

# Research Encounters

*via*

# Architecture's Methods

17th Annual PhD Student Symposium



[ncl.ac.uk/apl/ahra](http://ncl.ac.uk/apl/ahra)

**17th AHRA PhD Student Symposium on  
'Research Encounters via Architecture's Methods'  
hosted by the School of Architecture, Planning and  
Landscape, Newcastle University, Newcastle Upon  
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The papers in this book include proceedings of the 17th AHRA PhD Student Symposium held virtually in April 2020. The abstracts were blind-reviewed and the papers included in this publication have been copy-edited.

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**Symposium coordinator:**  
James Craig

**Symposium organisers:**  
Alex Blanchard  
Ray Verall  
Sonali Dhanpal  
Kieran Connolly  
Ashley Mason

**Conference website & administrator:**  
Sarah Delap

**Peer reviewers:**  
Juliet Odgers  
Ashley Mason  
Ray Verrall  
James Craig  
Kieran Connolly  
Alex Blanchard  
Sonali Dhanpal  
Prue Chiles  
Christos Kakalis  
Matthew Ozga-Lawn  
Jianfei Zhu  
Jonathan Hale  
David Boyd

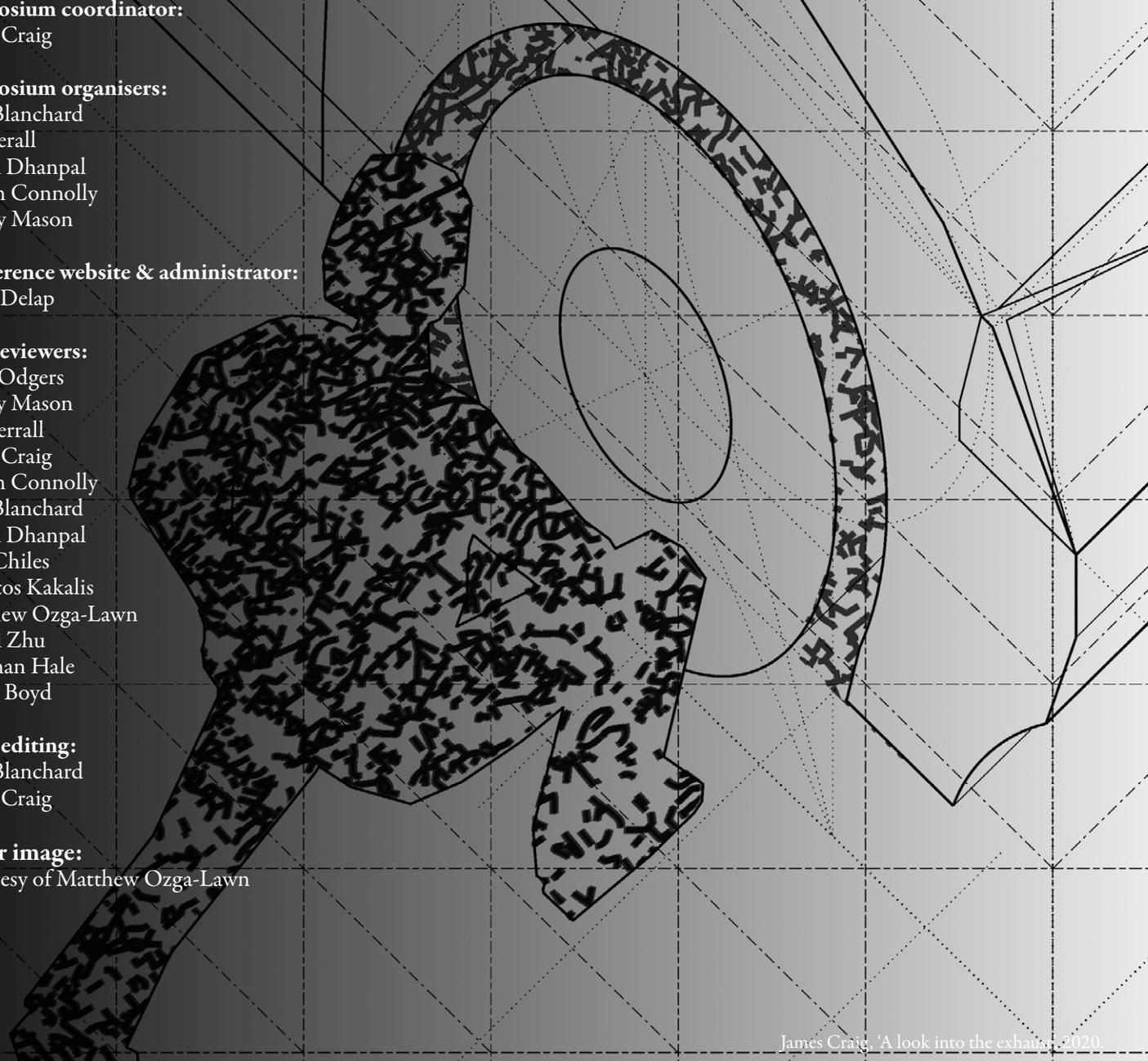
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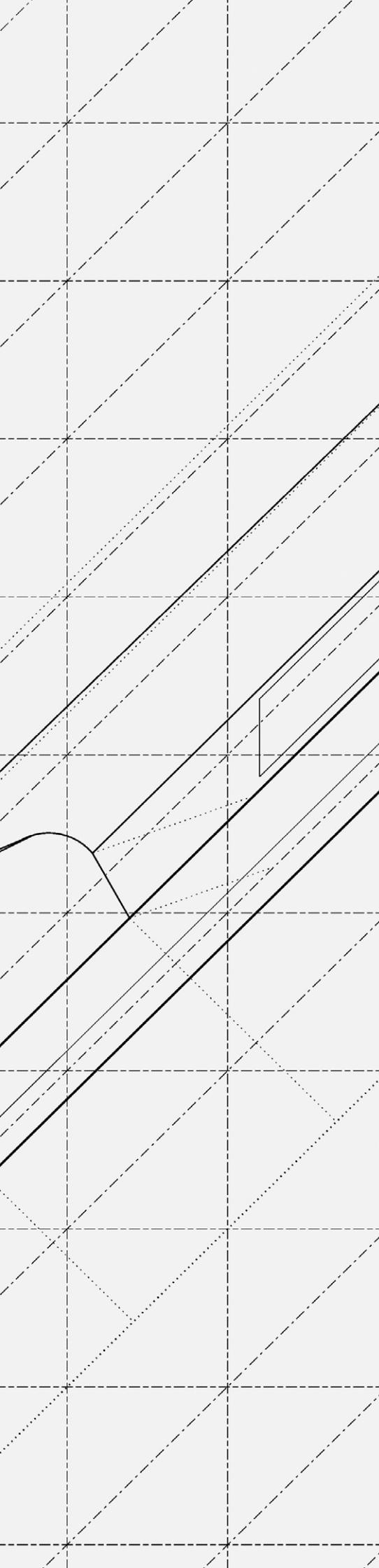
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**Publisher**  
School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape  
Newcastle University  
Newcastle  
NE1 7RU

+44 (0)191 208 5831  
[ahra.phd@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:ahra.phd@newcastle.ac.uk)

