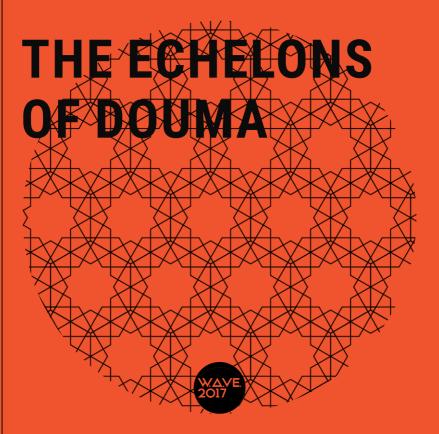
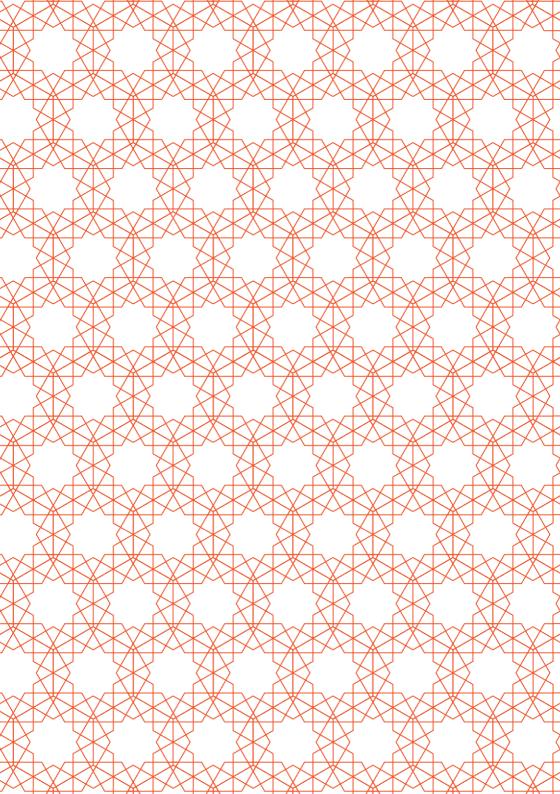
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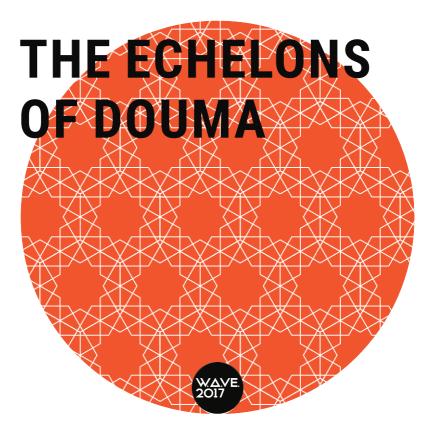




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Antonella Gallo

- DOUMA / 33°34'20"N 36°24' 06"E













Under the patronage of UNESCO



SYRIA - THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE FROM URBICIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY

W.A.Ve. 2017

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Antonella Gallo The Echelons Of Douma

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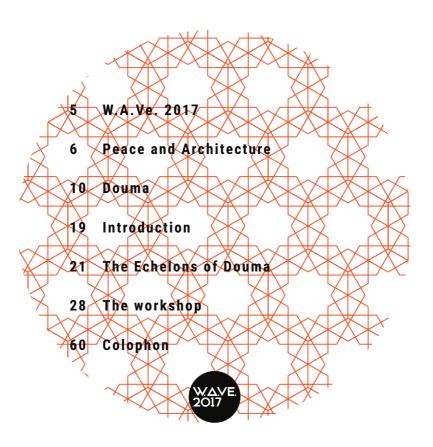






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W.A.Ve. 2017

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Alberto Ferlenga

W.A.Ve. is now at its fifteenth edition but, despite this, its characterising formula still works. Since its beginning, when it did not have its current name yet, being a design workshop and an international architecture exhibition at the same time has made it a unique product. If we consider that each year more than 1,500 students and 30 teachers are involved, we cannot deny that even the numbers are sizable. In these 15 years, about 23,000 students (not counting students from abroad) and 450 architects (not counting assistants) have developed a project experience at Università luav di Venezia that takes place in a narrow span of three weeks. during which luav venues become training and meeting sites. Its open-air workshop feature has brought many prestigious architects and names of the international scene to the classroom venues of the Cotonificio Veneziano and Magazzini: Pritzker prizes such as Eduardo Souto de Moura or Alejandro Aravena, masters such as Yona Friedman and Pancho Guedes, and renowned professionals such as Sean Godsell or Carme Pinos. Under their guidance, luav undergraduates and foreign participants have developed (together and making no age distinction) a project experience that pertains to the city of Venice and many other places as well. The same summer days also see the spaces of the Santa Marta Auditorium and the Tolentini Cloister become the scene of large conferences, making it possible for hundreds of students to follow the latest international projects or reflections on the most pressing issues concerning cities and territories. Above all, however, W.A.Ve. is special for the atmosphere that it creates during its three weeks of work; discussions, projects, and meetings are often expanded and brought outside the classrooms, in bars and Venetian campi, and in the exhibitions that follow, transforming the campus of Santa Marta into a major international architecture showcase.

