

History Thesis

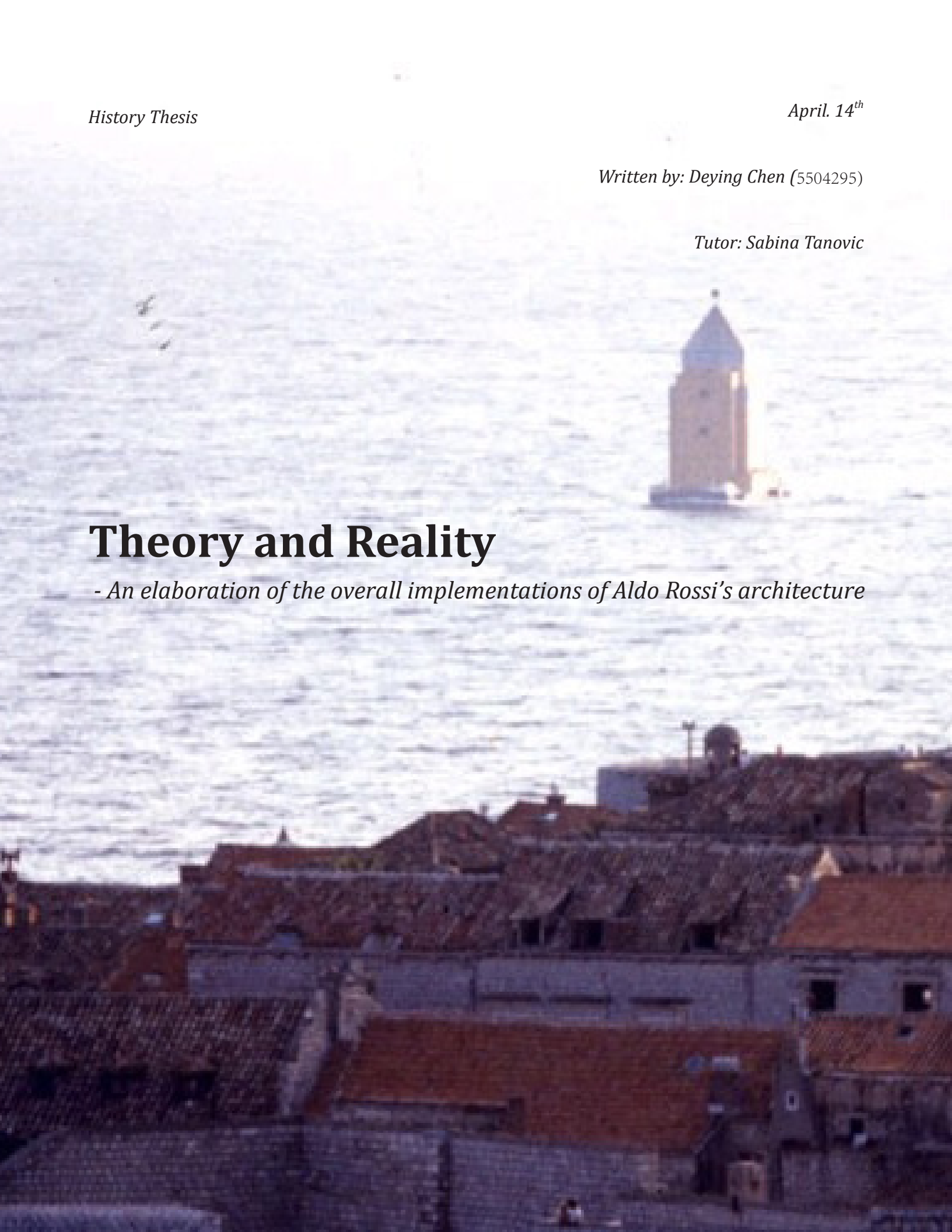
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Theory and Reality

- An elaboration of the overall implementations of Aldo Rossi's architecture



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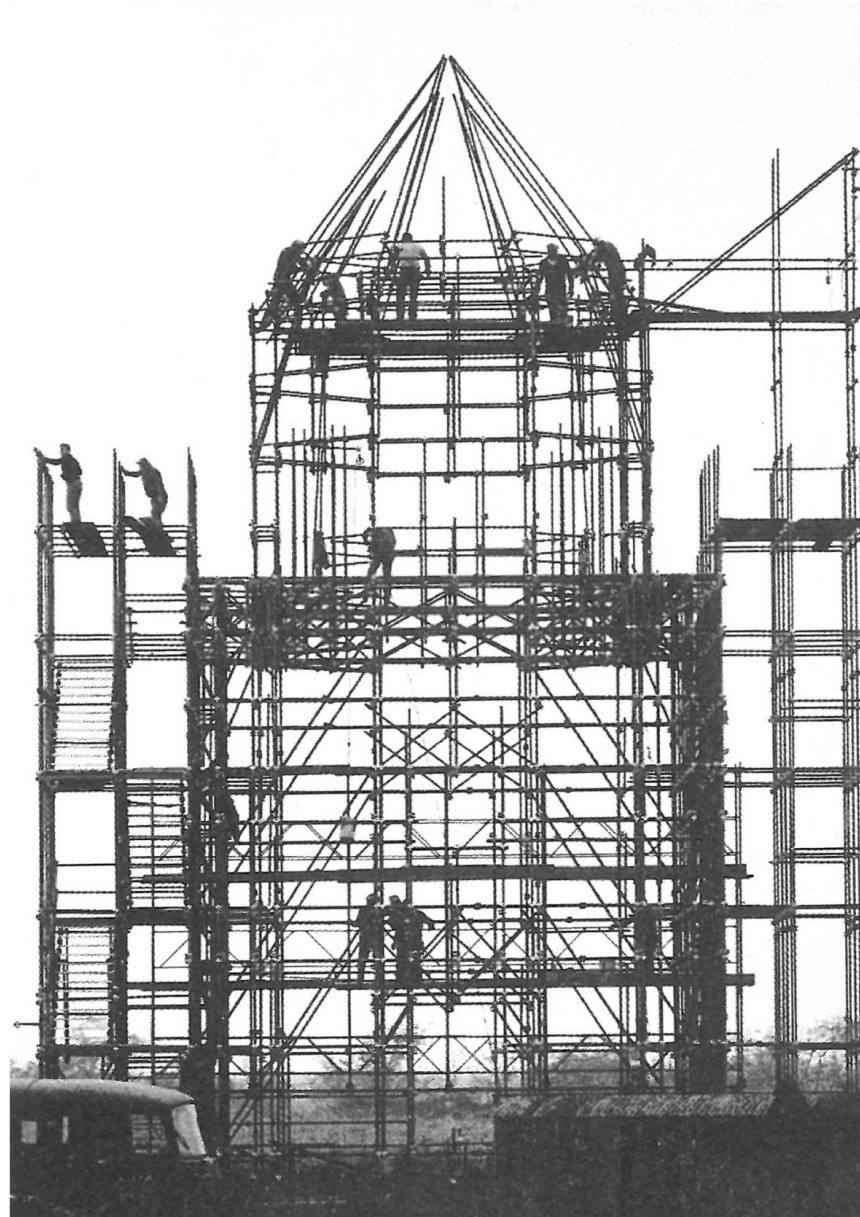


Figure 1 - Arnell, P. and Scully, V. Aldo Rossi-Buildings and projects. Rizzoli International Publications, New York. (architectuur, 1985)

Introduction

“What surprises me most in architecture, as in other techniques, is that a project has one life in its built state but another in its written or drawn state.”¹

– Aldo Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*

When reading about Aldo Rossi’s career, what first caught my eye was his versatility. There have been very few architects in the modern era who embodied the art of drawing, writing and architecture like him. To me Rossi’s writings were very poetic and personal. Using simple words he took the reader into his memories, experiences, his attraction to architecture and his theories for a city. His drawings were often colorful and free. His buildings, for a long time overshadowed by the writings and drawings, were clean and pure in his early career, while more playful and symbolic later. I realized the contrasts and echoes between all aspects of his work were of great importance. The drawings and theory supported people’s perception of his buildings, while the buildings in turn gave life in reality to his drawings and theory. I wonder what the degree of deviation between Rossi’s conceptual designs and his realized buildings was, and the reason behind this divergence.

When looking into the delicate relationship between Aldo Rossi’s theory, drawings and the implemented projects in reality, one might find it fascinating that his designs that were expressive

and vibrant on paper oftentimes were built and perceived in a completely different way. For various reasons, his projects were sometimes not completely built or built differently from his original intention. When looking into the way his architecture is perceived decades after implementation, some stood the test of time while others didn’t. Architecture historians analyzed the reasons behind these unsuccessful implementations, whether they were caused by the fundamental design ideas or just came from reality issues. By studying this topic, I hope it would be helpful for future reference in understanding how to design in a similar symbolic way, and to better understand the elements that are essential for a faithful implementation of the design.

Chapter I of this paper provides a comprehensive look into Rossi’s background and professional life, with events that happened throughout his transition from a theorist to an architect, and presenting the evolution of his characteristics in both theoretical and practice fields. By presenting his architecture and theories, I try to compare their differentiations in general and explore the reasons behind it. By

1. Aldo Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*. MIT Press, 1984, 63.

Figure 2 - Aldo Rossi, In Mergozzo, on Lake Maggiore, in the sixties (“Biografia”)

presenting how other architectural professionals analyzed and commented on his work, I hope to give an understanding of Rossi's design principles.

Chapter II explores the events behind the implementation process of Rossi's architecture, seeking design principles, working methods, social backgrounds and other elements that deviated his buildings from his designs on paper. This chapter also introduces theories debating the relationship between Rossi's architecture and the surrounding context, exploring the relationship between context and the endurance of design. In the end I tried to interpret Rossi's

working attitudes regarding implementation.

Chapter III introduces events behind three of Rossi's most well known projects at different stages of his career, *San Cataldo Cemetery* (1971), and *Teatro del Mondo* (1980). Comparing their conditions with Rossi's initial designs, I hope to answer the questions of what could be the elements that gave a short life to some of his projects, and what other elements that enabled his projects to survive with time.

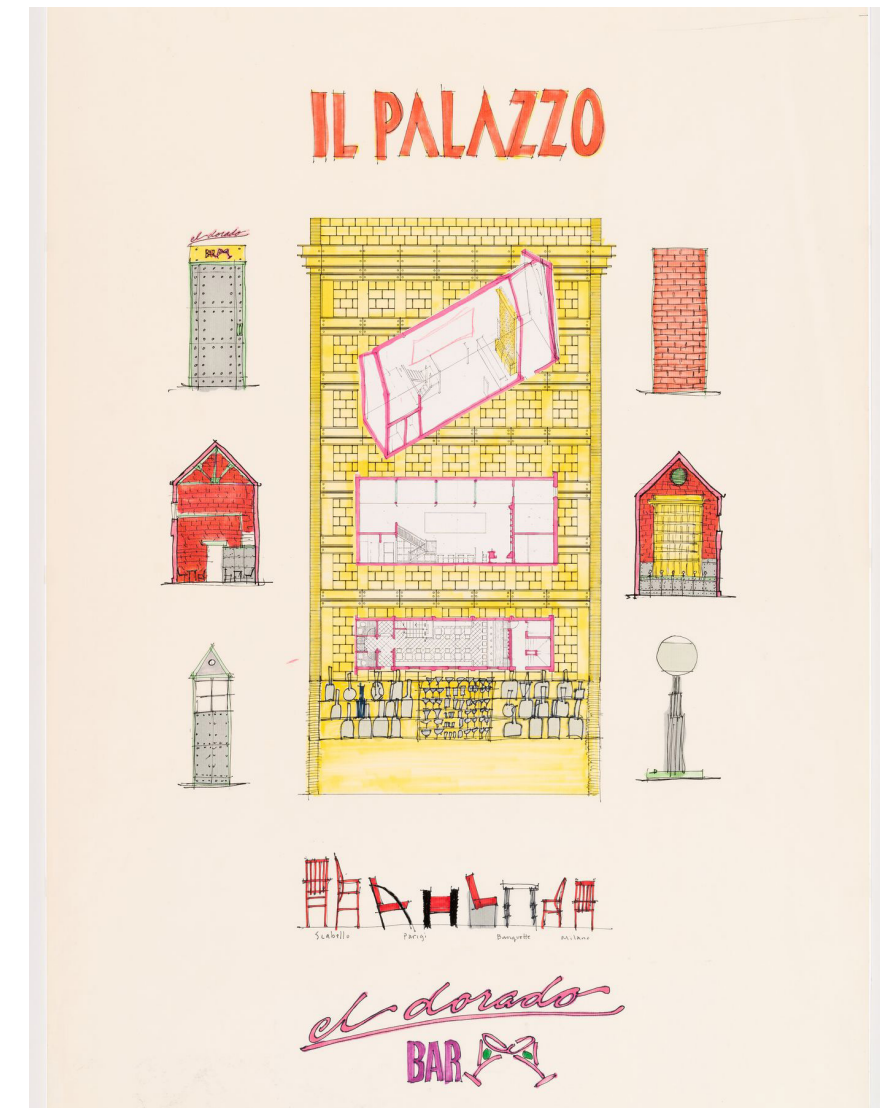


Figure 3 - Aldo Rossi, Poster for El Dorado Bar, Hotel Il Palazzo, Fukuoka, Japan (Fonds: Aldo Rossi Fonds, 1953-1997, Predominant 1962-1997)