Twitter: [@newcastleuniapl](https://twitter.com/newcastleuniapl)  
Instagram: [NewcastleUniAPL](https://www.instagram.com/NewcastleUniAPL)  
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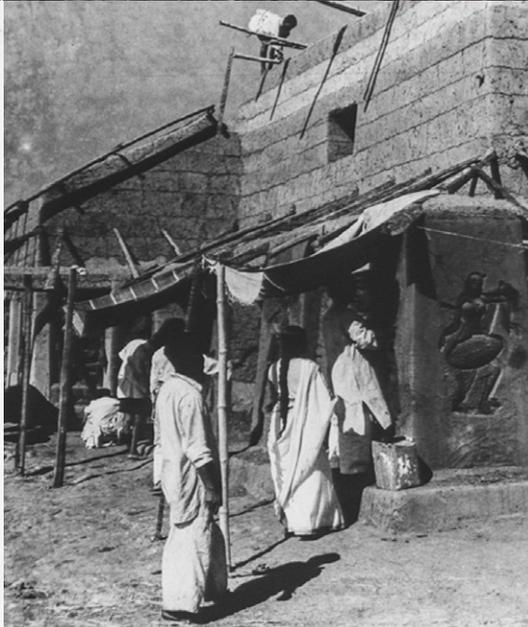
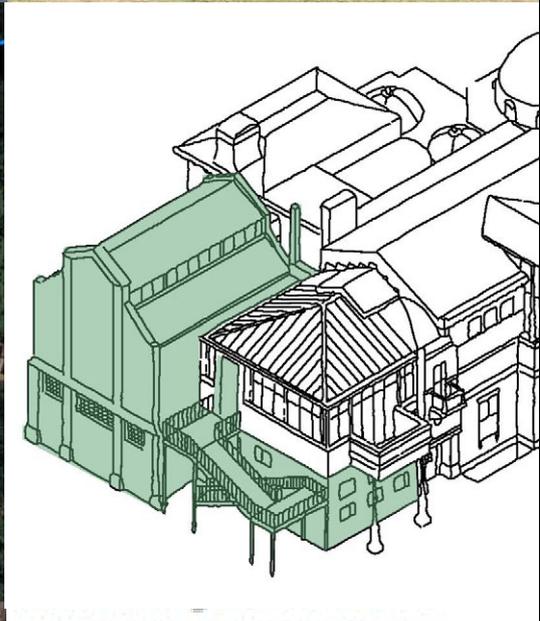
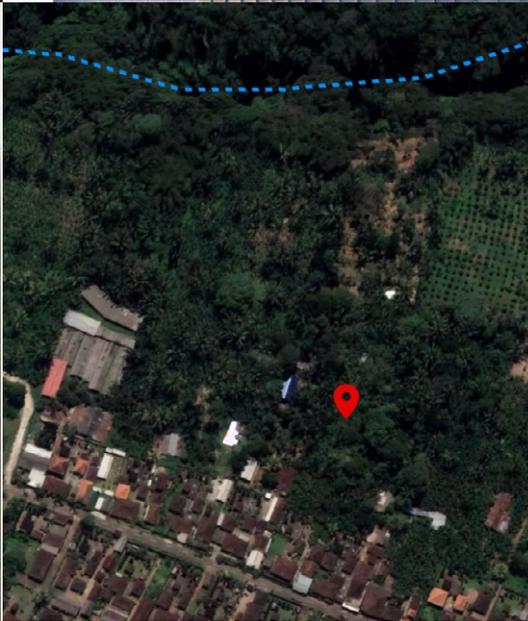
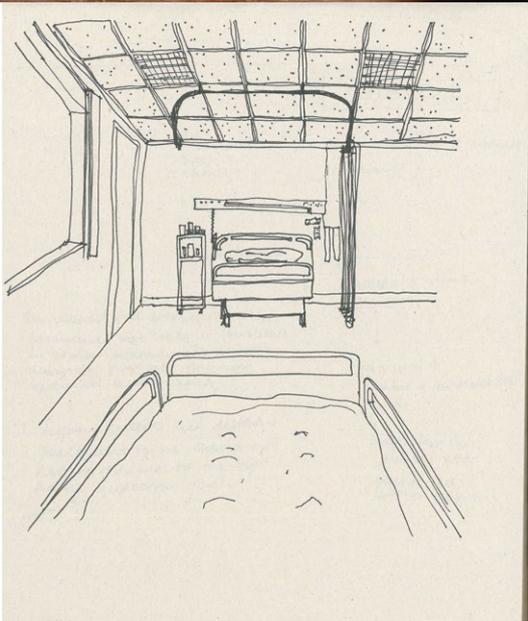
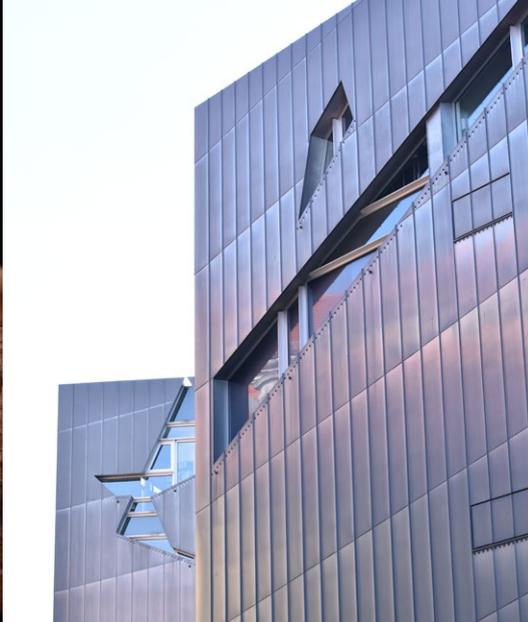


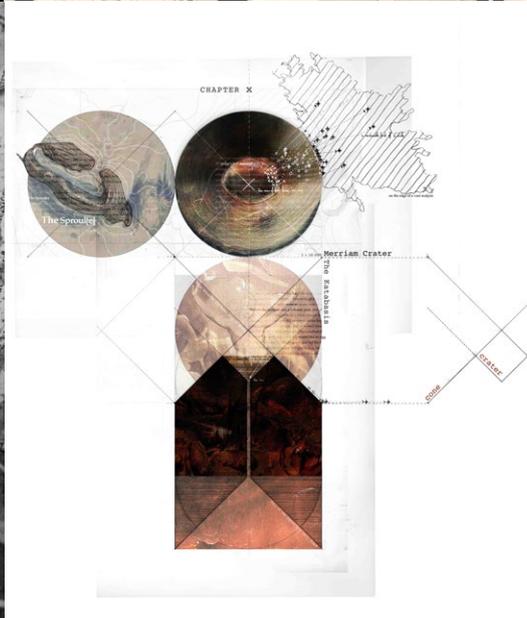
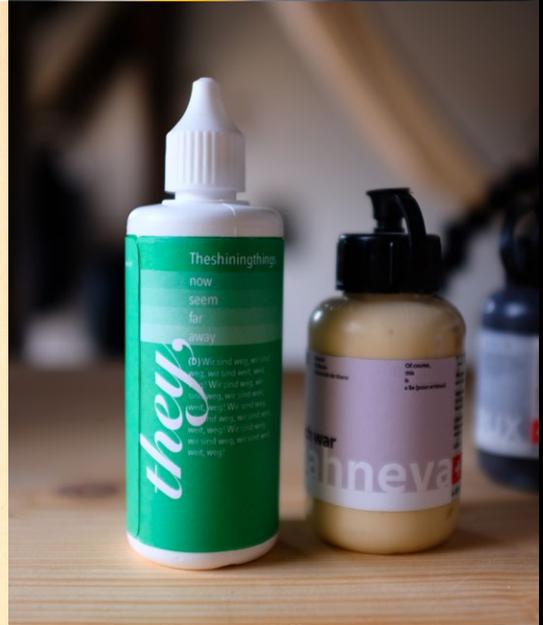
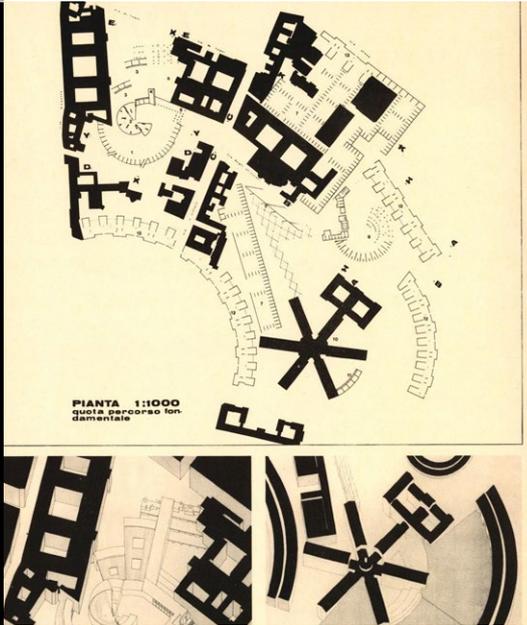
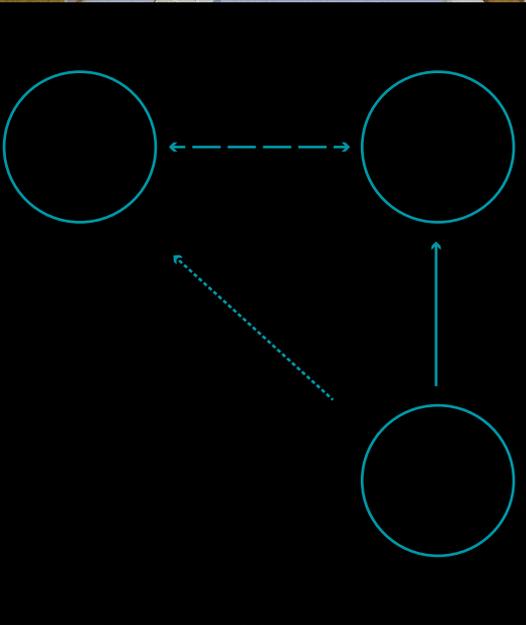
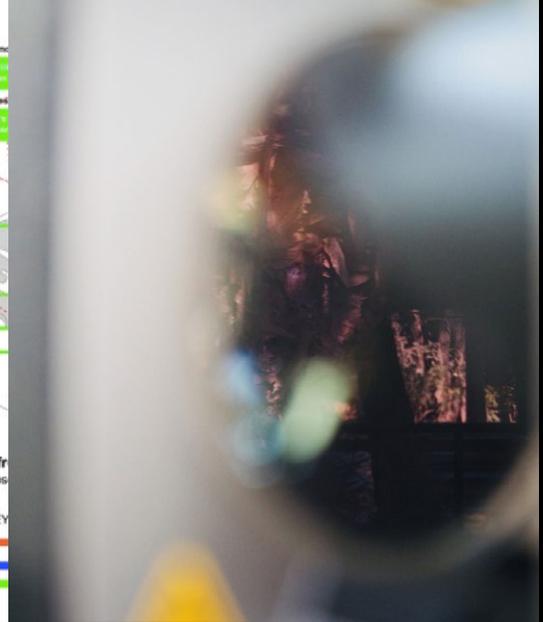
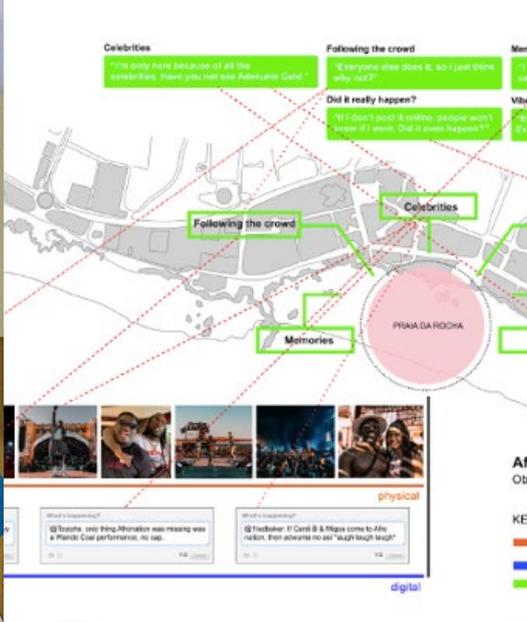


## Symposium call for papers

The Architectural Humanities Research Association (AHRA) 17th AHRA PhD Student Symposium 2020, to be hosted by the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at Newcastle University, takes as its departure point the tendency for architectural research to be dissected into distinct disciplinary categories, including 'architectural history', 'architectural theory' and 'architectural design'. This categorisation implies that architectural research requires methods to be applied from outside of its discipline, rather than conceiving of architectural research as a discipline with its own research methods. How then might we consider our encounters with architectural research in a way that links to our own ways of working and conception of the wider world?