For all these reasons, W.A.Ve. is unique and renowned among architects and students of Architecture around the world, becoming one of the most representative expressions of a school, luav, that has built its peculiar quality on international exchange, laboratory experience, and on city studies.

Peace and Architecture

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Benno Albrecht

1 — Elio Vittorini in "Il Politecnico", n. 1, September 29, 1945.

2 — Pierre Rosanvallon, "La democrazia dell'emergenza", "La Repubblica", April 16, 2012. We invited many architects to Venice, to contribute to the discussion on the reconstruction of countries destroyed by the madness of men. Like a round table, Università luav di Venezia became the venue for the dialogue and discussion on the possibilities of architecture to preserve and reconstruct Peace. The will and desire for Peace was the quest of honour of our 2017 W.A.Ve. workshop.

A post-WWII Italian intellectual, Elio Vittorini, said that it was necessary to form "not a culture that consoles in times of suffering, but a culture that protects from it, fighting and eliminating it".

We see the University as an institution that serves society and the generations of the future, alertly vigilant and working to stay one step ahead. The relationship between Universities and Administrations can become operational and productive, precisely because the university is the exact place to test hypothetical future models — an "Academy of the Future"², as described by Pierre Rosanvallon — to overcome the fragmentation of knowledge and educate in global civic responsibility.

In luav's W.A.Ve. workshop, a future of Peace, the reconstruction of Peace, has become an academic topic, a forecast technique, and an experience in practical planning of the future.

The immanence of the "environmental and human disaster" that we see today in Syria overcomes the

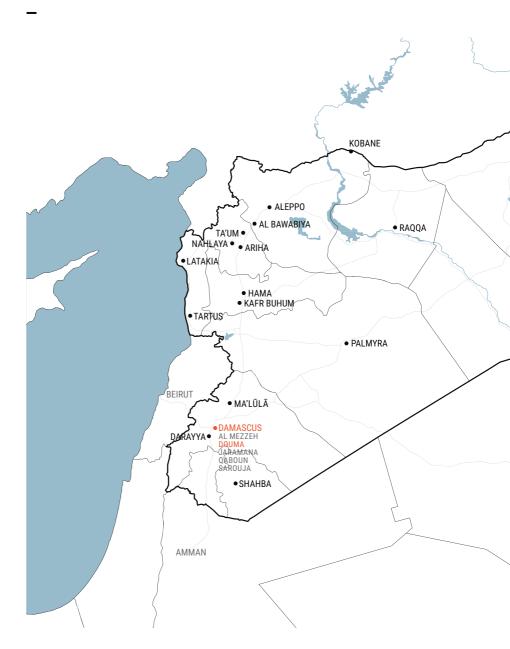
concept of architecture (understood as a need, consequence or manifestation of something else), leading the discipline to inevitably participate, as an integral part, in the resolution of a local/global "political and environmental" issue. In fact, one of the most pressing topics in the field of civil commitment (and in the operational field of architecture) is how to deal with the consequences of urbicides, with the deliberate violence against cities, with their destruction, and with the intentional elimination of collective memory made of stone.

Venice is where reflecting on these things is possible: a city that was described, by Richard Bonington and by Antoine-Claude Valéry, as "a Palmyra of the Sea"³.

However, we side these reflections with the words that John Adams wrote to his wife from Paris: "The science of government is my duty to study, more than all other sciences; the arts of law and administration and negotiation should take the place of, indeed, exclude, in a way, all other arts. I must study politics and war, that our children may have freedom to study mathematics and philosophy. Our sons must study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain"⁴.

- 3 Valéry Antoine Claude Pasquin, "Venise et ses environs", Société belge de librairie, Bruxelles, 1842, p.2.
- 4 Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, post 12 May 1780, in L.H. Butterfield, Marc Friedlaender, eds., "Adams Family Correspondence", Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1973.

SYRIA - THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE



W.A.Ve. 2017

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ALEPPO

Armando Dal Fabbro Fernanda De Maio Patrizia Montini Zimolo Paredes y Pedrosa UNLAB Gaeta Springall Architects

