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New Research on Leonardo Ricci's Archives

The issue wants to illustrate the state of the archival sources, and of some new research based on them, regarding Leonardo Ricci's taking into consideration both the existing open funds collecting Leonardo Ricci's drawings and documents where the research began: Casa Studio Ricci in Monterinaldi (CSR), and Ricci's fund kept in the Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione - Università di Parma (CSAC). It is important to specify that, in addition to these funds, there is one further non-institutional fund: Ricci's house in Venice, where he lived, from 1973 until his death in 1994 with his second wife and collaborator, the recently deceased architect Maria Grazia Dallerba. This last fund was never accessed and catalogued.

The research considered different kinds of sources: documents, drawings, photographs and paintings. Histories of Postwar Architecture Open Lab of the University of Bologna contributed to the celebrations for Leonardo Ricci's centenary in 2018 by participating in studies and contributing to the digitization and cataloguing of the materials kept at Casa Studio Ricci thanks to the gracious

permission of Clementina Ricci, Ricci's granddaughter and President of the Ricci100 Committee, with the support of Fondazione Michelucci. In agreement with the mentioned partners, to which the CSAC must be added, the issue includes a selection of archival materials gathered for the RICCI100 initiatives. All the documents as letters, typescripts of lectures and conferences, articles, notes, academic documents and manuscripts are kept in CSR, whereas CSAC keeps only drawings and graphic materials. In the first archive the family kept the materials found in Leonardo Ricci's study after his death in 1994, when he had already donated to CSAC a large part of his archive (1983). In Casa Studio Ricci 2013 drawings and 3660 documents covering the time span 1941-1993 are kept, whereas Leonardo Ricci's fund of CSAC, never completely listed, consists of 923 drawings realized between 1959 and 1990: mostly drawings on transparency and large format heliographic copies.

The research work in Ricci's fund at CSAC was done following the institution cataloguing methods and software named Samira. Hence it began with a general vision of the entire fund and a subsequent reorganization and recognition of the projects not yet identified. At present it is organized in "project folders", distinguished by unique numerical codes, which contain the drawings related to each project. After this first selective and cataloguing phase it was also necessary to indicate the presence of severely damaged drawings (those difficult to consult) to be restored. Subsequently, for each project (each identified with its own code), the most significant drawings in terms of quality of representation and state of conservation were selected, identified with a unique code, and marked in pencil on the back. The final operation was to catalog each design with two different types of filing: a form for each project (form OA-P, "project sheets" or "P-sheets containing the general data and the consistency of each project) and a form for each individual drawing (form OA-S, "single files" or "S-sheets", each identifying and describing a single drawing individually). Part of these forms were further filled in the CSAC-Samira digital archive - allowing a public view of the documents corpus. In addition, for each individual card, a photographic attached reproduction is also visible and downloadable online. It is in this last phase that the need to re-elaborate the general sheet of Samira has emerged, making it more compliant with an architectural project, through the addition of useful information for a search, such as the specific identification of the graphic elaborate (eg. ground floor plan, elevation, section ...) or the insertion of the representation scale used in the technical data.

For what concerns the CSR fund, a first cataloguing of the remaining drawings at Monterinaldi was carried out by Professor Corinna Vasić Vatovec¹, daughter

Fig. 1

The places of the research. Casa Studio Ricci, hall, dining room and staircase where drawings, documents and books belonging to Leonardo Ricci are kept.

1 Among Corinna Vasić Vatovec's writings, about Leonardo Ricci: Corinna Vasić Vatovec, "Villa Balmain. Isola d'Elba: Leonardo Ricci/Villa Pleydell-Bouverie", *Area*, no.52 (October 2000): 4-19; Corinna Vasić Vatovec, "Il progetto dell'incompiuta 'Ecclesia'", *Area*, no.53 (December 2000): 90-91; Corinna Vasić Vatovec, "Leonardo Ricci e Giovanni Michelucci: confronti preliminari", *La Nuova Città*, no.2-3 (December 2001): 100-127; Corinna Vasić Vatovec, "Un'opera dimenticata di Leonardo Ricci: 'villaggio Montepiano'", *Quasar*, no. 24-25 (December 2001): 187-99; Ezio Godoli and Corinna Vasić Vatovec, eds., *Architettura Del Novecento. La Toscana. Leonardo Ricci: "Oltre" Firenze* (Firenze: Polistampa, 2001); Corinna Vasić Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci: architetto 'esistenzialista'* (Firenze: Edifir, 2005).

of the artist Dusan Vasić, architect, artist, Ricci's friend and collaborator, but it was not completed since other scrolls were later found in the study after Ricci's death. As for the numbering of the Monterinaldi rolls, one part is found, from number 1 to number 82, catalogued by Vasić, while Ilaria Cattabriga, during her PhD research, has assigned to the others a numbering that goes from the number 11 to 421. The documents include the so-called – as Ricci called them – “Giornali di bordo”, a sort of diaries, logbooks, completely ordered and composed by Angela Poggi. They are of two main types: a systematic chronologically ordered collection of all the newspaper articles, Italian and foreign specialized journals, invitations to Ricci's exhibitions and photographs of the models, from 1938 to 1963, and a portfolio of Ricci's teaching and professional activities including the architect's curriculum vitae, collections of letters and institutional documents from the eminent Italian and foreign universities where Ricci worked, typescripts of lectures and conferences.

