

Leonardo Ricci and Florence (1936-1989)

Leonardo Ricci, Florentine Architects, List of the Works, Arts and Architecture, Design Evolution

/Abstract

The paper wants to be an overview on the work of Leonardo Ricci in his town, Florence, by depicting a complete frame about his activity as a painter, architect, scenographer and about his relationship with Florence and with his projects in the different phases of his life.

The chronological span, from 1936 to 1989, was chosen in function of the available archival resources. The list of Ricci's work is therefore enriched by his drawings that best explain his experimentation through different representative methods and languages, able to convey the projects' strength.

The pictures of the drawings's choice was also driven by the intention to integrate the iconographic material already published in HPA issue no. 9, *Leonardo Ricci (1918-1994) - Archives I*, which collects a plenty of unknown graphic documents, especially in the archival records sections.

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Ilaria Cattabriga is a PhD in Architecture and Design Cultures. She studied at the School of Architecture and Engineering of the University of Bologna, where she graduated with a thesis work in History of Architecture in 2016.

Her interests are in post-war architecture and her PhD research project concerned the figure of the Italian architect Leonardo Ricci focusing on his American transfer during the period 1952-1972, which is going to be published with the title *Leonardo Ricci in the United States (1952-1972)* by LetteraVentidue. She has collaborated on architecture exhibitions in 2019 and 2020 about Leonardo Ricci as well as on national and international research projects: she was free researcher at UBA for the interdepartimental project SPEME (Questioning Traumatic Heritage: Spaces of Memory in Europe, Argentina, Colombia) in 2018, helping in collecting research materials on the traumatic memory of the dictatorship in Argentina, then free researcher at MIT in 2019 and 2022.

She is involved in national and international conferences and she is currently adjunct professor of History of Architecture at Architecture-Engineering degree course (Bologna campus).

Leonardo Ricci was born in Rome in 1918, but soon his family moved to Florence because of his father's work. To describe Leonardo Ricci's relationship with Florence it is worth making an introduction about his view on painting, since his artistic work there began as a painter. It is important to start dealing with Ricci's view on painting with the words he used to explain the meaning of painting in a paragraph of the eight chapter of his book *Anonymous (XX century)* titled "Raison d'Être of Painting". To Ricci painting was an act as the form in architecture, the form-act deriving from the human acts:

No longer painting-opinion, painting-comment. No longer painting enslaved to an idea. No longer painting propaganda. Nor painting experiment. No. This is painting as an act. Painting as living. Like breathing, eating. Painting as loving. Painting as creation, emancipated and free. Painting that has become object. That functions as object. The object of Anonymous (20th Century)¹.

In the book Ricci faced all fields of interest for his work - architecture, urban design, urban planning, and painting - feeling them in strong connection one to the other.

Painting is not a state of perfection; it is not a state of grace. You paint because there is something inside your chest that wants to get out. It cannot stay in there. It hurts. It hurts like a head-splitting toothache. It must get out².

What does painting really mean to me? Why do I go on painting, still making pictures? I paint them because I am still alone, and not capable of integrated acts every minute of the day. I also know that painting is no longer a symbol of perfection but a demonstration of my imperfection; which means that my acts are not yet accomplished³.

Ricci's painting was "free and relieved" - as he himself defined it - and it was driven by the feeling of solitude, which was strongly connected to the concept of existence: casting paint on canvas or wooden tables was for him a way to let a piece of himself get out. A piece of his existence was getting in touch with the external world. Painting was born because of the human incapacity to break solitude, and, to do it, men painted images that became free, liberated forms in space⁴. It consisted in and had turned into a relationship with all things, it became act, and then, life. It must be understood in its main function of describing the process of revealing the truth of life and as a discipline practiced to investigate on life, on existence, and on the need for the synthesis of the arts. Painting introduced Ricci to some of the fundamental themes of investigation for his architectural research, some encountered as guiding themes of the exhibitions he took part in.

1 Ricci, *Anonymous (XX century)*, 142.

2 Ricci, *Anonymous (XX century)*, 127.

3 Ricci, *Anonymous (XX century)*, 133.

4 Ricci, *Anonymous (XX century)*, 137.

To Ricci painting was useful to reach the truth of life the society had to give back to the artist with the possibility of being useful and integrated in a world that considered artists evil fellows, emarginated, anarchical men. To him, with the help of the artists' sensitivity and attitude to dominate the world of textures and colours, with their imagination - «better prepared than others' to create new and vital spaces» - everyone could «get honest products, genuine, useful, and well-made products. [...] An end will be put to all those absurd, pseudo-cultural polemics between "realism" and "abstractionism", or among the various schools of abstractionism as to which is the true one⁵».

Moreover, Ricci did not understand classifications and the critics' attempts to define artistic movements and works of art. Since he intended painting as a language, the only things that mattered were expression, communication, and truth.

Ricci firstly faced painting at sixteen, when he had already started his painting self-taught work and had his first exhibitions in Italy in Florence and Padova: the "Esposizione intersindacale veneta di pittura" (Padova, 1934 and 1935), and the "Esposizione intersindacale toscana di pittura" (Firenze, 1936 and 1937). Indeed, in half 1930s he started working with a group of Paduan artists, a small group of young self-taught artists who had the desire to renew the Paduan artistic environment. There he knew his friend Lucio Grossato, who remembered Ricci as the youngest, the most quick-tempered and passionate member of the group⁶.

When *Il Bò*, fortnightly of the fascist university group, decided to publish an article on Ricci's painting by Grossato⁷, Ricci's artistic ambition was already visible in the sign of his works, which, despite showing their author's acerbity in colour and plastic effect, in the deformation of the sign they showed his temperament⁸ [Fig. 1].

In Ricci's early works, at twenty⁹, already animated by primitivist influences, the colour acquired particular importance because it was born with the realistic intuition of things, and then changed once it became the object of the author's imagination and elaborations. The design was concise, and the volumes were



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5 Ricci, *Anonymus (XX century)*, 143.

6 Lucio Grossato was a historian of art who knew Leonardo Ricci in Padova, where Leonardo Ricci spent the first part of his life. A significant corpus of letters by Grossato spanning from February 1936 to September 1942 tells the deep friendship between him and Leonardo Ricci. The letters are kept in Casa Studio Ricci.

7 Lucio Grossato, "Il Pittore Leonardo Ricci", *Il Bò*, no.5 (May 15, 1938).

8 At the time Ricci was still blocked by ethical, psychological, naturalistic, and rationalistic dictates, but he was passionate and solitary at the same time. This feeling of loneliness will be what will allow him to subsequently define his relationship with painting and the reasons for it. "Solitary, rude, but not naïve", as Grossato remembered him, he was guided by moments of solitude, in which he meditated intensely. He gave precedence to his own spiritual rather than aestheticizing values. Leonardo Ricci started his reflection from nature and life, using man, not understood as an ethical entity but as the grounding principle and measure of his works, to create, without re-using pre-established forms.

9 Clément Morro, "Leonardo Ricci", *Revue Moderne illustrée des artes et de la vie*, no. 15 (September 13, 1938).

Fig. 1
The article by Lucio Grossato published in *Il Bò* magazine, page 1 of the Logbook no. 1, Casa Studio Ricci.



ALZATO RAPP. 1:100

clear, the plastic of the shapes highlighted the material essence of things, sometimes full-bodied and sometimes aerial.

In this period Ricci acquired a modern synthesis of plasticity and colour, as well as a concise plasticity in structure derived from the nineteenth century teachings. Primitivism was what approached Ricci² to the Italian art of the time, it was at the same time the sign of his search for sincerity and of the lack of decadent refinement¹⁰.

Afterwards, Ricci followed the “Scuola Romana” and its preference for dark tones expressing a clear heretical vision with respect to the demands of vigorous realism by fascism. In the meanwhile, he graduated in Architecture in 1942 at the Faculty of Architecture in Florence with a thesis work concerning the project for a theater titled “Teatro al chiuso e Teatro all’aperto” for the Boboli Garden [Fig. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6].

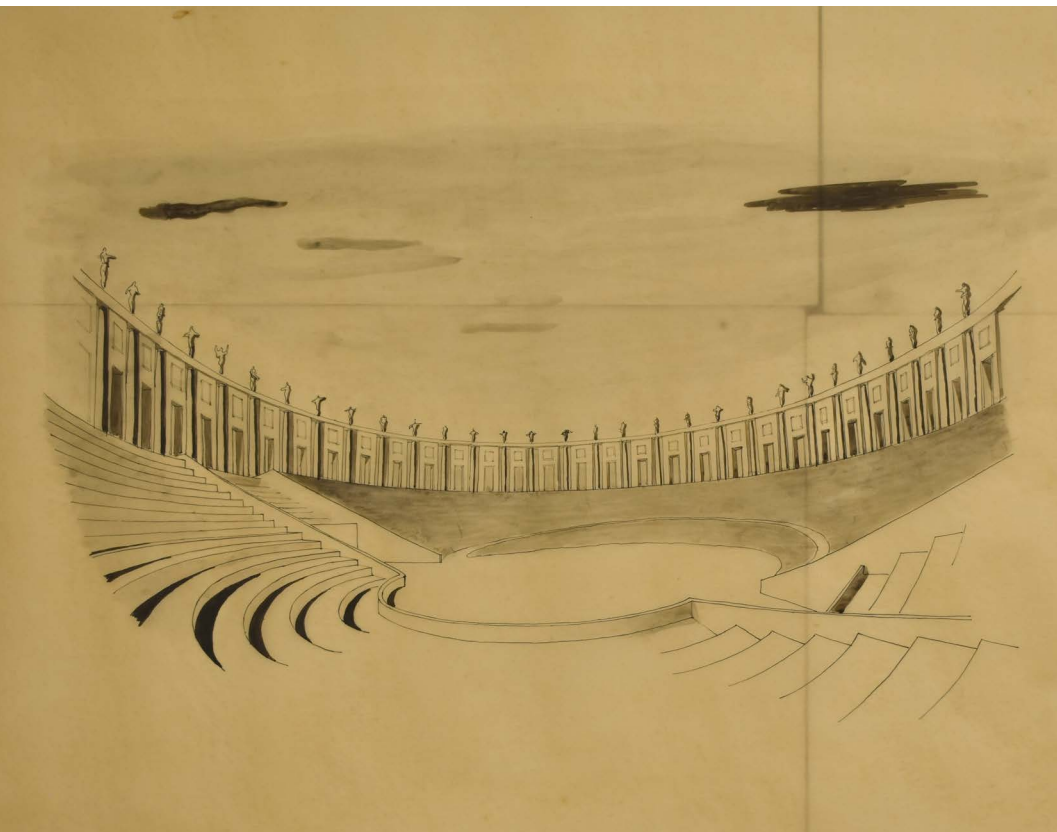
After his graduation, the appointment as Giovanni Michelucci’s assistant professor allowed Ricci to deepen his research, meet the first job opportunities and the possibility to combine painting, architecture, design, the set-up of exhibitions, the staging of opera shows, and scenography. Ricci was completely involved both in painting and in architecture till the postwar period, when he took part in the work of the maverick classic Abstract art group “Arte oggi”, under the supervision of the master Michelucci and of the Gallery “La Vigna Nuova”. In this period he gave birth to both paintings similar to those of classical abstract artists and others with figurative subjects that had to do with the ancestral myth and the primitive activities of ritual

Fig. 2
Leonardo Ricci’s thesis work titled “Teatro al chiuso e Teatro all’aperto”, section, scale 1:100, Casa Studio Ricci.

10 Grossato, “Il pittore Leonardo Ricci”.



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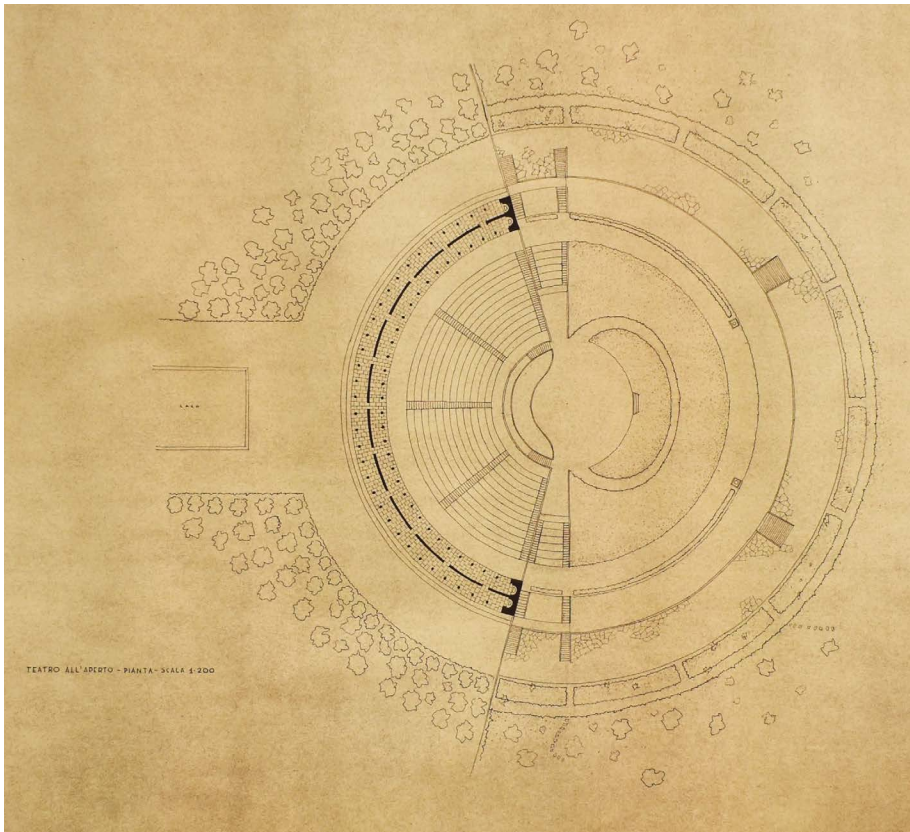
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Fig. 3
Leonardo Ricci's thesis work titled "Teatro al chiuso e Teatro all'aperto", view from the inside of the covered theatre, Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 4
Leonardo Ricci's thesis work titled "Teatro al chiuso e Teatro all'aperto", view of the open theatre from the inside, Casa Studio Ricci.



