (1969-74) for the reconstruction of a part of the old city centre of Genoa destroyed by bombing, the research path proceeds by *exempla*, seeking answers to specific questions and recurring design scenarios, to which current and useful strategies correspond. It outlines a diachronic and transcalar journey through Ignazio Gardella's experience, going back from the city to the architecture of the museum — the PAC in Milan (1948-54) — to the interiors realised by the young Gardella in the 1930s and 40s, to focus on the genesis of strategies and tools of full expressiveness capable of dialogue with places, their history, and their future. The structure of the thesis is schematically divided into three parts corresponding to three different scales of the project and of the comparison with “preexistences”: city, building, interiors.

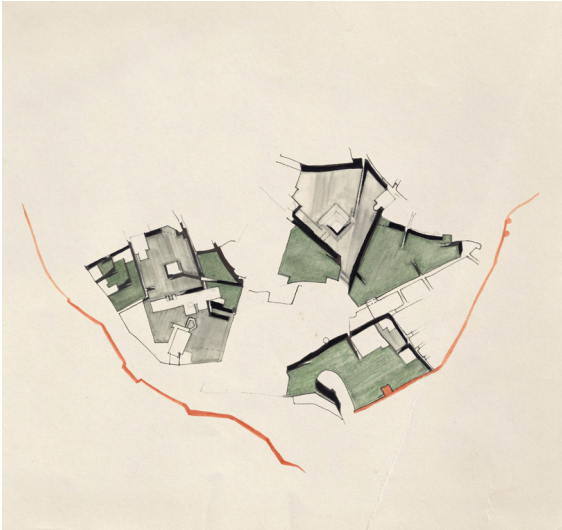
¹ Gallo, “Postfazione”, *The Clinic of Dissection of Art*.



5. Author: Genova, San Silvestro area, analytical drawings: de facto and planned status.



6. Author: Genova, Piano Particolareggiato di San Donato e San Silvestro, analytical drawings. Deconstruction of the project: strongholds (red), ancient fabrics (yellow), and new soils (grey and green).



However, the three parts are different in nature and objectives. The first part of the research deals with the theme of reconstructing a complex and highly stratified part of the city, related to the material and immaterial pre-existences of the destroyed and transfigured urban landscape. It manifests an idea of the city itself and a general approach to the existing context.

With the analysis of the detailed plan of S. Donato and S. Silvestro, the first chapter deals with the most articulated case study, which constitutes a kind of “unicum” in the experience of Gardella, while the second and third chapters propose two thematic explorations on the nature of the creative process and “theatricality”, that are both crucial for clarifying the specificity of a dialectical architecture that is declined across the different scales of the project.

Thinking of the city from within

The main part of the research deals with the theme of reconstruction on an urban scale through the case of the Piano Particolareggiato of S. Donato and S. Silvestro. It was an exceptional and controversial plan in many aspects, which provided for the establishment of humanistic universities on the site where the city of Genoa was founded, which was destroyed by bombs.

The urban project is little known in terms of its essential content. Certainly penalised by its non-realisation, and perhaps misunderstood due to the construction of a single building that we know today as the Faculty of Architecture in Genoa. A building designed almost ten years later and with a substantially different perspective of use, which was conceived as the only emerging figure of the entire plan to represent on an urban scale the civil re-foundation of this part of the city.

The radical change of use made a discourse on the pre-existing typologies impossible and the reconstruction of the fronts of the disappeared urban fabric at least artificial. Gardella planned the reconstruction of some ruined monuments “where it was, as it was”, imposing a selective discourse on preserving the fabric. In the destroyed areas, the new buildings take up some pre-existing street axes and erase others. However, the city’s complex topography animates the project as a memory of narrow streets, staircases, ramps, tunnels, porticoes, and sudden openings.

Above all, the chapter addresses the issue of the persistence of the images, spaces and figures of the ancient city in the construction of a new city, responding to new and very different needs.

