

TITLE OF THE ISSUE

Poetry and Techniques in Architectural Restoration

Restoration: an Issue to Face

Claudia Conforti

Architectural restoration is neither only a technical matter, nor only an ideological and cultural matter. Space and time; matter and form; function and representation; perception and emotion; individual and collective memory coexist in it. So it is an architectural central issue. The reasons today to talk about this issue are many. Above all in order to understand if the separation between the restoration and the architectural project is necessary and useful for the results.

For several years, in several «Casabella» editorials, Francesco Dal Co deals with restoration, wondering: «What difference might exist between a restoration and an architectural project?».

Cino Zucchi, editor of the Italian Pavilion at the XIV

Biennial 2014, called it *Graftings. Transformation versus conservation* is the title of a recent convention in Paris, organized by *Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine*.

This is the interpretive key of the essays collected in this magazine. The project operates on the existing architecture, with actions revealing what might resonate inside a damaged, abandoned or simply disused building; what makes it unique and precious, what transcends the matter and makes it worthy of being preserved and revitalized by new uses.

The essays are on methods of restoration and on different ways of understanding the architectural heritage in Italy, in Germany and in the Iberian Peninsula, other on exemplary projects on existing architecture. The choice of these three countries is due to their awareness and the persistence of national cultural paths, despite the globalization era. They also emerge for originality on the debate about revitalization of existing architectures, and for the disciplinary culture in the second half of the twentieth century.

DEBATE

Germany. Remembering and Forgetting: the Restoration Project from Josef Wiedemann to the Twenty-first Century

Leila Signorelli

World War II introduced into reality a brutality that marked a deep change in the idea of memory and of preservation as well: before that was quite difficult to imagine how it would have disfigured the face of German cities. Germany has a great importance on the one hand for the theoretical thinking on restoration, on the other, for the idea of preservation of heritage which changes significantly between the Federal Republic of Germany (West) from the German Democratic Republic (East). In West Germany, Bavaria develops since 1945 peculiar way of reconstruction, showing a constant balance between technological innovation and the preservation: the works of the architect Josef Wiedemann (1910-2001) in the center of Munich represents a considerable example. The architect is responsible for the reconstruction of some significant buildings in Munich, addressing them as a fundamental theme in the history and identity of the Bavarian people, but above all as an opportunity to define a method of intervention on the ruins of war. His work is characterized by the constant investigation for a synthesis between the need of the preservation of heritage and the innovation. The method that will be progressively carried out by Wiedemann working on the monuments wounded by the war has a great importance for some contemporary restoration projects, for example the one for Neues Museum (2003-2009) by David Chipperfield in Berlin and, that of St. Kolumba (2003-2007) by Peter Zumthor in Cologne.

Design, Restoration and Conservation in Italy (1945-2014)

Matteo Cassani Simonetti

In Italy, during the second half of the 20th century, the link between architectural design and restoration was gradually broken and those subjects became two different disciplines. In Venice, in 1964, at the congress *Il monumento per l'uomo* was edited the *Carta di Venezia* which became one of the most important text of the restoration culture. These norms excluded - de facto - the possibility of modern architectural works to intervening on the ancient architectures.

Before, during the years of reconstruction, the difference between design and restoration practices was less marked and the Italian architectural culture elaborated a own method to transform an ancient building in a modern work. Architects like Bbpr, Piero Bottoni, Ignazio Gardella, Liliana Grassi, Mario Ridolfi and Bruno Zevi designed works which express this idea of unity between the past architecture and the actual one and were appreciated by the restoration culture also.

After 1964, while were elaborated some other text like the *Carta italiana del restauro* (1972) or the *Carta della conservazione e del restauro degli oggetti d'arte e di cultura* (1987), some architects like Massimo Carmassi, Giorgio Grassi, Bruno Minardi, Adolfo Natalini, Franco Purini e Francesco Venezia, continued proposing another idea of restoration founded on the link between ancient and modern architecture which is alive in new generations of architects.