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Fig. 5
Leonardo Ricci's thesis work titled "Teatro al chiuso e Teatro all'aperto", general view of the open theatre, Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 6
Leonardo Ricci's thesis work titled "Teatro al chiuso e Teatro all'aperto", plan of the open air theatre, Casa Studio Ricci.

dance, struggle, embrace, birth, death and motherhood. Figures are often moving and they represent masks or human shapes, in which the sensation of movement is given with the use of sinuous lines and brush movements. For the group of young painters, the aim was to break with naturalist intimacy in favor of a new social interventionism, to overcome the "return to order" and experiment with new languages as the historical avant-gardes did before. The Florentine group took the name of classical abstractionism: they pursued the purity of form, rigorous compositions, flat and bright color backgrounds, crystalline geometrism, as if to return to the example of the Tuscan Renaissance, that created in architecture a perfect space Ricci would have then broken with his projects.

Making a step forward in time, in 1962 Ricci published in his *Anonymous (XX century)* his "Farewell, Masters; Farewell, Geniuses", as he titled a chapter in which he declared his love for the masters of painting and architecture of the twentieth century, but recognized their limits for the new direction art had to follow: masterpieces and heroes belonged to the pre-war period¹¹. The new era had suffered the crisis of values and, therefore, their teachings were not enough. Ricci experienced the masters' lessons finding new forms and open solutions: ritual masks, female figures playing the moon, simple silhouettes on textured backgrounds as in cave paintings, primitive pregnant Venuses, angels, and demons, all immobile and absolute¹².

Ricci's relationship with the masters' lesson and the attitude he derived from it influenced both his painting and architecture. More in detail, in his architectures Ricci declined the grammar adopted for painting for his home design: volumes clinging to the curves of the ground, load-bearing partitions in local stone, beams and inclined slabs in exposed reinforced concrete, simple wooden stairs, poor iron fixtures, in contrast with the refined finishes in stone and marble and with the numerous artistic interventions: ceramic panels on the terrace of the living room and on the wall of the library, compositions in recycled pieces of coloured glass such as the 'stone garden' in front of the house.

The first project that links Leonardo Ricci to Florence is the interior design and furnishing transformation of the center and didactic national museum of Palazzo Gerini in 1942 with Giovanni Michelucci. Michelucci, commissioned by Minister Bottai, drew up the project for the arrangement and furnishing of Palazzo Gerini in 1941 with his collaborators Edoardo Detti, Giuseppe Giorgio Gori, Ernesto Nelli and Leonardo Ricci in order to carry out the rearrangement of the rooms for the National Educational Center in Borgo Allegri, 51, inaugurated in the same year. For the occasion they engaged in an integral design effort, from restoration to fixed and movable furnishings, to the ordering of explanatory materials.

11 Ricci, *Anonymous (XX century)*, 79-99.

12 Giovanna Uzzani has recognized in these subjects of Ricci influences of the blue period or the contemporary period of Picasso who painted on ceramics, in the dramatic nudes on two-colored and gloomy backgrounds of Egon Schiele contrasted with material and golden surfaces that recall Cimabue. Uzzani, "Leonardo Ricci pittore", 135.

Already in 1936-38, following the redevelopment to the neighborhood and the new arrangement of Piazza dei Ciompi, Palazzo Gerini underwent a complete restoration promoted by the municipality and directed by the architect Ezio Zalaffi, head of the office of Fine Arts. The overlook on Via Michelangelo Buonarroti 10 is the result of the ex-novo reinterpretation of this portion of the factory, obtained after demolition of the old buildings, again designed by Ezio Zalaffi, but in strict adherence to Renaissance forms, including the roof-terrace, at the time highly praised in its restitution of the characters proper to Florentine tradition as well as the paired Tuscan columns and pillars. Next to the building there were plans for the erection of an additional body of the building, for which Giovanni Michelucci was given charge.

The center was divided into three main sections: the Educational Museum, the Technical Education Exhibition and the Historical Exhibition School; in the technical area there was a reserved room for the celebration of the immortal Carlo Collodi, the author of *Pinocchio*. The rooms housed materials illustrating the evolution of the school through the centuries. In the Historical Exhibition, the collected documents of the greatest interest have found their proper setting in rooms that, devoid of any reference to style and built with modern architecture and furnishings, provide that special atmosphere that did not allow distraction or misrepresentation. In the rooms devoted to technical education, the mechanical element of scientific instruments and materials, moderate in number and distribution, have been inaugurated with a rigorous architectural sense. The Educational Museum, in relation to elementary education and school building, has been contained in its own freshness and immediacy, in simple and bright rooms¹³.

One year later, always with Michelucci, Ricci worked at the project for the interior and furnishing transformation of Termini Ventura House, in Guicciardini road. After World War II the project was revised by Michelucci, who built the house on the corner of Via Guicciardini and Via dello Sprone for the Ina Assicurazione and parts of the Termini Ventura house¹⁴.

In the decade of the 1940s, therefore since the very beginning of his career, Ricci reflected on a typological theme he would have later investigated in other phases of his professional life: the cemetery, the "city of the dead", a spatial representation of the passage between life and death.

Indeed, in 1944, while designing the Settignano cemetery, a young Ricci was still in a phase of formal experimentation, he was a pupil of Michelucci, who worked also with Edoardo Detti, Giuseppe Giorgio Gori, Riccardo Gizdulich and Leonardo

13 Luigi Pescetti, "Compiti e aspetti del Centro Didattico Nazionale," *Il Corriere del Tirreno*, October 28, 1941; "A Palazzo Gerini," *Il Nuovo Giornale*, October 28, 1941; "A Palazzo Gerini," *Il Nuovo Giornale*, October 29, 1941; "L'inaugurazione del Centro Didattico Nazionale," *La Nazione*, October 29, 1941; articles collected in "Logbook", n.1 (1938-1952), page 2, Casa Studio Ricci; Corinna Vasič Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci. Architetto "esistenzialista"* (Florence: Edifir, 2005): 18.

14 <https://www.michelucci.it/architetture-nel-tempo/> (last accessed: May 12, 2023). Luigi Pescetti, "Compiti e aspetti del Centro Didattico Nazionale," *Il Corriere del Tirreno*, October 28, 1941; "A Palazzo Gerini," *Il Nuovo Giornale*, October 28, 1941; "A Palazzo Gerini," *Il Nuovo Giornale*, October 29, 1941; "L'inaugurazione del Centro Didattico Nazionale," *La Nazione*, October 29, 1941; articles collected in "Logbook", n.1 (1938-1952), page 2, Casa Studio Ricci.

Savioli to enhance in them a reasoning on the possibility to think of architectural insertions into the surrounding landscape that did not create any “architectural void in nature”. Their reflection was centered on the wall: a wall proportionate in height and thickness, broken into several segments, distributed in different planes of the promontory, which could free up views of the landscape. The main sector downstream was also concluded by a simple plastered wall, pierced by a few windows that lighten it, re-proposing the theme of ‘panoramic pictures’.

With the other young architects, Ricci designed the “Cimitero dei Partigiani” in Settignano. The Partisans’ Cemetery did not yearn for the “vanity of the living” or a detachment with them, because the partisans, of whom Ricci was also part, were an active part of the living world and should continue to be so. The architect, therefore, thought of a project that suggested a connection with nature and with men, making the partisans “equal in the uniform of death” as equal they were in combat. The tomes are all equal and all united, stripped of unnecessary additions, in a serene and humane environment where they could rest in communion with the living and their thoughts that went to honor their memory.

The chosen site was on a slight slope, dotted with olive trees and bordered by two streams. The designers’ first goal was to find the perfect rest place for three hundred partisans, that had to fit in nature without destroying the continuity of the landscape. For this reason, in the Settignano cemetery, the wall does not divide, creating an architectural void in the landscape, but it is proportionate in height and thickness, breaking into several segments distributed on different planes, leaving unobstructed views of the landscape at different points. For the same reasons, it was decided not to close the various openings

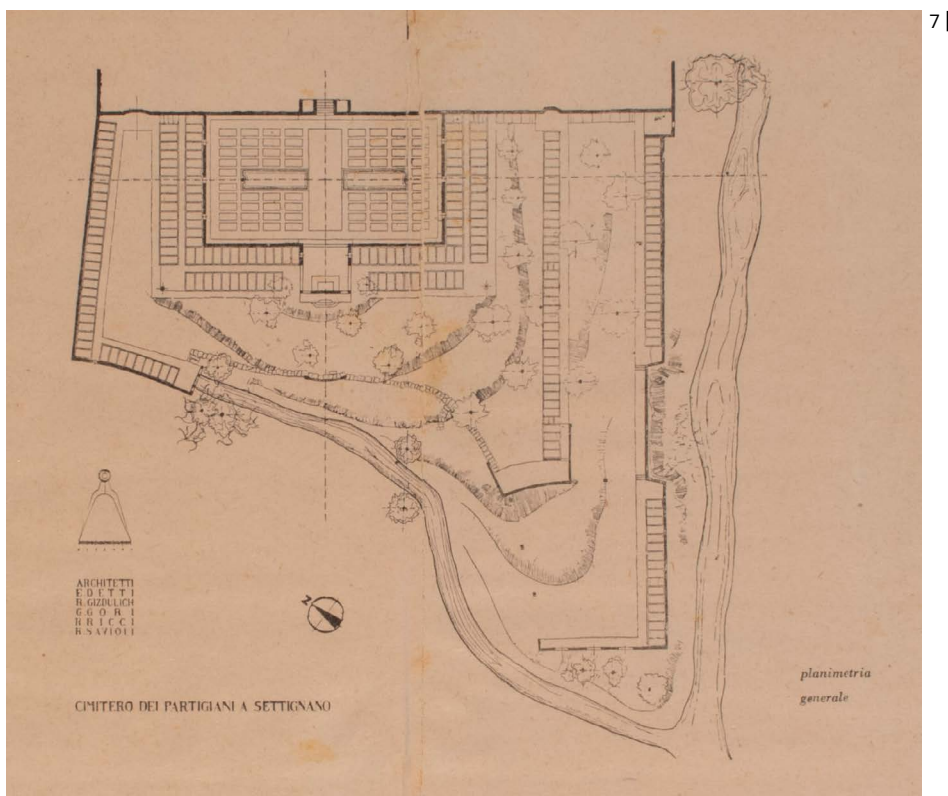


Fig. 7
The Partisans’ Cemetery, Settignano, general plan, image published in the article by Manlio Cancogni, “Il Cimitero dei Partigiani a Settignano.” *Il Nuovo Giornale*, August 11, 1944., Logbook no. 1, page 3, Casa Studio Ricci.

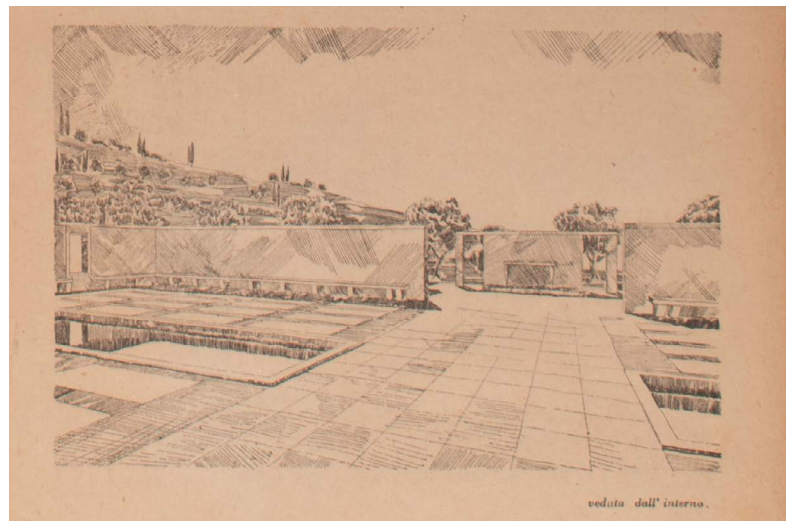
with gates, and the existing trees were maintained. The graves were arranged regularly around the wall and lined up, all covered by the same marble slab. In the main sector, downstream, the wall was finished with a simple architectural element and sandstone benches were placed there, on the inner side, to facilitate visitors' rest. The wall, made of plaster, was lightened with windows opening along its entire length. The design strength was thus found in the harmony of proportions, of colors - primarily green - and volumes, rather than on decoration and pageantry¹⁵ [Fig. 7, 8, 9].