DAMASCUS

AL MEZZEH VMXarchitetti

ARIHA

MOSUL

Plan Colletif

AL BAWABIYA

Felipe Assadi

DARAYYA

Aldo Aymonino Beals Lyon Arquitectos

DAMASCUS

DOUMA

Antonella Gallo

HAMA

BAGHDAD

Ammar Khammash

DAMASCUS

JARAMANA

Ciro Pirondi

KOBANE

Ricardo Carvalho

MA'LŪLĀ

Salma Samar Damluii

NAHLAYA

Solano Benitez

PALMYRA

Roberta Albiero Francesco Cacciatore Camillo Magni Attilio Santi Sinan Hassan

DAMASCUS

QABOUN

TAMassociati

RAQQA

Giancarlo Mazzanti

DAMASCUS

SAROUJA

BOM Architecture

SHAHBA

João Ventura Trindade



HE ECHELONS OF DOUMA

DOUMA

33°34'20"N 36°24' 06"E



Population

2004 • • • • • • • • • • 500,000 2017 • • • 125,000

Description

Douma is about 10 km north-east of the centre of Damascus and is the centre of the Rif Dimashq governorate (which completely surrounds the Damascus Governorate). During the Syrian Civil War, Douma has been a major flashpoint and had witnessed numerous demonstrations against the Syrian government and armed clashes against the Syrian Army and Security forces during the early stages of the conflict. These clashes were named the Battle of Douma, a military engagement that began on 21 January 2012, after Free Syrian Army fighters changed their tactics from attack and retreat guerrilla warfare in the suburbs of Damascus to all-out assault on army units. Earlier in January, the FSA had taken the town of Zabadani, and consequently gained control over large portions of Douma. After a general offensive in the suburbs, Douma was retaken by the Syrian army at the same time as the other rebelling suburbs.







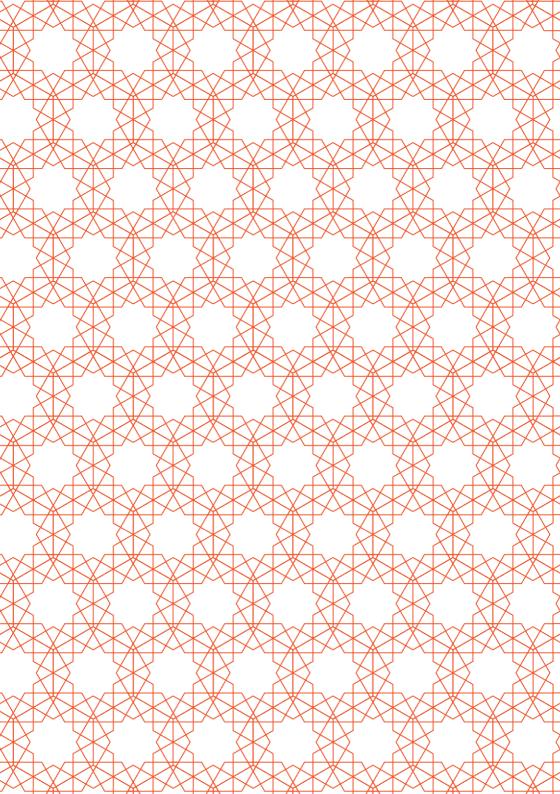




Antonella Gallo



— Douma was largely destroyed by the battle in 2012 and later by the siege of 2015 when the Syrian Army cut all the food supplies for the civil population and hit the town with heavy airstrikes. The United Nations have denounced the deliberate destruction of health care infrastructure in Douma, driving up deaths and permanent disabilities.



Introduction

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Laura Scala

Since each workshop was given a dedicated room that was transformed into the exhibition venue of the workshop results, our project was conceived as a theatrical set. With the awareness of the spatial limits of "room C", its specific measures, materials, pillars, and ceiling configuration, the students worked on the construction of a few scenic equipments, protagonists of a new spatial – and also anthropological – dimension, highlighted by a system of lights.

The new spatial characters are only five, but they were designed in detail:

- the jagged silhouette of the Wadi el Qubur river, the ancient dry river of Palmyra located in the proximity of the Valley of the tombs built as a snake creeping through the pillars;
- a group of nine twisted parallelepipeds (1 m high) representing the Palmyra Valley of the tombs: above, a sort of calque of nine emblematic sections, chosen for their particular configurations of the exact tombs, an articulated system of funeral architecture among the hills;
- the huge maquette of Douma's six layered-mass graves, designed in the shape of a staircase in order to occupy less surface area, appearing like a great earth sculpture;
- the great figure of the oil pump jack (3 m high) reminding us of the historical horizon of the war-crime policies. This was built with scrap wood and painted anthracite gray;
- the twelve big crosses (1.8 m high) standing like fierce soldiers, a sort of dramatic spatial counterpoint.

While the crosses and the gray oil pump jack silhouette rose up from below, a system of a few vertical banners – black drapes with the theatrical set's symbols – hung from above, and the snake of the dry river seemed to lead us inside the room, moving slowly among the parallelepiped tombs and the wooden crosses, walking on the pictures of the tombs of Douma, leaning on the ground and looking at some other pictures hanging on the wooden wall.

This workshop was a kind of a real scale composition exercise in a given space that helped rise the students' awareness on the topology, nature, character, dimension, and construction of the chosen scenographic elements, built with simple or recycled materials. A space composition made with few essential objects.

The Echelons of Douma

Antonella Gallo

In every project, there is "a theme to be interpreted". This is "the beginning" that precedes "the form". In the beginning, there are always requests made by a reasonably large portion of humanity, who expect a representative form of it. Here, "the beginning" coincides with "the end", in the sense that "the theme to be interpreted is Death". The "Death" we have the greatest difficulty in accepting is "mass slaughter", "the infinite number of deaths" of a long war. The most immediate act, the only possible one for defenseless survivors, is "the burial of the dead". At first sight, architecture returns to its "level zero" because the theme is not yet "the monument": "the signs" of funerary rituals belong to times or places that are not those of "mass slaughter". The "reconstruction" occurs among the ashes of the ruined city, it begins from an "awareness of the anthropological dimension of the burial theme". The "Latin crosses", a symbol of another identity, the "fingerprints" of the valley of the Tombs of Palmyra, the remains of an archaic civilisation, can be contrasted today in Syria with the "multi-layered underground graves of Douma".