Encountering architectural research in this way means acknowledging that architecture is not only inherently interdisciplinary, but that it is also a field offering its own distinct practices and ways of relating to society and culture. It is such re-thinking that, as this symposium proposes, opens the possibility for architectural research to be situated as a core research discipline. This re-consideration of architectural research is part of an ongoing project conceived by the Architectural Research Collaborative (ARC) at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at Newcastle University.





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## Professor Adam Sharr

Head of School

Colleagues and I are proud to have hosted the AHRA PhD Symposium in Newcastle in 2020. It didn't prove to be the event that we first intended because of lockdown restrictions imposed in the UK to curb the COVID-19 pandemic. But we are delighted that we were able to support the online presentation of fascinating and important papers from a group of stimulating emerging architectural researchers.

The event provided an opportunity to reflect on architecture's methods, developing what is an important preoccupation for our School concerning how our disciplinary knowledges and approaches can contribute to the intellectual commonwealth. There's growing interest from outside our profession in how architects think and know. For example, scholars in business studies have become increasingly fascinated by 'design thinking'. Authors such as Abbie Griffin, Nigel Cross, and Tim Brown have sought to learn from architects' and designers' distinctively messy but synthetic approaches to complicated problems – such as the complexity of shaping cities, or responding to the climate emergency – working holistically, innovatively, chaotically, and intuitively towards creative outcomes. Likewise, scholars in cultural studies and philosophy seem to be renewing their interest in how architectural proposals can describe and configure whole worlds; worlds sometimes configured productively sideways-on to habitual expectations. Graham Harman, the philosopher of Object Oriented Ontology, for example, has gone so far as to relocate to an architecture school, and Chantal Mouffe has articulated her agonistic theory of politics in architectural terms. Indeed, we've long

been familiar with how architecture becomes verb when computer programmers talk about architecturing software, and political scientists talk about architecturing agreements.

Architectural scholars are sometimes cast as methodological borrowers – making use of engineering, historical, theoretical, and social scientific approaches – and we're keen in our School to return the favour: to celebrate what architectural ways of thinking and knowing can offer in inter-, multi- and trans-disciplinary contexts.

Our architectural community at Newcastle has grown significantly this decade. Alongside exciting new academic colleagues – our biggest strength combined with our amazing, energetic, and diverse student body – we have benefitted from substantial investment in renewed workshop and studio facilities. We are establishing the Farrell Centre – courtesy of a substantial gift from Newcastle alumnus Terry Farrell – bringing public galleries and an urban room for our city, opening a permanent exhibition about the forces shaping the design of this region while simultaneously establishing an international programme of exhibitions and events celebrating the latest research in architecture and cities. We are setting up the Hub for Biotechnology in the Built Environment (HBBE), which is scaling-up to architectural size innovative biological materials that can absorb CO2 and process waste, while thinking through the ethical and cultural consequences of those materials. As part of this work, HBBE is building 'The OME', the world's first experimental biological house. Colleagues' creative practice

research engages research with design, also often in conjunction with teaching. Examples include the Testing Ground programme, which has produced several award-winning pavilions as part of the Art and Architecture programme at Kielder Forest Park, alongside projects co-produced with local communities here such as Fenham Pocket Park, plus the work of Stasus and CE+CA studio, and our Design Office, listed in the most recent *Architect's Journal 40 Under 40* of 'the UK's most exciting emerging architectural talent'. Alongside which, our school is home to two of the UK's leading research journals in our field: *arg: Architectural Research Quarterly* (Cambridge University Press), and *Journal of Architecture* (Routledge/RIBA). By means like these, colleagues and students in Newcastle seek not only to advance disciplinary knowledges in our field, but also to promote and extend the reach of architectural endeavour among wider academic, community, cultural, professional, and public constituencies.

On a personal note, having been involved in organising the first AHRA PhD Symposium, I'm delighted to see how the event has grown in reputation, popularity and international reach, to the point where being selected to present is now highly competitive and a badge of pride in itself. Since the start of 2020, we have become accustomed, globally, to wholly online events, meetings and symposia. This was one of the first in our field. I'm extremely grateful to my colleagues who adapted to changed circumstances so quickly, and have done excellent work in both leading the event and editing this volume: James Craig, Sonali Dhanpal, Ashley Mason,

Ray Verrall, Kieran Connolly, and Alex Blanchard. This has been a strange time for researching architecture – when visiting public buildings, urban spaces and archives has become so difficult, and when the loss of public life is so deeply felt – and the participants demonstrated resolve and resilience in presenting and discussing their work to us in tough times. I hope you find the papers collected here as fascinating, rewarding and valuable as I do.

This year's AHRA Student symposium is distinguished both by the quality of the contributions and the adaptability and practical creativity involved in staging the event online in response to the restrictions consequent to the Covid-19 pandemic. By now we are all (over-) familiar with the potentials and sad limitations of meeting through the screen and microphone. Back in the Spring of 2020 it took a leap of faith to imagine that a virtual conference could be successful, as it undoubtedly was. We look forward (yearn even) to see future AHRA events restored to full corporeality, and thank the organisers and participants for their determination to proceed in the face of these difficulties.

The papers presented here are characterised by their diversity and reach, both in terms of method and topic. There are contributions that engage with auto-ethnography, studies that explore storytelling and a variety of creative practice methods, alongside some that delve into literature in unexpected and more traditional ways. The topics show a wide global reach –Tyneside, Bali , China, India are all represented and decolonising concerns emerge strongly in the enquiries. It is a pleasure to see contributions from Italy, the USA, Germany, the Republic of Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England included in these proceedings. If we are not currently allowed to travel in person, we can still travel in the mind.

AHRA was created to provide an inclusive and comprehensive support network of researchers in architectural humanities across the UK and beyond. It promotes, supports, develops and disseminates high-quality research in all areas of architectural humanities.

It promotes the quality, breadth and significance of research in architectural humanities to the key institutional bodies in the UK including HEFCE/RAE, AHRC, ESRC, CABE, RIBA and SCHOSA. It supports the culture of research in architectural humanities internationally by facilitating a comprehensive network of established academics, encouraging the development of younger researchers and fostering the exploration of new and emerging areas of humanities research in architecture.

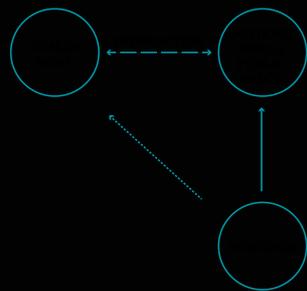
It develops research in this expanding area by providing regular forums for the exchange of ideas, a rigorous process of peer-review and the establishment of strong international links with partner organisations.

It disseminates research in architectural humanities through annual refereed conferences, meetings, research symposia and high-quality research publications - as well as reaching out to other researchers working in related disciplines.

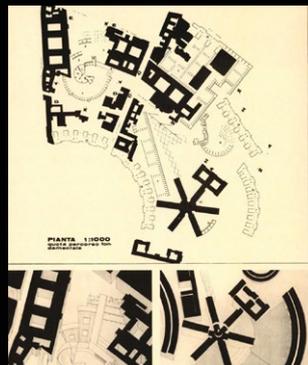
AHRA raises public awareness of the social, cultural, economic and political value of research in architectural history, theory, culture, design and urbanism. It provides access to a body of knowledge and informed opinion to statutory bodies and the academic community, as well as the wider public and the media - helping to set the terms of reference for debates about the quality of the built environment.



# 4 - Conveying



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1 *The Little Magazines Conference: After Modern Architecture*, 3-5 February 1977 organized by the IAUS New York. It was joined by many of the protagonists of the architectural debate on magazines, among which was Italian *Controspazio*.

Architectural drawings are often imbued with a normative message. This normativity does not constrain praxis; instead, it has a pedagogical function which constitutes a precondition for action.