Iberian Peninsula: Restoration as Processing; Reading and Interpretation as a Method (1980-2014)

Gianpaola Spirito

Since the mid-80s, interventions into build heritage in Spain and Portugal have been particularly relevant. Relevant enough to divert the attention that architects and specialists once conferred to other countries, such as Italy and Germany during their postwar reconstruction. After the end of Franco's and Salazar's dictatorships, Spain and Portugal entered in the European Community in 1986. The democratic governments realized the modernisation of the countries: building infrastructures and public facilities; regenerating cities and recovering architectural heritage, with the community funds. The architectural heritage is considered a resource, a tourist attraction and a cultural growth's device. So a lot of operations on architectural heritage is widespread in Spain and Portugal in the last thirty years. Among them this essay talks about the

transformation of existing monuments to give them a second life.

Alvaro Siza, Rafael Moneo, Gonalo Byrne, Jos  Ignacio Linazasoro - whose works are described in this essay - share the same method: they read the place and the pre-existing building carefully, they convert it according to its characters. Connecting urban fragments belonging to different times they enhance the monuments's role within the city and with its inhabitants. The current recession have changed the mode pre-existing buildings are considered, regardless of their historic values or their author. They may become "raw matter" for the city, available for new uses. Furthermore, the reduction of resources due to the crisis has determined that each intervention, also of reuse and transformation, have to deal with energy efficiency. For example, the school of Hostelry in Medina Sidonia, designed by Sol89, reuses an early 19th century slaughterhouse employing several bioclimatic features have been inherited from vernacular tradition: the different heights and slants of the roof allow greater control of the effects of the sunlight; the internal patios act as ventilation shafts; the outer walls guarantee high thermal inertia.

RESEARCH

Rethinking Venice Charter Fifty Years Later

Nicoletta Marconi

The Venice Charter is one of the most important and long-standing international documents regarding architectural restoration. It was signed in 1964 by 23 experts, among whom the Italians Roberto Pane and Pietro Gazzola; they took part in the *International Conference of Architects and Technicians for monuments and sites*, organized by the Italian Ministry of Fine Arts and UNESCO. The document established basic principles for architectural conservation and restoration so that the monumental buildings from the past could be preserved for future generations. Today, in light of the evolution of restoration practices and recent changes in the guidelines of the architectural profession, the principles and objectives of the Venice Charter should be re-examined. The new guidelines favour interventions on existing buildings rather than the creation of new buildings. However, it is evident that there is disagreement in the this field. It seems to have dissociated the architectural project from the conservation project. This essay analyzes the principles and the content of the Venice Charter, which is credited with regarding the building not as a single object from a culture or a society, but rather as an integral part of the city, the landscape, as well as the so-called «minor» architecture. The Venice Charter anticipated the present trend of recovering our architectural heritage; it is based on the dialectic relationship between the pre-existent and innovation, and is aimed at solving the delicate balance between the new and the historic city.

Renzo Piano «How to Preserve the Memory of the Places that Change?»

Lorenzo Ciccarelli

Mainly known for its fine new museums and skyscrapers all over the world, Renzo Piano has been involved several times in restoring, reconvertng and transforming existing buildings and disused factories. This paper analyses in particular the seminal experiences of the Unesco «Laboratorio di quartiere» in Otranto (1979) and the renovation of the Schlumberger industrial workshops in Paris (1981-84). In the first one Piano – after the seven years Centre Pompidou building site – plunged in a little historical urban centre in southern Italy, proposing soft and punctual intervention techniques. In the second one the Genoese architect faced for the first time the reconvention of an industrial plant, experimenting design approaches later used in the huge renovation of the Lingotto in Turin (1987-2002). Moreover, recently, Piano inserted new buildings in very delicate contexts: the metallic volume of the Fondation Path  in a historical city block in Paris (2006-2014) and the mending of the architectural and natural landscape of Ronchamp (2006-2011), with the addition of a new gatehouse, monastery and guesthouse near the Le Corbusier masterpiece. Discussing these projects some common strategies emerge: preserving the external walls as shared urban symbols; designing not a finished building but a kit of prefabricates parts; using the vegetation and the water as hinges between the renewed building and the urban context.