Ilaria Cattabriga also digitalized, with the help of Loreno Arboritanzza and Beatrice Conforti, the plenty of materials at CSR, as CSAC proceeded with his own digital tools and equipment. Since it was not possible to digitize Ricci's graphic drawings directly in Monterinaldi, the Fondazione Giovanni Michelucci in Fiesole kindly made its own equipment available to complete the work. The cataloguing and the complete digitalizing of the graphic material and documents constituted the two main phases of the archival research, which helped to highlight that there is still a lot of material to be investigated, which has not yet been examined, useful to the study of the figure of Leonardo Ricci. Therefore, having all the materials digitalized, the research was enriched by the further intention to create a unique digital archive collecting the whole corpus of documents and drawings kept in the existing funds. The same aim guided the elaboration of the following archival records, that also include some drawings kept in the Fondo Gori for the Flowers Market in Pescia. The acquisition at CSAC of the fund kept in CSR would be fundamental to foster research activities on the architect, but, so far, this physical movement of the entire archive of Monterinaldi to Parma was not possible.

A series of drawings kept in CSAC or CSR archives had neither date nor site references, but the research helped organize them all in the correct chronological order, and, in some cases, to attribute the untitled or unreferenced drawings to the correct title. The whole body of materials is going to merge in an online geo-referenced archive prototype elaborated by means of the software ArcGis Online by the HPA Lab of the Department of Architecture of the University of Bologna. The online archive was built to provide a digital research tool to allow the scholars to undertake further research on the architect. Indeed it is provided with a geo-referenced map of the projects, sorted in chronological order. For each project, an archive table provided with the images of all the drawings was elaborated. They include the project data: title, type, code, date, place, number of pieces in total, the authors of the project (Ricci's collaborators), and all the bibliographic references concerning each project.

This issue of HPA detects Leonardo Ricci's work and aims at presenting a selection projects, both realized and not realized, covering the architect's whole career from the Forties to the Eighties, thus temporarily forgetting a more thematic approach to suggest one possible reading of his archive. This is done through essays concerning seven main projects: the Flowers Market in Pescia (1948-1951), the Hon. Pleydell Bouverie House (1958-1960), the Goti Factory (1959), the model for the Macrostructure of an Integrated Town, (1965) The Costume Sector in the Italian Pavilion of Expo 67 (1966-1967), the Directional Center of Florence (1977) and the Savone Courthouse (1981-1987).

Micaela Antonucci and Alice Fantoni purpose an analysis of the structural and compositional aspects of the Flowers Market in Pescia by focusing on the reinforced-brick structure application, as a proof of the prolific constructional experimentation in post-war Italy and purposing a reconstruction of the three dimensional structural models of the building. By following the useful possibilities offered by the threedimensional modelling, Beatrice Conforti describes in detail one of Ricci's projects for the Hon. Pleydell Bouverie House, a less known work coeval to more widely published projects with the same architectural program as Balmain and Mann Borgese Houses and comparing it to Cardon House in Castiglioncello and to the building “La Nave” in the Sorgane district in Florence. Ilaria Cattabriga presents two of the projects that best portray Ricci's highly experimental attitude towards the spatial research: the Goti Factory as a perfect example of the translation of the concept of existence as an experience, relational and phenomenological architecture in which a different rigor and spatial balance is pursued through volumetrical juxtaposition, structural experimentation and integration of the human and the machine spaces. The Macrostructure for an Integrated town is presented instead as the perfect result of Ricci's research on the “synopia” for the future town, which reflects one further important feature of the architects work: his strong belief in the intertwining between the theoretical and applied research. Matteo Cassani Simonetti analyses the Costume Sector of the Italian Pavilion at Expo 67 in Montréal with the intention to detect the morphological genealogies of Ricci's project, which was part of a choral work of architects and intellectuals of the time actually, rooted not only in the architect's design method but also in the Florentine cultural context of the Sixties. Another interesting jumble of actors, was involved in the design of the Directional Center in Florence, introduced by Lorenzo Mingardi within its political context as fundamental instance that led the complex design process of the building that saw a suffered dialogue between Leonardo Ricci and Giovanni Michelucci as well. Vittorio Pizzigoni instead highlights Ricci's design ambitions for the Savona Courthouse, built when the architect had already abandoned Florence and was working with Mariagrazia Dallerba in Venice, and tries to understand both the building and the building site decay reasons.

