



Giovanni Michelucci

“Architecture is a Problem of Freedom”

The editorial of this thematic issue about Leonardo Ricci is an unpublished letter by Giovanni Michelucci addressed to Leonardo Ricci concerning the project for Sorgane. It implicitly describes a state of mind of Ricci's master and their difficult relationship. The text of the letter is kept in Casa Studio Ricci and was translated by the curator.

October 4, 1956

Dear Leo,

you didn't receive - because I didn't send them to you - three or four letters that I had begun to write you about particular moments, and which I left there, sleeping. And I didn't send them because they were “caresses,” as you call them, that might have come at unpropitious times - as it happens in professional life - and for which they would have lost their genuine meaning.

But now “Sorgane” offers itself not only so that those letters may be resumed and retain their deep and true sense of spiritual and human “caress” (need to feel a prompt and happy correspondence) but so that we may live together, responsibly, this exceptional adventure of shaping and witnessing the lives of ten thousand men not enslaved by mediocre regulations and dead theories.

(Dear Leo, how few people have understood that the problem of urban planning and architecture is a problem of freedom).

Fig. 1

Leonardo Ricci, picture of an untitled mosaic, folder “Mosaici e ceramiche”, Casa Studio Ricci.



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Last night you said things that comforted me: the modesty I consider grounding on operating is the condition for capturing those minimal vibrations (I think of the life of matter and want to treat it as the living element as such: and when I get in contact with life I become most humble) that almost everyone neglects, failing to capture them.

People say "Man, humanity"; but we must be interested in the secret or secrets (which they often do not know) of these men and humanity, about whom I know almost nothing. And how could I be proud? But if I can grasp a secret, then I "want" to translate it into a sublime and eternal form.

Your "good night" found me well; I hope the "good morning" I send you finds you full of faith.

Hug you,

Giovanni