Chapter I · Aldo Rossi's theory and projects

1. A theorist or an architect : the dilemma

In 1931, Aldo Rossi was born in a middle class Italian family in Milan when World War II was on the verge of happening. He would later be known as one of the most accomplished postmodern Italian architects. Growing up in a family that manufactured bicycles², and living his teenage years through the war, Aldo Rossi chose the path of architecture following his interests of painting and observing artifacts of daily life. After highschool, in the background of the post-war industrial prosperity in Milan, he entered *Politecnico di Milano* to study architecture in 1949, and graduated in 1959.³

Recalling his days in *Politecnico di Milano*, Rossi described himself as “one of the worst students”,⁴ while humorously addressing that he found the criticism from his professors one of the best compliments that he’s ever gotten. The reason he didn’t fit in the architectural climate at that period, even discouraged by his professor from making architecture⁵, was his rebellion against modern architecture. He realized from his first years of architectural education that the way modern architecture searched for purity in everything, had caused architecture to become untouchable. That architecture had

become unrelatable for people and countries because of how reduced and formal it was.⁶ The struggle to accept the theory of modernism led Rossi to create his own theories about architecture.

Theoretical Works and Drawings

While he was still a student at the Politecnico, Rossi started writing in parallel to his study after his teacher recognized his talent and employed him to write for a highly regarded architectural magazine called *Casabella-Continuità*⁷. He explored topics from Milanese architecture to the concept of tradition, and by the time he graduated in 1959, he had already become the editor of this publication.⁸

Starting his career as an architecture writer and theorist, Rossi was heavily influenced by Ernesto Rogers, his colleague at the magazine who had distinguished views for that time. Rogers believed architects should consider context, history and traditions in their design.⁹ He recommended the book *Ornament and Crime* from Adolf Loos to Rossi, which Rossi described as his favorite book at the time. The book explored cultural contexts of modernism in the field of architecture and

2. Federico Brunetti, “Aldo Rossi.” The Pritzker Architecture Prize, <https://www.pritzkerprize.com/laureates/1990>. Accessed 7 Mar. 2022.

3. “Biografia.” Fondazione Aldo Rossi, <https://www.fondazionealdorossi.org/biografia/>. Accessed 1 Apr. 2022.

4. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 43.

5. *Ibid.*, 39.

6. *Ibid.*, 46.

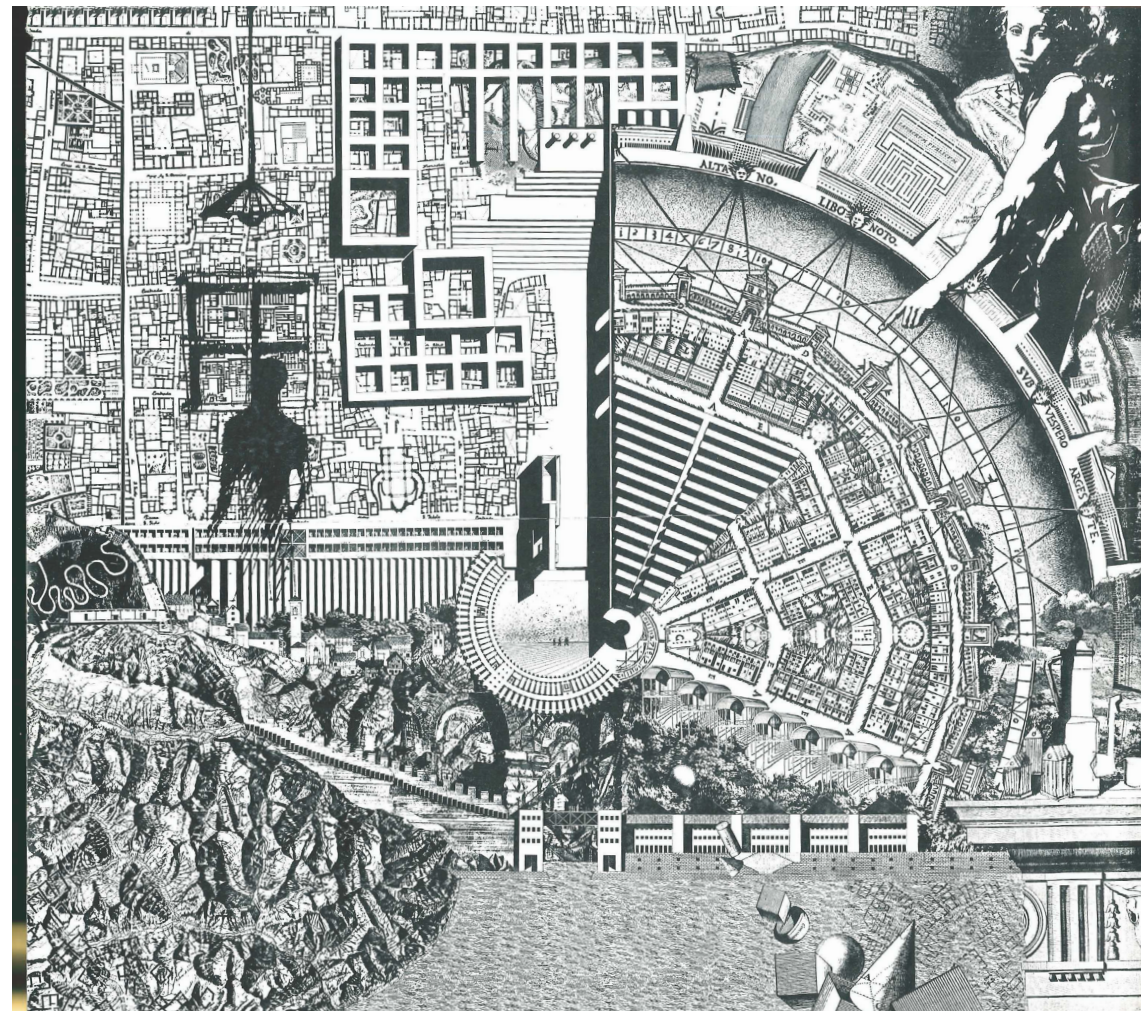
7. Diane Ghirardo, *Aldo Rossi and the Spirit of Architecture*. Yale University Press, 2019, 3.

8. “Aldo Rossi Architect.” Famous Architects, 13 Aug. 2015, <https://www.famous-architects.org/aldo-rossi/>. Accessed 5 Mar. 2022.

9. Ghirardo. *Aldo Rossi and the Spirit of Architecture*, 2.

Figure 4 - Aldo Rossi, In Milan, in the sixties (“Biografia”)

Figure 5 - Aldo Rossi, Eraldo Consolascio, Bruno Reichlin and Fabio Reinhart, the Analogous City, Venice Biennale, 1976 ("The Analogous City-The Map")



industrial design,¹⁰ leading Rossi to dive deep into the thinkings of form and function that inspired his later work in industrial design.¹¹ In the meantime Rossi took up teaching positions in universities such as the *School of Urban Planning in Arezzo*, the *Institute of Architecture in Venice* and *Polytechnic University of Milan*.¹² Being an architecture writer and scholar enabled Rossi to absorb ideas and approaches from all disciplines of architects and eventually form his own. Architecture scholar Diana Ghirardo was a colleague and friend of Rossi's and translator of his books. She described this period of Rossi as his exploring period of "what the roles of art and architecture could be in a deeply

compromised postwar world."¹³

In 1966, Rossi published his first book *The Architecture of the City*, in which he intended to analyze how to build and read a city in a scientific and rational way. He first analyzed the functionalist elements of a city, quoting theories from Marcel Poete and Pierre Lavedan, arguing we should read a city with structure and points. Then he explored topics including residential districts, transformation of ancient cities, monuments and the collective memory. An important conclusion was that "The city is the *locus* of the collective memory"¹⁴, which became the foundation of many of his later theoretical and practical

work.

After the great success of *The Architecture of the City*, Rossi's second book *A Scientific Autobiography* didn't come out until 1981. In between this time period, Rossi was not only working on the book, but was also enjoying the practicing world of architecture, implementing several of his earliest built projects, as well as teaching in various universities across Europe and the US.¹⁵ In the 1976 Venice Biennale when architecture and art were combined for the last time, Rossi presented a collage panel together with his students Eraldo Consolascio, Bruno Reichlin, and Fabio Reinhart.¹⁶ The panel was called *The Analogous City* and it showcased dozens of elements across different locations, realities and time. A map of the Italian city Como was overlaid by Rossi's proposal of a housing project in San Rocco, while the partial plan of *San Cataldo Cemetery* was integrated alongside *Drawing of Vitruvius' city* by Giovanni Battista Caporali. Several Swiss villages lay in the suburban area of the city, and David from the painting *David and Goliath* by Tazio da Varallo was pointing his finger to the center of the panel. *The Analogous City* was immensely complicated and provocative since it proposed an imaginary city where fragments could be extracted, twisted and adapted to fit into the same time and space. In the article Rossi wrote to explain his intentions behind this panel, he stated his belief that the power of the imagination would be a concrete possibility.¹⁷ *The Analogous City* was considered as one of Rossi's most signature drawings, together with his plan for San Cataldo

Cemetery and others.¹⁸

At the same time as his drawings were being published and exhibited during the 1970s, Rossi was also working on *A Scientific Autobiography* which was published by MIT Press.¹⁹ As opposed to his first book, Rossi took a much more personal approach on *A Scientific Autobiography*. He wrote in a way that readers could follow his mind and thinking, opening up about his memories of childhood in his grandma's kitchen, and his car accident that inspired his view of death, as well as his ideas about architecture in general. His sentences were poetic and smooth, while expressing a personal philosophy towards many of his projects that remained in an unfinished state.

From theory to Practical Work

The earliest projects that Rossi designed were mainly unbuilt, including *town hall proposals for Scandicci* in 1968, *the monument at Cuneo* in 1962, *the urban plans for Broni* in 1965 etc.²⁰ The lack of chance to implement his designs led Rossi to cry about the "formalist dogmas" of the modernist movement in *The Architecture of the City*.²¹ One of his projects was built before he published the book (the first of his projects to be realized), a residential duplex named *Villa ai Ronchi* in Versilia that was constructed in 1960. Looking at this project, the exterior staircase shifted and wrapped around the house, forming a layer of strong lines outside, with narrow and shifting windows positioned around the facades.²² Following *The Architecture of the City*, Rossi

15. Federico Brunetti, "Aldo Rossi."

16. "VENICE ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE." Biennial Foundation, 19 Nov. 2014, <https://biennialfoundation.org/biennials/venice-architecture-biennale-italy/>. Accessed 7 Mar. 2022.

17. Aldo Rossi, "The Analogous City: panel[C]/text accompanying the exhibition panel, in Forum International." 1976, 13: 5-6.

18. Antonello Marotta. "Aldo Rossi: The 'Autobiography' and Its Fragments." *City, Territory and Architecture*, vol. 6, no. 1, Dec. 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40410-019-0109-9>.

19. Ghirardo, *Aldo Rossi and the spirit of architecture*, 25.

20. *Ibid.*, 9.

21. Aldo Rossi. *The Architecture of the City*. MIT Press, 1984. 12.

22. Ghirardo, *Aldo Rossi and the spirit of architecture*, 8.

10. Jimena Canales, and Andrew Herscher. "Criminal Skins: Tattoos and Modern Architecture in the Work of Adolf Loos." *Architectural History*, vol. 48, 2005, pp. 235-56, doi:10.1017/s0066622x00003798.

11. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 46.

12. "Biography of the Architect: Aldo Rossi." *Floornature.Com*, <https://www.floornature.com/aldo-rossi-83/>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2022.

13. Ghirardo, *Aldo Rossi and the spirit of architecture*, 5.

14. *Ibid.*, 130.



Figure 6 - Leonardo Ferrari, Aldo Rossi, Villa ai Ronchi in Versilia, 1960 ("VILLA AI RONCHI")

won a competition in 1965 to design a square in front of the town hall in Segrate, Milan. He split the square into two levels using a wide flight of stairs that double as seatings, used columns to define the square towards the town hall, and used exposed reinforced concrete to build a fountain with strong triangular prism.²³ Only half realized initially, the design was a continuation of his theory about *Locus* and forms in *The Architecture of the City*, that simple elements of figures and forms should constitute each of the fragments.²⁴ Additionally, *the square in Segrate* was placed in the center of *The Analogous City*, where its shadows indicated the passing of time.²⁵ Several of Rossi's implemented projects that were based on his theory, by appearing in *The Analogous City*, contributed to his theoretical work in return,

23. Ibid., 8.

24. Kersten Geers, and Jelena Pancevac. Aldo Rossi. *The Urban Fact A Reference Book on Aldo Rossi*. Walther Konig Verlag, 2021.

25. Peter Eisenman, "The Houses of Memory: The Texts of Analogy." *The Architecture of the City*, 1982.

26. Geers, Pancevac, Aldo Rossi. *The Urban Fact: A Reference Book on Aldo Rossi*, 59.

which perfectly showcased how Rossi's theory and architecture were connected and practiced in a binding and logical way.

After the publishing of *The Architecture of the City*, Italian architect and urban planner Carlo Aymonino, who was known for his multiple residential projects, invited Rossi to design together a public housing project named *Monte Amiato Housing* in Gallarate, Milan. The project was seated in an interesting urban context of an extended wing of the bigger housing complex. The urban context was important in this case because of the triangular shape of the complex and the way that Rossi decided to be coherent led the complex to become a distinct "Urban Figure". About the composition of the building, there were two levels of apartment with square windows on the facade, and 2 lower levels of galleries and lanes with columns lining up alongside. The entire structure is made of reinforced concrete and hollow bricks, and rendered in unifying rough white cement, except for the four round columns that were painted with glossy white enamel. The construction started in 1968 and finished in 1972. The building was subjected to later renovations that left a mark on the portico ceiling. On top of that, architects Kersten Geers and Jelena Pancevac criticized that the building was made with poor materials and detailing.²⁶ Other than suffering from poorly constructed conditions, many earlier implementations of Rossi's design weren't completely realized either, including The project of renovation of an elementary school in Broni, Rossi proposed a small sports pavilion with a pyramid

hip roof covered in aluminum sheets, but it was never executed.²⁷ What might be his most famous work, San Cataldo Cemetery also remained largely unfinished.

Political stance and spiritual world

Regarding Rossi's attitude towards the relationship between architectural theories and design, he considered it natural to build a theory in order to guide the design process. He wrote an article just after the publishing of *The Architecture of the City*, stating that

*The creation of a theory is the first objective of an architectural school prior to all other types of research...my proposal is to outline a true and appropriate theory of architecture, in other words, to form a theory of design as an integral part of a theory of architecture.*²⁸

Rossi primarily discussed his definition of urban artifacts as well as their contributions in the forming of a city in *The Architecture of the City* together with the theory of *locus* in an attempt to create his urban theory.

Architect Pier Vittorio Aureli went a step further and linked Rossi's choice of creating this urban theory that's made up of fragments and based on forms, to his personal political views. In his book discussing the relationship between architecture and politics, Aureli went into detail about how Rossi established his theory of *locus* aiming to conceive architectural form as the principal means of constituting a modern

city's political scenario.²⁹ Aureli thought of *locus* as a concept aimed directly at countering the processes of capitalist integration. He considered Rossi's hypothesis of autonomous architecture as a search for a kind of rational language to liberate the forms that were trapped into the sequence of formal styles that served the dominating bourgeois institutions.³⁰ Aureli first analyzed urban planners Claudio Greppi and Alberto Pedrolli, on their theories against the social integration of the capitalist city, by proposing parts of the city to be identified as working-class areas. Aureli stated that Rossi criticized this kind of urban category. He pointed out that Rossi opposed the large-scale intervention and categorizing of the city territories because Rossi considered a city as a "plurality of parts that did not add up to any totality"³¹, especially those parts that were built upon capitalist intervention. Even though Rossi opposed the separatist development in continuation of economic division of both society and the city, he couldn't deny the fact that "architecture that is going to be realized is always an expression of the dominant class."³² Aureli concluded that it was this clear dominance of capitalist power that led to Rossi's

27. Ibid., 67.

28. Aldo Rossi. "Architettura per i musei." *Teoria della progettazione architettonica*, Dedalo, Bari, 1968.

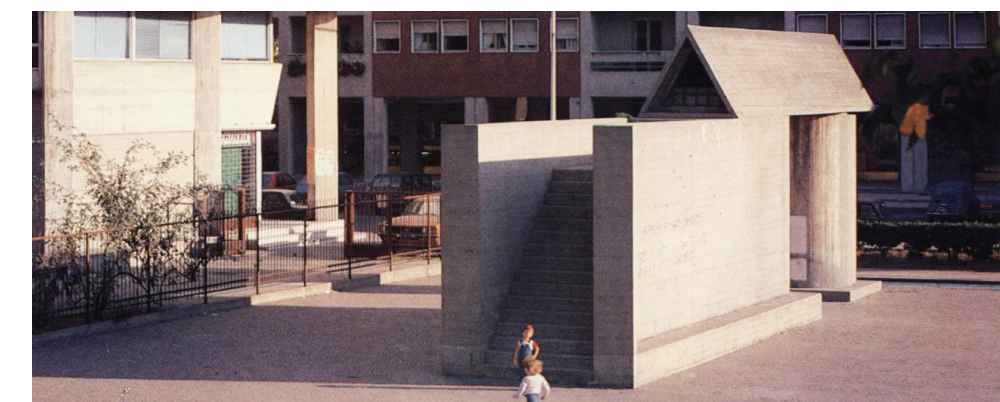
29. Pier Vittorio Aureli. *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism*. Princeton Architectural Press, 2008.

30. Aureli, *The project of autonomy: politics and architecture within and against capitalism*, 57.

31. Ibid., 63.

32. Rossi, *The architecture of the City*, 116.

Figure 7 - Aldo Rossi, City hall square and memorial fountain, Segrate, Italy, 1965 (archiveofaffinities)



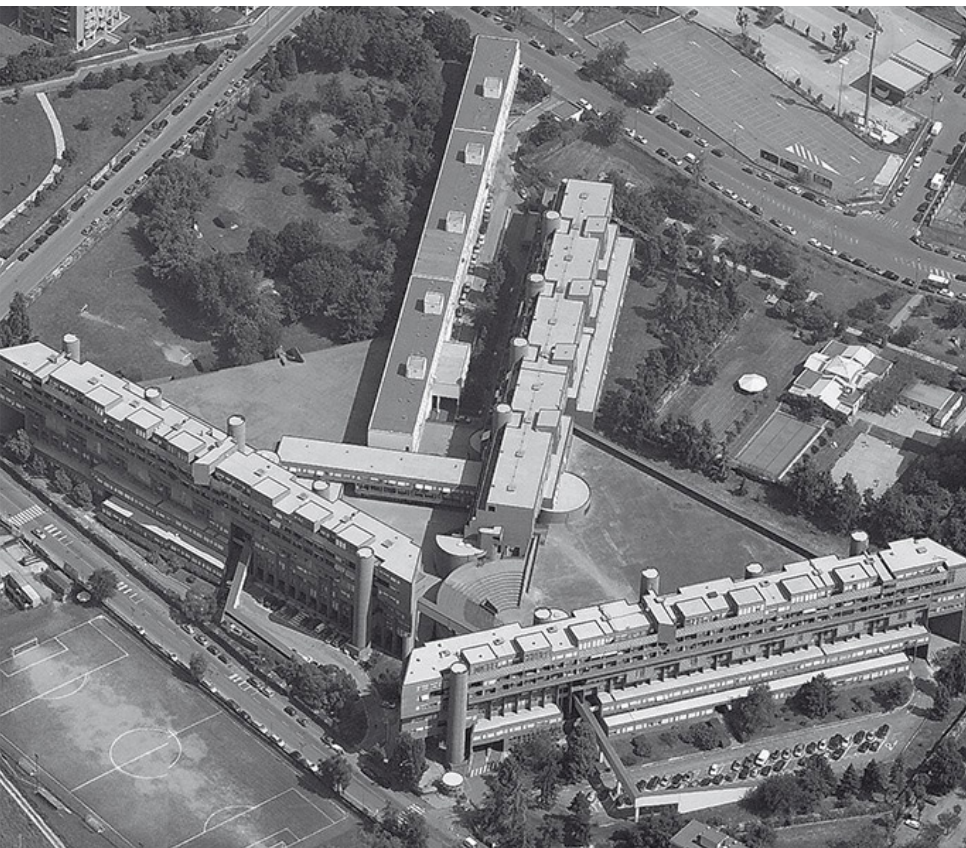


Figure 8 - Aldo Rossi, M. Aymonino, Massaré. Gallarate complex

33. Aureli, The project of autonomy: politics and architecture within and against capitalism, 69.

34. Rossi, A Scientific Autobiography, 40.

35. Ghirardo, Aldo Rossi and the spirit of architecture, 187.

36. Aldo Rossi, and Alberto Ferlenga. Aldo Rossi: Tutte Le Opere. Mondadori Electa, 2000.

37. Vicki Scheenstra. "Prayers, Quips and Quotes: St. Rose of Viterbo, Feast Day September 4." THE MYSTERY OF FAITH . Discovering Catholic Spirituality, 5 Sept. 2016, <http://catholicfaithpatronsaints.com/prayers-quips-and-quotes-st-rose-of-viterbo-feast-day-september-4/>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2022.

38. Ghirardo, Aldo Rossi and the spirit of architecture, 193.

of the possibility of buildings becoming authentic monuments and having the capacity to be aesthetically beautiful at the same time.³⁴

However, Rossi was also a Catholic, and this fact was not well documented since a lot more critics seemed more willing to point out his association with the communist party than his religious beliefs.³⁵ As Rossi wrote this himself that "I have always been grateful... to my Catholic education that enabled me to choose extremely different types of logic and beauty in as much as they referred to something beyond themselves"³⁶ Religious beliefs of Rossi were particularly heavily expressed in one of his collage drawings of *San Cataldo Cemetery*, in which he referenced the holy card of St. Rose of Viterbo, whose dying message to her parents was "I die with joy, for I desire to be united to my God. Live so as not to fear death. For those who live well in the world, death is not frightening, but sweet and precious."³⁷ The message was perfectly conjoined with Rossi's description of the cemetery as "house for the dead", as his vision of *San Cataldo Cemetery* was exactly the home and playground for the dead, and the worship of afterlife that no one could doubt the spirituality of Catholicism presented in the cemetery architecture.³⁸

In the later stage of his career, Rossi started to deviate himself from his political views and instead began to explore more on his own identities, memories and architectural beliefs. Starting from 1968, Rossi maintained a set of blue notebooks called the *Quaderni Azzurri*, in which

he dedicated a large amount of focus on architecture during the neoclassical and baroque era, especially the ones that were related to religious structures and his Catholicism. Ghirardo expressed her appreciation of Rossi's illustrations in the blue notebooks, regarding them a revelation of Rossi's rich interior life, his faith as well as his struggle to bring the ideas into built and written form.³⁹ A sentence from Rossi's blue notebooks was "today there is no value in having a political consciousness."⁴⁰ Architecture researcher Sebastiano Fabbrini considered the success of Rossi's drawings in the American art market as one of the reasons for Rossi's intentionally distancing himself from the communist ideology, due to it bringing in a large amount of fortune and fame that he couldn't gain from building architecture.⁴¹ After all, Rossi said this himself in an interview titled "From the Barricade to the Coffee Maker", that