These essays are accompanied by archival records, all curated by Ilaria Cattabriga, showing the most representative drawings for each selected project: they constitute a graphic rendering of the digitalized results and are provided

with the project synthetical data: date, place, collaborators, customer, reference sources and bibliography. The essays are also accompanied by excerpts of original typescripts, two of them never published, properly chosen to support, with Ricci's own words, the reading of the projects: the Ecumenical Village of Agàpe is presented through the archival record and a letter by Ricci to Tullio Vinay that expresses both the architect's design intentions, experience and feeling about the project; a text concerning the 1968 socio-cultural revolution Ricci lived both in Italy and in the United States follows one of his most important, even quite unknown, urban design projects carried out with Paul Nelson and Mirko Basaldella in the USA: The F. D. Roosevelt Memorial of 1959; the set up of the exhibition "Espressionismo. Pittura scultura architettura" is analyzed through the archival record and the letter from Ricci to Nello Ponente, in which Ricci defends his exhibition set up design choices; and finally, Ricci's "Architecture in Relation to the other Arts" wants to anticipate the intentions and artistic influences that guided the "formativity" instances of the Macrostructure for an Integrated Town.

The projects were selected on the base of three main parameters: firstly the significance of the drawings kept in the archives, to testify the architect's design method. Indeed, although they belong to different decades, they all play a fundamental role in explaining Ricci's "forma-atto", which succeeded in finding its definition across different times, places, and programs, realization techniques. Secondly, the selection wants to show the importance of unifying the materials kept in both funds through unknown drawings, and, finally, unveil to what extent, being the selection only a reduced one for publication reasons, Ricci's work is still unknown, even it shows novelty, originality and an extreme actualization potential to contemporary life.

In this text we also wanted to deal with the reasons that led our interest towards the figure of Leonardo Ricci, with our research projects that concerned the important figure of the architect in the national and international scene and with the important role the archive work played in our different investigations in design and history of architecture. Our interest in Leonardo Ricci's work was centered on his strong personality and, especially in his determined will to investigate and realize the ideal of anonymous architecture, thus to embody the figure of the anonymous architect for the twentieth century, as his title book *Anonymous (XX century)* quotes². Secondly, Ricci's dichotomous and controversial research as architect and man, always concentrated in solving a tension between opposites, which affected his activity of painter, architect and teacher increased our interest to investigate on his professional experience in those fields which helped him solve that tension, which drove him towards the highest design solutions. Moreover, the architect's artistic skills due to his constant interdisciplinary work and the strong experimental character of his works have enhanced our intention to retrace a common line of spatial research, never positioned on pre-established canons, free to change form and language throughout

2 Leonardo Ricci, *Anonymous (XX century)* (New York: George Braziller, 1962).

his professional and academic career.

As a matter of fact, the archival work was useful not only to carry on research projects in history of architecture and design but also to arrange the two exhibitions on Leonardo Ricci, organized on the occasion of the celebrations of the centenary of Leonardo Ricci's birth (June 8, 1918) by the Ricci 100 Committee, which gave us the possibility to take part in the group work of both exhibitions: "Leonardo Ricci Architetto. I linguaggi della rappresentazione" curated by Loreno Arboritanzza and Ilaria Cattabriga (Parma, CSAC, from December 1, 2018-to April 7, 2019) and "Leonardo Ricci 100. Scrittura, pittura e architettura. 100 Note a margine dell'Anonimo del XX secolo" curated by Ugo Dattilo, Maria Clara Ghia and Clementina Ricci (Florence, Ex Refettorio Santa Maria Novella from April 12, 2019 to May 18, 2019).

We would like to thank the Ricci family, and in particular Clementina Ricci, the Ricci 100 Committee she set up and guided, the heads of the CSAC and the Fondazione Giovanni Michelucci for all their efforts and the opportunity they have offered to enter so deeply into Leonardo Ricci's archive, still largely unknown, to deepen his work and contribute to what we hope will be a new season of studies dedicated to his figure³.

3 Among the last publications the archival research enhanced: Maria Ghia, Clementina Ricci, and Ugo Dattilo, eds., *Leonardo Ricci 100. Scrittura, Pittura e Architettura. 100 Note a Margine Dell'Anonimo Del XX Secolo*, catalogue of the exhibition, Firenze: Didapress. Dipartimento di Architettura, Università degli Studi di Firenze, 2019; Maria Clara Ghia, *La nostra città è tutta la Terra. Leonardo Ricci architetto (1918-1994)* (Wuppertal: Steinhauser Verlag, 2021); Maria Clara Ghia, *Architecture as a Living Act* (Novato-CA: Oro Editions, 2022); close to publication: Ilaria Cattabriga, *Leonardo Ricci in the United States (1952-1972). A Twenty-year American Transfer as a turning experience in Teaching and Design* (Siracusa: LetteraVentidue, 2023).