## The abstract and the normative: Controspazio's architectural drawings

Davide Pisu, Stefano Mais, Marco Moro

### Rules and images

According to the French philosopher Françoise Choay,<sup>1</sup> the discipline of architecture has a twofold foundation: on one side, it is grounded on verbal rules, expressed mainly in the works of Vitruvius and Alberti. These texts act as an ordinate sequence of instructions and considerations that are meant to inform the aims, scopes and instruments of architects.<sup>2</sup> On the other, architecture was established by what Choay refers to as the *model*: a series of works that, due to their capacity to depict a possible future, act as instruments for a radical critique of the existing world, and lay the basis for imagining a 'project' for the cities. Choay refers to rules and models as *conceptual instruments* to understand architecture's ideological milieu. We seek, with this work, to extend Choay's definition towards a more inclusive perspective by which architects' works – the drawings that may or may not lead to the construction of a building<sup>3</sup> – act as euristic systems that inform practice.

Common sense typically assumes that pictures cannot convey a message and instead considers pictures representations of reality.<sup>4</sup> For example, Mitchell, in his book *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*, argues that the content of pictures is unrelated to conceptual meaning – meaning, for Mitchell, is instead brought to the picture by the spectator, who 'fills' the image with their interpretation.<sup>5</sup> While this idea can reflect the generic attitude towards graphic artefacts, it can also be challenged by the existence of pictures specifically conceived for a certain 'normative' purpose – for example, traffic signs or land-use maps – that cannot be understood without pre-existing knowledge of their function. Unlike these pictures, architectural drawings are often not forthright artefacts: they have a greater degree of interpretational complexity, which is strictly interrelated with their pedagogical dimension. Below, we investigate the normative and pedagogical roles of architectural drawings and describe a possible role of drawings in architectural debate.

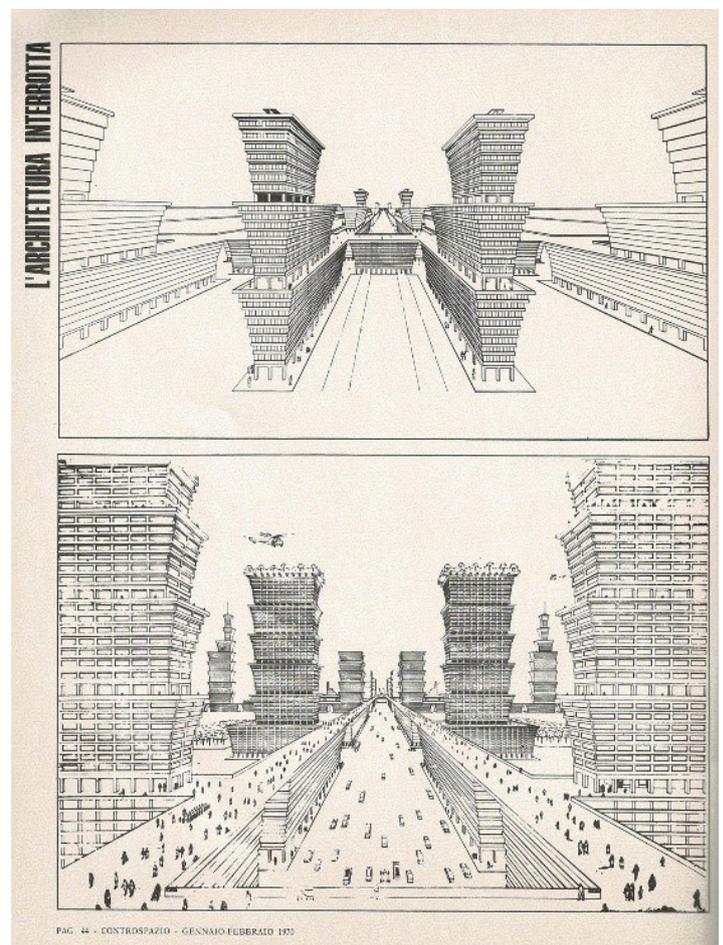
To do so, we analyse a set of selected architectural drawings, extrapolated from issues of the Italian architectural magazine *Controspazio* published between 1972 and 1978, a period in which the magazine served as a showcase for an emerging group of architects destined to profoundly impact the forthcoming debate and thus challenge the way architecture was conceived, produced and taught [1].

This group was the *Tendenza*, and its notable members included Aldo Rossi and Manfredo Tafuri.<sup>6</sup> The primary ideas articulated by this group and the other architects that subsequently joined its cause were (i) the need to be attentive to the 'reality' of architectural production, (ii) that they represented a spontaneous intellectual uprising of architects in the wake of academic tradition against modernist dogma and (iii) the importance of a novel gaze on the city, by which every urban parcel is considered a finite work of architecture.<sup>7</sup> Not all

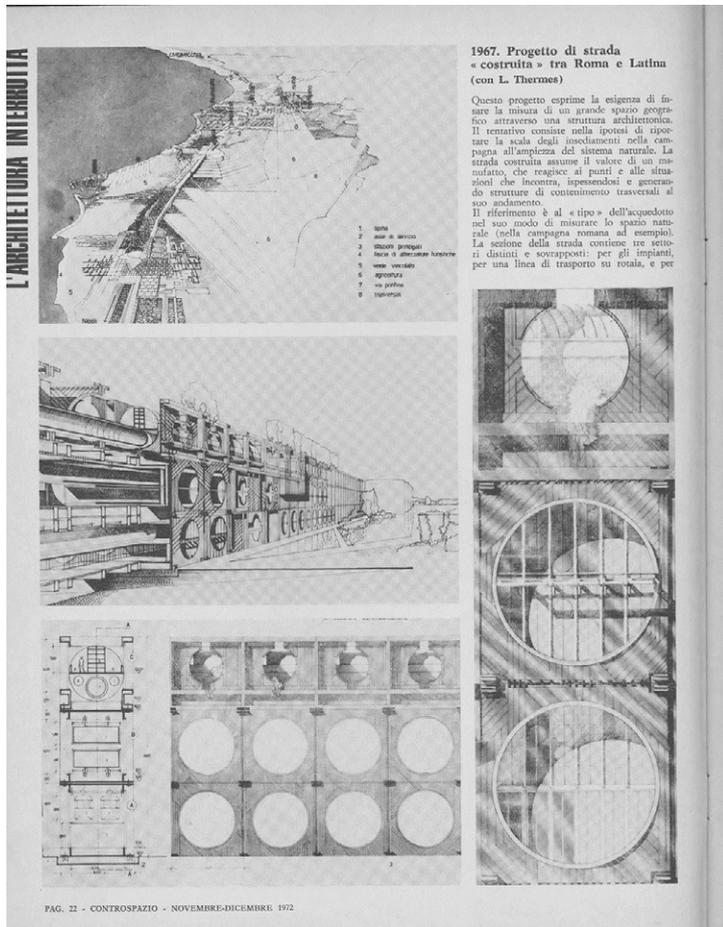
the drawings we selected represent buildings; instead, a series of drawings are presented that reflect a general attitude towards the design acts that may characterise the author's work, and may serve as a 'guide' for their work.

### The Italian *Tendenza* between the normative and the abstraction

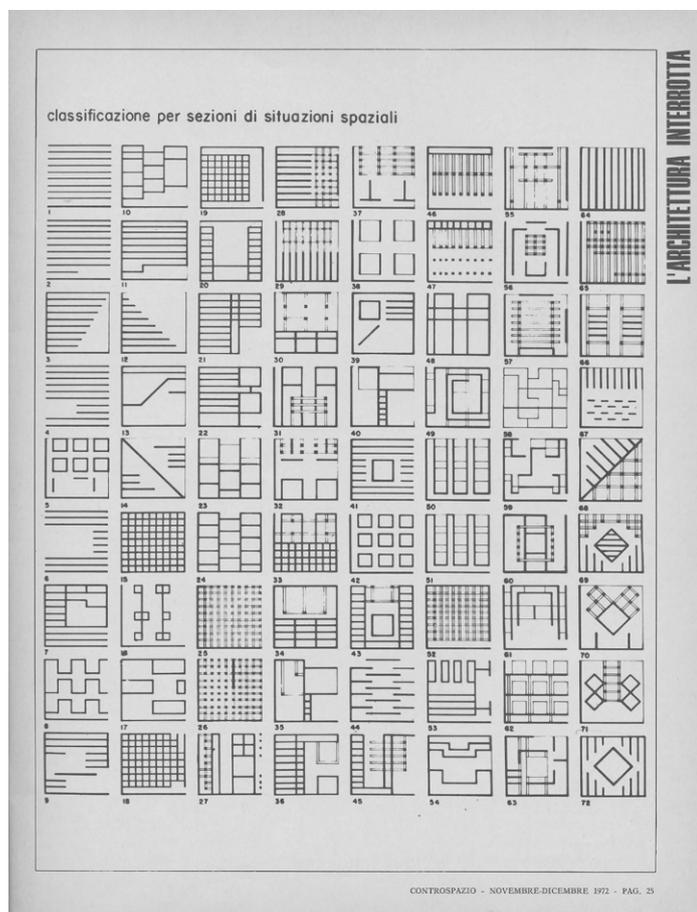
*La Tendenza* was the first – and is still today the most important – intellectual movement in Italian architecture that has occurred since the end of World War II. *Controspazio* was founded in 1969 to tackle the problem of the political placement of architects between the practice and the pedagogy of architecture;<sup>8</sup> the founders of the magazine believed this problem was due to a lack of representation in this period in leading Italian architectural magazines, such as *Casabella* and *Domus*, directed in that period respectively by Alessandro Mendini and Gio Ponti, both distant from the *Tendenza's* theses and from what, in that moment, was perceived as the frontline of the architectural debate.