*I have drawn a beautiful coffee maker for Alessi and I am glad that it is selling very well. Hopefully, thanks to this coffee maker, I will be able to make that boatload of money that I have not been able to make producing good architecture.*⁴²

39. Ghirardo, Aldo Rossi and the spirit of architecture, 27.

40. Aldo Rossi. Aldo Rossi: I Quaderni Azzurri, 1999.

41. Sebastiano Fabbrini. The State of Architecture. Aldo Rossi and the Tools of Internationalization, 2020.

42. Fabbrini, The State of Architecture. Aldo Rossi and the Tools of Internationalization, 111.

Figure 9 - Aldo Rossi, San Cataldo with Holy Card of Saint Rose of Viterbo, 1978 (Ghirardo)



2. The distinctive elements of Rossi's drawings and projects

Drawing styles and theory

The drawings that brought Rossi recognition and fortunes were often elucidated by people as cartoon-like, they were described by Peter Eisenman as “timelessness of childhood”⁴³, or “childish” in Tafuri’s words⁴⁴. They were unique to traditional architecture drawings because of the abstractness, a quality that led to his drawings being exhibited and sold as art works in the 1970s, and a quality that Fabbrini considered resulted from Rossi’s educational background and training that’s different from modern education.⁴⁵ Fabbrini pointed out that Rossi went to a collegio for high school because of the outbreak of WWII, at a young age he was influenced by the particular style of the early sixteenth century religious education system that hadn’t been modernized, especially their type of approach on drawings.⁴⁶ This educational background of religious and classical art training made Rossi constantly looking back and being aware of the differences in place and time, therefore he denied himself to be a contemporist for his attention to both the past and present. To Rossi, drawings were the embodiment of his private and public journeys in life and worth some levels of acknowledgement.⁴⁷

It’s important to look into the evolution of Rossi’s drawing styles over his career, to understand the reasons behind the deviations between his paper architecture and realized buildings, especially on the later free

sketches that reflect on his earlier architecture that was built many years prior, that were considered very different in style to the actual building and completely parted from reality.

When looking into the transformation of his drawing styles, it’s fascinating to see decisions made by Rossi on his earlier drawings. He seemed to have some hesitation in presenting his free sketches to the public at first. For the Segrate monument in 1966, Rossi created two versions of collages, the first was close to a purist ‘modernist’ composition, and the second one was leaning more towards the expressionist. In 1975, at an early stage of his career, Rossi chose to publish the modernist one instead of the expressionist one.⁴⁸ However, in the later stage of his career, the drawings that were exhibited and embodied by Rossi as narratives of his own history and memories, were mainly the free sketches and colorful cartoon-like drawings that he hesitated to show earlier.

This transformation of recognition in architectural drawings of the public came with the trend of architects entering the art market. Art historian Jordan Kauffman wrote about the period when architectural drawings suddenly were being recognized as works of art, “During the 1970s and 1980s, for the first time, architectural drawings became more than an instrument for building...Drawings from the architectural process were ultimately perceived as aesthetic

43. Peter Eisenman. “The Houses of Memory: The Texts of Analogy.” Rossi, Aldo, *The Architecture of the City* (1982).

44. Manfredo Tafuri. “Ceci n’est pas une ville.” *Lotus International* 13 (1976): 10-16.

45. Fabbrini, *The State of Architecture. Aldo Rossi and the Tools of Internationalization*, 73.

46. *Ibid.*, 72.

47. Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 52.

48. Ton Quik. “The Window of the Poet.” *Maastricht Catalogue*, 2015.

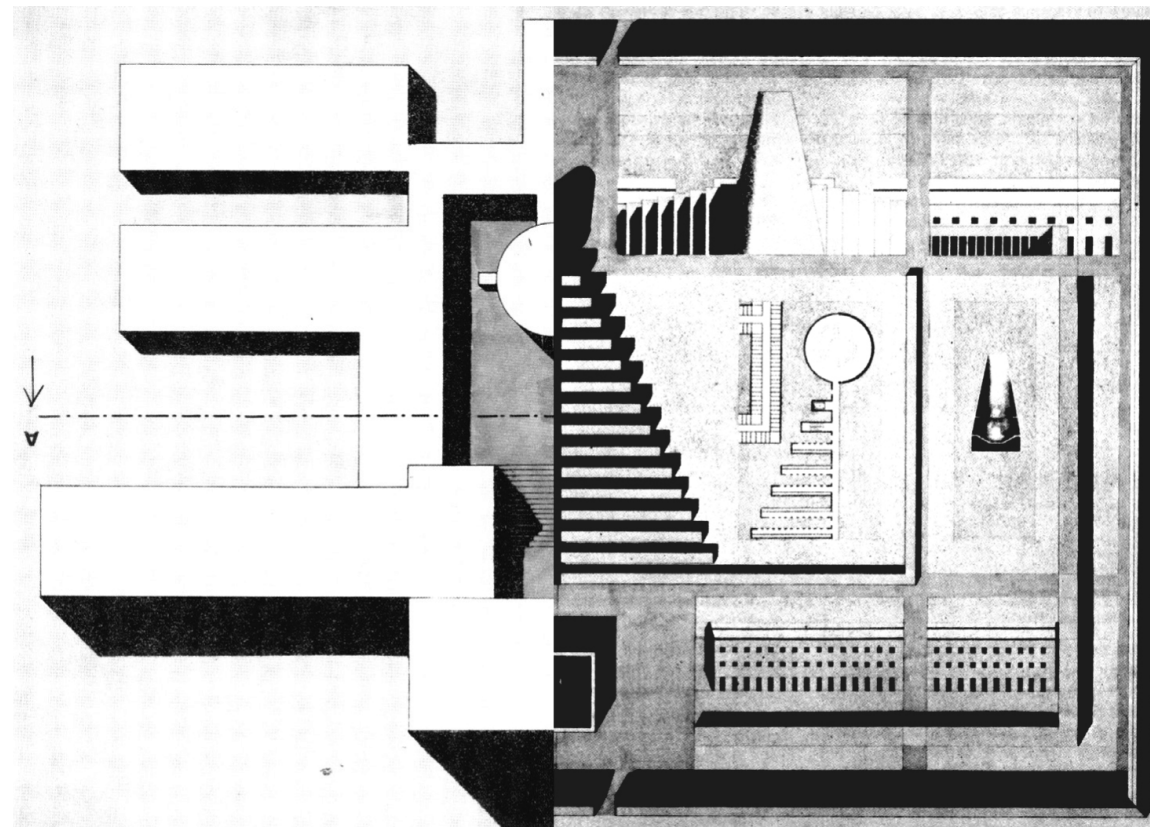


Figure 10 - C McEwan, 2013
School-Cemetery Left: Fagnano
Olona School, Right San Cataldo
Cemetery, Both drawings by
Rossi.

49. Jordan Scott Kauffman. "Drawing on architecture: the socioaesthetics of architectural drawings, 1970-1990." Diss. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2014.

50. Fabbrini, The State of Architecture. Aldo Rossi and the Tools of Internationalization, 80.

51. Pierre Apraxine, and Beth Gates Warren. "Pierre Apraxine Interviewed: Part I." On Paper 1.3 (1997): 32-38.

52. Fabbrini, The State of Architecture. Aldo Rossi and the Tools of Internationalization, 85.

53. Jesse Reiser. "The Story Behind a Drawing: Jesse Reiser on Aldo Rossi." Architectural Record, 26 Feb. 2019, <https://www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/13936-the-story-behind-a-drawing-jesse-reiser-on-aldo-rossi>.

artifacts in and of themselves."⁴⁹ Rossi's work started to appear in galleries and exhibitions in the US around the same time. In 1976, Rossi made his debut exhibition in America in IAUS (Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies) in Manhattan, New York, which marked the beginning of the internationalization of his works, since he was immediately absorbed into a small circle of New York curators, architects and artists.⁵⁰ Rossi went from discarding his drawings that art dealers wanted to purchase in the mid 1970s, because he didn't realize their value,⁵¹ to receiving 2.5 million lire from an insurance company for compensation of the loss of three drawings in 1980.⁵² With the evaluation of his drawings in the New York art market increasing, Rossi made the decision to modify his drawing styles to ammodate

to preferences of American art dealers.

New York based architect Jesse Reiser documented Rossi's modification process of his own drawings. Reiser was a student studying in Cooper Union when Rossi taught there in the spring of 1979, then he was invited to intern for Rossi over the summer in Milan. During that internship, Reiser was appointed to work on a redrawing of San Cataldo Cemetery. In an article, Reiser wrote about the methods he used to redraw, as well as Rossi's unexpected choice in terms of different versions of color palette. "He took me to the art supply store and he was pulling gouache tubes out"⁵³ Reiser wrote, and he was shocked by the color Rossi picked because they were so different from any of the previous San Cataldo drawings, they were

a mixture of beiges and tans, plus Rossi's signature red. Reiser wasn't convinced those colors would work together, but they worked beautifully in the end. Reiser called this unusual color choice as the localization of "a drawing for America"⁵⁴.

Jesse Reiser also offered some inside look into Rossi's office and working schedule. In his article, Reiser described Rossi's office in Milan as hardly an office, but some tables set up in an apartment, with only 6 to 7 employees.⁵⁵ Reiser's narrative on Rossi's working methods provided the details of his self-discipline and reasons for his distinctive styles of drawings.

He would spend the morning writing—he had a very structured day—and then

look at projects in the afternoon, and then spend one day a week drawing on his own, maybe on the weekend. He would do two things: either hand drawing, or he would have film positives of drafted drawings that he would run through the blueprint machine...His drawings, then, fell into two rough categories: completely free-hand drawings and illuminated blueprints.⁵⁶

With Rossi's repeated presentations of his own designs using his completely free-hand drawings, and the much bigger influences they had publicly than his technical blueprints, it's not hard to see why people would compare his sketches to his building designs. Additionally, Rossi's design styles also

54. Jesse Reiser. "The Story Behind a Drawing: Jesse Reiser on Aldo Rossi."

55. Ibid.,

56. Ibid.,

Figure 12 - Jesse Reiser. Copy of composition with the Modena Cemetery by Aldo Rossi, Drawing Matter Somerset, 1979 ("Architecture Itself and Other Postmodernist Myths – Archined")