Omar Youssef Souleimane tells us from Paris: "If the population density makes buildings grow taller, the density of death leads to building in the depths. This is how the citizens of Douma now build their new cemeteries. Death has produced its own forms of art in this war, like the mass graves that the people in this agricultural suburb of Damascus, which is Douma, had to invent to bury the thousands of dead who are the fatalities of air raids. Over 6,000 victims in

2015 alone. A number that is sufficient to destroy all the agricultural land that the population's food security entirely depends on. Which is why the people of Douma had to economise on burial spaces. Hence, the decision of the local council to dig 4-metre deep trenches within which a double ramp reaches a sequence of vertically superimposed graves, built in steps. It may seem something simple at first, but the fact is that the construction of this type of tomb requires great accuracy, since any error in the overlapping of the horizontal and vertical planes can cause a subsidence.

The level of the plane that ascends towards the surface is carefully measured. Six specular steps model the rectangular section of the deep trench. Each of them serves as a base to create a series of graves built on superimposed levels. This invention began in Douma and spread rapidly to other cities near Damascus. We might recall, in terms of economising on land use, what the people of Homs have been doing since 2011, transforming playgrounds into cemeteries. It might also be helpful to recall that some of those parks originally were cemeteries, Bab Houd Park for example, or Damascus Road Park. Some of the graves are without a name either because of the impossibility of identifying the bodies before burial, or because the bodies had been cut into pieces. However, the worst thing for the victims of Douma is not so much that some of the layered graves are without a name but, rather, that even these graves were subsequently bombed. On 14 February 2016, the city cemetery was devastated, including several multi-layered graves. That day, Kasem Ballah, the man in charge of the cemetery for the local Douma Council, was killed. He had buried his two children, Osama and Yumna, only a few days earlier. They too had been killed in the bombing. We do not know if it was their graves, or those of others which were destroyed that day. The regime usually buries those they torture in mass graves. But respect for the victims prevented the people of Douma from burying their dead in the same way. As regards ISIS, they will not destroy these graves as they have done with other types of grave in the areas under their control. The multi-layered graves do not emerge above ground level, and therefore do not "undermine the monotheism of God", by ascending too high, according to Wahhabi theology. Perhaps one day, researchers will come to Douma in search of an extinct civilisation. They will rediscover the foundations of these structures and find that death has its own echelons at Douma, just as life does".

1 — Freely adapted from Omar Youssef Souleimane: "The Echelons of Death in Douma" www.syriauntold.com/ en/2016/03/the-echelons-of-death-in-douma/

We cannot think that in the digital era we can expel emotions, desires, and poetry from the world of architecture. To operate in Syria, we must first develop the idea that death can be understood as an inherent part of reality and that, at the same time, only by interiorising tragedy in our mind, along with its many causes, can the project phase take place. Clearly then, this stage of the workshop is a call to architecture in its interpretation of a grave that is "before the artefact". The exhibition turned into a privileged terrain to think and experience significant ways of relating to these questions and giving them expression; a privileged terrain to provoke a shock to incentive reactions of curiosity and inquiry. The preparation of the exhibition became a "laboratory" to exploit the construction procedures of the display narration, both in the way of inventing or interpreting the potential of the space, and of including and presenting the "objects" in that space. The creation of settings for the observer's perception, and experiences that brought out its meaning, brought the exhibiton closer to a form of theatre.

The first situation in which space and time are autonomous with respect to reality is the dream; the second is the theatre. The theatre, like the dream, is the place where it becomes possible to bring together past and future, distant and nearby spaces, to see the value of things in a new and different way. The key mechanisms of dreaming are, as we know, dramatisation, symbolisation, condensation, and dispersion; mechanisms that all operate in the theatre, starting from the first, which is as central to the theatre as it is to the dream, making dreams a precise mental counterpart of theatre. The many traces, memories, and fragments that we re-codified and embodied in the space of the exhibit room aimed to build a full sensorial experience. Collages characterised this work, filled with shifts and re-contextualisations of various types, from the river to the new elements included in the atmosphere of the room.