Ricci would take up the cemetery program theme again years later, in 1967, with the expansion of the Montecatini Basso cemetery¹⁶. While the commission for the Montecatini Alto cemetery is given to Leonardo Savioli, who will build his part with Emilio Brizzi and Danilo Santi, Ricci's project was not realized.

On June 18, 1946, after an initial collaboration with Renzo Chiarelli and Riccardo Gizdulich, Ricci was given responsibility for the entire project of the Reconstruction and general plan of Vicchio del Mugello by



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15 Lucio Grossato, "Leonardo Ricci," *il Bò*, no. 5 (1938); Clément Morro, "Leonardo Ricci," *Revue moderne illustrée des artes et de la vie*, no. 15 (1938); Manlio Cancogni, "Il Cimitero dei Partigiani a Setignano," *Il Nuovo Giornale*, August 11, 1944, 5, 68, 72, 75, article and drawings collected in "Logbook" n. 1 (1938-1952), page 3, Casa Studio Ricci. Vasić Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci. Architetto "esistenzialista"*, 19; Maria Clara Ghia, *La nostra città è tutta la terra, Leonardo Ricci architetto (1918-1994)* (Wuppertal: Steinhäuser Verlag, 2021): 62, 264.

16 In the 1966 study project, Savioli imagines the new cemetery as a park organized by paths, a circuit that also includes the old cemetery and establishes a dialogue with the landscape through large visual cones open onto the valley. In the final project of 1967, this attention to views remains in the blades that cut the roof of the large interior space, as does the theme of the path through terraces and the strong tectonic impact of the structure obtained through the excavation of a large unified space for the basilica hall. There are of course similarities with Ricci's project, the idea of the path, the grounding and the excavation, but Ricci formally resolves the theme through the design of a sculptural shell: *l'ésprit de finesse* prevails over *l'ésprit de géométrie*. Burials are placed on mounds of soil. The transition between nature and architecture, between life and the space of silence, of rest, of the intimate relationship between the living and the dead, is represented with great drama. The connection to the ground takes place through promenades, ribbons emerging from the openings of the shell-membranes that give shape to the project. An idea takes shape that, perhaps at an unconscious level, is even referable to the excavation for the burials of the monument to the martyrs of the Ardeatine Quarries by Mario Fiorentino and Giuseppe Perugini (1944-51), but the stereometric slab of the roofing takes on informal aspects here. The closest reference is, as always, Michelucci: in the tormented sketches for the monument for the fallen soldiers of Kindu of 1961, an underground space appears covered by an uneven volume, like a heap of stone blocks. On the other hand, in the project realised for the cemetery of Jesi in 1984-85, it is easy to find references to the forms of the great pyramid and the sentinel towers, or the shoe-shaped basement that alludes to the fortified walls of Jesi, as well as the relationship with the ground, in the ascent of the vertical paths to form overlooks, resting places, suspended squares from which to look inwards or towards the landscape. If the 'cities of the dead' are indeed configured as 'pieces of city' in a constant relationship with the landscape, so too the 'cities of justice', designed for Savona in 1981-87 and for Florence in its two design phases, from 1981 to 1987 and from 1987 to 1989, are 'pieces of city' this time carved out within the urban context. More difficult, in the latter cases, is the insertion of strong, recognisable signs that must resonate with built or expanding neighbourhoods.

Fig. 8

The Partisans' Cemetery, Setignano, top view, image published in the article by Manlio Cancogni, "Il Cimitero dei Partigiani a Setignano," *Il Nuovo Giornale*, August 11, 1944., Logbook no. 1, page 3, Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 9

The Partisans' Cemetery, Setignano, view from the inside, image published in the article by Manlio Cancogni, "Il Cimitero dei Partigiani a Setignano," *Il Nuovo Giornale*, August 11, 1944., Logbook no. 1, page 3, Casa Studio Ricci.

the municipality. Integrating the reconstruction plan with the master plan, instrumental in the drafting of the detailed plan for the town's new historic center, the plan mainly aimed at giving the town a more organic appearance from a compositive point of view. It was more rationally structured for facing traffic and hygienic issues. In this intervention the intention of preferring redesign over restoration of the pre-existing buildings clearly emerges. In order not to incur a false history, the plan refuses to restore the ancient towers, but maintains the concept of wall closure. The inspiring theme of the project is the beautiful landscape that induces the enhancement of open spaces and panoramic views¹⁷ [Fig. 10, 11, 12].

In the same year of the reconstruction of Vicchio, Ricci was also encharged of a consultation for the reconstruction and the general plan of Dicomano, then elaborated by Leonardo Savioli, and finished in 1948.

In 1945-1946 Ricci's experience in the bridges' design with the Tuscan group started: the first projects under the guide of Michelucci affected the development of Ricci's work to such an extent that he was able to identify in those projects the premises for design solutions adopted later. The bridges had a monumental emphasis in the stairways at various levels and in the opening of the squares to the heads on the pylons with round arches. These components were already present in the project for the "Ponte alla Vittoria", where the stairs placed along the extrados of the three downstream arches made it possible to reach the base of each pile, perforated and passable along its entire length to allow the passage on the slope upstream. Leonardo Ricci participated in the competition for the "Ponte alla Vittoria", dated January 15, 1945, with Leonardo Savioli, Riccardo Gizdulich, Giuseppe Giorgio Gori and Giorgio Neumann with a project titled "Luomo sul Ponte" ["The man on the Bridge"] and it was selected for the second session of the competition. It was then awarded with the second prize by the jury composed by Giovanni Michelucci, Roberto Salvini and Roberto Longhi, after Nello Baroni, Italo Gamberini, Lando Bartoli, Carlo Maggiora and Carlo Focacci's project titled "Il Ponte" [The Bridge]¹⁸ [Fig. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17].

Leonardo Ricci had participated in the competition for the reconstruction of the Ponte alla Carraia in July 1945 with Leonardo Savioli, Giuseppe Giorgio Gori and Giorgio Neumann with the project entitled "Ponte di Città" ["Bridge of Cities"].

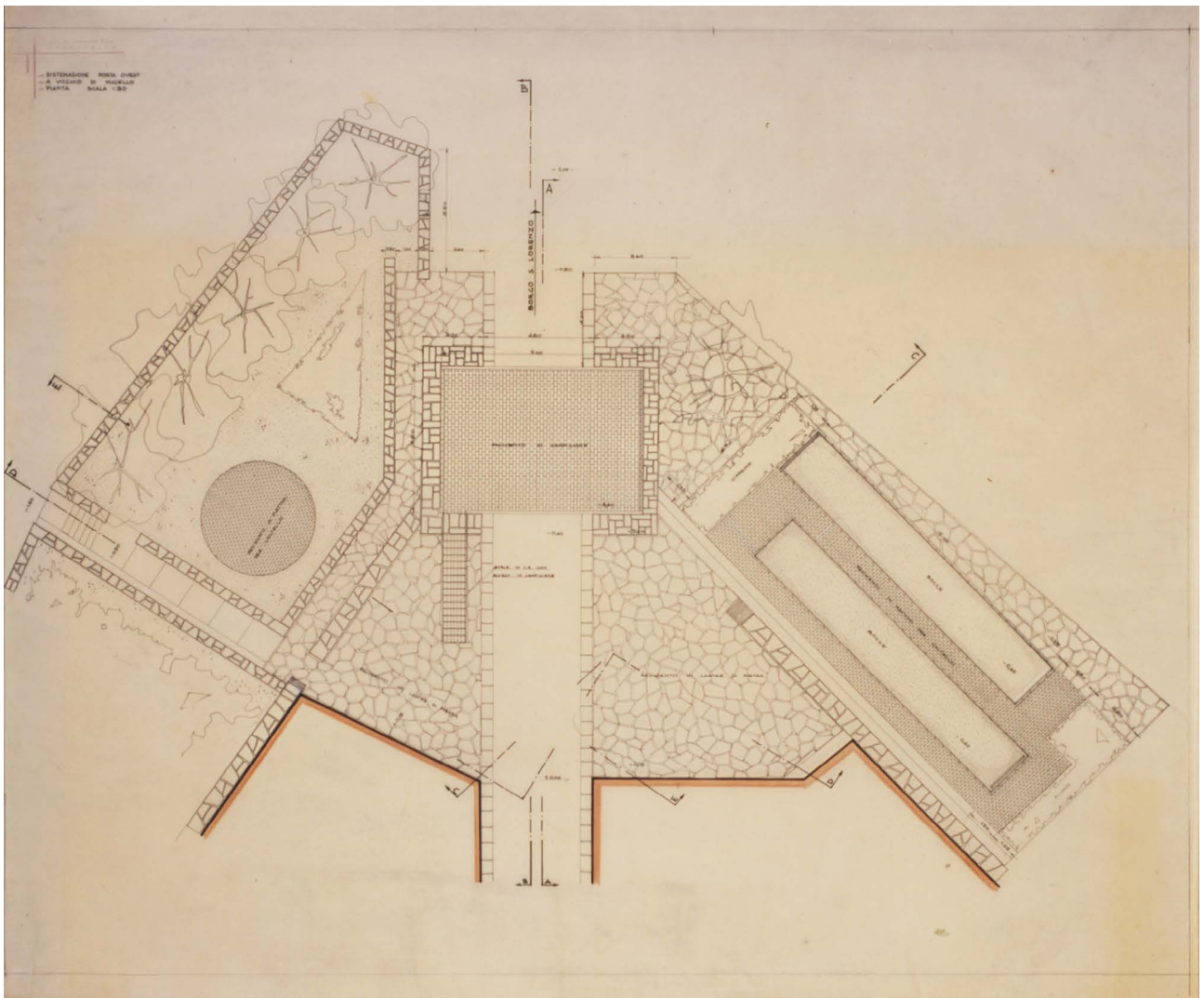


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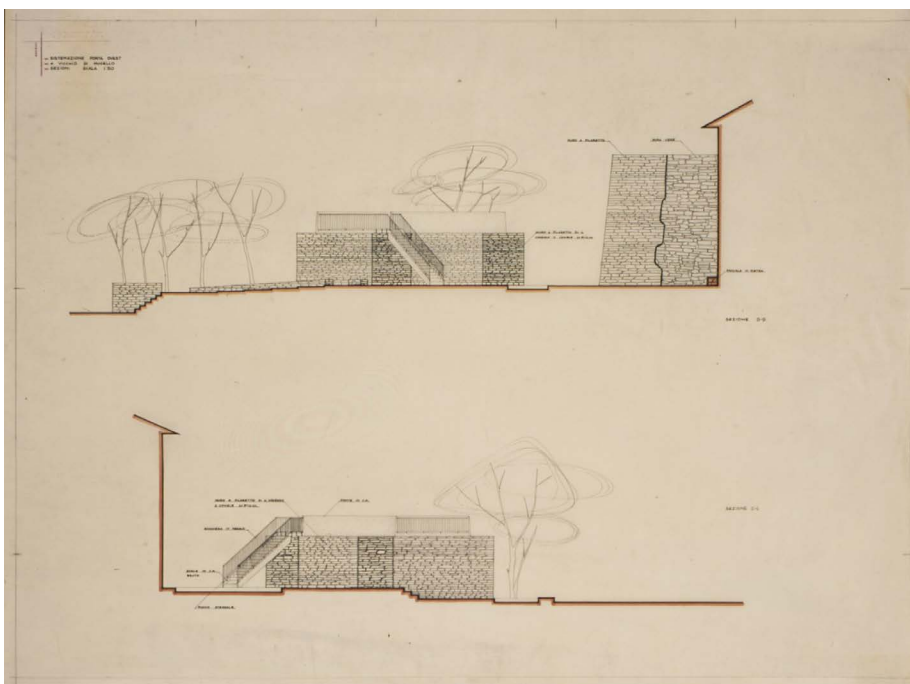
17 Renzo Chiarielli, "Problemi della ricostruzione. Urbanismo di due piccoli centri: Vicchio e Dicomano," *Emporium*, no. 617 (1946): 242-44; "Vicchio, piano di ricostruzione di Leonardo Ricci," *Associazione toscana architetti*, no. 3-4-5 (March-April-May 1947), magazine and Vicchio's floorplans collected in "Logbook" n. 1 (1938-1952), pages 14-15; Vasič Vatovec, *Architetto "esistenzialista"*, 21.