2 Giovanni Ricciardi, perspective view.



3a Franco Purini: early works on the Aqueduct and 'Classificazione per sezioni di situazioni spaziali'



3b Franco Purini: early works on the Aqueduct and 'Classificazione per sezioni di situazioni spaziali'

An example of the political engagement of the magazine can be seen in issue number 1–2 from 1970, where the architectural vision presented in *Controspazio* extends its scope to include urban design, a move not out of place with the ideological implications of the movement. The design of the city by Giovanni Ricciardi<sup>9</sup> is the outcome of a set of norms external to the academic debate [2].

In issue number 11–12 from 1972, Franco Purini presented a retrospective of the earliest "design researches". The article was part of an ongoing series titled *Interrupted Architecture* [*Architettura interrotta*]. In the introduction, Purini writes:

*The reduction of the objects (elements) to a limited number, the classification by sections of their relations, the construction of space as coexistence of these "objects" and as a ratio with respect to a reference plane (base or wall), allows to set up a "description" of the composition based on a closed number of propositions, in an attempt to constrain the project by forcing the comparison with a series of primary preordinate situations.*<sup>10</sup>

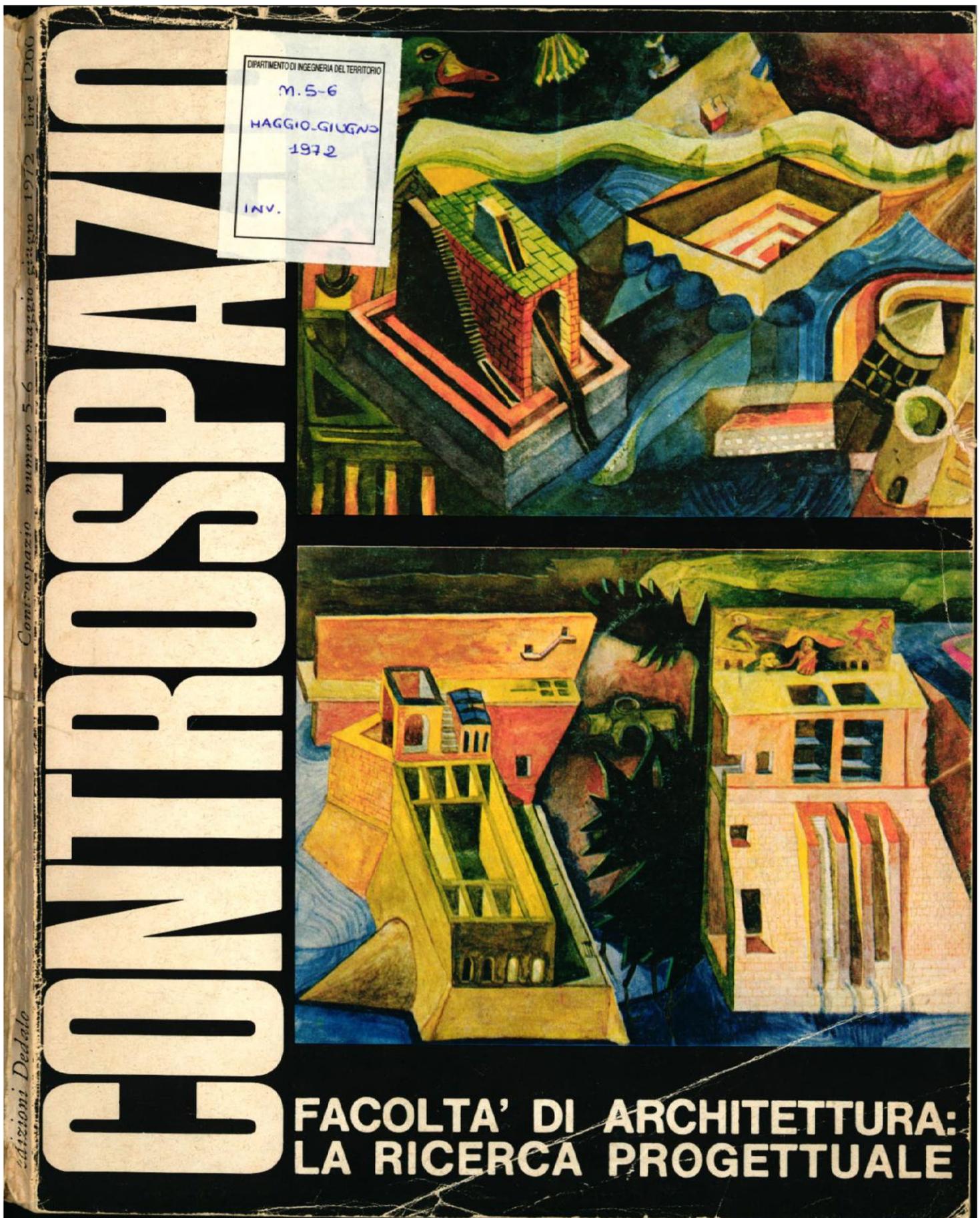
The primary preordinate situations refers to a 'constructive' process, or a set of rules. The graphic outcome of this idea is the drawing *Classificazione per sezioni spaziali*<sup>11</sup> [3]. Purini's synthesis is halfway between morphological and typological analysis – namely the act of 'filling' an image with an interpretation<sup>12</sup> – and an elegant and quasi-graphical approach that carries an intentional normative message. In fact, if, on one hand, this image can open new design scenarios for future projects, then it also will emerge as the outcome of these rules.

This graphicism is key to understanding another crucial component of architectural representation in those years' issues of *Controspazio*, namely, the inclination to a strong degree of abstraction that ultimately emphasised aspects that were deemed important by the *Tendenza*: the relationship between architecture and the urban – and territorial – scale of Italy's emerging design, likely in response to the emerging index-driven regulatory approach that in those very years was particularly surging in the 1968 Interministerial Decree 1444, which established dimensional standards for new urbanisations.

**'Non è vero che gli studenti non sanno disegnare'**<sup>13</sup>

Architectural production in Italy starts looking at the new urban dimension emphasising physical form over technocratic approaches of regulations and codes. Predictably, that affected the role of drawing in architecture as exemplified in *Controspazio* n.5/6, 1972, a special issue on architectural education illustrating students' works titled 'Progetto di edificio pubblico' (University of Naples) alongside 'Disegno territoriale dell'agro' or 'Fascia Periferica' (University of Rome) [4]. More than any other, Guido Canella (1931-2009) became 'the architect of hinterland',<sup>14</sup> best known for exploring the 'fuori scala' connotation of architectural artworks integrated into the Italian 'città territorio'.

As final design theses from Politecnico di Milano published in this issue, two of Canella's students were asked to design a higher education system in Calabria as part of a research project he led between 1967-69.<sup>15</sup> In step with the polycentric configuration of a region that had long suffered from geographical isolation and economic decline, Canella's students conceived the project in two phases: the first consisted of a *campo base* located near infrastructural nodes – this was



DIPARTIMENTO DI INGEGNERIA DEL TERRITORIO  
M. 5-6  
MAGGIO-GIUGNO  
1972  
INV.

Controspazio numero 5-6 maggio-giugno 1972 Lire 1200

edizioni Dedalo

FACOLTA' DI ARCHITETTURA:  
LA RICERCA PROGETTUALE

4 Cover of Controspazio n.5/6, 1972.

La seconda area è quella caratterizzata dall'infacotto tra l'edificio dell'amministrazione-direzione (12), ed il corpo lineare dei locali per la ricerca (14) con gli edifici dalla tipologia a corte (15) attestati lungo una gradinata in terra battuta. I due prospetti (l'ordine gigante e l'ordine nano rispettivamente) si contraddicono lungo la discesa, per dimensione e materiali.

L'ordine gigante, costruito magari in pietra locale, raggiunge la quota della piazza opponendosi al percorso in discesa con la crescita in altezza dei suoi elementi costitutivi (diverse gradazioni di luce e ombra quasi a reinventare gli incolumi luminosi di un tempio antico). All'opposto l'ordine nano costituito da un sistema di locali prefabbricati a un piano (14) poggiati su sostegni cilindrici di cemento, si adatta all'andamento della gradinata, conserva l'altezza costante lungo tutta la discesa, e si conclude in uno scavo (13) sotto la quota della piazza.

Il terreno dei tre cortili laterali ha una forte pendenza tale da garantire la chiusura dell'insediamento verso lo esterno, lungo tutta la gradinata. La fuga prospettica determinata dalla convergenza dei due ordini, conduce il suo primo tratto sulla piazza pavimentata a mosaico (10). Prosegue restringendosi drasticamente e allentandosi completamente le sue componenti. In questo secondo tratto della prospettiva, convergono, non più allineati, ma due superfici con diverse inclinazioni: da un lato, un grande spazio per riunioni all'aperto, una sorta di piazza di armi formata da terrazzamenti in salita e contrastati dalla fitta teoria degli alberi di un bosco; dall'altro, una grande struttura in ferro con travi contenenti percorsi, che sostiene i locali di amministrazione e di studio dipartimentali.

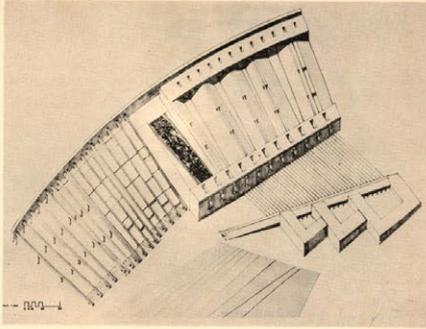
Questa parte dell'insediamento, più suscettibile di trasformazioni e di differenze, può essere completata in diverse fasi all'interno di un impianto predisposto.