Here, in an apparently unintentional way, we kept together fragments and memories of the archaic, symbolic, and mythical world of ancient Syria, along with new brutal "intrusions" such as the pump oil and the Douma tombs. Inside the 18×13 m room, in the central space drawn by the two rows of pillars that make up the building's load-bearing structure, we placed the silhouette of the Wadi el Qubur river, the ancient dry river of Palmyra crossing the Valley of the tombs. The river was evoked through a winding pattern that ran diagonally across the room. Near it, starting from the entry, we arranged a succession of inclined memorial stones made of cardboard, with a cubic base and almost a metre high. They supported nine section models of some ancient hypogeum tombs of Palmyra. Further on, on the other side of the river, an awe-inspiring and threatening Heiduk's fetish of the "Oil Pump" necessarily served to remind us, along with the living survivors, of the historical horizon of the policies of the massacre of war. On the same side, at the end of the room, where the river ended, a model (scale 1:25) reproduced the multilayered cemetery dug in the hard ground by Douma's workers to give burial to the awful number of civilians killed by daily aerial bombings. All around, inside and outside the pillars, dispersed in space, a dramatic forest of crosses completed the scenic architecture of the exhibition, while on one of the longer perimeter walls a set of great photographs documented the construction of the Douma tombs. Metric, rhythmic, and iconic relationships between the objects were exploited to "build empty spaces"², necessary to highlight the objects and create a space that was similar in atmosphere to the metaphysical ones of De Chirico, Savinio, and Carrà - where everything gravitated, where objects could be positioned outside any temporal and spatial succession. The room became an action field for figures, objects, and presences that, topologically placed, fluidify and animate the space creating tension. The neutrality of the supporting structure enhanceed the elements whose importance was emphasised by the fact that they were not returned to the serial order of the mesh, remaining individual and discontinuous. It was the assigned position that conferred meaning and directional power to these elements, which had their own life and figurative substance. Composition became a strategy of positions, giving rise to a mechanism in which the dialectic of opposites operates.

Letter by a student³

Dear Professor, I am a luav student, graduating in Techniques and Design. This morning I visited the works at the Cotonificio, all very interesting. But I

- 2 Cf. Albini F., Le mie esperienze di architetto in Italia e all'estero, in F. Bucci, F. Irace (eds), Zero Gravity. Franco Albini. Costruire le modernità, Triennale-Electa, Milan 2006, pp. 75-77.
- 3 Letter sent by the student A.Z. to prof. Antonella Gallo, on 14 July 2017. Object: Congratulations for the W.A.Ve. results.

must say that the exhibition you curated struck me and moved me a great deal. In my opinion, it caught an ineluctable level-zero reflection on the project in its specific context. This is a sign of a civilisation stopping before the End, and consequently reflecting on the forms that architecture can assume in the restoral of bodies to the ground. With everything that might be said, whether theological, teleological, or aesthetic. I have enjoyed these W.A.Ve. very much and I think that, on average, the results are always great. However, this morning I felt a little uncomfortable while examining the projects, perhaps a sense of quilt toward a reality so far off, so violent, and so sacred. On a desert of silence so much bigger than our indissoluble desire to build, produce, and fill (even in the correct way, I mean). And this is the point: your work seems to me humble, good, and respectful with a silence that must come before the project (and that the project will then carry as a warm heart, forever).

Cordially, A.Z.

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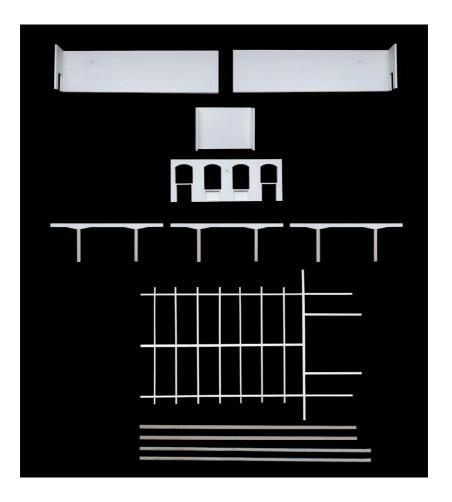