The project is a far cry both from the more conservative positions and from the disinterested approach to the ancient city that was manifested in the first reconstruction plan of 1950, in which a single new redented building overlooked the hill of San Silvestro, indifferent both to the pre-existing fabric and to the orography.

From the urban palimpsest — generated by an operation of superimposition between Gardella’s project and the pre-existing city — emerges a particular relationship between memory and invention, which accepts an interpretative dimension based on the experience of the lived city. As in a blank sheet of paper from which ancient writing emerges, some pre-existing signs, traces, and figures are confirmed or transfigured in the project. In blue are indicated the traces that the plan’s design does not repeat, while where blue traces do not appear, the project confirms the state of the place. There are a few interesting points where the new traces barely deviate from the old ones so that we can recognise the pre-existing alley, street, or stairway shifted or manipulated in the new design. On the other hand, other signs arise from new needs of the university or new urban connection possibilities brought about by wartime destruction. Selective demolition erodes the

existing blocks, while a new urban morphology emerges that overlaps the large voids left by the bombing.

Gardella adopts an approach to the reconstruction of the city that is difficult to classify. The project expresses an ancient and, in many respects, “inactual” attitude that has guided the construction of cities on themselves for centuries: a humanistic attitude to reuse and recycle, composed of economic and spiritual needs.

The project’s deconstruction into several significant categories — “strongholds” (red), “ancient fabrics” (yellow), and “new soils” (grey and green) — made it possible to highlight points of convergence and differences with other urban projects.

I have called “strongholds” the main monuments and figures of urban weight, such as

the city walls and gates, to which the project attributes the role of certain, secure and indeed solid elements, from which to start building a new urban configuration.

The “old fabrics” are the fabrics of minor buildings, mostly residential, which are subjected to a selection and “cleaning” operation, following the dominants of the consolidated urban structure.

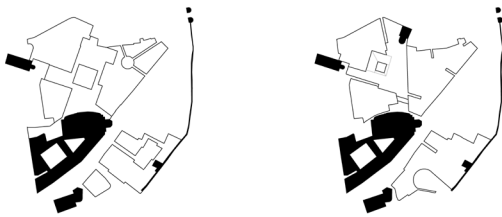
Lastly, the category of “new soils” refers to the new buildings proposed by the project, which interpret certain characteristics of the pre-existing city and, at the same time, offer themselves as new soils, in fact, that can be walked over.

The role Gardella attributes to pre-existing buildings of a different nature does not correspond to the established categories of urban restoration. The cornerstones of the project, chosen as the elective reference for the construction of the new university citadel, do not coincide with the monumental buildings of the ancient city. Urban infrastructures and the city’s persistent layouts are also considered cornerstones of the project. While not all historical monuments are restored and different conservation principles are applied. It is a perception-driven “case by case”, reflecting on the role each of these urban facts plays in the new dimension of the city.

The collages of the photographs of the surveys seem to anticipate the project’s key choices by recomposing some fundamental “scenes” that, at least in part, consolidate the urban void created by the wartime destruction in order to open up new and broader urban triangulations.

Emerging facts and building fabrics are read in the progressive dimension of the city, to grasp the essence of its immutable physiognomy, to which the operations of selective demolition, as well as the choices of reconstruction, can be traced.

Gardella’s attitude towards the ancient city is very far from the Enlightenment concept of the monument as an exceptional and isolated fact, later introjected into the functional city concept of the modern movement. Le Corbusier’s Plan Voisin is emblematic of an idea of the city where it is possible to select monuments isolated from their context, ideally extract them, and then relocate them on a new abstract and idealising urban grid, expressing a new model of the city conceived *a priori*. On the contrary, Gardella’s project realises a particular relationship between monuments and urban fabric that establishes a new form of continuity because “there is no problem of conservation of monuments ‘in vitro’, but there is a problem of ‘urban context’, that is, a problem of



7. Author: Genova, San Donato area, Comparison between preliminary and final design: 1968-1971.

8. Gardella: Genova, wood model of the urban project, ASG.

co-presence in the city of the old and the new, so that both become organic components of the same urban reality". A relationship of continuity that is expressed as much in the choices of conservation as in the proposal of new volumes.