Interiors and Cities: Restoration of Paolo Portoghesi in Montecatini and Treviso

Benjamin Chavardès

Portoghesi is a singular figure; as he led with the same level of commitment his career as both an historian and an architect. His restoration projects are rarely considered, even though one would legitimately wonder how he does operate when he uses the past to make it a material for its project. Two projects seem to be particularly relevant here: the restoration of «Il Tettuccio» thermal baths in Montecatini and the restoration of the old Santa Maria dei Battuti hospital in Treviso. As regards «Il Tettuccio», Portoghesi continues the work of the Florentine architect Ugo Giovannonzi by creating an inner forest. The second project's aim is to repopulate the historical center and reintegrate the complex in the urban fabric. In order to do so, Portoghesi recreates permeability and continuities. To work on the existing building, he takes care of differentiating the creative restoration from the conservative one. Outside, he mainly works on the unity appearance of the building complex. Inside, he works on one room after the other, depending on the characteristic of the existing space and its new final usage. The whole restoration project can be understood as a story where each room represents a new chapter.

The Uncertain Destiny of Melnikov House in Moscow

Anna Vyazemtseva

Recently the famous house of architect Konstantin Melnikov, a masterpiece of avant-guard architecture, built in the city-center of Moscow between 1927 and 1929, has passed from the descendants of Melnikov to the State and has become a museum, affiliated with a State Museum of Architecture «A.V. Ščusev». The event was overshadowed by a receivership dispute between the Museum and the architect's grand daughter Ekaterina Karinskaja, and, discussed by the chief media, has divided the Russian intellectual community between ones who accepted the operation and others who did not approve the forced methods applied by the State. Anyway, despite the public visits available until December, 2014, the professional community is still waiting for the definite project of future museum which was not already announced. Meantime the conditions of the construction has become always worse, despite the question has been being discussed since early 1980. The restoration of 1990s was inefficient, no one of different projects proposed during last years was approved. The winner of the last unofficial competition, promoted by Museum «A.V. Ščusev» in 2013, the project by Moscow architects «Citizenstudio» proposed to reject any intervention if not conservation measures. Even though the Museum has accepted this concept, there is no news about the conservation project prepared. In this article we try, examining different fonts - books, publications in the press and by interviewing competent authorities, to understand the state of affairs and, for one more time, attract attention to this one of the most important buildings of the world architecture.

The Church of Santa Marta in Venice (1997-2006) by Vittorio De Feo

Renata Codello

The ancient building is to be found near the western edge of Venice, in an area already urbanised in the 14th century. In 1993, Codello, at the time a functionary of the Superintendency of Venice, intervened to stop static instability provoking the collapse of the western façade of the ancient church. In 1997, it was the general state of abandonment that led to urgent intervention and to the collaboration project with the great Italian architect Vittorio De Feo in order to reflect on the architectural space of the ancient construction. A series of in-depth surveys were carried out which made it possible to reconstruct all the historical phases of the building. From this it became clear that there was a need to extend the interventions of static consolidation to various different points of the building, while making sure they were entirely functional to the conservation of the building materials and not invasive of the ancient structures. Thus, interventions were carried out to further guarantee the survival of the historical building, studying those best suited to a Romanic structure, in solid brick, with decorative elements made up of pilasters joined together with ogival arches resting on stone corbels. The new purpose of the ex-church of St. Martha was to be used both to welcome passengers and as an auditorium and exhibition chamber. Thorough restoration work was carried out on the ancient walls, the decorative covering, the faux marbles and the frescoed friezes still to be found on the internal walls. Furthermore, a single – albeit highly articulated – architectural element was also designed to accommodate for its new use despite being an ex-church, capable of satisfying the needs of the various public activities yet in full respect and appreciation of the ancient edifice. Thus the great wooden structure – a theatre capable of housing 150 people – met the requisites of the project reversibility, and was designed in such a way as to be able to perform the new function within the space of the ex-church of St. Martha, making the whole a single unit which (in full respect of the ancient setting) dialogues with its contemporary role. The intervention received the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage (Europa Nostra Awards 2005) and the project came in for special mention at the 10th edition of the «Città di Oderzo» Architecture Prize.