18 "Il Ponte della Vittoria, un concorso di secondo grado fra i primi tre progetti prescelti," *Il Corriere*, February 28, 1945; "Tre progetti prescelti per un concorso di secondo grado," *La Nazione del Popolo*, February 28, 1945; "Il ponte della Vittoria," *L'Arno*, March 11, 1945; "Postilla ad alcune considerazioni," *La Nazione*, March 13, 1945; "Il Ponte della Vittoria, considerazioni su di un concorso," *La Nazione*, March 10-11, 1945; "Il concorso del Ponte," *La Nazione del Popolo*, March 29, 1945; articles collected in "Logbook" n. 1 (1938-1952), page 4, Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 10
General plan for Vicchio del Mugello, pages of the article "Vicchio, Piano di Ricostruzione di Leonardo Ricci", published in *Associazione Toscana Architetti*, no.3-4-5 (May 1947), collected in Logbook no. 1, page 14, Casa Studio Ricci.



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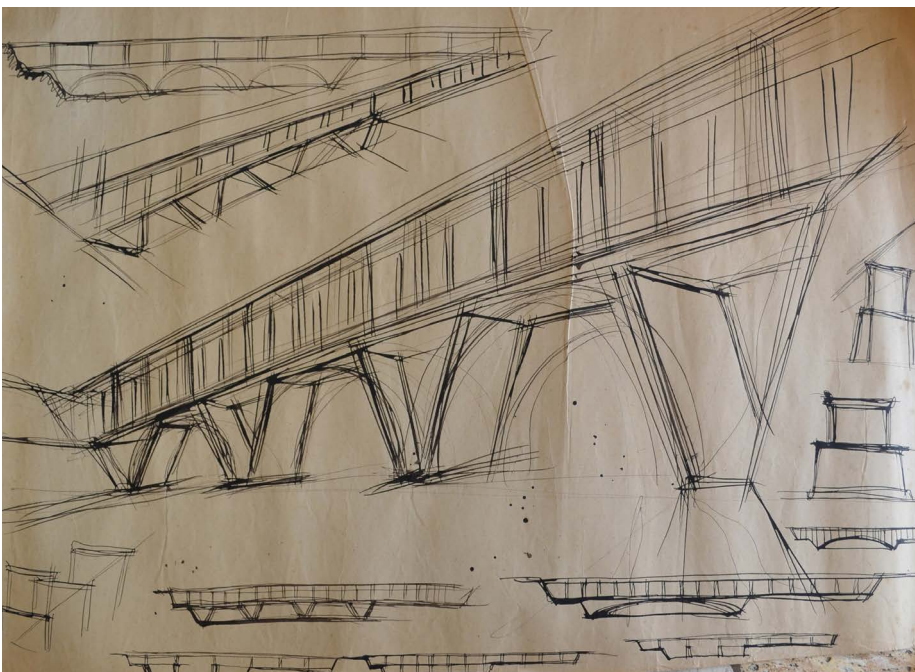
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Fig. 11
General plan for Vicchio del Mugello, west door restoration, plan, scale 1:50, B038564S, CSAC.

Fig. 12
General plan for Vicchio del Mugello, west door restoration, section and elevations, scale 1:50, B038566S, CSAC.



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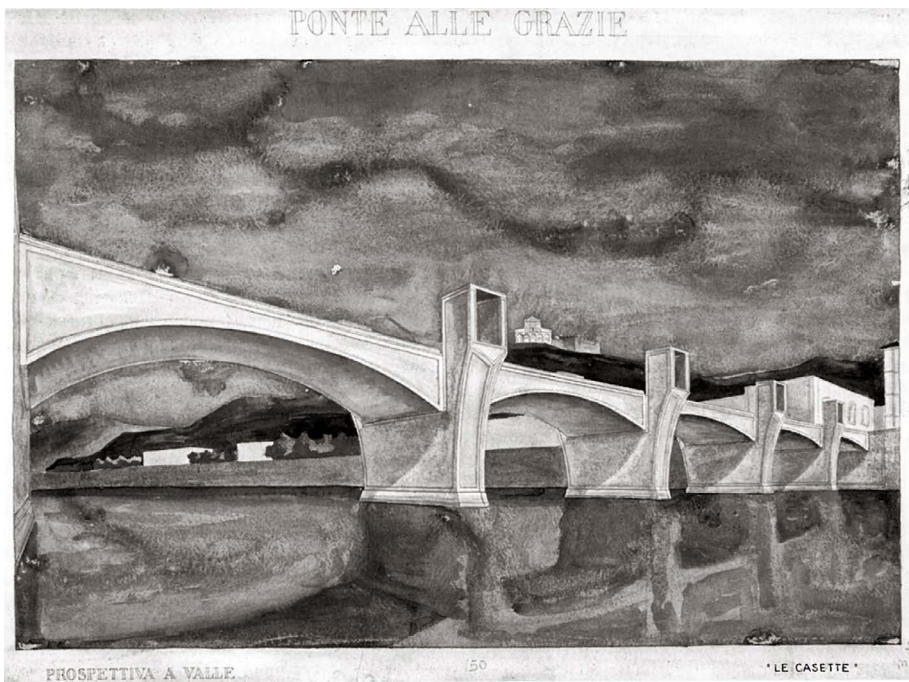
Fig. 13-17
Sketches for the reconstruction of the Florentine bridges,
Casa Studio Ricci.



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From 1945 to 1946 the group elaborated four versions of increasing complexity following the theme of full usability for humans, but the winner version was the first, the simplest one. It prefigured a bridge with five arches in reinforced concrete with stone formworks to make the cladding an integral part of the structure, which was neither a subsidiary nor a decorative element. The bridges were, as it was evident in the fourth version of the project for the "Ponte alla Carraia", "city pieces", architectural-urban-landscape, parks, and route junctions, because they interacted with the river and offered new views¹⁹. In 1948 Ricci, Giuseppe Giorgio Gori and Leonardo Savioli took part again in a new competition-contract for the same bridge.

The theme of the "Casette" ["Little Houses"] project for the "Ponte alle Grazie", anticipated the theme of panoramic views as "paintings" or "telescopes" that became the generating themes of entire projects with a fan plant. The "Casette" was the second version of the project for the "Ponte alle Grazie", object of a competition held in 1946. Ricci firstly participated in the competition with Giuseppe Giorgio Gori, Leonardo Savioli and Emilio Brizzi with a purpose titled "Le Piazze" ["The Squares"] based on the same principle of the project for "Ponte alla Carraia" on five arches with squares at the ends, from which the river was accessed with stairways. The version entitled "Le Casette" showed an accentuated plasticity, in which the five lowered arches were integrated with the triangular curvilinear spurs and tapered in the lower part that connected to the overhanging small houses-niches, from which the project version took its name [Fig. 18].

19 "Ricostruire le nostre città che la guerra ha disfatto- Lasciare testimonianza dei tempi nostri," *La Montagna*, November 15, 1946; "Il nuovo Ponte alla Carraia," *Il Nuovo Corriere*, September 28, 1947; "Linee e caratteristiche del nuovo Ponte alla Carraia," *Il Pomeriggio*, October 23, 1947; "Imminente inizio dei lavori per la ricostruzione dal Ponte alla Carraia," *Il Mattino*, June 15, 1948; "Notizie poco confortanti per il progetto del Ponte alla Carraia," *La Nazione Italiana*, December 22, 1949; articles collected in "Logbook" n. 1 (1938-1952), pages 13, 24, Casa Studio Ricci.

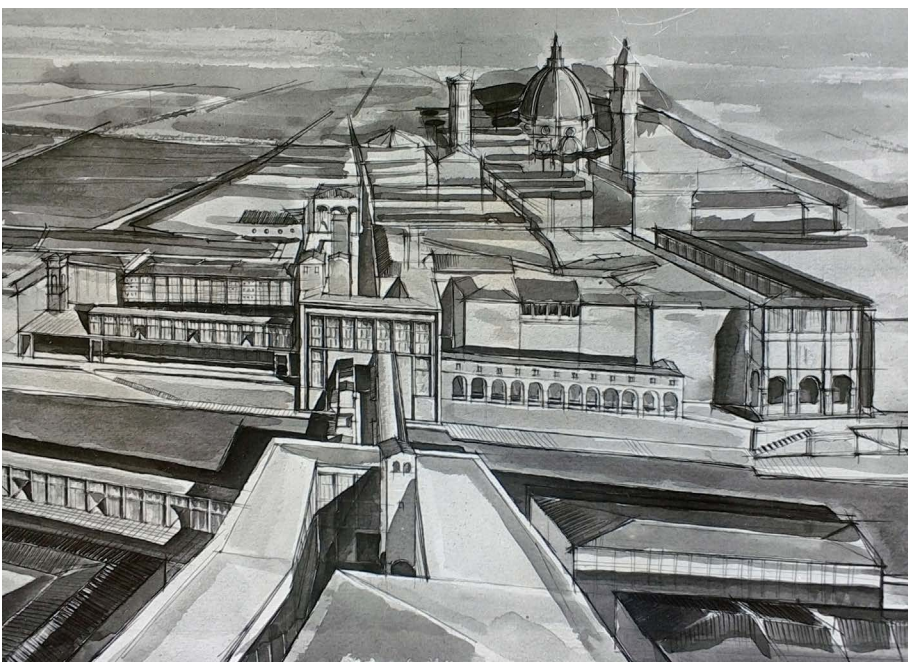
Fig. 18

Second version of the project for the "Ponte alle Grazie": titled "Le Casette" (1946), table of the project, undated and untitled sketch, Casa Studio Ricci.

After the destruction of World War II, with reference to the formative period and as a synthesis of the initial research based on the master's teaching, Giuseppe Giorgio Gori, Leonardo Savioli, Emilio Brizzi and Leonardo Ricci designed the plan for the reconstruction of the destroyed area in the neighborhood of Ponte Vecchio, taking part in the national competition for the reconstruction of the center of Florence (1946), and the Flowers' Covered Market in Pescia (1949) which was awarded at the Sao Paolo Architecture Biennale in Brazil in 1953, in Naples with the "Naples" Prize for Architecture in 1956 and published in Kidder Smith's *Italy Builds* (1955).



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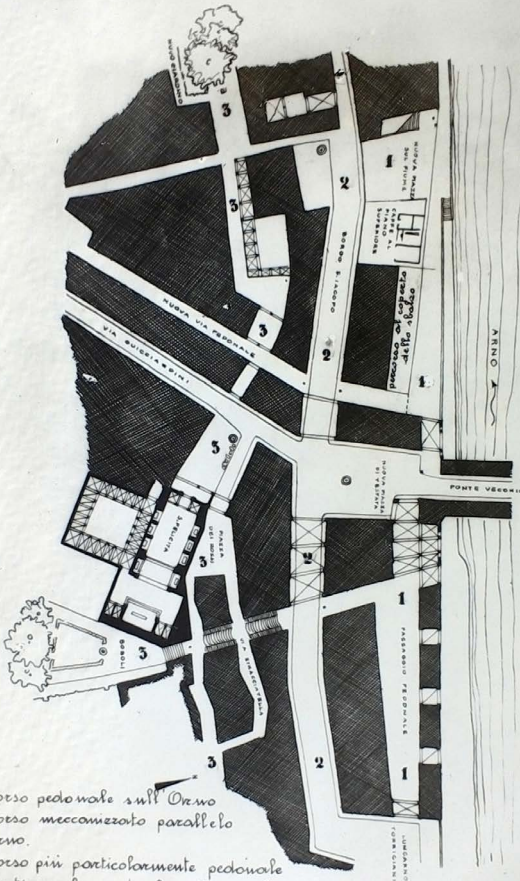


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Fig. 19
"Firenze sul Fiume", plan for the reconstruction of the destroyed area in the neighborhood of Ponte Vecchio, national competition for the reconstruction of the center of Florence (1946), top view, sketch, Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 20
"Firenze sul Fiume", plan for the reconstruction of the destroyed area in the neighborhood of Ponte Vecchio, national competition for the reconstruction of the center of Florence (1946), top view, sketch, Casa Studio Ricci.

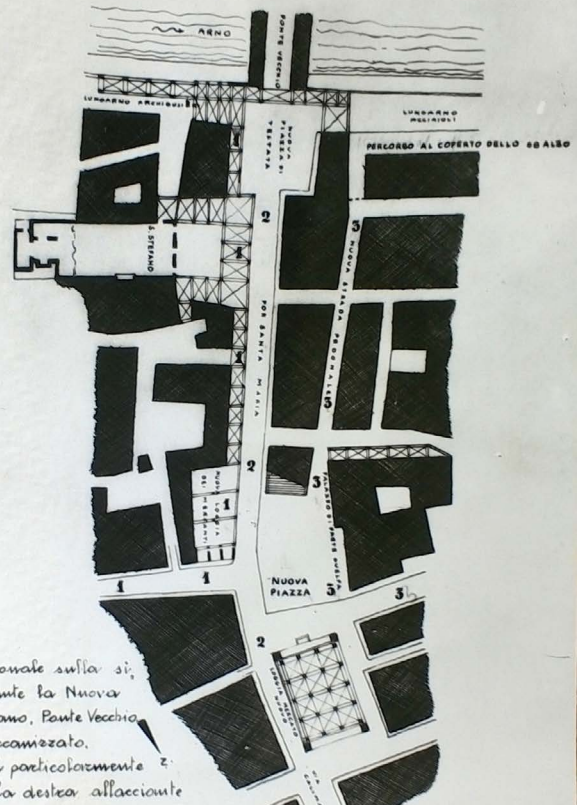
PIANTA AL PIANO TERRA AL DI LA' DELL'ARNO.