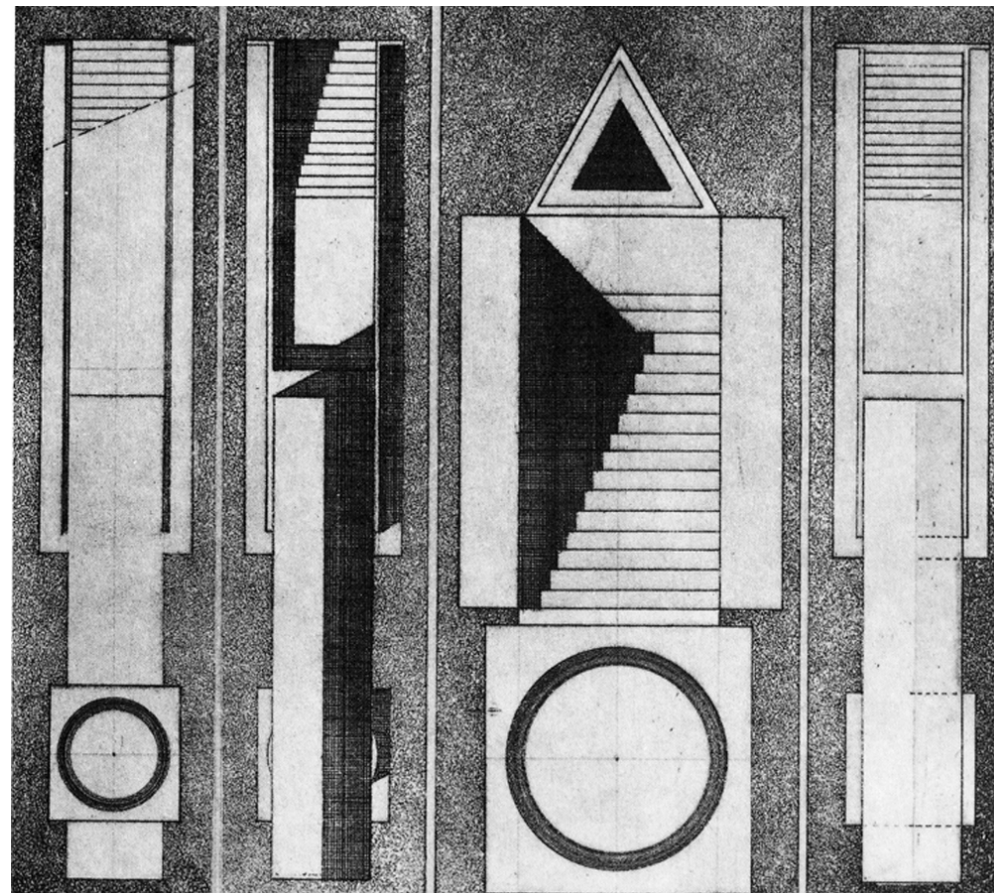
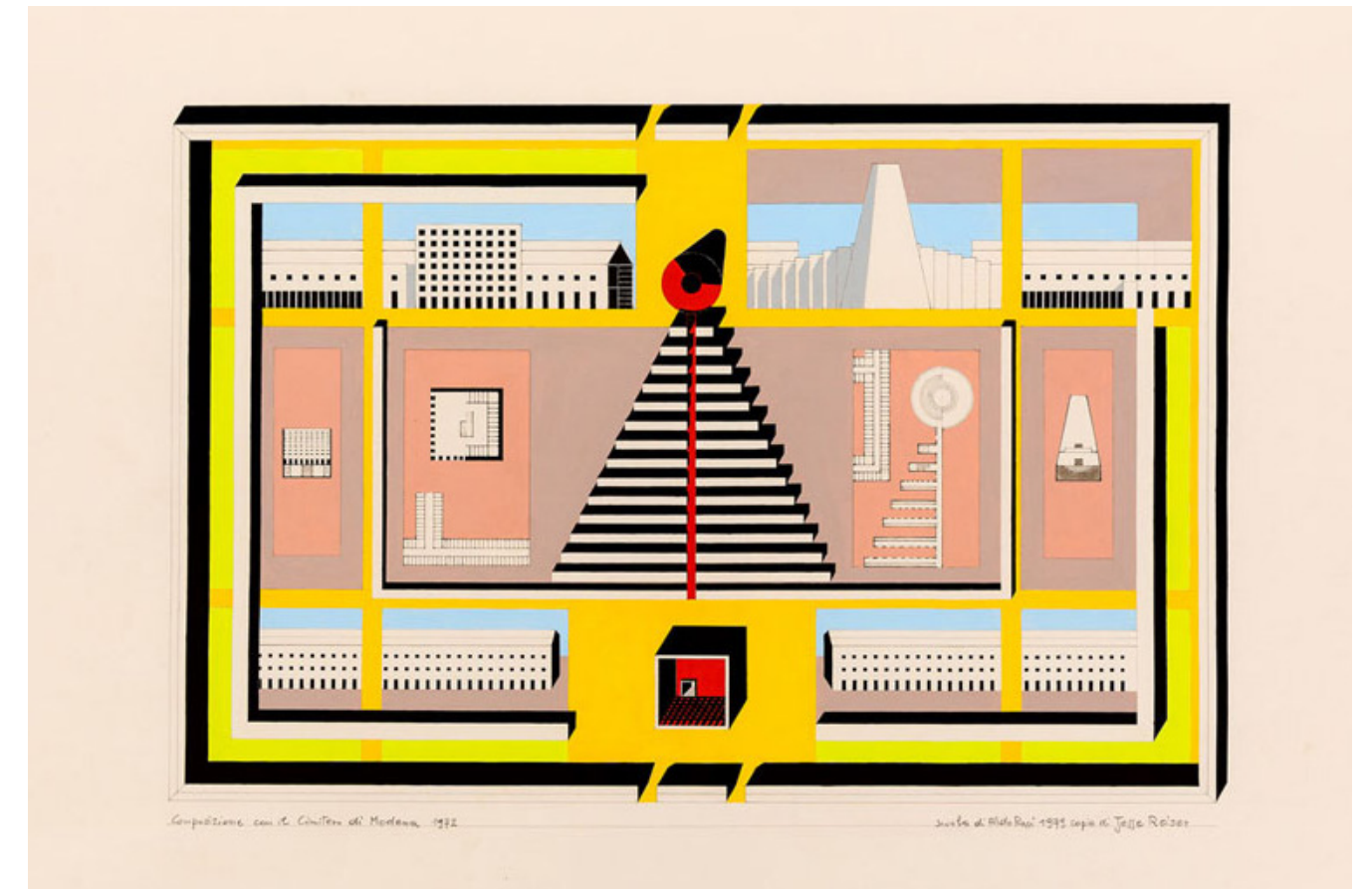


Figure 11 - Aldo Rossi, Drawing of the Monument to the Resistance in Segrate, Italy, 1965



57. Huxtable, Ada Louise. "The present: The troubled state of Modern Architecture." *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 33.4 (1980): 24-37.

58. Rossi, The architecture of the City, 27.

59. SWOSZOWSKA, JUSTYNA WOJTAS. "ALDO ROSSI-ARCHITECT AND THEORIST. THE DILEMMAS OF ARCHITECTURE AFTER MODERNISM1." *New York Review of Books* 1 (1980): 22-29.

experienced an evolution over his career, and it's important to analyze that to understand the degree of deviation between his paper architecture and implemented works and the reason behind.

Design styles transitions

Rossi's career in architecture started in the 1960s, with the disadvantages of modernism starting to surface in architectural studies. It was considered to be deprived of historic and surrounding contexts. The precise rules and definitions that were once advantages were then considered to be stopping a new revolution.⁵⁷ Rossi began his theory writing career by criticizing these disadvantages of modernism architecture, and when he started designing projects, he designed by searching for a "real, useful theory of design"⁵⁸ He adopted the idea of an "analogous city" that indicates a single building to be designed by analogy to the city, and based on this neo-rational manifesto he attempted to design by applying theoretical ideas.

Architecture researcher Justyna Wojtas Swoszowska summarized the transitions in Rossi's design styles throughout his career. She considered that in the first period of his career from the 1960s to 1980, Rossi used simple "purist" spatial principles, devoid of details. She said that he used pure forms as the basic composition elements for his architecture in this period, and that it was characterized by restraint and simplicity. From 1980, Rossi stressed more on memory, imagination and traditions in his designs, using softened form or

monumental features to shape architecture. In the later stages of his career he designed many structures of different sizes with much more vibrant colors and details compared to his earlier works.⁵⁹

Looking into the evolutionary processes of both Rossi's drawings and designs, they both went from pure or relatively unbending to abstract and vibrant. The level of deviation was less when comparing the designs and drawings that were produced in the same period. As Rossi believed in architecture having another life in drawing and writing forms, he repeated producing earlier implemented works of his own in later stages of his career from the 1980s to 1990s, giving more abstractness and vibrance on paper to these purist architecture, that were designed and built much earlier (from 1960s to 1970s), resulting in the great contrasts between his famous free sketches and his architecture in reality.



Figure 13 - Aldo Rossi, Bonnefantenmuseum (James Taylor-Foster)

3. Different perceptions on Rossi's paper architecture and built projects

60. Quik. "The Window of the Poet."

61. Eisenman, Peter. "Preface." Aldo Rossi in America, 1976 to 1979: March 25 to April 14, 1976, September 19 to October 30, 1979.

62. Geers, Pancevac, Aldo Rossi. The Urban Fact: A Reference Book on Aldo Rossi, 15.

63. Manfredo Tafuri. L'architecture dans le boudoir: the language of criticism and the criticism of language. 1974.

64. Manfredo Tafuri. History of Italian architecture, 1944-1985. MIT Press, 1989.

65. Ghirardo, Aldo Rossi and the spirit of architecture, 199.

Perceptions on Rossi's drawings

Many architecture critics appreciated the vibrance and liveliness presented in Rossi's drawings. As it was well illustrated by Ton Quik, a curator for the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht, the important meanings of Rossi's drawings were that they gave another life to the project by deepening the insight into how he dealt with a specific métier.⁶⁰ The drawings by Rossi belonged to the project, yet having their own domain. Quik considered that Rossi's drawings and designs were interconnected, and that they contributed to each other.

Peter Eisenman however had a different opinion on Rossi's drawings. Compared to the drawings that closely represented the projects, Eisenman preferred conception drawings such the *Analogous City* since they were more conceptually relevant and showed a deliberate attempt to separate the drawings and projects. Therefore in a letter he sent to Rossi ahead of an exhibition in 1979, Eisenman asked Rossi to include as many hand sketches as possible which could be described as conceptual exercises, yet turned away the drawings that had direct presentation of the actual building, seeking to make the exhibition theme more "unique and valuable".⁶¹

Belgium architects Geers and Pancevac acknowledged the styles and attributions that Rossi's drawings brought to his design, as these sketches allowed Rossi to

test the potential of shape, forms and typologies. However, in their opinion, the drawings by Rossi were often an endless repetition of his several limited projects that were rearranged in different scales but invariably in a vacuum. They considered Rossi's drawings that represented buildings as "objects" as an act of removing the contexts and becoming a limitation that caused representation to be confused with reality.⁶²

Critiques on Rossi's projects

Architectural historian Manfredo Tafuri wrote several critical articles on both Rossi's theoretical and built works. In his opinion, Rossi's works were impossible to be translated from paper to reality, since Rossi decided on his theories and drawings to disconnect the architecture from reality and prevented the building from "all incursions by chance".⁶³ To Tafuri, Rossi's designs were indifferent, belonging to "a geometric elementarism reminiscent of Durand's tables." ⁶⁴ Ghirardo defended these criticisms by arguing that Tafuri, as an Italian Marxist, had prejudice against Rossi's abandoning of communist politics, that Tafuri must have never been to a building site with Rossi or that he did not understand Rossi's writings.⁶⁵

Ezio Bonfanti on the other hand suggested a method of analyzing and understanding Rossi's architecture in the article *Elements and construction: Notes on Aldo Rossi's architecture* that was first published in 1970. In this

lengthy analytical article he first acknowledged the contribution of Rossi to the current architectural culture. He pointed out that even though many people defined Rossi's design as rigid, they were worth further investigation because of their specific features and their reflections of Rossi's scientific way of combining theory and personality with architecture. Bonfanti then proposed a system with steps to reconstruct Rossi's works, which started with the division of 'pieces' and 'parts' in categorizing the elements.⁶⁶ Due to the "unusually clear, recognisable and highly programmatic features of Aldo Rossi's architecture,"⁶⁷ Bonfanti considered that the task was to find a way to take into account both the rigorous logic and imagination. He then defined basic elements that couldn't be further reduced as "pieces" and more complex elements such as free-standing components or entire architectural work as "parts". By analyzing the "pieces", Bonfanti pointed out that they recurred in Rossi's projects in various sizes and proportions, but were repetitive in style.⁶⁸ To understand Rossi's compositional approach, Bonfanti proceeded to write about the additive procedure, which he claimed to be radical since Rossi not only rejected interpenetration, but also adapted complete architectural elements as "parts". Bonfanti analyzed the method Rossi used for linking these "parts" in the project of Scandicci, in which elements were pinned together by the bridging gallery. Bonfanti considered this as Rossi's most complete design at the time. He described it by saying,

It combines sequence and overlapping into an

*object whose monumental features are combined with unsettling features of a machine or a toy - but a toy that is far from innocent.*⁶⁹

Bonfanti further expressed his disagreement with Tafuri's comments which described Rossi's works as "rigorous composition in the strictest sense" and 'silent architectural objects'⁷⁰. He emphasized that when looking at Rossi's architecture, the design and the finished projects should be seen as equal since all the expressive sketching techniques and theories were the background that contributed to the architecture's atmosphere. In the same article, Bonfanti also discussed how Rossi displayed the past in a new manner instead of being a "historiographical instrumentalist" as accused by Tafuri.⁷¹ From December 1970 to January 1971, Rossi wrote several letters to Bonfanti responding to his article, praising its accuracy and claiming it made him think of his own works in a more systematic way, while further discussing the questions of compositions and history.⁷² However, even Bonfanti, who had an overall positive opinion on Rossi's contribution to architectural culture, couldn't deny that he found it difficult to interpret Rossi's work only by the way they were constructed. There were very few instances where Rossi's theories could be expressed solely in a built project without the support of background information such as sketches or theoretical writings.⁷³

66. Ezio Bonfanti. "Elements and construction: Notes on Aldo Rossi's architecture." OverHolland (2017): 199-213.

67. Ibid., 201.

68. In one example of Rossi's design of openings, Bonfanti explained Rossi's unique style by stating that the most signature modernist styles of large areas of glass or ribbon windows were missing in Rossi's openings. Therefore, it was as if Rossi was reproducing these architectural components, and there were no alternatives of other openings in Rossi's works, thus making them typical "pieces".