I locali della biblioteca nella parte più alta della struttura formano un percorso lineare di collegamento e di distribuzione per le aule di studio.

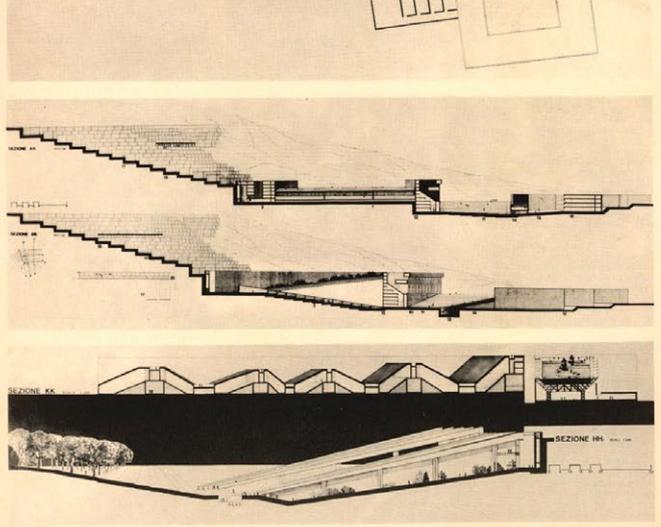
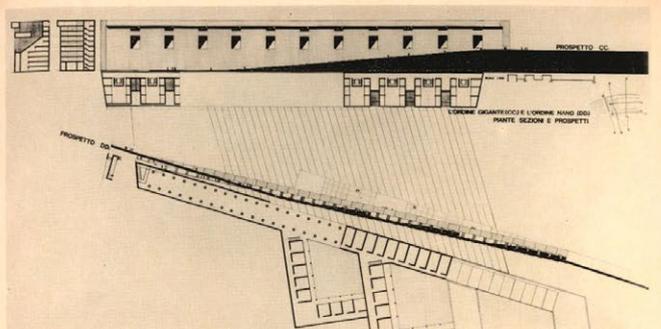
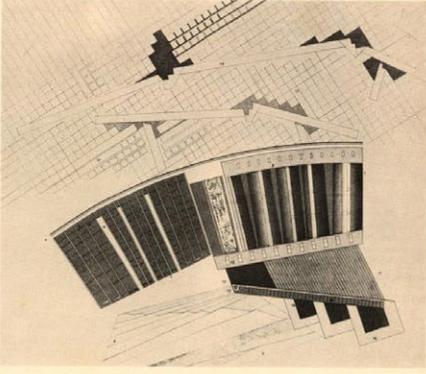
Il corpo «a forbice» che fa da contrafforte all'ordine gigante nell'area di cerniera (2) tra le aule didattiche e la struttura in ferro dei dipartimenti è una grande aula a gradoni per attività di massa, riunioni di lavoro e svago.

Sulla copertura inclinata che lungo i lati scopre il traliccio della struttura di sostegno è inserito un giardino: i colori, appunto, dei giardini meridionali sulla trabeazione di un tempio greco.

In margine alla descrizione del progetto, il montaggio fotografico dei riferimenti, precisa alcuni dettagli grammaticali di disegno e per via di ciò sostiene la contaminazione di un linguaggio di parole necessarie al disegno di questo progetto, per questo parli colare contesto.



In questa pagina: *assonometria e planimetria*. Nella pagina a fronte: *prospetti e sezioni*. 1. Aule per la didattica con laboratori e locali di servizio annessi. 2. Aula grande per attività di massa. 3. Laboratori tecnologici e locali di studio annessi. 4. Grande struttura metallica portante i locali di amministrazione e di studio dipartimentali. 5. Partici in metallo. 6. Biblioteca attestata al porticato. 7. Sistemazione del terreno agli estremi inferiori delle travi praticabili della struttura metallica. 8. Terrazzamenti nel terreno per grandi riunioni all'aperto. 9. Bosco. 10. Piazza con pavimentazione a mosaico. 11. Gradinata in terra battuta. 12. Direzione, amministrazione, depositi (l'ordine gigante). 13. Parte infossata della piazza. 14. Sistema di spazi per la ricerca (l'ordine nano). 15. Edifici a cortile per il lavoro di gruppo. 16. Cortili con terreno in forte pendenza. 17. Tracciato indicativo per le residenze. 18. Edificio porticato a due piani: momento di consolidamento funzionale del tracciato residenziale. 19. Smagliature interne al tracciato residenziale con diverse destinazioni funzionali. A pag. 101: montaggio fotografico di riferimenti.



5a Design theses by Alessandro Cristofellis and Giorgio Fiorese on the new 'University of Calabria' supervised by Canella in 1970.

Tesi di laurea di Giorgio Fiorese, 1970 Relatore: Guido Canella

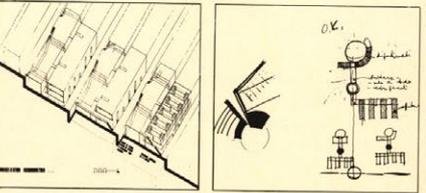
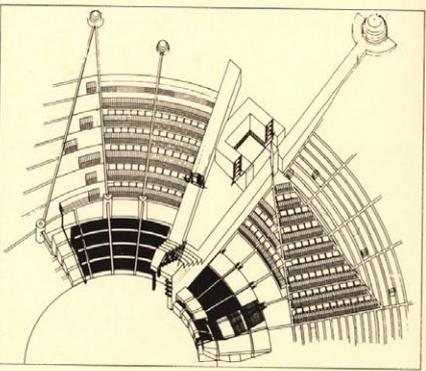
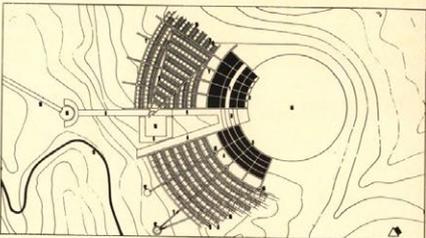
Per una geometria delle funzioni

Sul programma insediativo riferito al campo base è stato impostato, sperimentalmente, un lavoro diretto a scoprire e inventare le relazioni (contatti e portati) di questo con un disegno d'architettura: ad esempio, da una parte la definizione degli elementi necessari e sufficienti a garantire (e incentivare) quel determinato funzionamento; dall'altra, il tentativo di arrivarvi sinteticamente, ad una figura dimostrativa del rapporto tra l'insediamento, le sue parti e il terreno nella sua conformazione. Tentando contemporaneamente un'altra strada che, dopo aver raggiunto una semplificazione delle funzioni e aver stabilito i rapporti fondamentali (per esempio, tra spazi della ricerca e della didattica), assuma questi come elementi iniziali di un processo e porti a lavorare su di essi, con prove e riprove, deformandoli (nell'importarli in una logica complessiva) e introducendo nuovi elementi di connessione. In questo modo di procedere è necessario il ricorso alla conoscenza storica, riportata ad una dimensione operativa di guida per la pratica progettuale, attraverso esperienze storiche con cui confrontarsi. La possibilità, ad esempio, di leggere la pianta dell'abbazia di San Gallo come diagramma di comportamento, vero e proprio programma di uso di quell'insediamento.

Era importante comprendere come arrivare alla definizione architettonica di uno spazio, mediante approcci diversi: partendo da alcune considerazioni intorno alle induzioni dal comportamento, per esempio di Palladio e di Le Corbusier, e da altre sul rapporto tra natura e paesaggio artificiale (l'ombra dell'albero fuori dalla città murata in una sequenza di Edipo Re di Pasolini suggeriva uno spazio architettonico ben determinato nel suo uso); così come alla costruzione di un paesaggio artificiale era attendibile esempio il palazzo per l'industria pesante di Karkov. Le singole parti dell'insediamento costituiscono un sistema, le cui relazioni fisiche trovano sempre riscontro nel funzionamento; ad esempio, la piazza circolare, che determina la configurazione dell'insediamento, è anche luogo con ampia disponibilità ad usi collettivi diversi, e, più generalmente, lo spazio cui si riferisce (anche indirettamente) e in momenti particolari la vita dell'università.

L'immagine generale dell'insediamento è definibile come un sistema di edifici, con i collegamenti assimilabili ai rapporti fra una macchina e le sue parti; i gradi di libertà del meccanismo ne rendono possibile l'adattamento dall'orografia del terreno. Ma quali sono le parti di questo sistema?

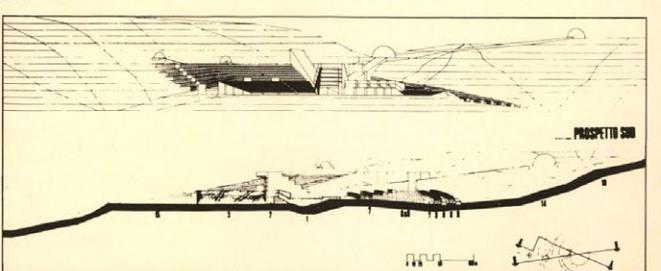
I tre edifici che si affacciano sul terrapieno circolare: i laboratori con un ambiente molto ampio a terra, atto a contenere gli impianti e gli strumenti di maggior dimensione per la sperimentazione tecnologica; agli altri piani



aule e laboratori, con gli strumenti più leggeri, con possibilità di affaccio continuo sullo spazio più grande; in copertura, infine, una gradinata per spettacoli, riunioni all'aperto, eccetera. Il secondo edificio, ancora di laboratori, oltre a concludere gli edifici in linea, che contengono i percorsi principali, determina, nel coprirlo, uno spazio omogeneo alla grande piazza, diventandone la parte riparata dal sole. Il terzo edificio, per l'insegnamento, è generato da una sezione di arena, che contrappone per tutta la sua lunghezza due gradinate; la suddivisione in aule è prevista per mezzo di pareti provvisorie.