- 1- Percorso pedonale sull'Arno
- 2- Percorso meccanizzato parallelo all'Arno.
- 3- Percorso più particolarmente pedonale di quartiere che porta la vita dalla zona di Via Cosimella, al Nuovo Giardino, alla Chiesa di Santa Felicità a Boboli o alla Costa S. Giorgio.

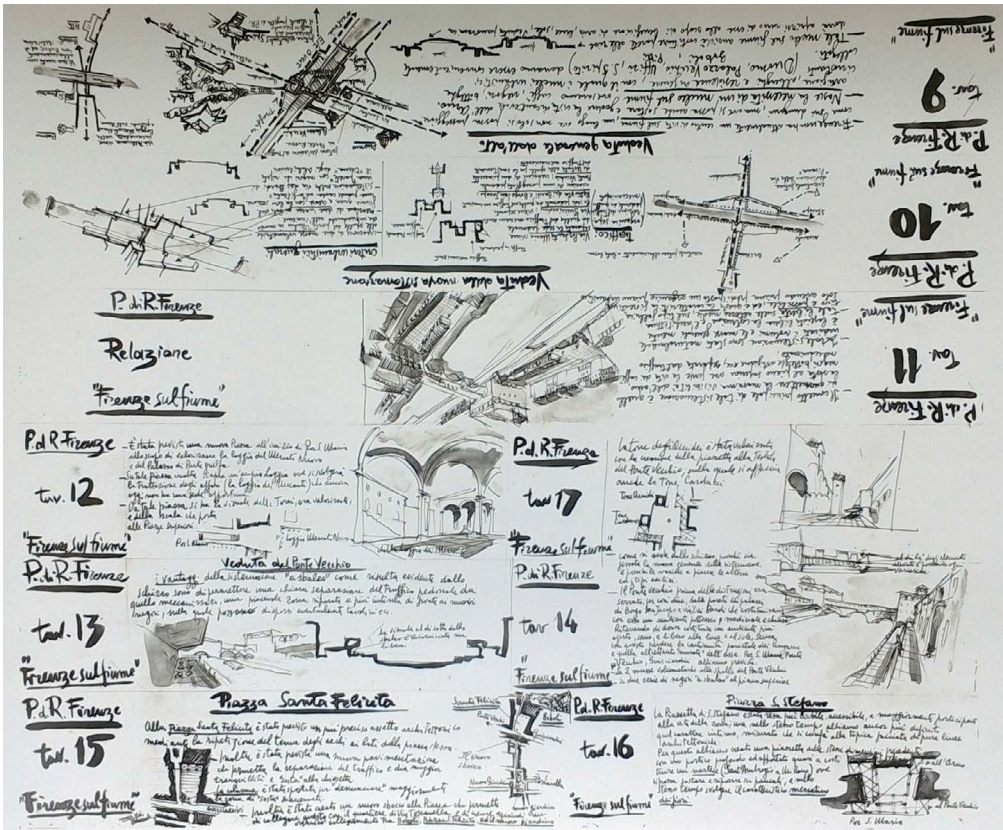
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PIANTA AL PIANO TERRA AL DI QU'À DELL'ARNO.



- 1- Percorso pedonale sulla sinistra, affiancato da Nuova Loggia, S. Stefano, Ponte Vecchio.
- 2- Percorso Meccanizzato.
- 3- Percorso più particolarmente pedonale sulla destra affiancato da loggia del Mercato Nuovo, Palazzo di Parte Guelfa, l'Arno ed il Ponte Vecchio.

22 |



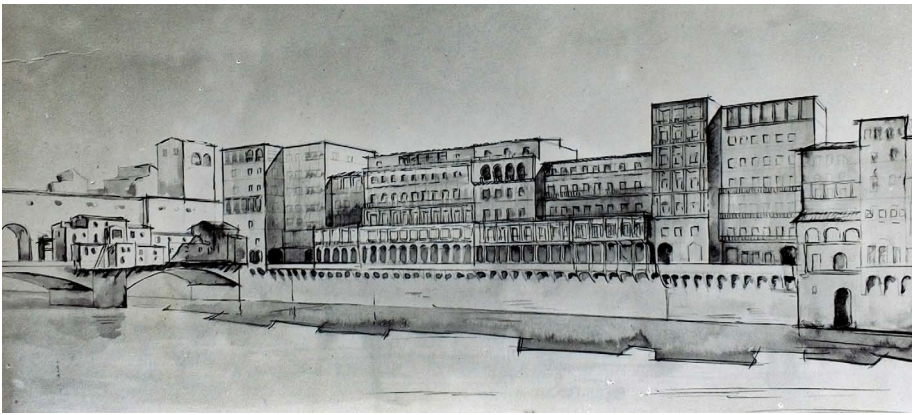
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Fig. 21-22

"Firenze sul Fiume", plan for the reconstruction of the destroyed area in the neighborhood of Ponte Vecchio, national competition for the reconstruction of the center of Florence (1946), tables of the projects, Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 23

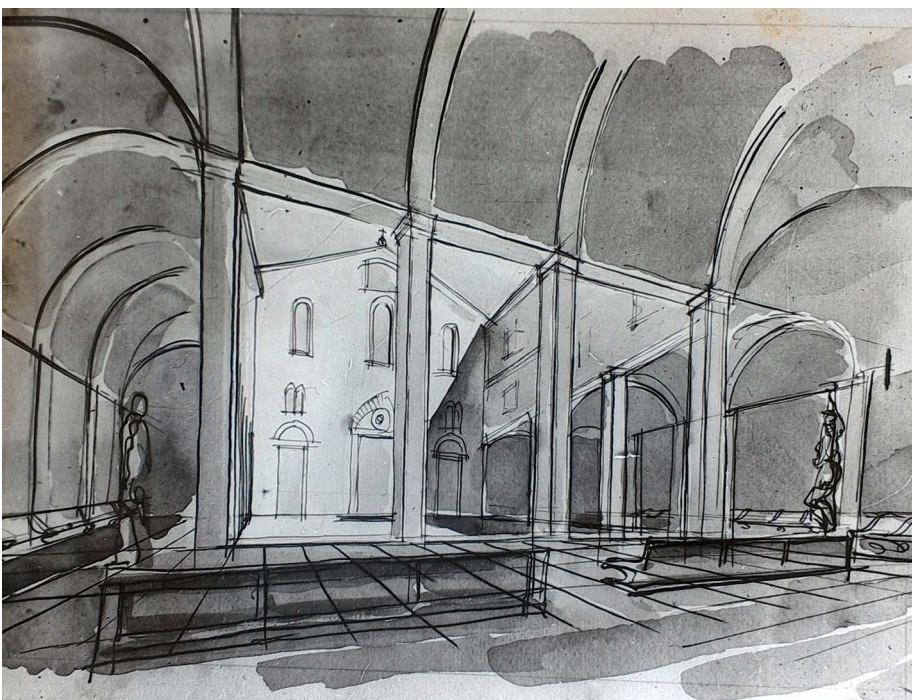
"Firenze sul Fiume", plan for the reconstruction of the destroyed area in the neighborhood of Ponte Vecchio, national competition for the reconstruction of the center of Florence (1946), thumbnails sketches of the project drawings, Casa Studio Ricci.



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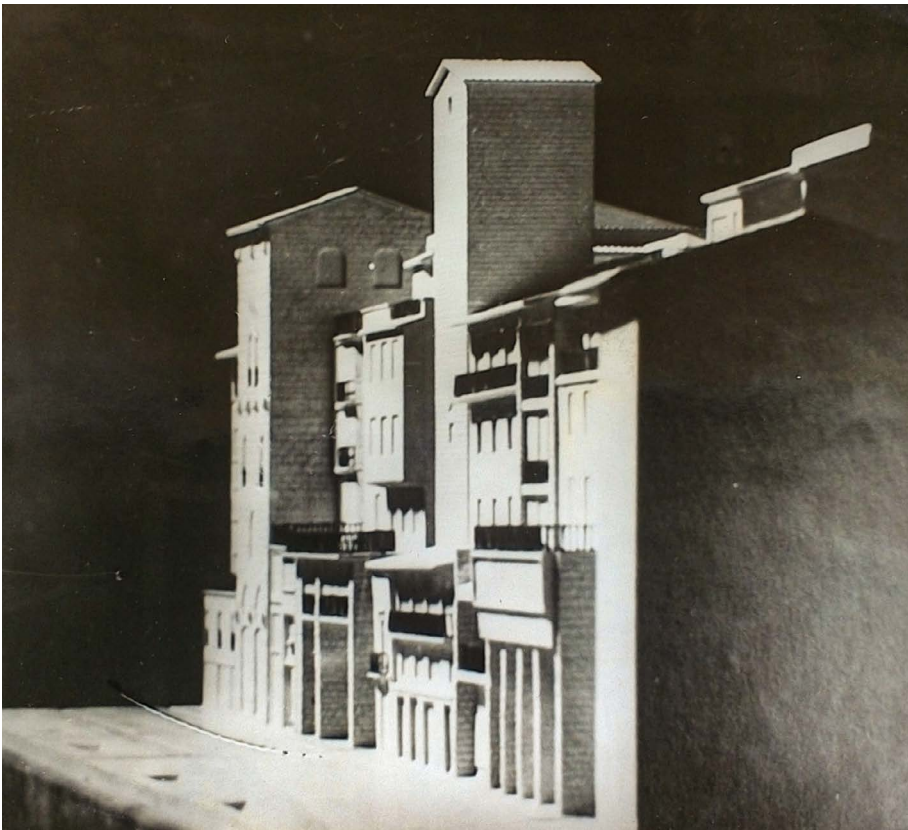


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Fig. 24
 "Firenze sul Fiume", plan for the reconstruction of the destroyed area in the neighborhood of Ponte Vecchio, national competition for the reconstruction of the center of Florence (1946), sketch by Leonardo Ricci of the project for the elevation on the Arno River, Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 25
 "Firenze sul Fiume", plan for the reconstruction of the destroyed area in the neighborhood of Ponte Vecchio, national competition for the reconstruction of the center of Florence (1946), sketch by Leonardo Ricci of the project for the elevation on the Arno River "Lungarno Acciaiuoli", Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 26
 "Firenze sul Fiume", plan for the reconstruction of the destroyed area in the neighborhood of Ponte Vecchio, national competition for the reconstruction of the center of Florence (1946), sketch by Leonardo Ricci, inside road view, Casa Studio Ricci.



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For the first Ricci's group elaborated the project "Firenze sul Fiume" ["Florence on the river"], perfect example of how the projects for bridges had matured in Ricci and in his colleagues the desire to extend the possibilities of reconnecting the urban tissue from the bridge to the surrounding areas. The project linked Por Santa Maria road to Guicciardini road through the connection offered by the preexistence of Ponte Vecchio. Two building blocks grafted the bridge to the two banks, on which two closed and covered squares opened on each side. In Casa Studio Ricci archive there are many drawings of the final project and a short report, which states that «the pedestrian path on the upper level (the first floor of the buildings) was planned organically, it was not fragmented or devoid of meaning. It originates from the sorting node of the new square on which it faces the Palazzo di Parte Guelfa, crosses the Arno on the roof of the Vasari Corridor, suitably arranged as a terrace, along the two elevated paths on the Arno at the end of which there is a staircase and ends at the opposite junction in via Guicciardini. Furthermore, as it can be clearly seen from the graphs, a direct connection was provided, from the roof of the Ponte Vecchio, through the Gallery of the new head building, with the Boboli Gardens. So that from the Loggia del Mercato Nuovo it is possible, with organic connections, to go to the Boboli Gardens without going down to the mechanized traffic floor»²⁰ [Fig. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27].

20 Luigi Piccinato, "Ricostruire Firenze," *Metron*, no. 16 (April, 1947); "Piano di ricostruzione d'Oltrarno," *Il Nuovo Corriere*, June 21, 1950; "Le Ricostruzioni intorno al Ponte Vecchio," *La Nazione Italiana*, June 27, 1950; articles and drawing of the facades of the buildings facing the Lungarno River near Trinita bridge collected in "Logbook" n. 1 (1938-1952), pages 19-20 and 32, Casa Studio Ricci; Luigi Piccinato, "Concorso per il piano di ricostruzione," *Urbanistica*, no. 12 (1953); article and picture of the model collected in "Logbook" n. 2 (1952-1956), page 58, Casa Studio Ricci; Vasič Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci. Architetto "esistenzialista"*, 22.

Fig. 27

"Firenze sul Fiume", plan for the reconstruction of the destroyed area in the neighborhood of Ponte Vecchio, national competition for the reconstruction of the center of Florence (1946), sketch by Leonardo Ricci, picture of a model, Casa Studio Ricci.