The "new soils" create a new city that is simultaneously unprecedented and familiar, starting from the dialectic between buildings and orography, between open space and roof gardens arranged at different heights, which has always belonged to the city of Genoa, but which is extended here to a public dimension.

The forms of the new volumes are defined by the paths of the old city, recognised as its most enduring structure. It is the empty spaces that give shape to the solid bodies. The new university citadel is both an unveiling and a refounding project.

Through the selection of images and the interpretative redrawing of some parts of the plan, the research focused on the value of the "construction of the void" in Gardella's city. Emptiness is understood as a dialectical space in which the city represents itself, through the emerging elements and through the forms and open spaces that welcome collective life.

² Bergson, *Matière et mémoire*.



The thesis focuses on the analytical study of the urban project, starting from the conviction that the plan offers a relevant reflection on the city's construction starting from memory. A memory understood as the selection and "use of past experience for present action".²

A way of thinking of the city from the inside emerges, which does not recognise any possible split between town planning and architecture. For Gardella, the detailed plan is a "guiding image" that cannot disregard a figurative and formal prefiguration (otherwise, it would have to be a simple address programme).

The thesis insists on the search for the appropriate signs to invert an idea of the city and on the work of progressive refinement of forms that tend towards the synthesis and representation of an essential and irreducible portrait of the city, new, ancient, and timeless.

The purpose of the chapter is precisely to show the value of an approach to the city that cannot be ascribed to canonical categories of intervention or established theories because it is based on listening to the place and a particular sensitivity to phenomenological reality. It is a thought that moves from within, from perception and experience, to build a dialogue between the city

and its histories, to continue building the city on the profile of its "essential" character.

Making architecture

The second chapter delves into understanding and describing Ignazio Gardella's creative process through the study of the project for the Pavilion of Contemporary Art in Milan, which is, in many respects, a manifesto project. The pavilion is a wonderful account of the life of this suspended, intimate place in the city and a perfect exhibition machine for the works. A theatrical machine bent on staging life and history in a specific place.

The aim of this lunge is to discover and show how the museum's image has taken shape through choices and refinements that cannot be traced back to the building's preexisting character, nor mechanically derived from its function. In other words, it is a question of identifying strategies and techniques of a dialectic and receptive architecture, built as a system of relationships.

With a myriad of sketches, design versions and refinements of each building element, which increasingly converge on the appropriateness of solutions, the PAC project is demonstrative of an approach that is both empirical and rational. Gardella states that we only know what we do. He denies the existence of creation *ex nihilo*, creative ge-

nius and raptus; he states that the project is "critical research of the formal outcome". A search made with the hands, as well as with thoughts, which is precise precisely in its "making".

Gardella's creative process is a non-linear path, full of discarded trials and returns, with no formal *a priori*, or transcendent reference to guide it. However, in this path, there is an extreme rationality aimed at pursuing the most appropriate solution concerning the needs of use.

The PAC project is thus constructed in dialectical form with respect to its spatial envelope and with respect to the character of the characters with which it enters into relation: the royal villa, the park, the walls of the old, destroyed stables, the intimacy of the park and the light filtered by the trees.