69. Bonfanti. "Elements and construction: Notes on Aldo Rossi's architecture.". 207.

70. Manfredo Tafuri. Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development. MIT Press, 1979.

71. Bonfanti. "Elements and construction: Notes on Aldo Rossi's architecture.". 207.

72. Aldo Rossi. Aldo Rossi: I quaderni azzurri. Vol. 1. Getty Publications, 1999.

73. Bonfanti, Elements and construction: Notes on Aldo Rossi's architecture, 199.

Chapter II · The events behind the implementation of Rossi's projects

1. Reality issues and events impacting the implementation

Early in his career, Rossi's few architecture projects that eventually entered the implementation process were all in Italy. Some were his most signature designs, including the *Square in front of the Town Hall of Segrate* (1965), *Secondary School in Trieste* (1968), *Housing Complex in Gallarate, Milan* (1968), *the Renovation and Expansion of an Elementary School, Broni* (1969), *San Cataldo Cemetery* (1971), all of which were to some extent altered during the construction process. They were criticized by some architects for their shaky construction processes, poor materiality and incompleteness.⁷⁴

In the initial construction of the square in front of the Town Hall of Segrate in 1967, only part of the square where the fountain and prism sit were realized. Other parts including the altered wall with plants (initially designed to be gateways), the columns and the painting were only later built in the 1990s.⁷⁵ The implementation of the Secondary School in Trieste was corrupted by lack of budget and it was documented that only eighteen front columns were built instead of twenty-three. The construction halted in 1972 as funding cuts and a disapproval of the final budget had led to half of

the front facade to be constructed without any stone cladding.⁷⁶ Along with these, Rossi's most famous project San Cataldo Cemetery had remained unfinished till this day.⁷⁷ However in his defense, some of these construction issues were largely out of his control. Ghirardo explained in her book regarding these accusations of Rossi's poorly constructed works, that in Italy architects had very little control over the implementation of a public project once the design was completed. In addition, the lowest bid with the cheap and less durable materials would win the bidding competition for the construction even if the architect specifically asked for another type in the design.⁷⁸ Rossi however was very good at controlling the budget by choosing the right materials and technologies, therefore he faced no lawsuits about over-budget buildings, unlike what regularly occurs nowadays with famous architects.⁷⁹

Rossi first started the implementations of his earlier works before the 1970s, yet the incident of financial recession during the same time profoundly impacted the architectural industry. The 1970s recession was an economic stagnation that occurred in much of the western

74. Geers, Pancevac, Aldo Rossi. *The Urban Fact: A Reference Book on Aldo Rossi*, 14.

75. *Ibid.*, 27.

76. *Ibid.*, 45.

77. *Ibid.*, 83.

78. Ghirardo, Aldo Rossi and the spirit of architecture, 198.

79. *Ibid.*,

Figure 14 - Photographic reportage of the construction and travel of the Teatro del Mondo from Venice to Dubrovnik, 1979-1980, Photographs by Antonio Martinelli

80. Raymond Lubitz. "The Italian economic crises of the 1970's.", 1978.

81. Tim Love. "Paper Architecture, Emerging Urbanism." *Places Journal*, no. 2010, Apr. 2010, doi:10.22269/100413.

82. James Murdock, "Drawing, Thinking, and Digitizing: Recession's Modus Operandi," *Architectural Record*, December 2009, 37-38.

83. Pierre, Warren. "Pierre Apraxine Interviewed: Part I.", 32-38.

84. Kats, Anna. "How the 1980 Venice Architecture Biennale Jumpstarted Postmodernism." *Metropolis*, 14 Sept. 2017, <https://metropolismag.com/viewpoints/1980-venice-biennale-postmodernism-book/>.

85. Ghirardo, Aldo Rossi and the spirit of architecture, 22.

world, and marked an end to the post war economic expansion, especially in Italy, where the healthy pace of economic growth since world-war II disappeared during this decade.⁸⁰ It could be assumed that the economic recession was part of the reason why so much of Rossi's work in this period remained unbuilt or only partially completed. Some researchers speculated that the deep economic recession in the mid-1970s sparked the trend of paper architecture. John McMorrough, a professor at Ohio State University, gave a lecture focusing on the discussion of whether the shortage of architectural commissions in the 1970s in combination with advancement in representation technology, had led to the growing amount of theoretical studies on architecture at that time.⁸¹ Architectural scholar James Murdock asked the same question and he concluded that with fewer projects available, architects were forced to increasingly create paper architecture while their design projects had to remain unbuilt. Using the example of Rossi, Murdock argued that his unbuilt projects were the symbols of a "return to autonomy"⁸², pointing to a trend of architects intending to focus on the imaginary buildings themselves rather than realistic ones that were connected to the city.

An interview with Pierre Apraxine, the curator of an architectural drawings show in Leo Catelli's gallery, provided not only some insights into the focus of New York's architects during the financial recession, but also possibly another reason for Rossi's unbuilt early projects. He said that

it was possibly due to the fact that his designs were ahead of his time. The architectural drawings show that Apraxine worked on in the mid-1970s listed architects from whom the works came, including Aldo Rossi, Rober Venturi, Walter Pichler, James Sterling etc. With all these famous architects, the show was however primarily about conceptual works, Apraxine explained the reason was that none of them were actually having their designs implemented at the time except for Richard Meier and Jim Sterling, "It was a difficult time for architects in general." he said, "Then the Postmodernist movement erupted, and everything was greatly changed."⁸³

The 1980 Venice Architecture Biennale was the first Venice Biennale that separated art and architecture, which also marked the beginning of the postmodernist movement.⁸⁴ With this change in format of the Venice Biennale, came one of Rossi's most important works, the *Teatro del Mondo*, floating in the waters of the Venice canal. It immediately became a symbol and "an iconic image, as it coincided with the flowering of debates about postmodern architecture,"⁸⁵ Rossi's fame grew as this floating theater with bright yellow and blue wooden structure declared a different understanding of architecture than the standard modernism movement. With his growing presences in both Italian and international architecture community, Rossi started to design projects all around the world, including *Project for a tower in Melbourne, Australia* (1982), *House in Rauchstrasse, Berlin Tiergarten, Germany* (1983), *Project for the School of Architecture at the*

University of Miami, Florida (1985), *Il Palazzo Hotel and restaurant, Fukuoka, Japan* (1987), *Lighthouse theater, Toronto Canada* (1988) and many others.⁸⁶ Although many remained at the level of unbuilt, as Ghirardo pointed out as "quite common in the world of architectural practice"⁸⁷. The diversity of locations guided Rossi's architecture out of the suburbia of Italy, into metropolitan areas all around the world, where his designs faced the challenge of fitting in different urban and cultural contexts.

86. Ghirardo, Aldo Rossi and the spirit of architecture, 248.

87. Ibid., 26.

2. The problem with contexts

88. Ghirardo, Aldo Rossi and the spirit of architecture, 62.

89. Kongsombat, Prin. "Study on urban catalyst for sustainable urban development.", 2012.

90. Geers, Pancevac, Aldo Rossi. The Urban Fact: A Reference Book on Aldo Rossi, 256.

Rossi had always insisted that his projects were based on the history and context of a city, a project in Japan however, showed how subjective people could be towards the understanding of contexts. For the design of *Il Palazzo Hotel and restaurant* in Fukuoka, Japan, Rossi used elements such as round columns and red stone cladding in the facade; layered green steel roof details seemed almost classical in style. It was reported that Rossi thought he had produced a Japanese style building, but the developers were over the moon because they thought Rossi had produced an Italian building.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the building received overwhelmingly positive reviews, and became a landmark in the former red light district

in Fukuoka. Urban researchers considered it successful for bringing in other tourists business such as restaurants, uplifting the atmosphere of surrounding areas without damaging the existing contexts.⁸⁹

In each of his projects, Rossi always elaborated on his basic theory of the building being the amalgamation of fragments from the city. In other words, the architecture itself was considered as a city. Even in his manifestos for each designs, he emphasized on the idea that the building was a city, for example, *San Cataldo Cemetery* was a "city for the dead", *Fagnano Olona school* is a small city focused on its central piazza", "Centro Torri is a piece of the city".⁹⁰ Geers and Pancevac analyzed this ideological

position from Rossi in their book, and brought up the assumption that it could be the reason for the lack of urbanity in Rossi's architecture. The natural setting of empty lands in Italian suburbia of a lot of Rossi's works, led him to create "monuments against the field"⁹¹. Therefore, even though his projects reflected on the history and experience of the city, they stood autonomously in the city, making "pointed interruptions in the white noise of mid-century suburbia."⁹² They considered that the absence of interaction with surroundings in Rossi's works disabled the buildings from further growing and blending into the city, but it helped to preserve the monumentality of the building itself even long after it was built, regardless of the changing field around it.

91. Ibid., 256.

92. Ibid., 256.

Figure 15 - Aldo Rossi, "Il Palazzo" hotel and restaurant complex, Fukuoka, Japan: elevation, 1987 (Fonds: Aldo Rossi Fonds, 1953-1997, Predominant 1962-1997)