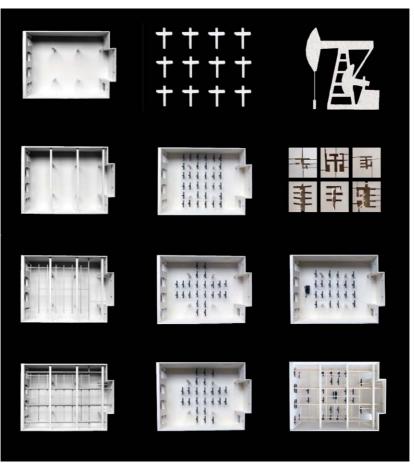




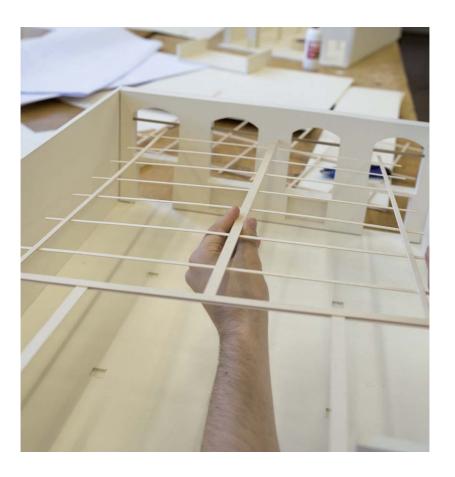




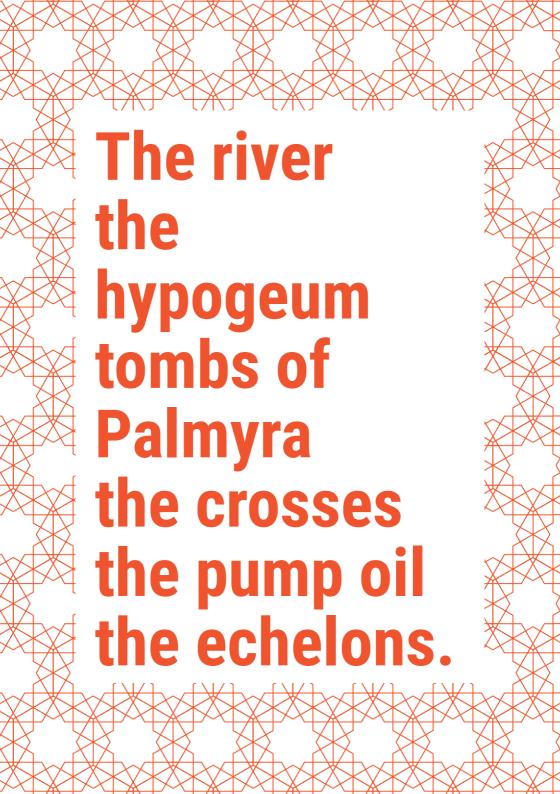




- Model of the workshop room, abacus of the building elements.
- First exsibition project.







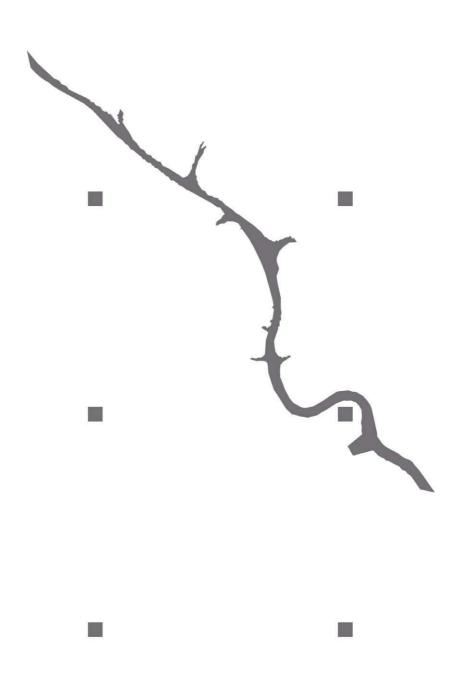


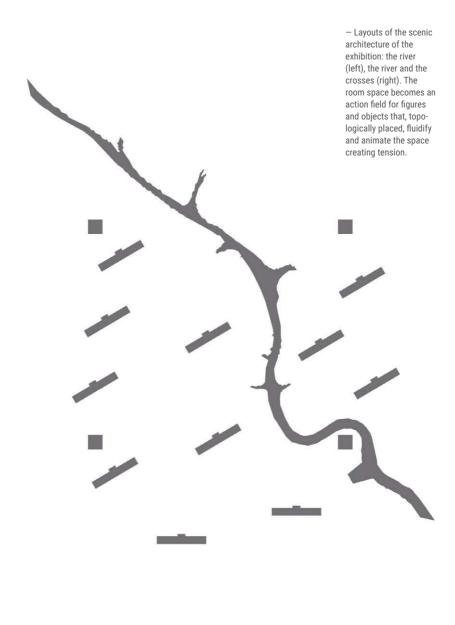


Antonella Gallo



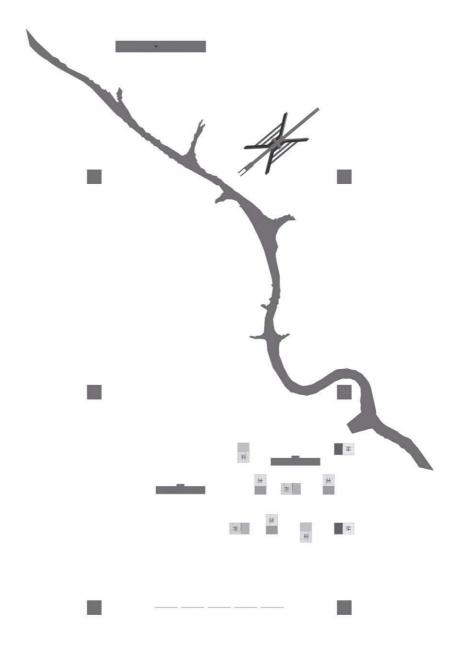
- Elements of the scenic architecture of the exhibition: the cardboard silhouette of the Wadi el Qubur river that runs diagonally across the room, total length 15 meters.
- Elements of the scenic architecture of the exhibition: the crosses.