Le residenze, viste come una parte non aggiunta dell'insediamento, sono elementi singoli che si collocano all'interno di un tracciato subordinato al disegno generale dell'insediamento e all'orografia; alle residenze inoltre sono direttamente ritirati i luoghi di studio e lavoro di gruppo. La maglia uniforme dei percorsi (anche corridoi, ponti, luoghi di riposo fra gradinate, spazi necessari alla costruzione di pareti divisorie) costituisce la trama omogenea atta a consentire il massimo di accessibilità e quindi il minimo di segregazione alle funzioni dell'università.

In questa pagina: *montaggio del progetto su una fotografia dell'insediamento di Delfi, sezione e prospetto*. 1. Aula. 2. Servizi alle aule. 3. Laboratori tecnologici pesanti con aule di insegnamento e di studio - copertura a gradinata. 4. Spazio di servizio ai laboratori tecnologici pesanti. 5. Servizi generali dell'università e della residenza. 6. Laboratori. 7. Strada coperte. 8. Residenza. 9. Locali di studio, lavoro di gruppo ed eventuali altre residenze (temporanee). 10. Collegamenti tra spazi di servizio ai laboratori tecnologici pesanti, residenza, locali di studio, lavoro di gruppo ed eventuali altre residenze (temporanee). 11. Strada esistente (secondaria). 12. Ritorni. 13. Collegamenti tra spazi di servizio ai laboratori tecnologici pesanti, residenza, locali di studio, lavoro di gruppo ed eventuali altre residenze (temporanee). 14. Strada coperte. 15. Piazza. 16. Spazi d'interesse verso l'esterno (Esposizione, ecc.). Nella pagina a fronte: *planimetria, assonometria, studi sulla residenza e schizzi*.



5b Design theses by Alessandro Cristofellis and Giorgio Fiorese on the new 'University of Calabria' supervised by Canella in 1970.

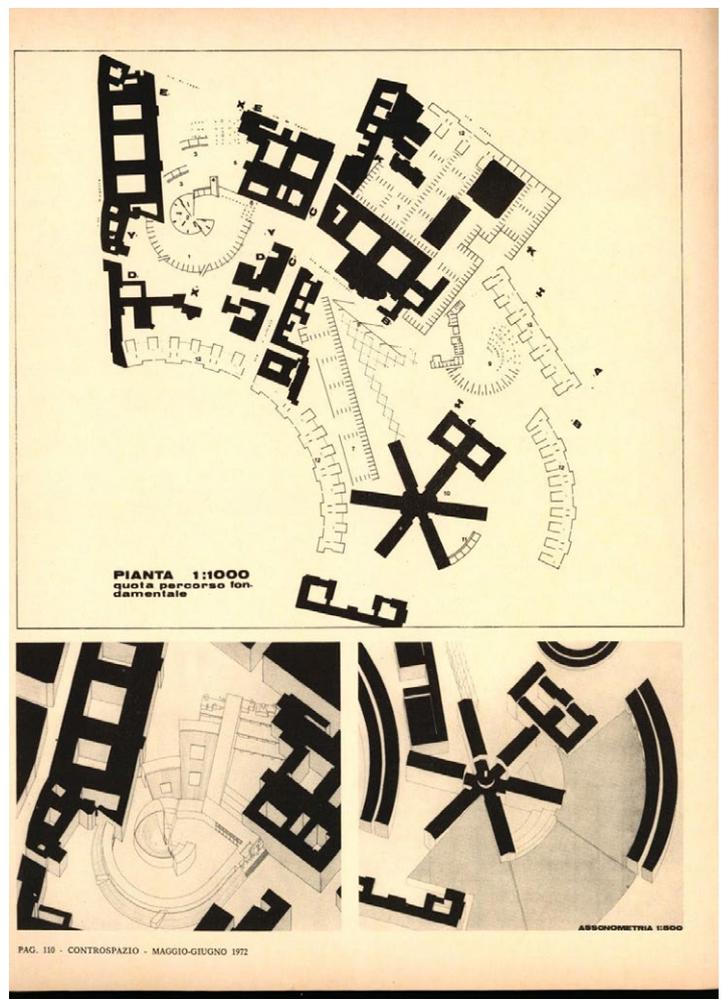
proposed to serve as the core centre for teacher training for the whole region; the second sought to enable the university's nomadic dispersion, instilling university in other sectors such as manufacturing, public administration and lower levels of schooling [5].<sup>16</sup>

Intriguingly, the more architectural drawing turns into operational criticism, the more it increases in complexity. Abstraction, which mostly had normative connotations up to that moment, seems to have been replaced by a dialectic of demonstrative images, evidencing a suspicious imbalance in figuration courteously denounced by the same Purini.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, figurative aspects – overtly reiterated in the third design thesis which anchored a public infrastructure to San Vittore Prison (Milan) [6] – aim to emphasise the differentiation of spaces not as a mere taxonomy, but rather as a constellation of figures literally facing the real world and, as drawings testify, endowed with a typologically and volumetrically pronounced internal life.<sup>18</sup>

However, it would be a mistake to look at these drawings as self-referential architectural artworks without any exemplarity. As Canella specifies in the article, his academic research is operationally involved in the work of pedagogisation of Italian peripheries through the so-called '*prototipi didattici*'. Neither countryside nor city, *hinterland*<sup>19</sup> is a contested territory made suitable for learning processes with the aim of practice *collective behaviours* through the support of new architectural devices by which public institutions regain their formal importance recombined with contemporary recreational rituals related to shopping and culture.

As relationship instigators of militant civiness infiltrating hinterland production systems, Canella's '*prototipi didattici*' openly opposed to the concurrent fascination with the undifferentiated *container* where everything happens.<sup>20</sup> But while *prototype* and other type-notions were already carefully handled in Italian architectural parlance, anxieties came from the term *didactic*: their certain degree of abstraction and approximation provided 'semi-finished' products for students who were going to find the 'sigil' of architectural principles in their drawings.<sup>21</sup> Hence, the reiterated pedagogical practice of collective behaviours materialises in a tight sequence of axonometric drawings with a marked exemplary character. More precisely, these taxonomic representations industriously documented in the books on Canella's design studios,<sup>22</sup> are markedly evident in his early experiences as an assistant—and later as a fellow and successor – of Ernesto Rogers courses, which contain research hypotheses substantiated by discourse<sup>23</sup> and drawn up as prototypes strictly defined by site-specific conditions. *Exempla* rather than abstraction [7].<sup>24</sup>

In 1974, two years after *Controspazio* published the special issue on architectural education, Vittorio Gregotti and his group – which included Purini – won first prize in the University of Calabria's design competition. The massive physical structure they designed appears as a literal materialisation of a 'settlement principle',<sup>25</sup> the norm of which can be precisely codified from that sequence of cross-sections-along-one-axis – or 'spatial situations' – which vary according to the ever-changing clashes between the new structure and territory conformations.