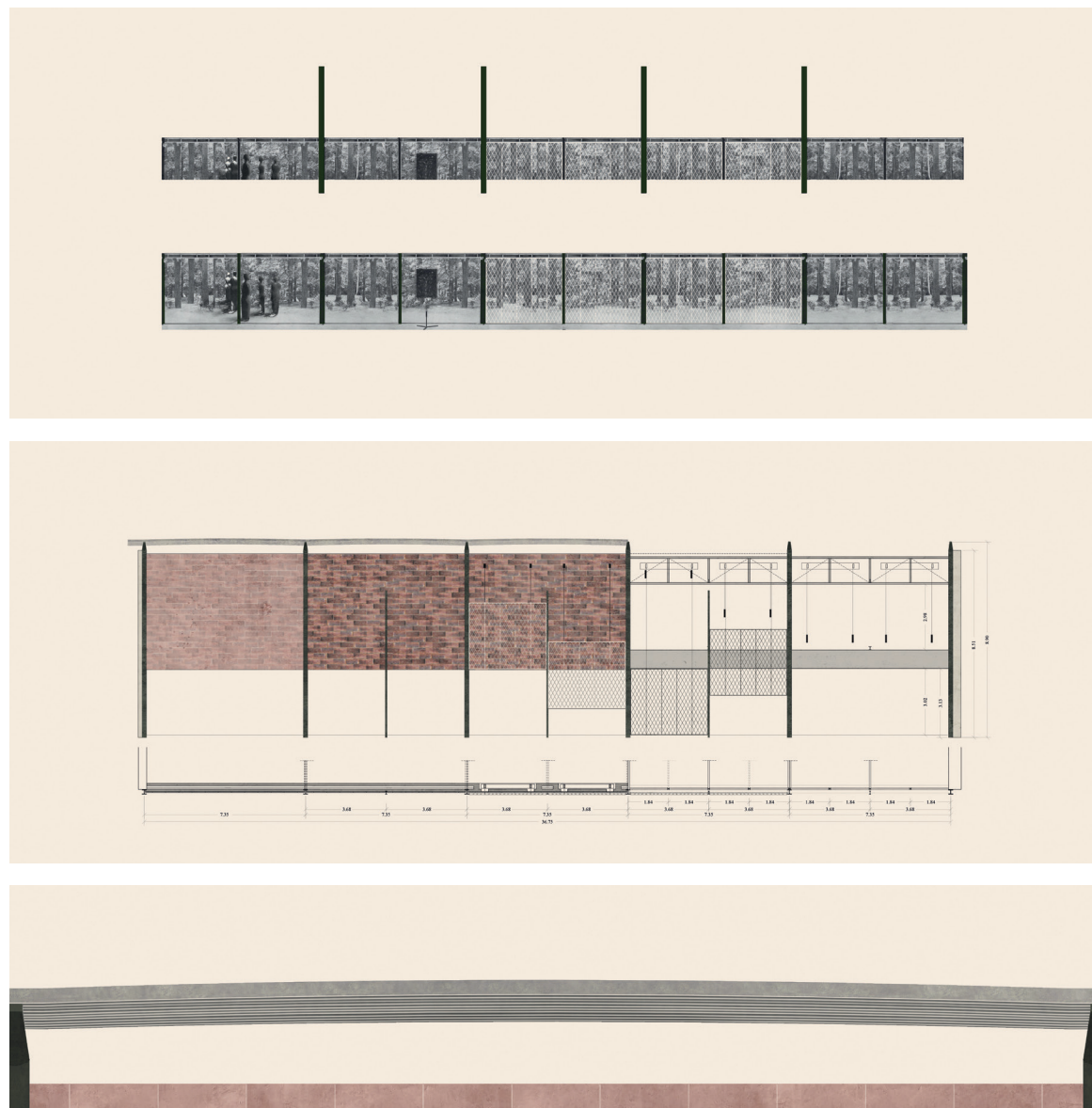
The thesis observes the progressive and intentional construction of the building's character in relation to its elective references and uses the tool of the interpretative redrawing to show the richness of this type of process, through the comparison of the individual elements of the final project with the first versions and isolates and dissects certain devices of the project aimed at communicating with its surroundings. The research thus achieves an in-depth study of the nature and genesis of the language of architecture in Ig-

nazio Gardella's experience, which aspires to take on a general and transmissible value for "making architecture" and "making cities".

