

MODERN
HERITAGE
BETWEEN
Venice, 4-5th May 2021
CARE
AND RISK

Edited by Maria Bonaiti, Sara Di Resta

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The International Conference “Modern Heritage between Care and Risk” (Venice, 4-5th May 2021) was held at Università Iuav di Venezia, in collaboration with Fondazione Le Corbusier and Docomomo Italia. The event offered an opportunity for an international exchange on crucial issues of documentation and preservation of the 20th century architectural heritage in a time of rapid social, cultural and political changes. The first day has been dedicated to “Ahmedabad. Laboratory of Modern Architecture”, a site-manifesto threatened today by the demolition of relevant dormitories of the Indian Institute of Management by Louis I. Kahn. The second day has been dedicated to “Living the Architectural Preservation. Modern Houses in the Conservation of 20th Century Heritage”, focused on recent conservation/restoration works of Modern authorial houses and neighbourhoods. The proceedings collect selected papers presented by international researchers and architects involved in the fields of History of Architecture and Architectural Preservation.

Maria Bonaiti is a Full Professor in History of Architecture at Università Iuav di Venezia. In her research Bonaiti investigates twentieth-century architecture, focusing on post-World War II architecture in Europe and the United States, with particular emphasis on the debate that develops around the complex relationship established in those years between modernity and tradition. Among her publications are the monograph *Louis I. Kahn 1901-1974, Electa, Milano 2012*, and *Le Corbusier in India. Villa Sarabhai, Ahmedabad, 1951-1956, Electa, Milano 2021*.

Sara Di Resta is Associate Professor of Architectural Preservation at Università Iuav di Venezia. Her research activities are focused on the preservation of 20th-century heritage, with particular attention to the conservation of modern building materials. She is the author of more than 70 publications including the volumes “Le forme della conservazione. Intenzione e prassi dell’architettura contemporanea per il restauro” (2016) and “Materiali autarchici. Conservare l’innovazione” (2021). She is currently member of the executive committee of SIRA - the Italian Society of Architectural Conservation/Restoration and Docomomo Italia.

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Edited by Maria Bonaiti, Sara Di Resta
with the collaboration of Elena Sofia Moretti

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MARIA BONAITI, SARA DI RESTA

In 2021, the Università Iuav di Venezia, in collaboration with Fondation Le Corbusier and Docomomo Italia, hosted the International Conference “Modern Heritage between Care and Risk” (Venice, 4-5th May 2021).

The event offered an opportunity for an international exchange on crucial issues of documentation and preservation of the 20th-century architectural heritage in a time of rapid social, cultural and political changes.

The first day has been dedicated to “Ahmedabad. Laboratory of Modern Architecture”, a site-manifesto today in danger due to the threat of demolition of relevant dormitories of the Indian Institute of Management by Louis I. Kahn. One of the most industrious and modern cities in the Indian state of Gujarat, Ahmedabad is a unique laboratory of architecture. Alongside the historic walled city with its superb examples of Mughal architecture, the city is home to essential works by some of the leading masters of the 20th century such as Le Corbusier and Louis I. Kahn, as well as works by contemporary architects such as Balkrishna Doshi and Charles Correa.

This excellence in architecture was made possible thanks to the presence in Ahmedabad of a cultured and enlightened industrial class committed to promoting and supporting

industrial activity without forgetting the local cultural tradition, whose characteristics are offered as a foundation on which to build a renewed national identity.

The proposed interventions, some of which are the result of recent research work undertaken by the Università Iuav di Venezia, reconstruct Ahmedabad's cultural, entrepreneurial and architectural landscape. The interventions focus on the nature and role played by patrons, such as Gira and Gautham Sarabhai, as well as by masters such as Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn.

The second day has been dedicated to "Living the Architectural Preservation. Modern Houses in the Conservation of 20th Century Heritage", focused on recent conservation/restoration works of authorial houses and neighborhoods of 20th-century. Modern architecture has involved radical changes in the way of housing and living that are now part of the legacy of 20th-century. These changes embody not only aesthetic and functional features, but political and social transformations that still define some aspects of Modern life. From the exclusive authorial villas to the large-scale housing programs, this legacy gives today a multi-faceted and polysemic heritage which poses still unsolved issues for conservation.

The understanding of how to deal with this legacy represents a crucial challenge in social, cultural and political context unceasingly changing, which is endangering the material conservation of these buildings. From the technological obsolescence caused by the rapid changes of current demanding standards, to the shifting of tangible and intangible values of this heritage, the cultural relevance of preserving the buildings emerges, as well as the active role in conservation played by the owners and inhabitants. The contributions outline an outlook of research, including international academic studies in the fields of architectural preservation, anthropology and art, and the

documentation of recent restoration works carried out on relevant 20th-century houses.

The proceedings collect recent studies and researches carried out by the Iuav research unit “HeModern – Heritage, Culture and Modern design” and by international researchers and architects involved in the fields of History of Architecture and Architectural Preservation.

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