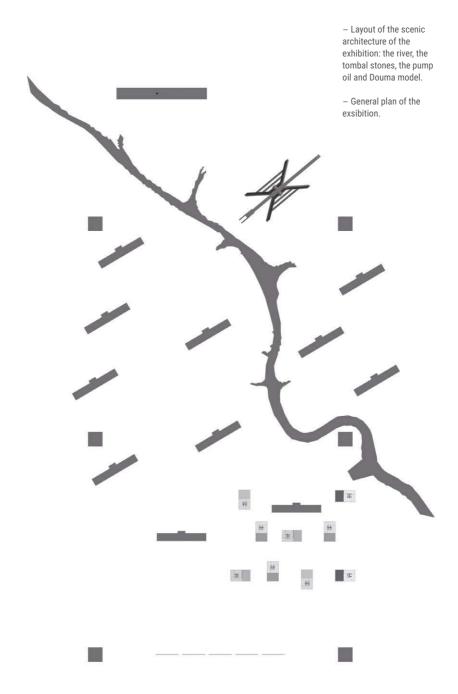






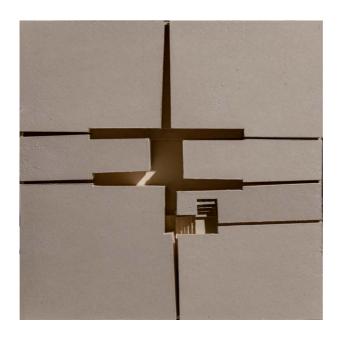




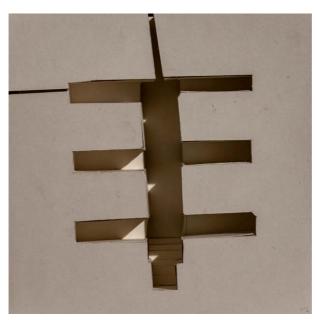




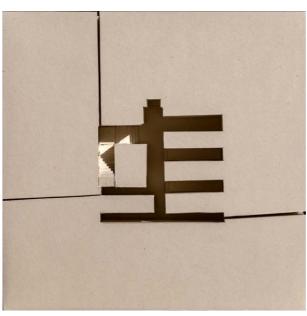


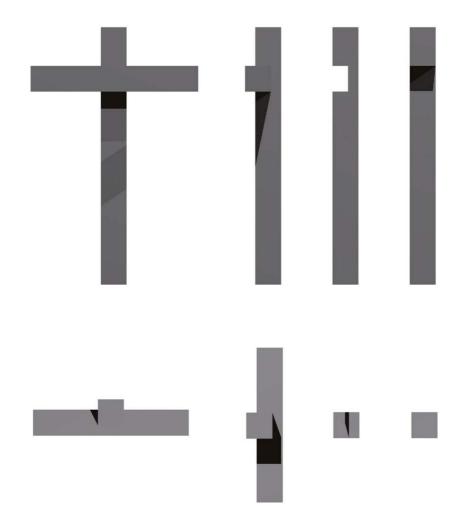


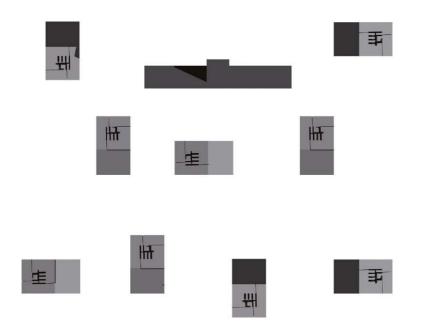




- Tower of Atenatan, Palmyra Valley of the Tombs , (underground level 3); model.
- Tower of Atenatan, Palmyra Valley of the Tombs , (underground level 2); model.
- Tower of Atenatan, Palmyra Valley of the Tombs , (underground level 1); model.
- Tower of Hairan, Palmyra Valley of the Tombs , (underground level 3); model.





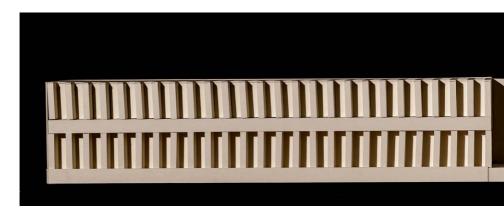


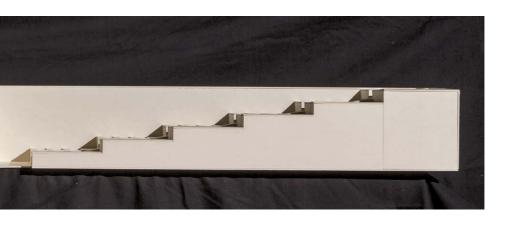


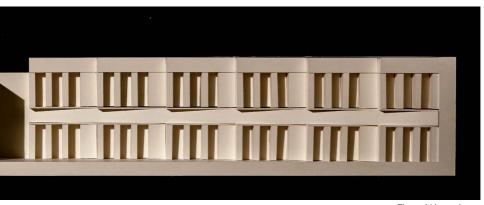


- The crosses, drawings of the model.
- The hypogeum tombs of Palmyra, drawings of the model basis.