A dialectics of the history

Going back even further to the interiors realised in the 1930s-40s, the third chapter focuses on "theatricality" in Gardella's architecture. A theatricality turned to the most ancient roots of theatre, when the uncovered artifice of the periaktoi was but the changing stage set to accompany the narration of life. Interiors are understood here as a test laboratory, where Gardella experiments with the dialectic in space between autonomous and heterogeneous figures. Architectural elements, upholstery, objects and furniture, both old and new, are arranged in tension with each other in an "empty" space conformed to accommodate them. The intentional construction of the character of the scene and some protagonist figures is shown through the study of some projects chosen to exemplify the strategies adopted: the Busto Arsizio Theatre, the Villa Borletti in Milan, the Gardella House in Piazza Aquileia and Mr Uselli's studio in Alessandria, together with some exhibition layouts, are all pieces to show the taking shape of architecture in the face of an existing space.

9. Author: Milano, PAC, park facade, interpretive redrawings



The interpretative redrawing serves to highlight the set of scenographic operations implemented to transform the interior spaces with a few targeted gestures.

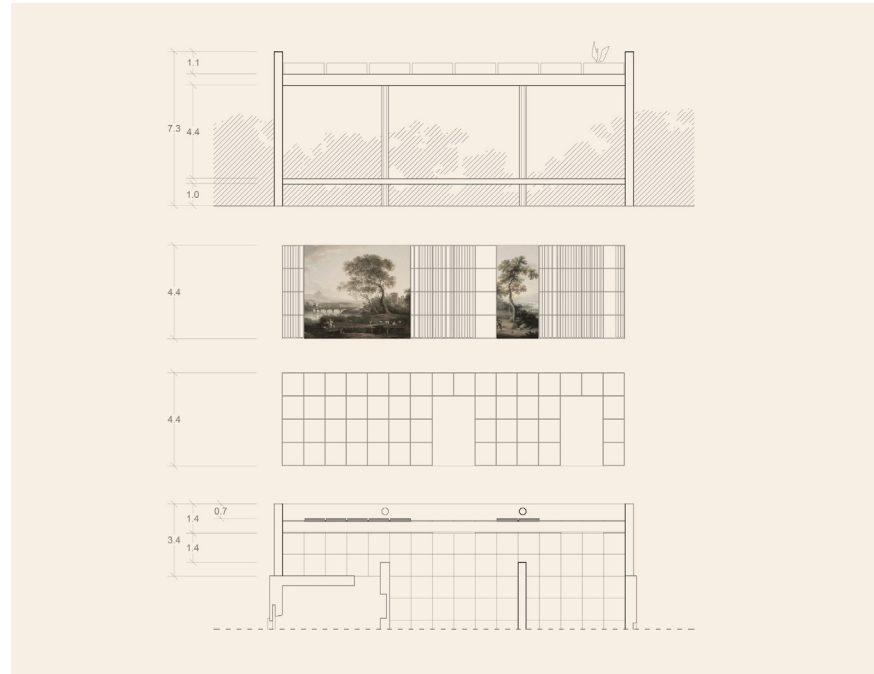
Gardella's ability to master the use of light, dynamism, materials, textures, and colour constitutes the prerequisite for an ability in "tone" adjustment, which is fundamental if architecture is to dialogue with the world in which it is embedded.