In 1946 the group of Leonardo Ricci, Leonardo Savioli, Giuseppe Giorgio Gori, and Giulio Krall took part in the competition for “Ponte San Niccolò” with two projects: the first of a bridge with a single arch that reflected the requests of the competition, characterized by access stairs to the river leaning against the shoulders, and a version with three lowered arches on perforated piles connected to the road level. The same year saw the competition-contract for the bridge on Sieve river, San Piero a Sieve, in which Ricci participated with Giuseppe Giorgio Gori, Leonardo Savioli, executive firm Ferrobeton.

Between 1946 and 1947 Ricci took part in the competition-contract for the Ponte alla Rufina on the Sieve river with Giuseppe Giorgio Gori, Leonardo Savioli, Emilio Brizzi, Giorgio Neumann. They won the first prize and the bridge was realized. At the time Ricci was also involved in the project of reconstruction and expansion of Palazzo Albion, Lungarno Acciaiuoli with Giuseppe Giorgio Gori, Leonardo Savioli²¹.

In 1947 he also took part in several competition such as the competition for the Ponte of Salitone on the Sterza river with Giuseppe Giorgio Gori, Leonardo Savioli, Emilio Brizzi, the competition for the Ponte of Bottacina on the Sterza river with Giuseppe Giorgio Gori, Leonardo Savioli, Emilio Brizzi, the competition-contract for the Ponte on the Arno river in Signa with Giuseppe Giorgio Gori, Leonardo Savioli, Emilio Brizzi, the competition-contract for the Ponte San Niccolò in Florence where he won the II prize with Giuseppe Giorgio Gori and Leonardo Savioli, Emilio Brizzi e Giulio Krall. In addition, it is worth reminding the competition-contract for the bridge in Figline Valdarno with Giuseppe Giorgio Gori, Leonardo Savioli, Emilio Brizzi (I prize), the competition-contract for the bridge in Terranova Bracciolini on the Arno river with Giuseppe Giorgio Gori, Leonardo Savioli, Emilio Brizzi who presented three design purposes and won the I prize.

In 1947 the XI Market Exhibition of the Craftsmanship of Florence was organized for the first time since the outbreak of the war. In this edition, a new architecture made up of plastic, coloristic and life-like elements, in which the fantastical element is predominant, was emerging; an architecture of exteriors and an architecture of interiors, in which decoration plays a key role in the interpretation of the environment. The Florence Craft Exhibition was defined by Roberto Papini “a laboratory” where artists and architects of the new generation worked together. The group of young Florentine architects, all students of Giovanni Michelucci, designed the setting up of the rooms where toys, jewels of the Florentine goldsmiths, and ceramics were exhibited. The architects Giuseppe Giorgio Gori, Enzo Gori, Leonardo Ricci and Leonardo Savioli were joined by the painters Osvaldo Tordi and Renzo Grazzini²² and worked together also in the preparation of the central room C.A.D.M.A. (Association for the revival of Italian artisan productions which worked with the support of

21 Giuseppe Gori, *Operosità didattica e architettonica del Prof. Dr. Architetto Giuseppe Gori*, (Florence: C.I.P.E. 1950); Maria Elisabetta Bonafede, *La scuola fiorentina tra le due guerre: genesi, figure e contributi nella cultura architettonica europea*, (Florence: Print & Service, 1993); Carlo Cresti, *I progetti della “Ricostruzione”*, (Florence: Alinea, 1995).

22 Roberto Papini, “Orientamenti di architetti, di artigiani e d’altro”, *Stile*, no. 9-10-11-12 (1947): 11-13.

the American Handicraft Development Inc. Foundation in New York)²³. In those years in Florence realists and abstract painters opposed their views, but they all had the same goal to seek the synthesis of the arts to find a new birth and a new direction for the society²⁴.

The late 1940s saw a rich production both in painting and in architecture for Ricci, who, in 1949, rebuilt the bridge on the Bisenzio river in Novanella (Signa) with Giuseppe Giorgio Gori and Leonardo Savioli. 1949 was the year of Leonardo Ricci's first personal exhibition at the Gallery "Il Fiore" in Florence²⁵, for which he was introduced as a mature painter. There Ricci's one was recognized as a the painting of an architect, therefore as a painting "built with an architectural love of positivity"²⁶.

In the same period Ricci belonged to the abstract art group with articulated volumes, structural solutions, and neoplastic compositions, but, at the same time, primitive influences emerged with the representation of ancestral myths, and, finally the Informal appeared as well. Giovanna Uzzani defined them the three optional visions of the world Ricci would have described in the *Anonymous (XX century)* some years after: the logic world, the world of myth, and the world of the absurd, respectively²⁷.

1949 also marked the beginning of the design for Monterinaldi general plan, modified and revised until 1953, and the construction of the residential settlement on the hill near Florence that brought Ricci to the international scene as it was widely published. The first house was Ricci Study-Home, designed from 1949 to 1950, it was executed in 1951 and finished with the furniture design in 1952 with Engineer Gianfranco Petrelli. In Monterinaldi Leonardo Ricci established an architectural synthesis based on tensive, spatial, formal, structural polarities displayed by means of a material contrast between rough stone and reinforced concrete masonry, and on the themes, then recurring, of the turriform body incorporating the main staircase and the fireplace, which also has symbolic significance [Fig. 28].

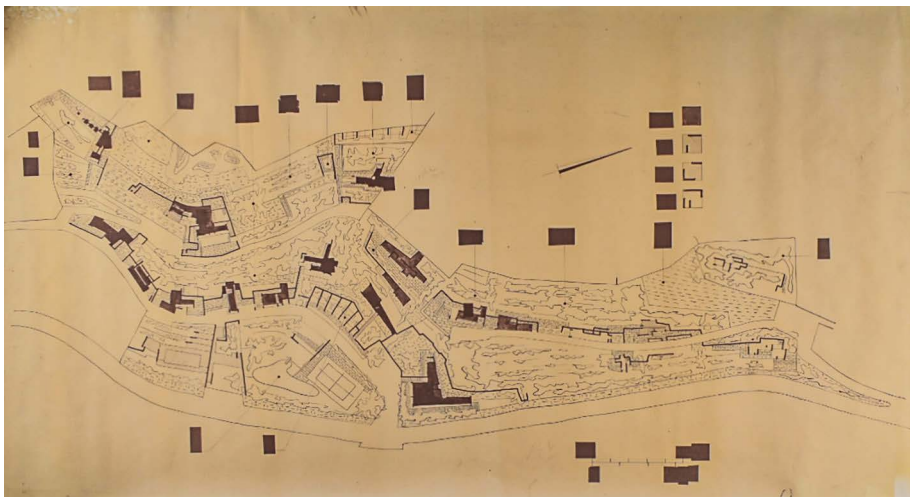
23 The Foundation C.A.D.M.A. financed the whole Exhibition and arranged the first Italian Craft Exhibition in New York in April 1947. Giovanna Uzzani, "Leonardo Ricci pittore", in *Leonardo Ricci 100. Scrittura, pittura e architettura. 100 note a margine dell'Anonimo del XX secolo*, eds. Maria Clara Ghia, Clementina Ricci and Ugo Dattilo (Firenze: Didapress, 2019), 129-139.

24 Roberto Papini, "Orientamenti di architetti, di artigiani e d'altro", *Stile*, no. 9-10-11-12, (1947): 11-14; "La Mostra dell'Artigianato", *Il Nuovo Corriere*, September 11, 1947; Renato Venturini, "Mostra film a 11", *Il Pomeriggio*, October 1, 1947; articles and magazine collected in "Logbook" n. 1 (1938-1952), pages 22-23, Casa Studio Ricci; Ghia, *La nostra città è tutta la Terra. Leonardo Ricci architetto (1918-1994)*, 71.

25 "Al 'Fiore", *Il Mattino dell'Italia Centrale*, December 11, 1949; Gianna Basevi, "Ricci", *La Nazione Italiana*, December 23, 1949; "Leonardo Ricci al 'Fiore'", *Nuovo Corriere dell'Italia Centrale*, December 23, 1949, "Stanze Fiorentine. Leonardo Ricci", "Pittura nuova di Leonardo Ricci", *Pomeriggio*, December 15, 1949.

26 «It seems to us that he has been able to obey the Rilkean precept of "listening to himself": which is a famous exhortation as betrayed by the presumptuous impatience of most, young and not young. Here is a painter, we said, who from the first apparition denounces a considerable degree of maturity and fits effortlessly into the heart of a suggestive pictorial adventure: that committed, precisely, to a classically unitary synthesis of all the scattered fragments of the post-romantic diaspora, from Impressionism to today. As immense and risky a commitment as everyone sees, as it is certain that the rational and geometric spirit to which even Ricci may abusively entrust himself will not be sufficient to fulfil it, where the figurative mechanism restrains the possibilities glimpsed by fantastic intuition and precipitates the image on the lost slope of critical processing. However, we welcome this first exhibition by Leonardo Ricci as a conscious, and so far, stylistically identified promise of the very human results that the "split automaton" of absolute abstractionism can achieve». *L'Ultima*, no. 52 (April 25, 1950).

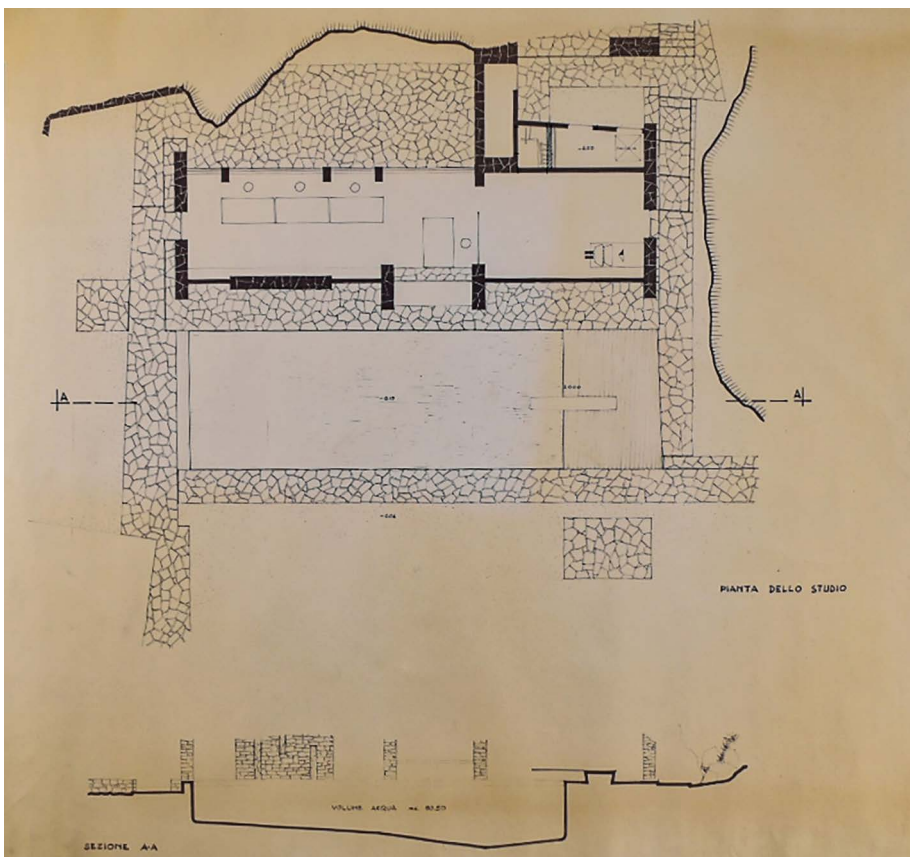
27 Uzzani, "Leonardo Ricci pittore", 133.



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In the original design of the Monterinaldi plan, Ricci envisioned a few common services and the absence of fences, thus wishing to reintroduce the theme of the community village as a single organism capable of stimulating a form of relational life among families. Although this aspiration was eventually disregarded for the few services were not realized, Monterinaldi saw the birth of a small artists' colony, unfortunately forgotten as such, but still inhabited.

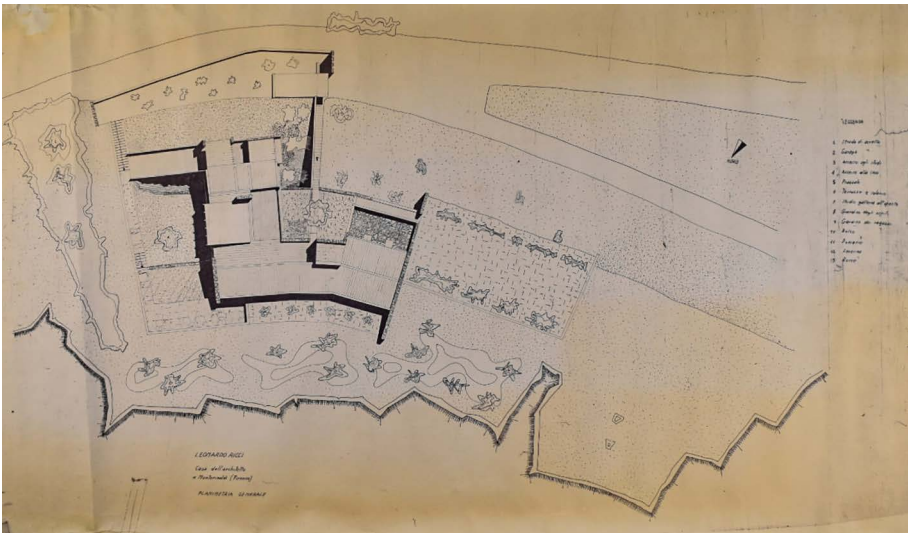
The village construction history continued in 1951 with Petrelli House, until 1952, then with Selleri House (1952-1953), Sante House, David House (1952), Masi House (1953, then Santoni House in 1953, modified with following changes in 1955-1957), all designed with Gianfranco Petrelli and Giovanni Klaus Koenig. Then De Giorgi Ricci House was built in (1954), while Petroni Bonifazi House



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Fig. 28
Monterinaldi, general plan,
Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 29
Ricci Study Home, Monterinaldi,
plan and section of the
study, Casa Studio Ricci.