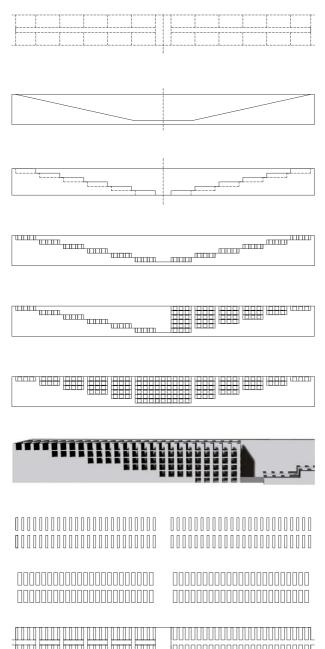




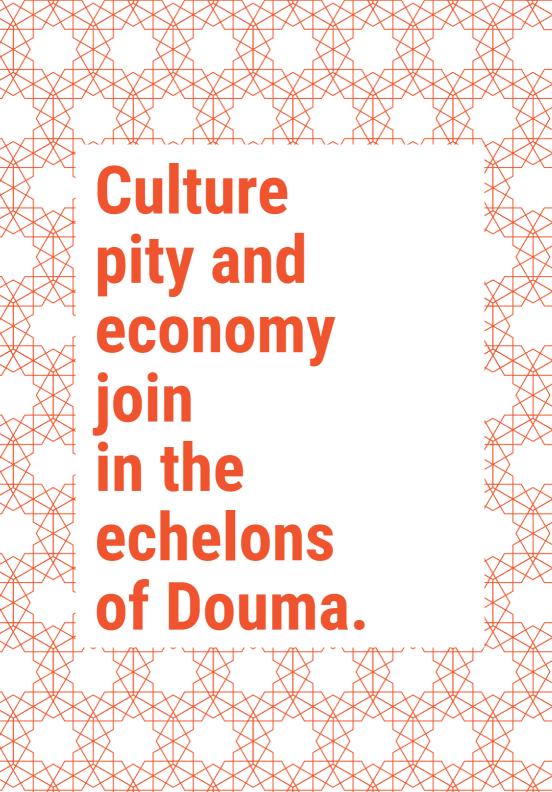
- The multi-layered undrgrond graves of Douma, reconstruction model, scale 1:25.



Antonella Gallo



- The multi-layered undrgrond graves of Douma, plans and sections of the levels. The Echelons of Douma. The gravediggers have begun digging into the hard earth and creating a specially layered cemetery to allow the victims to be laid to rest after the old cemetery was filled beyond capacity. The foundations digging and the mud bricks used to build burial cells.







Antonella Gallo

- Venice, Italy

Antonella Gallo teaches Architectural and Urban Composition at Università luav di Venezia. She is director of the Postgraduate Specialisation Programme (Master) in Architecture at the Department in Architecture in Arts and is a member of the PhD teaching body in Architectural Composition at luav.

She is the author of studies on the work of Jože Plečnik and Lina Bo Bardi. In 2004, as part of the IX Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, she curated and designed the layout, along with Luciano Semerani and Giovanni Marras, of the exhibition Lina Bo Bardi Architect, and in 2006 edited the reissue of Lina Bo Bardi Arquiteto for the MASP of São Paulo. She carries out design activity and participates in national and international competitions.

Tutors and Guests

Andrea Pastrello

Architect graduate from Università luav di Venezia, where he obtained the title of PhD in Architectural Composition. He participates in research activities at luav, while teaching and collaborating at luav and at the Faculty of Architecture of Trieste.

Laura Scala

Architect graduate and PhD in Architectural Composition from Università luav di Venezia, with a thesis on the construction of space in the first Russian Avant-garde, cum laude and publication. She has been working as tutor of professor Antonella Gallo since 2014.

Nicola Revolti

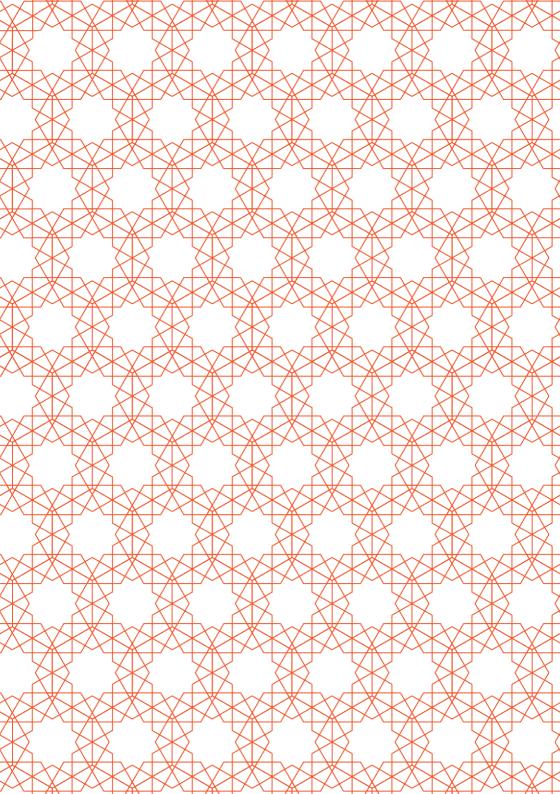
Graduate in Architecture: Techniques and Design at Università luav di Venezia, he is currently a student of the Postgraduate Degree Programme in Architecture Design at the same university. After an internship experience with professor Antonella Gallo in 2016, he has worked as tutor at the latest W.A.Ve. workshop.

Students

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SYRIA - THE MAKING OF THE FUTURE

FROM URBICIDE TO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE CITY



Roberta Albiero

Felipe Assadi

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BOM Architecture

Francesco Cacciatore

Ricardo Carvalho

Armando Dal Fabbro

Salma Samar Damluji

Fernanda De Maio

Gaeta Springall Architects

Antonella Gallo / The Echelons Of Douma

Sinan Hassan

Ammar Khammash

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