An almost conclusive reflection

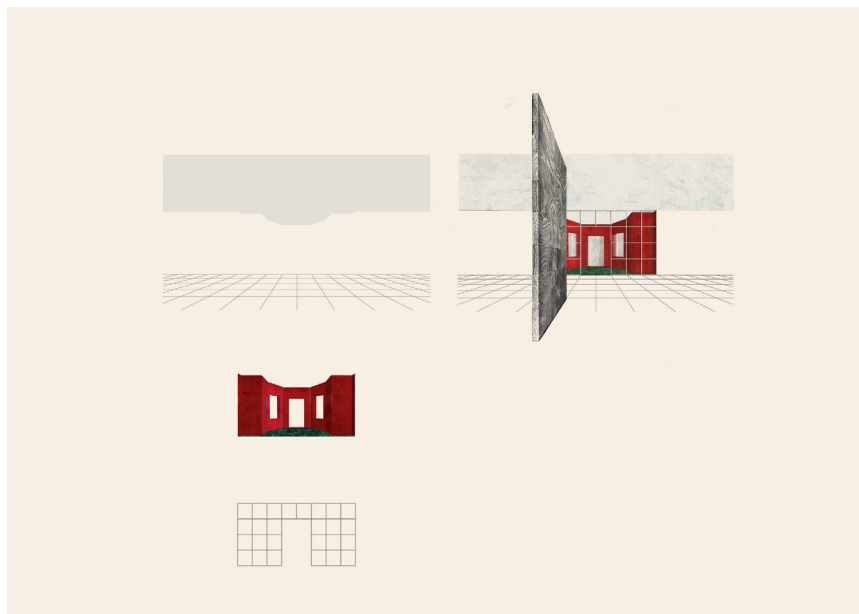
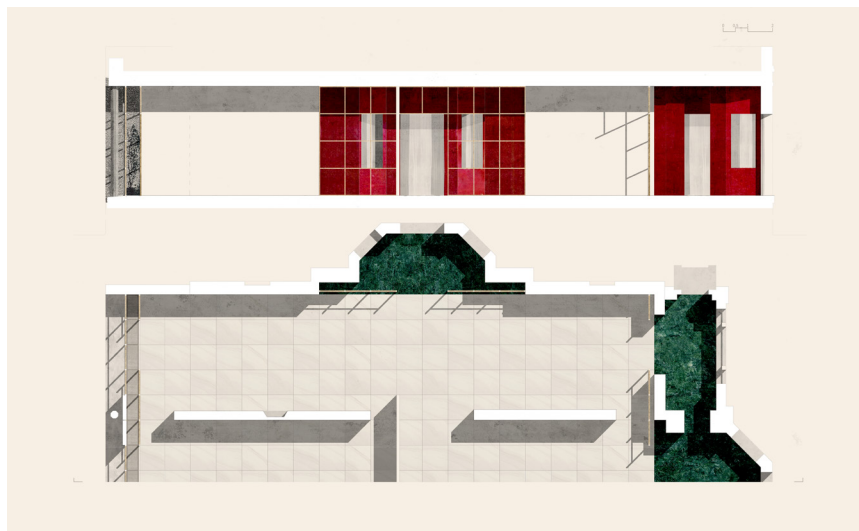
After the lunge into the creative process and the role of theatricality in interiors, it is possible to return to rereading the overall meaning of Ignazio Gardella's specific lesson on building in the built environment.

In the projects studied, the architectural organism, and even the city, takes shape, from the overall figure to the individual building elements, in relation to the context in which it is located. Architecture measures its corporeal presence against what already exists and establishes a dense yet selective web of relationships with the pre-existing environment. The concept of environmental pre-existence in Gardella's architecture is declined in the topological relationships that assume a fundamental role in the composition.

If it is true what Gardella claims, that what distinguishes architecture from the merely construction construction is precisely the ability to "say" then the dialectic of architecture, that is, the ability to express "content" (needs and values) in relation to the environment (composed of place and culture), thus becomes foundational to the very possibility of existence or persistence of architecture in its fullest sense.



10. Author: Milano, Villa Borletti, interpretive redrawings: constructing the new facade as a new landscape and interpreting the ancient spaces of the house.



The entire research path can be traced back to the underlying objective (or hope) of showing the connections between architecture experience and memory and the implications of this link for the transmissibility of architectural design and, more generally, the fundamental value of human experience in the construction of a world to be inhabited. An experience that is rational and simultaneously full of emotions and memories, not only private, which it is becoming increasingly urgent to return to affirm in the face of the improper use with which we turn to the processes of automation in the construction of the city.

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