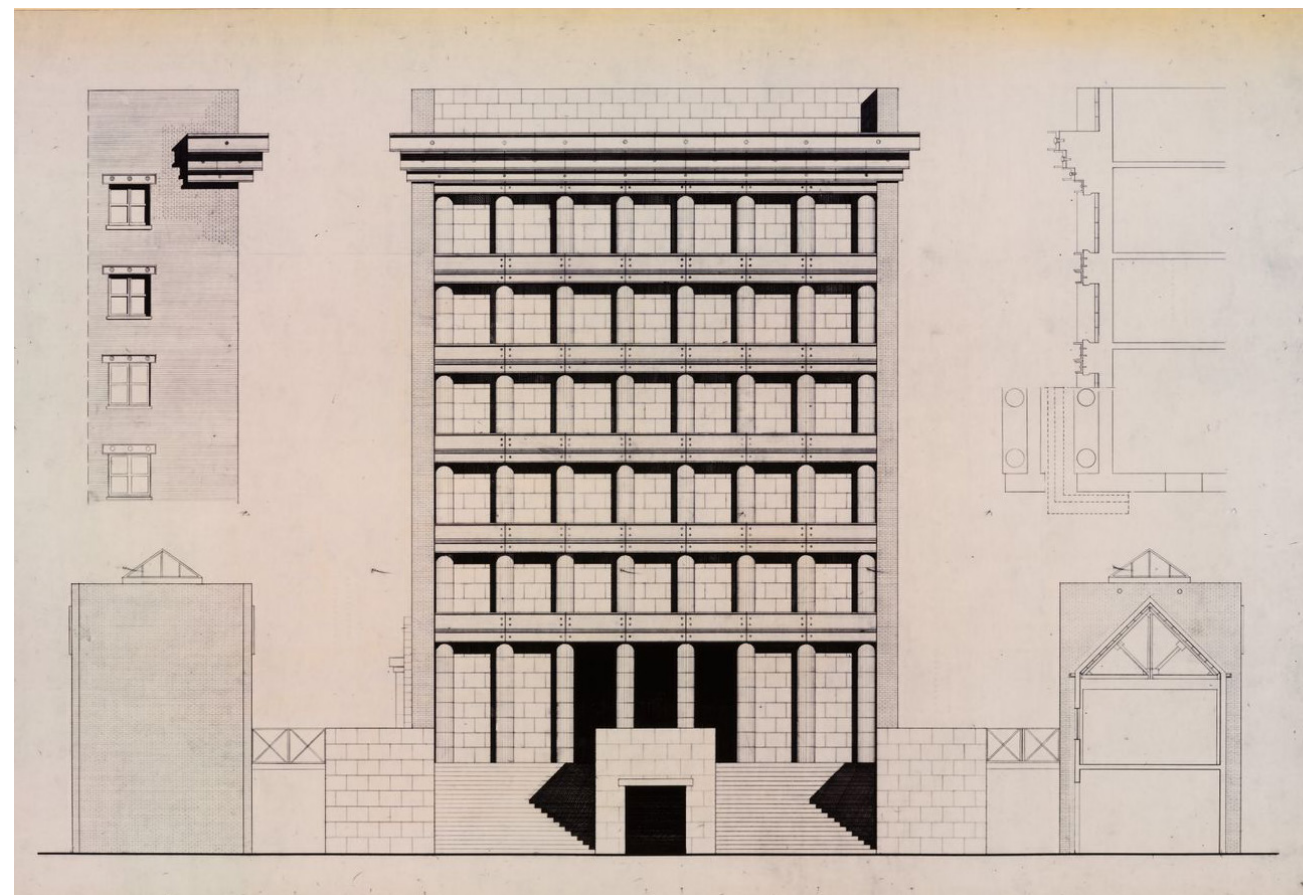


Figure 16 - Börner, Jakob. "BOERNER PHOTOGRAPHER." San Cataldo Cemetery

3. Rossi's philosophy towards implementation

93. Bonfanti, "Elements and construction: Notes on Aldo Rossi's architecture."

94. Ghirardo, Aldo Rossi and the spirit of architecture, 198.

95. Aldo Rossi, Paolo Portoghesi, and Marco Brandolisio. Aldo Rossi: the sketchbooks, 1990-1997. Thames & Hudson, 2000.

96. Ghirardo, Aldo Rossi and the spirit of architecture, 198.

97. Rossi, A Scientific Autobiography, 38.

98. Ibid., 39.

99. Ibid., 78.

Reading about Rossi's philosophy towards the building process seemed puzzling. On one hand, Rossi once said "the most important artists have focused on theory rather than on execution,"⁹³ which appeared to indicate his focus was more on theory than on the implementation of a design. On the other hand, researchers who were close to Rossi described how attentive Rossi was towards the expressions of his design in the construction process. Ghirardo wrote about how Rossi's visits to building sites would lead to his lengthy conversation with workers who in turn would offer their perspective to the attentive architect.⁹⁴

The information about Rossi's working method regarding implementation events on building sites was lacking in academic archives, therefore it is impossible to truly determine whether Rossi was enthusiastic about the correct implementation of every detail. Only a few short essays written by people who worked for him documented his attention to materials and details.⁹⁵ In defense of the criticism regarding the building condition in Rossi's works, Ghirardo described Rossi's working methods on construction sites. She praised Rossi's dedication to materials and the quality of construction. Even with the systematic problems of the Italian building industry like corruption and poor quality, Rossi still chose the most suitable materials and treatments that could survive the poorer construction.⁹⁶

However the ideas from

Rossi's own writings, about the process of implementation, appeared to be much blurrier. Even though he claimed to have a passion for technique, Rossi had a preference towards simple construction without the need for fancy technology. For example, he considered that the design for the *Gallaratese Housing complex* was important because it was replicable due to the simplicity of its construction.⁹⁷ Regarding the changes that had to be made because of the reality issues on construction sites, he had a fairly flexible attitude and was open to practical changes. "Whenever I followed the progress of my realized projects, I liked the errors made on the construction site, the little deformations, the changes which became remedial in some unexpected way."⁹⁸ With this attitude of flexibility, it is not hard to understand why compared to finishing the projects in a completely authentic way, Rossi seemed to enjoy purity the process. He was more than excited about adjusting and the on site developments.

*We could speak of every project as if it were an unfinished love affair: it is most beautiful before it ends.*⁹⁹



Figure 17 - Aldo Rossi, View of Nuovo municipio [New City Hall] of Borgoricco, Italy, under construction (Fonds: Aldo Rossi Fonds, 1953-1997, Predominant 1962-1997)

Chapter III · Important Works

1. San Cataldo Cemetery

History of the Cemetery

The nineteenth-century *San Cataldo Cemetery* was a project originally built by engineer Cesare Costa, who was famous in the architectural field for restoration work. The construction of the original building started in 1860 and was finished by 1887. It had a quadriportico that was divided into rectangular layout, a solemn Doric colonnade, a monumental entrance and a triangular tympanum.¹⁰⁰ The old cemetery buildings included a chapel and a dome with classical forms that reflected on religious and mythological symbolisms.¹⁰¹

The city of Modena was experiencing the after war economic boom when the competition for a new cemetery was proposed by the municipality in 1971. Due to the rapid growth of the population, the old cemetery was out of capacity by the end of the 1960s, therefore it was proposed that a new burial compound was to be built next to the old cemetery on the outskirts of the city. The designated land was surrounded by agricultural areas and a sprawling residential neighborhood with a ring road and highway across the side of the area. Rossi won the competition

in collaboration with Giani Braghieri in 1972, with a design that counterbalanced with the old cemetery, for it also regulated the site with boundaries defined by the similar rectangular perimeter. In 1976, Rossi and Braghieri submitted their final project and the construction started in the same year.¹⁰²

Theory and Metaphor

Rossi embraced the design of *San Cataldo Cemetery* as if it was a personal journey associating almost every element or detail with metaphors, as a way of expressing “the end both of adolescence and of an interest in death”¹⁰³ in his design. In *A Scientific Autobiography*, Rossi wrote in length about an incident that he was involved in, a car crash that put him in a hospital of Slavonski Brod in April of 1971.

*Lying nearly immobile, I thought of the past...the painful awareness of my own bones-brought me back to my childhood... During the following summer, in my study for the project...I was the skeletal structure of the body as a series of fractures to be reassembled.*¹⁰⁴

100. <http://www.provincia.modena.it>, R. centrale-. (n.d.). Portale Turismo - Provincia di Modena - Cimitero Monumentale di San Cataldo e complesso cimiteriale di Aldo Rossi. Architettura Moderna. Retrieved February 22, 2022, from <http://www.portaleturismo.provincia.modena.it/>

101. Ibid.,

102. Geers, Pancevac, Aldo Rossi. *The Urban Fact: A Reference Book on Aldo Rossi*, 83.

103. Rossi, A *Scientific Autobiography*, 8.

104. Ibid., 11.

Figure 18 - Börner, Jakob. "BOERNER PHOTOGRAPHER." *San Cataldo Cemetery*(Börner, "BOERNER PHOTOGRAPHER")

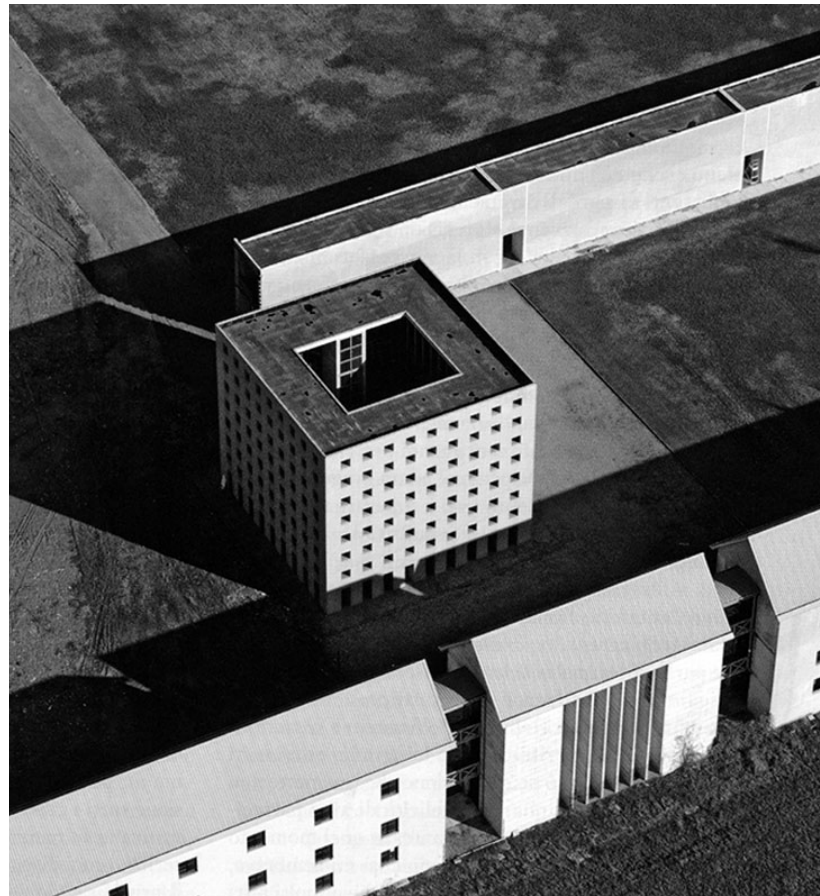


Figure 19 - Stefano Topuntoli, Photograph of San Cataldo Cemetery ("Architecture")

could be added in later according to needs.¹⁰⁶ However, because the initial implementation process suffered from underbidding and excessive costs,¹⁰⁷ some features were therefore already altered along the first building process. The ossuary cube was built with hollow blocks, then finished with rendered and painted red instead of finished with exposed brickwork as Rossi intended; the stepped seating with the wall along the road weren't realized; and aluminum windows were added on the hollow window openings of the perimeter building after complaints from visitors.¹⁰⁸ Over the years, a lot of construction was carried out on the cemetery by different companies, with the last work dating back to 2011 but still only 40% of the project has been completed to this day.¹⁰⁹

Rossi had identified the morphology of the skeleton with death; he proposed his design for the cemetery, "the house of the dead". To Rossi, the buildings were an embrace of the time, whether past, present or future and that they celebrated the ages of life. However he thought that one should not over emphasize on the themes and rather, focus on functions that existed in the forms like death, that manifested inside the building.¹⁰⁵

Construction and Built Condition

The construction of San Cataldo Cemetery was planned to be executed in phases and Rossi considered it to be the rational and rigorous implementation plan. He hoped the design could be an additive system that would be altered overtime, that components

The incompleteness was partially due to the fact that the locals weren't very accepting of Rossi's design and the emptiness of burial spots didn't trigger the need for enlarging the existing buildings. Although some locals were buried in Rossi's cemetery, many of them preferred to bury their dead in the provincial cemetery, which had to be enlarged.¹¹⁰ Additionally, research showed that the number of occupied burial spots in Rossi's cemetery were declining over the time, meaning people were moving tombs out of there when new cemeteries were built elsewhere in Moderna. The cemetery would probably be empty within 50 years. "Abandoned even from the dead"¹¹¹ the researcher concluded.

Nowadays, when entering the empty cemetery courtyard that is covered in dry grass, visitors are enclosed by a wall with hollow

windows. The skeleton structure was never implemented and hence the tallest structure in sight is the schematic cube with four faded red facades. The design of the ossuary cube contained a unique feature that it was just a structure with openings. Traditional architecture elements such as doors, windows or roof were non-existent.¹¹² The surrounding buildings, only partially finished and corrupted by time, are now showing spallings on the facades. They were positioned in a way as to confine the wild green spaces in between that are now uncared for; a criss-cross of pedestrian paths further marked the geometry of the site. The building complexes were positioned either parallel or perpendicular to each other. According to Rossi, these shapes and forms were inspired by the geometric board games that children would usually play, where they overcame various obstacles including death.¹¹³

Despite being in poor condition nowadays and lacking maintenance, the cemetery design was full of complex symbols. However even with this deep symbolism, Rossi intended the design to be easily comprehensible. On the interior of the ossuary cube, columns and rows formed a sequence of Latin crosses- the most sacred symbol in Roman Catholicism, which line up at each side of the volume on each level. Visitors could enter the volume in between each of the crosses on the ground floor, and peek from the openings between them on the upper floors. Ghirardo regarded the crosses as a clear indication of Rossi's intention of the religious symbols in the building to be understandable.¹¹⁴

Critiques

Architects who revisited San Cataldo Cemetery 30-40 years after it was first built, had mixed reviews about the project. When associating the existing structure with Rossi's writings and theory, some were amazed by the visual and aesthetic connections between the theory and the building, praising it to be a "democratic cemetery, where all the dead have the same dignity" and "a city for the spirit waiting to be lived."¹¹⁵ Other critics found it difficult to link the scattered complex in sight with "a city for the dead", and wondered if this half-empty desolate space had the most appropriate atmosphere to celebrate death. Sapienza architecture researcher Donatella Scatena commented on the cemetery in a most straightforward

112. Cementerio San Cataldo de Aldo Rossi. (n.d.). Buscador de Arquitectura. <https://noticias.arq.com.mx/Detailles/14603.html/>. Assessed February 22, 2022.