Doctrine and Operativeness of Restoration. The «Regenerative» Action by Emanuele Fidone

Maria Grazia Turco

In the past few years Emanuele Fidone has won numerous awards for his architectural designs. In the last two decades the Sicilian architect has stood out for the coherent method he adopts in his projects for extremely important pre-existing architectural artefacts, projects in which he maintains their material interpretability and authenticity. One of his early projects (with Giuseppe Barci, 1997-2000) involved the nineteenth-century covered market in Ortigia, Syracuse, next to the Archaic-Greek Temple of Apollo; his task was to turn the indoor market into a tourist service centre. Another was the restoration of the Early Christian Basilica of St. Peter's (2008) in Syracuse; here the strong point of the design was the spatial recomposition of the

old building and reinstatement of the original plan of the church irreversibly altered by a restoration project performed in the fifties. A third project, together with Bruno Messina, was the recovery of the monastic complex of Santa Maria del Gesù in Modica (1996-2008) where his main focus was on light, the natural light entering through the new structures to illuminate the pre-existing elements which were left in their current state as ruins.

Neues Museum in Berlin (2003-2009) by David Chipperfield and St. Kolumba in Cologne (2003-2007) by Peter Zumthor

Leila Signorelli

The coexistence of old and new is a cornerstone of the work of Döllgast first and of Wiedemann then and it returns in some recent works on the ruins of World War II in Germany, which take as reference the experiences of the Federal Republic. In particular, these works of restoration are expression of the material culture that seems to characterize the country in relation with the theme of ruins and their almost physical «aura», that could not be divided from its material manifestation. In the restoration of the Neues Museum there are some fixed principles: the project is first interested in the present, the point between past and future, and in the research for a dialogue with the ancient part, that go along with its construction techniques and its becoming through time. The project finds solutions step by step, making the museum congenial to the changing needs, setting a new balance in the architecture between old and new. The Museum St. Kolumba is an intervention that is grafted on a previous one, belonging to post-war period. In the project Zumthor preserves the complex stratigraphy of a place among the oldest in Cologne, giving a recognizable face to his intervention. The new becomes a stratification that is grafted on the ruins using a brick of special format design by the architect, protecting the archaeological remains of St. Kolumba, playing with light and shadow. Both works – Neues Museum and St. Kolumba – are united by a deep interest in the material culture that built the ancient architecture, in which resides the spark that triggers the design process on the existing with significant results among the works of restoration of the XXI century.

Piero Bottoni's Restorations in Ferrara (1953-1965)

Matteo Cassani Simonetti

The projects for Minerbi's House and Renata di Francia Palace are the most important works which Bottoni designed for the city of Ferrara in the 1950s and in the 1960s. Both projects invest pre-existing buildings: the first, a medieval house and a hall with 14th century fresco painting which will become the house of Giuseppe Minerbi, while the second a renaissance palace which will become in the University Palace of the city. Appointed by Minerbi to studying the project for his home, Bottoni elaborated some plan to link the ancient spaces with the modern ones according the modern structures with the characteristics and the materials of existing building but avoiding any stylistic mimesis. Like to the project of Muggia's villa in Imola (1936-38) the aim of Bottoni's research was the unity of these different parts

based on the interpretation of the ancient building through the author *sensitivity, spirit and fantasia*.

The same types of intervention were employed by Bottoni in Renata di Francia Palace. The arcades of main court of the palace were partially closed by the architect with a large glass wall transforming the porch in the new distribution nucleus of the building preserving, at the same time, the image of original façade.

While the inner spaces of two buildings are strongly modified by Bottoni, the external façades were maintained in the original shapes: for Bottoni, modern architecture in urban context can make a unity with the ancient part principally in inner spaces.

Further Historiography: Malaparte House in Capri by Curzio Malaparte

Paolo Desideri

The essay, referred to the very known villa Malaparte in Capri, focuses on two themes apparently distant, but in reality strictly interwoven: the attribution of the project fully to landlord Curzio Malaparte and the structural analysis of the roof slab, the most famous architectural solution of the villa.

Recently the authorship of the villa was definitely recognized to the only Curzio Malaparte, contradicting the myth that wanted Adalberto Libera as the principal architect. The lack of documents and an unusual spatial distribution, far from the elegant and rational plans of the buildings of Libera during the Twenties and the Thirties, distrusted a direct intervention of the Tyrolean architect. But also the constructive and structural solution adopted during the building site address to Curzio Malaparte, a man outside the box and free from the professional constraints. In particular the essay is devoted to explore the structure of the roof slab, alternately a staircase and a terrace, realized around 1940. The analysis of this complex and very delicate ceiling is the first step, necessary to conceive a future restoration of the famous villa, 75 years later its construction.