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between 1954 and 1955. They were followed by Tinu-Sebregondi home-study (afterwards Meucci home-study), Innocenti home study (afterwards Durante home study), Rodriguez home study, Baldacci restaurant, Van Damme Capacci House (afterwards Guidi House), and Bellandi home study that saw the light all in 1956. Nardoni House (after Ricci House) was built in 1957, Fantoni house between 1956 and 1957 whereas Fantoni factory-study was built in 1958 with Dusan Vasić and Ernesto Trapani. Coisson House (after Benocci House) was finished in the time span 1958-1962 and the early Sixties saw the execution of Nahum House (then Corsi House) in 1962, and in 1963 of the project for Micheletti House and Focardi House (1963)²⁸ [Fig. 29, 30].

Among the houses for Monterinaldi, the unrealized project for the “Theoretical house” (1956-1958) deserves a special focus as it led Ricci to the definition of his design method. It can be considered to all intents and purposes one of the first experimental dwellings of Leonardo Ricci, conceived to be built next to his

28 Leonardo Savioli, “Una casa sulla collina a Nord di Firenze,” *Architetti*, (1952): 15; “Vive con le stelle nello spazio l’umanissima casa di un architetto-pittore,” *Il Mattino dell’Italia Centrale*, November 19, 1953; Silvano Giannelli, “Cinque edifici fiorentini in gara per il <<fiorino>> dell’architettura,” *Giornale del Mattino*, November 21, 1954; “Premio del fiorino,” *Nazione Sera*, November 29, 1954; Paolo Nestler, Neues Bauen in Italien: 66-67, 164-165; “Habitation près de Florence,” *Aujourd’hui, art et architecture* I, no. 5 (November, 1955): 30-33; “Vom Museum zum Bauplatz. Ein Prototyp moderner Architektur in Italien,” *Der Galler Tagblatt*, (December 2, 1955); Race Eden, “Leonardo Ricci, an architect of Florence,” *Architecture and building* (August, 1956): 296-302; Friedrich Rasche, “Ein Haus am Monte Rinaldi,” *Feuilleton*, no. 1/2 (September 2, 1956): 205; Ernesto Trapani, “Alcuni progetti di Leonardo Ricci,” *La Provincia, Il Comune*, no.1 (January-February 1957); Leonardo Ricci and Gillo Dorfles, “A Monterinaldi presso Firenze: un centro di quindici case,” *Domus*, no. 337 (Dicembre, 1957); 1-12 “Palast im Steinbruch,” *Der Standpunkt* (January 20, 1958); Silvano Giannelli, “La città dal cuore di pietra serena,” *Giornale del Mattino*, January 23, 1958; Kurt Ekholm, “Ny Arkitektur i Florens,” *Goteborgs Handels och Sjöfartstidning* (September 18, 1959); Kurt Ekholm, “Ny vy i Florens,” *Hufvudstadsbladet* (October 8, 1959); M. A. Febvre-Desportes, “Beauté des maisons campagnardes: Monterinaldi près de Florence,” *Meubles et décors* (October, 1959); Alberto Boatto, “Village Monterinaldi près de Florence, Habitation a Forte dei Marmi, Italie,” *L’Architecture d’aujourd’hui*, no. 86 (October-November, 1959): 28-32; Creighton, “The involved man: Leonardo Ricci”: 144-151; “Leonardo Ricci. Conjunto residencial Monterinaldi,” *Revista informes de la construcción*, no. 120 (Aprile 1960); materials and pictures of Casa Studio Ricci, Casa Masi, Casa Petroni, Casa De Giorgi, Casa Selleri, Casa Tinu, Casa Bellandi, Casa degli Innocenti, Casa Van Damme collected in “Logbook” n. 2 (1952-1956) (these articles can be found in the Logbooks kept in Casa Studio Ricci on pages 43-46, 48, 51-53, 59, 63, 65-67, 82-83, 85-86, Casa Studio Ricci; “Logbook” n. 3 (1956-1959), pages 92, 95-99, 111-114, 116, Casa Studio Ricci; “Logbook” n. 4 (1959-1963), pages 135-1139, 144-145, 149-150, 153). Leonardo Ricci, “Ville a Monterinaldi presso Firenze, di Leonardo Ricci, Villa all’isola d’Elba, di Leonardo Ricci,” *Casabella continuità*, no. 291 (September, 1964): 36-38; Chiara Baglione e Leonardo Ricci “Leonardo Ricci: le case di Monterinaldi. La maniera Toscana,” *Casabella*, 63, no. 669 (August, 1999): 46-61; Luigi Spinelli “Leonardo Ricci, spazi fluidi che inseguono la vita. Nello studio di architettura e pittura a Monterinaldi si rinnova quella che Giovanni, Klaus, Koenig definiva la ‘la conformazione spaziale dell’esistenza,’” *Domus*, no. 938 (August 2010): 70-78; Nicolangelo Gelomini, *Leonardo Ricci, Monterinaldi, Balmain, Borgese*. Documentario, 2011; Antonella Greco e Maria Clara Ghia, *Leonardo Ricci Monterinaldi/Balmain/Borgese*. Roma: Palombi, 2012; Vasić Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci. Architetto “esistenzialista”*, 28.

Fig. 29
Ricci Study Home, Monterinaldi, planivolumetric, Casa Studio Ricci.



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Fig. 31
Picture of the stone quarry in
Monterinaldi, Florence, Casa
Studio Ricci.

Study-home, in front of the quarry from which the stones to build were taken and anchored on a steep terrain [Fig. 31].

This “Experimental House” was a case of considerable interest as it provided the architect with the possibility of being able to design without limits imposed by a probable client since he himself was the client. From reading the technical drawings of plans, elevations and sections, a space emerges that contracted and expanded on different staggered levels, where no main or predetermined path prevented the eyes from looking upwards or from right to left.

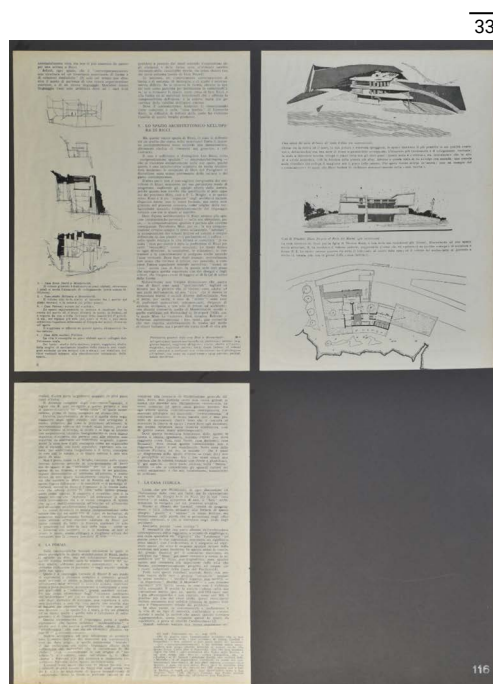
This project is a good example of Ricci’s work on the community space of the family, in which the design for the common space can be read in plan and section in Ricci’s sketches titled “the space in the vertical” and “the space in the horizontal”. The spatial interpenetration dominated: each space was not concluded in itself, but was integrated into the entire composition, inisolable and irreplaceable [Fig. 32, 33, 34].

Fig. 32-33-34

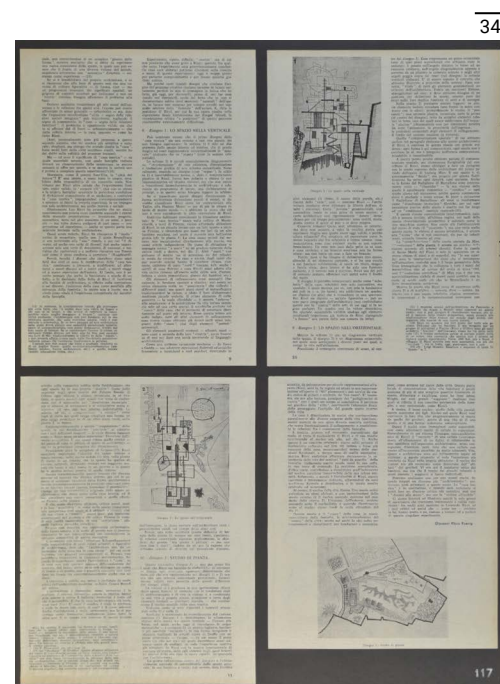
Logbook no. 3, pages 115, 116 and 117 of the article by Giovanni Klaus Koenig, “Leonardo Ricci e la “casa teorica” (alla ricerca di un nuovo spazio architettonico)”, *Bollettino Tecnico - Rassegna bimestrale fondata nell’anno 1936*, no. 7-8 (July-August, 1958): 4-12.



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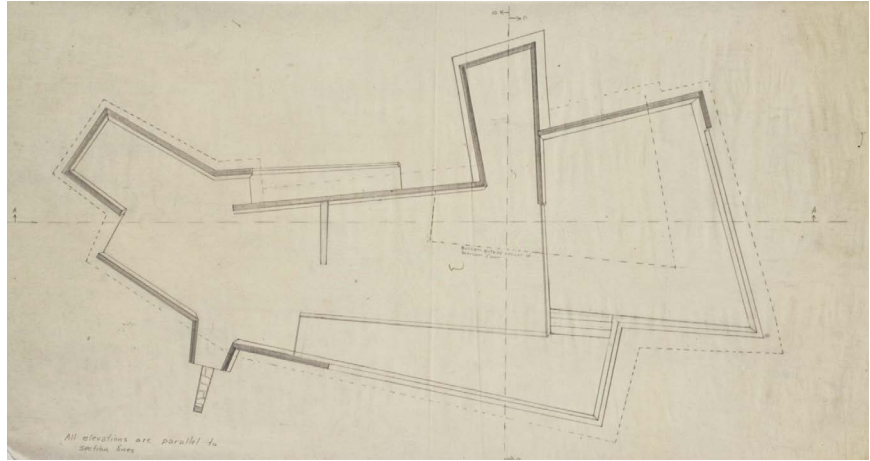
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The project for the "Theoretical House" also marked the search for a different spatial quality, which respected the concept of existence as experience, thus resulting from a careful study of the acts of human existence and of the relationships between these acts. In this sense, the building was responsible for respecting the Mumfordian equation "city - sign of integrated social relations", which, according to Giovanni Klaus Koenig could «be transcribed, removing the summation sign, in "home - sign of family relationships"²⁹». The name "Theoretical House" derived from the fact that the architect had not found the human capital on which to carry out the experiment of designing existence as an experience and, for this reason, he had become the client of himself. Indeed the design had to proceed with the experience of the family who would have lived in the house, but this would have caused too much slowness in the realization.

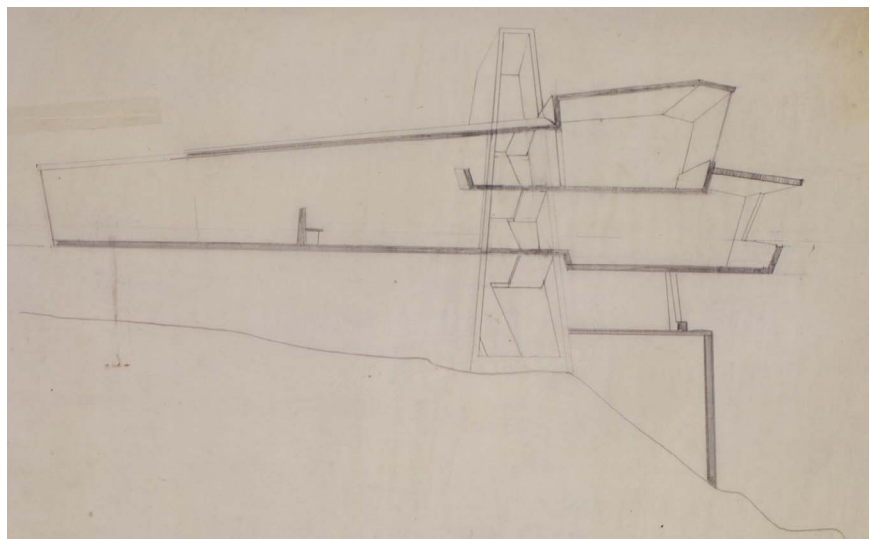
The community experience of the members of the family was reflected in the drawings, which changed and evolved with the evolution of the family life: the school rejection of Ricci's son or the enrollment of his daughter in the faculty of architecture caused the drawings to change. Each element of the architectural composition was moving and changing according to the phenomenological principle

of giving to the building's users infinite possibilities of choice as the infinite were the ways of living. The sketches in the vertical and horizontal dimensions were diagrams, "a conceptual scheme of existence", or better, of the activities and movements of the users [Fig. 35, 36, 37, 38, 39].