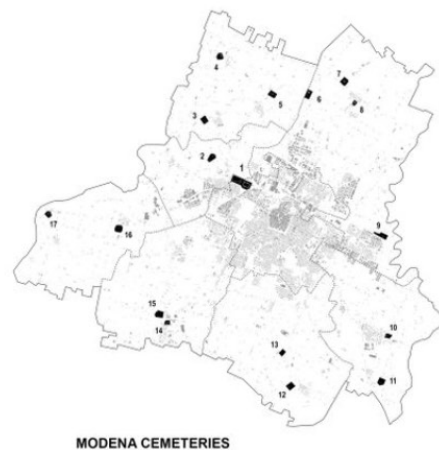
113. San Cataldo cemetery by Aldo Rossi. (n.d.). VisitModena. <https://www.visitmodena.it/en/discover-modena/art-and-culture/modern-architecture/san-cataldo-cemetery-by-aldo-rossi>. Assessed February 22, 2022.

114. Ghirardo, Aldo Rossi and the spirit of architecture, 193..

115. Modena Cemetery by Aldo Rossi: The incomplete city of the soul you have to visit – Taste Bologna. (n.d.). Taste Bologna. <https://www.tastebologna.net/blog/modena-cemetery>. Assessed February 22, 2022.

Figure 20 - Börner, Jakob. "BOERNER PHOTOGRAPHER." San Cataldo Cemetery (Börner, "BOERNER PHOTOGRAPHER")





MODENA CEMETERIES

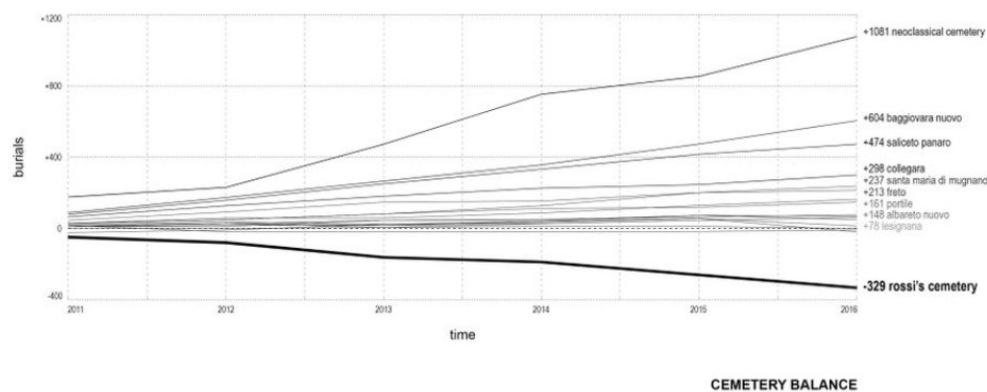


Figure 21 - Urban Issue, BEYOND THE CITY OF THE DEAD Aldo Rossi Modena Cemetery Conversion research("UNI")

way:

*The idea of the house is present indirectly as a "reflection or shadow," given the nature of the place. Its "skinned" elements make up spaces that bring back suggestions and deformations. Here, Rossi creates a funeral monument altering the dimensions of household objects. The square, regular windows that mark the whole complex are cut in the wall without shutters, since the houses of the dead, in architecture, are both unfinished and abandoned.*¹¹⁶

116. San Cataldo cemetery – Atlante architettura contemporanea. (n.d.). <https://www.atlantearchitettura.beniculturali.it/en/cimitero-di-san-cataldo/>. Assessed February 22, 2022.

2. Teatro del Mondo

Teatro del Mondo was a unique existence in Rossi's long list of projects, not only because of its iconic statue in the history of Venice Biennale, but also because its temporary existence and extended influence in the world provided such a big contrast. The story of this building is so iconic that Venice Biennale produced a stop motion animation telling the story of *Teatro del Mondo's* journey on the sea, tracing back important events that occurred around it. The animation was full of imagination, celebrating the beautiful art and culture that the building had brought to the world.¹¹⁷

The theater on the first glance looked like a functional design with designated spaces for stage, actors, audiences and technicians, but its functionality did not come from the sacrifice of a unique concept. Rossi designed the space as different as it could from any other traditional theater, it was more like a metaspace where spectators connect with the performers, a space for narrative itself and a space for imaginations.¹¹⁸ It illustrated the transition of Rossi's design styles from the "purist" persuasion toward designs that were based more on imagination in his later career.

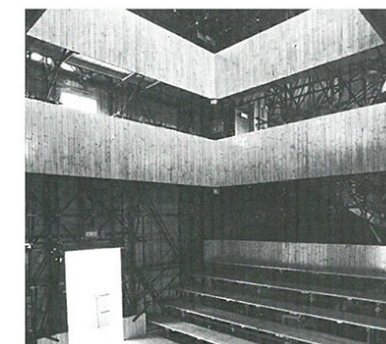
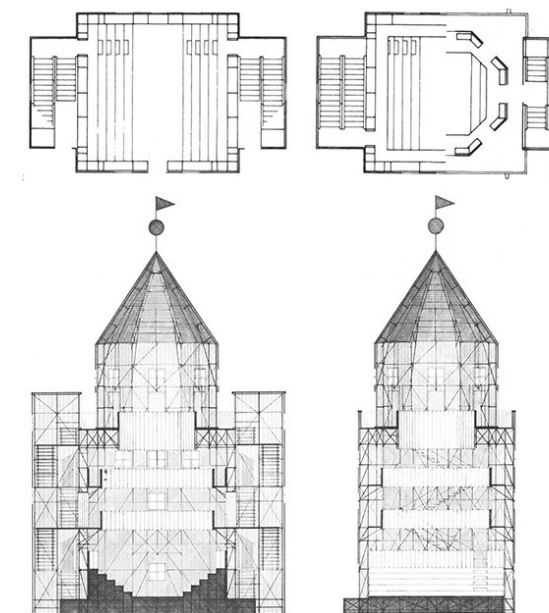
Teatro del Mondo was built with contemporary structure in 1979 and didn't exist for long. After only a few performances during the Venice Biennale, and a short display in the lagoon followed by a voyage across the Adriatic to the Croatian city of Dubrovnik, the temporary theater was disassembled in 1981.¹¹⁹

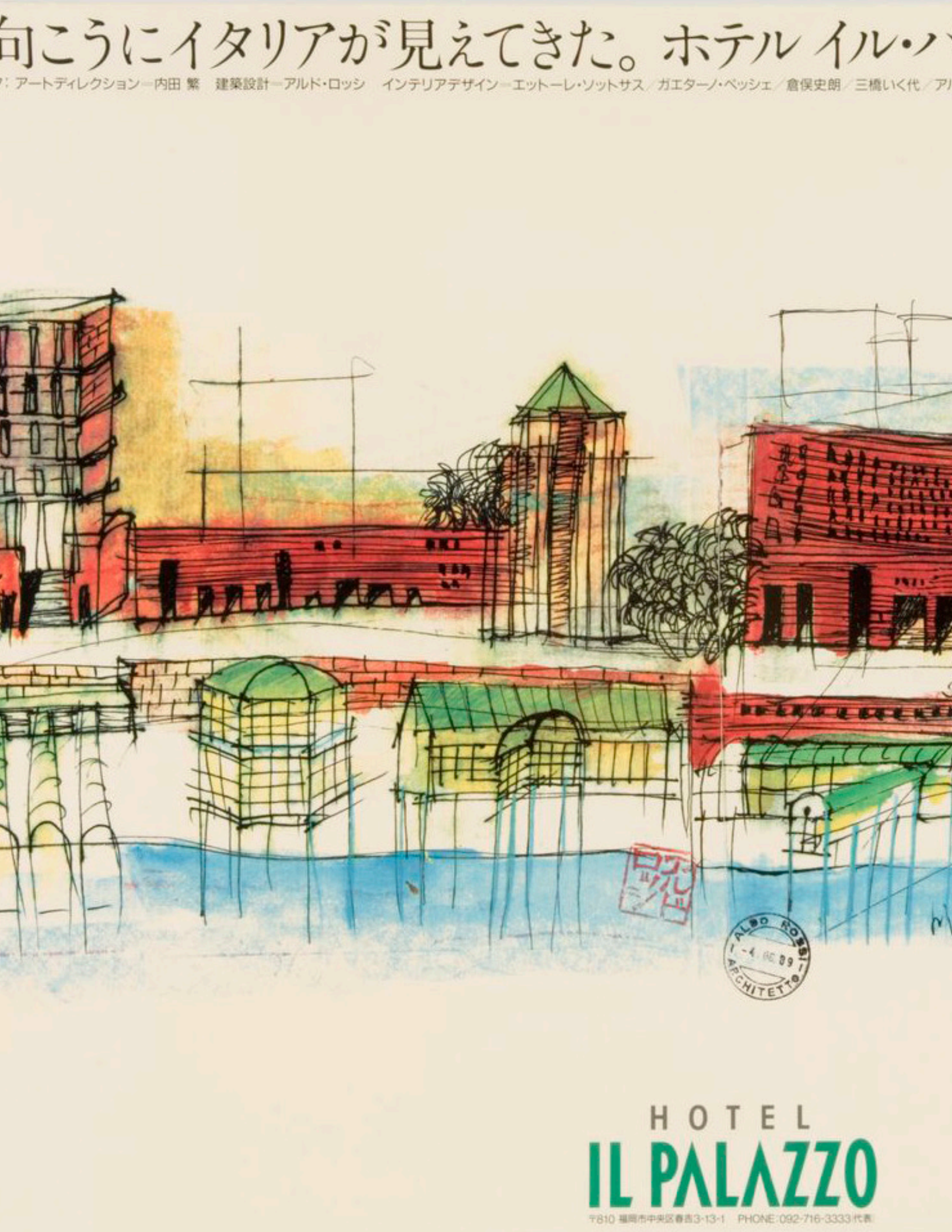
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Discussion and Conclusion

This paper gives a comprehensive review of the implementation process of Aldo Rossi's architecture by looking into various aspects regarding the construction process, conceptual background and building procedures of his work. The relationship between his theoretical and built work was also established.

By analyzing Rossi's educational background and personal experience, connections were established between his past and his unique styles of drawing. Additionally, by investigating his drawing methods and ambitions in the USA art market, his drawing techniques and adjustments in style were justified.

Along with a comparison of the evolution in both Rossi's drawings and design styles over his career, the reasons behind the deviation in style of his drawings and projects were analyzed, and the different perspectives from people towards his work helped to build a solid and comprehensive idea of Rossi's principles and initiations behind his works. Over the years, both Rossi's drawings and designs transformed from the "purist" to a more playful and vibrant style, dedicating time towards

imagination and details instead of form or traditional architectural framework. Rossi continued to produce drawings of his early buildings for artistic and financial reasons. The drawings had a playful new style, repetitively representing the earlier purist design style, and also creating a contrast between the paper architecture and the implemented one. This sense of contrast therefore became a hot topic and common questions toward Rossi works.

By analyzing the political background, economic recessions and architectural trends of the 1970s, the lack of implementation of Rossi's architecture and the criticisms of their built conditions were justified. By attempting to understand Rossi's attitude toward an authentic implementation process, it could be assumed that his flexibility, together with the ground reality of the world's economic circumstances, resulted in various changes from the initial designs. However, his flexibility was also the reason that he was able to control the budget during construction.

The discussion on Rossi's architecture with the surrounding context is complex.

Figure 23 - Aldo Rossi, Il Palazzo, 1989 (CCA)

On one hand, his designs were the *locus* of the city's history and collective memory, on the other, this background wasn't usually comprehensible solely based on the built condition. People in general tend to notice the lack of connections between his architecture and the surrounding. However, it could also be argued that this lack of urban context helped his architecture to survive the changing of time and field around it.

Architects who analyzed Rossi's important works such as San Cataldo Cemetery and Teatro del Mondo could learn from its architectural decay of demolition, understanding how to better design in a way that

the simple form could survive the test of time, yet interact with the surroundings in a more careful manner.

In the end, Rossi was an architect who mastered all disciplines of arts, which enabled his creations in writing, drawing and architecture. His talents in these fields helped architects all over the globe to understand his work more comprehensively. By analyzing and reviewing his implemented projects and their impact on society and culture in this paper we see how he has inspired and influenced architects for generations to come.

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