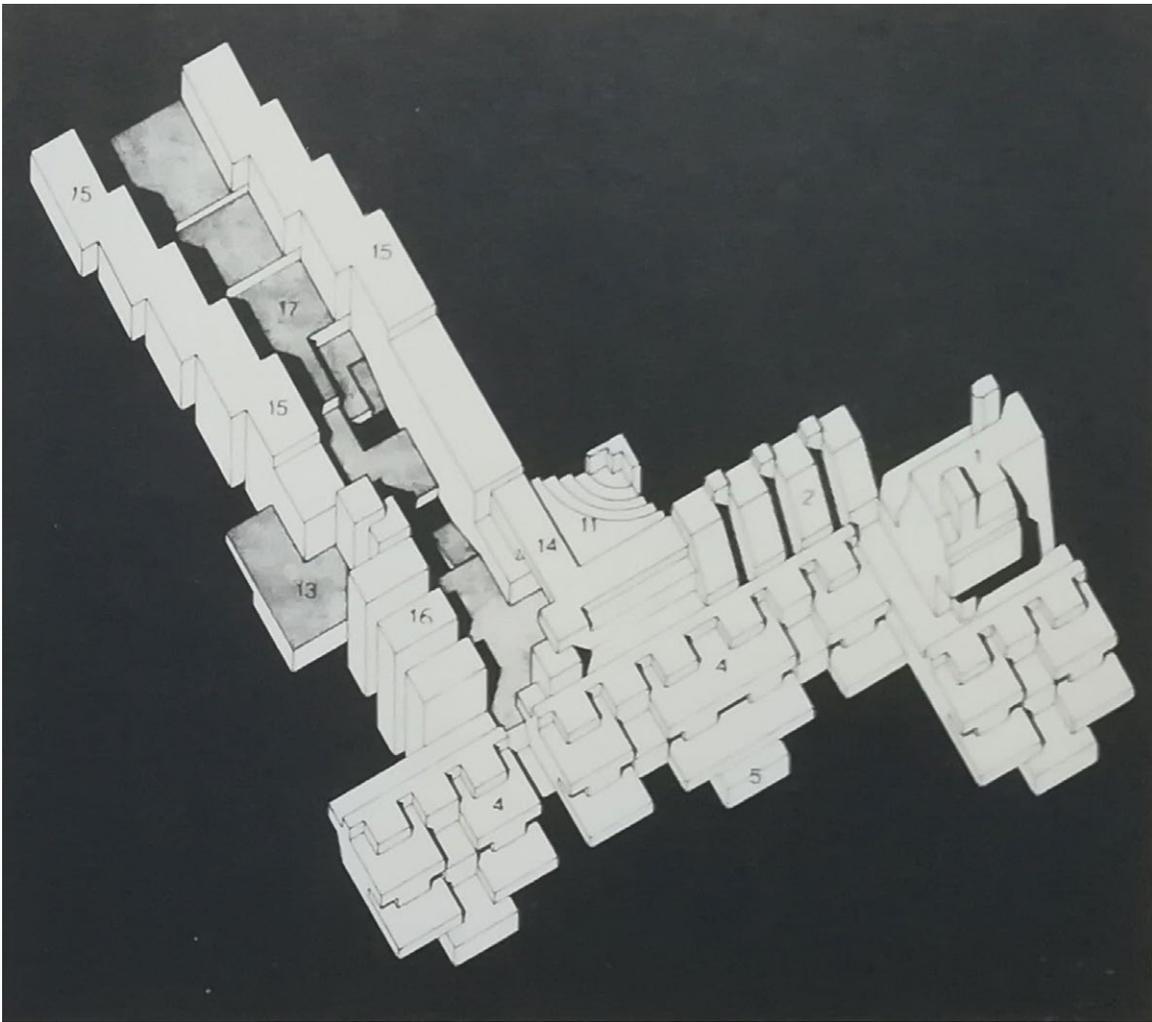
6 Design thesis by Rino Balconi, Sergio Brenna, Claudio Confalonieri on 'Milano San Vittore Prison' supervised by Canella in 1970.

## Conclusions

Architectural drawings, in the *Controspazio* experience, serve as a normative system on which practicing and researching architects aspiring to influence architectural debate could rely when exploring and developing novel architectural works and, moreover, to which they could contribute in a 'choral' and truly democratic way.

However, their normative nature, rather than establishing a set of constraints on the project when called to elaborate on specific programs and places, alludes to a pedagogical approach. On one side, the growing rigidity of the standards and indexes inherent in those years of normative elaboration – the *normative* sphere – on the other, *Controspazio* and its protagonists, who sought to uncover a *cognitive* system for the reform of architectural knowledge through common culture rather than through standardisation. Under the sign of this reform, Canella's contribution emerges here as a normative catalogue expressly based on form, in which one still has the courage to virtuously condition 'collective behaviours'.

Even more fundamental to our discussion is that, compared with literally materialised design principles or self-proclaimed post-ideological projective, networked, multidisciplinary and intelligent alternatives which paradoxically propagate a true *ideology of the common*,<sup>26</sup> within this rubric one still has the courage to teach students, perhaps for the latter, to be aware of the knowledge needed to draw this conditioning [9].



7 Example of 'prototipi didattici'. Students' drawing from Canella's design studio on 'the university' in 1967-68.



8 From left, Fredi Drugman, Guido Canella, Paolo Portoghesi, Federico Oliva, Pierluigi Nicolini at the Polytechnic of Milan occupied in May 1971.

## Illustration credits

ph. Oscar Israelovitz, from *Controspazio* 1 1977, p.62, 1  
*Controspazio* 1-2 1970 p.44, 2  
*Controspazio* 11, 1972, pp. 22,25, 3  
*Controspazio* 5/6, 1972, cover, 4  
*Controspazio* 5/6, 1972, pp. 102-5, 5  
*Controspazio* 5/6, 1972, p. 110, 6  
Guido Canella and Lucio Stellaro D'Angiolini (eds), *Università: Ragione, Contesto, Tipo* (Bari: Dedalo libri, 1975), 7  
Archive Paolo Portoghesi, 8

## Authors' biographies

Davide Pisu is currently a post-doc researcher in Architectural Composition at the University of Cagliari. His research interests are focused on the form/rule relationship in 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture and on the spaces of information.

Stefano Mais holds a Ph.D. in History of Architecture in 2020 at the University of Cagliari (Department of Civil Engineering, Environmental Engineering and Architecture). He graduated with a first-class honours in Architecture in 2014. He worked on several research and cooperation projects on the history and preservation of architecture, cities and landscape. He is a member of the association Storia della Città and European Architectural History Network.

Marco Moro is Ph.D. candidate from the University of Cagliari (Italy). He received a MSc with distinction from Universität für Angewandte Kunst. His research investigates the project of informal education in 1950s Latin America, tracing intersections with the Italian postwar architectural discourse on learning environments.

## Author's addresses

Davide Pisu  
[d.pisu@unica.it](mailto:d.pisu@unica.it)

Stefano Mais  
[stefano.mais@unica.it](mailto:stefano.mais@unica.it)

Marco Moro  
[marco.moro@unica.it](mailto:marco.moro@unica.it)

## Notes

1. Françoise Choay, *La regola e il modello* (Roma: Officina Edizioni, 1986).
2. Choay, 'The book De Re Aedificatoria establishes its own theoretical and practical field. It designates for the architect a role that will change its social stature: it implies the formation of a new professional category irreducible to that of the ancient builders' pp. 17, 18 (translated by authors).
3. It is worth to note that the importance of the design acts is at the core of the considerations of Durbiano and Armando on the social nature of architectural design Cfr. Alessandro Armando and Giovanni Durbiano, *Teoria del progetto architettonico* (Roma: Carocci, 2017).
4. See William J.T. Mitchell, *what do pictures want?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). Although the 'meaning' inherent in the images is at the center of Barthes' studies on semiotic, see Roland Barthes (1977) 'Rhetoric of the Image' *Image, Music, Text*. Ed. and trans. Stephen Heath. (New York: Hill and Wang), 32-51.
5. '[...] images are not words. It is not clear that they actually "say" anything. They may show something, but the verbal message or speech act has to be brought to them by the spectator, who projects a voice into the image, reads a story into it, or deciphers a verbal message'. See Mitchell p. 140.
6. The word Tendenza finds its origin in Rossi's article 'L'architettura della ragione come architettura di tendenza' in *illuminismo e architettura del '700 veneto*, Castelfranco Veneto, 31 August – 9 November 1969.
7. Roberta Amirante et al. 'Fortuna critica della tendenza', *op. cit.* 50 p. 172.
8. See Claudio D'Amato Guerrieri 'Controspazio come "piccola rivista"', *FAMagazine* 43 pp. 33-40.
9. *Controspazio* n. 1-2 1970, p. 44.
10. Franco Purini, 'L'Architettura interrotta', *Controspazio*, Novembre-Dicembre 1972, 23.
11. Literally translated 'Classification based on spatial situations'.
12. Luciano Patetta, 'Tre fantasmi di Città', *Controspazio*, Gennaio-Febbraio 1970, 42-46.
13. Francesco Nasi, 'Non è vero che gli studenti non sanno disegnare [It's not true that students cannot draw]', *Il Giorno*, (27 March 1963). Some Italian newspapers echoed students' remonstrance during It alian contestation.
14. Bruno Reichlin, 'Guido Canella, l'architetto dell'hinterland' in *Guido Canella 1931-2009*, Eds. Enrico Bordogna, Gentucca Canella and Elvio Manganaro (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2014), 438-443.
15. A few years before the Italian Ministry of Education launched the international design competition in July 1972.
16. Canella envisioned both a modern institution for a particular productive context, as well as a productive context for a modern institution.
17. Franco Purini, 'Guido Canella, l'ultimo architetto nel Novecento' in *Guido Canella 1931-2009*.
18. Canella used to call 'mausoleums' those autonomous buildings which express a new metropolitan geography. See Luca Monica (ed.), *Un ruolo per l'architettura. Guido Canella*. (Napoli: CLEAN, 2011).
19. «Hinterland» is also the name of the magazine founded and directed by Canella (1977-85), who had already declared he wanted to undertake an editorial project 'able of opening new operational gazes to citizens and architects, public administrators and artists'.
20. See the text accompanying the theses from the special issue *Controspazio* n.5/6, 1972.
21. Katuyuki Suzuki (ed.), *Guido Canella* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1983).
22. See Guido Canella and Lucio Stellaro D'Angiolini (eds), *Università: Ragione, Contesto, Tipo* (Bari: Dedalo libri, 1975).
23. Enrico Prandi (ed.), *Sessantadue domande a Guido Canella* (Napoli: CLEAN, 2005) pp. 12-13.
24. In this sense, theatricality becomes the dominant and pervasive character in Canella's design studio briefs whether they are schools, kindergartens, prisons, civic centers, churches, squares but also residential buildings. See Carlo Quintelli (ed.), *La città del teatro* (Milano: Clup, 1989).
25. Francesco Zuddas, 'The Idea of the Università', *AA Files*, 75 (December 2017), 319-331. See also his book *The University as a Settlement Principle: Territorialising Knowledge in Late 1960s* (New York: Routledge, 2020).
26. See Amir Djalali, 'Common Space. Politics and the Production of Architectural Knowledge', PhD dissertation, TU Delft, 2014.