The house was sited in Monterinaldi, where also Casa Studio Ricci stood emerging from the rocks, while the "Theoretical House" was positioned in the cave dug in the quarry from which all the stones to build the houses of Monterinaldi had been extracted, but it did not lean against the rock, it had a view of Florence and was enclosed on three sides by the rocky walls. In section,



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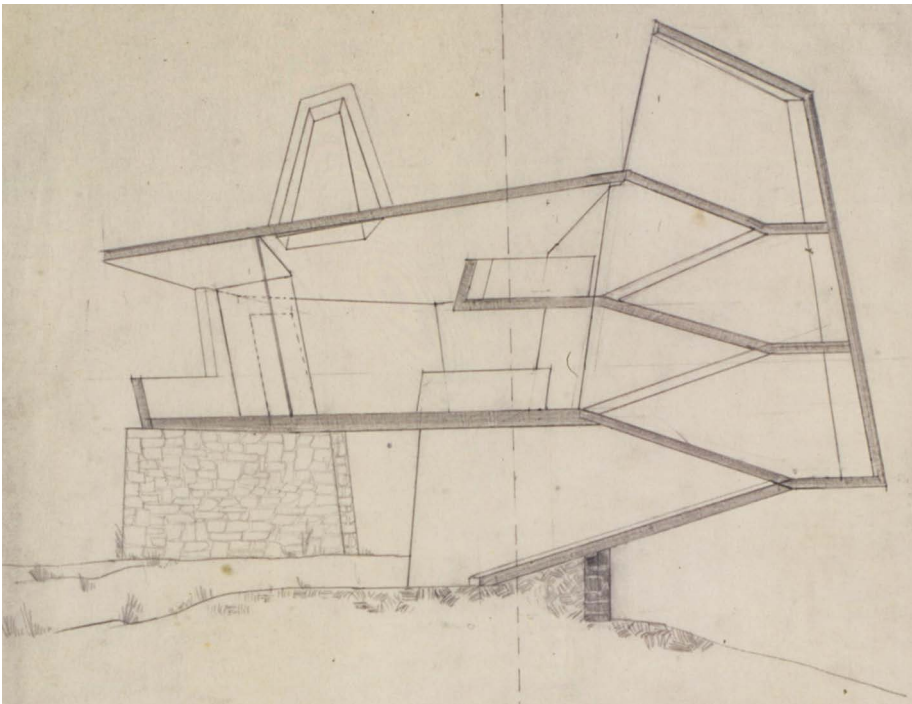


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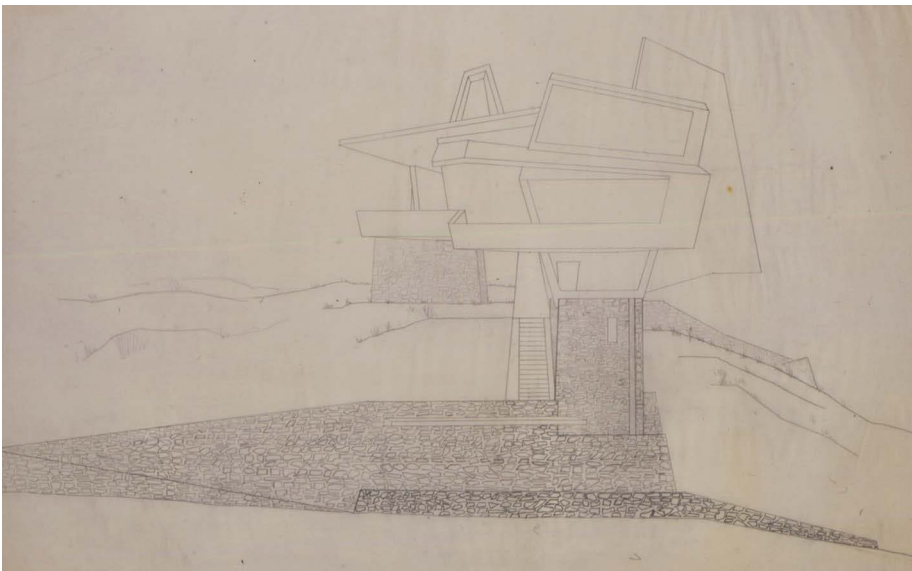
Fig. 35
Project for a "Theoretical House", plan, B022300S, CSAC.

Fig. 36
Project for a "Theoretical House", section, B038552S, CSAC.

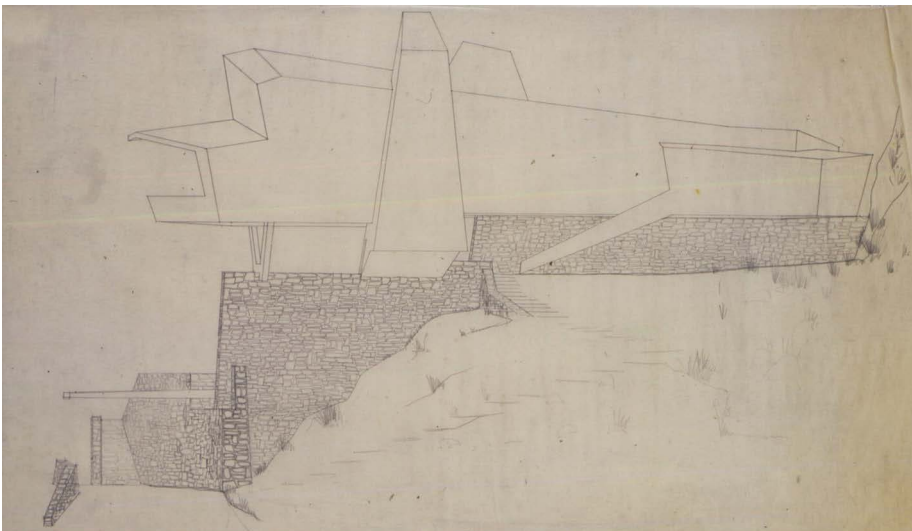
29 Giovanni Klaus Koenig, "Leonardo Ricci e la "casa teorica" (alla ricerca di un nuovo spazio architettonico)", *Bollettino Tecnico - Rassegna bimestrale fondata nell'anno 1936*, no. 7-8 (July-August, 1958): 21.



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Fig. 37
Project for a "Theoretical House", section, B022302S, CSAC.

Fig. 38
Project for a "Theoretical House", elevation, B022303S, CSAC.

Fig. 39
Project for a "Theoretical House", elevation, B022304S, CSAC.

while one of the floors leaned on the rock, the others leaned on pillars in order to create closed spaces between the building and the rock. In one case the connecting elements were clearly stairs, but in other points the same floors were transformed into connecting ramps.

The relationship that the house assumed with the earth was evident in the drawings: as for its ascending house-studio, the theoretical house faced the rock and was held firmly by it through a stone fence in opposition to the centrifugal forces acting inside it. From these forces sliding planes that floated in the air in a precarious but stable balance emerged. Set in motion, the "Theoretical House" launched towards the panorama of the Arno valley through a forked concrete structural element, a fixed point between the ground and the projecting floors.

In plan Ricci drew different black squares and rectangular forms because his design conception foresaw the overlapping of the activities on the different levels of the house. The different shapes were alternated, such as the circle that symbolized the study and the hatched shape of the swimming pool, which was inserted under another quadrangular shape. Ricci's sketch highlighted two further aspects of the project: the interpenetration of spaces given by the intersection of shapes and the importance of the coexistence of internal and external spaces, avoiding the Renaissance perspective.

There is a third drawing of the "Theoretical House" in which Ricci developed a more precise hypothesis in plan, which was therefore no longer a preformal conceptual scheme, but a possible configuration of the "evolved family life". In the planimetric plant there were three bodies that corresponded to different family needs and that were expandable. In them, the detached space of the raised parents' bed, the main body of the house with a center that welcomed the community life of the family, and a last nucleus dedicated to the life of the children, which was partially detached from that of the parents, but not totally. The three parts were interconnected and form an organic complex³⁰.

While the construction of Monterinaldi was under way, at the beginning of the Fifties, in Florence, Fiamma Vigo directed the Gallery "Numero", the gallery "La Vigna Nuova" exposed the "Manifesto of the Classical Abstract Art" and Giorgini began the made in Italy in fashion. In this active cultural climate Leonardo Ricci designed some of his funding projects as the Mercato dei Fiori di Pescia (1949), the Ecumenical Village of Agàpe (1946-1951), while some of his personal exhibitions reached France at the "Galerie Pierre"³¹ and the "Salon de Mai" in Paris (May 9 – May 31, 1950)³², then Germany for the "Review of Art in Germany"

30 Koenig, "Leonardo Ricci e La "Casa Teorica", 3–34; Marco Dezzi Bardeschi, "Aspetti Dell'architettura Toscana d'oggi", *Bollettino Tecnico - Rassegna Bimestrale Fondata Nell'anno 1936*, no. 10–12 (December, 1958): 9–13; Luigi Prestinzenza Puglisi, "Architetti d'Italia. Leonardo Ricci, Lo Straripante", *A Tribune* (September, 2018).

31 Galerie Pierre, "Leonardo Ricci", May 5, 1950, "Un Florentin expose à Paris des oeuvres d'une étrange indépendance", V, May 28, 1950, Charles Estienne, "Les Expositions", *L'Observateur*, May 11, 1950.

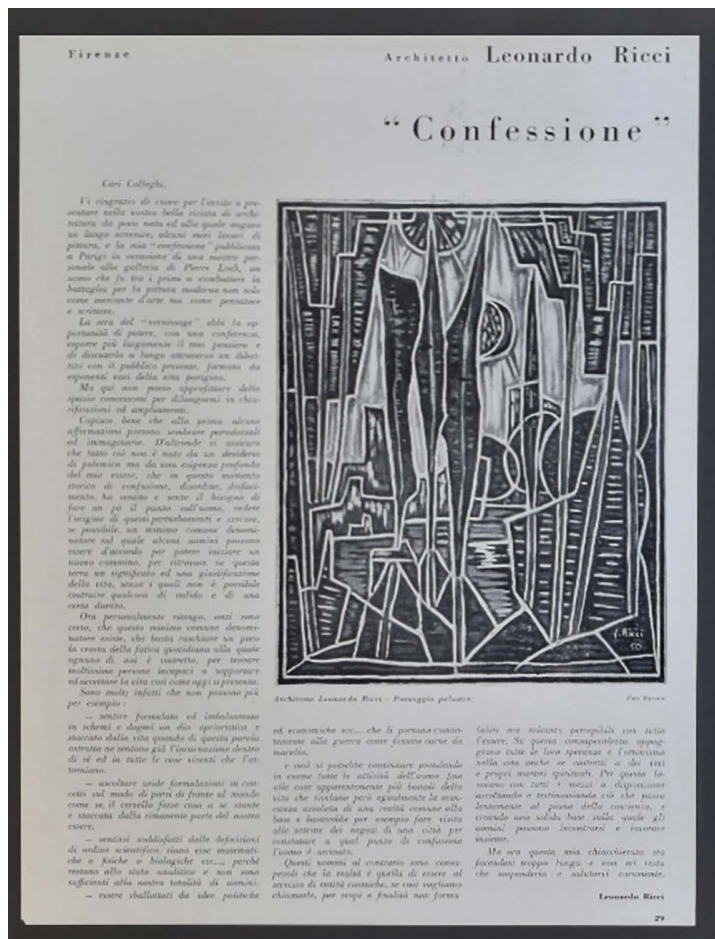
32 "Au Salon de Mai. Jeunesse perpetuelle de la peinture", *Le Monde*, May 12, 1950. The exhibition of Italian painters at the "Salon de Mai" meant a definite recognition of the importance and international value of the Italian art by France, as well as the importance of the cultural exchange between Italy and France for the European culture. To deepen this theme: Giovanni Grazzini, "Come oggi la Francia 'italianizza'. L'interesse c'è: bisogna aumentarlo", *La Nazione*, June 13, 1950. Some materials about the Salon de Mai exhibitions Ricci took part in are collected in "Logbook" n. 1 (1938-1952), pages 33, 34, Casa Studio Ricci.

(1950). More in detail, the exposition at the “Salon de Mai” dealt with a fundamental theme that affected Leonardo Ricci’s next studies on architecture, influenced by Michelucci’s teaching: the importance of tradition, not intended as a sum of human experiences, but as a *unicum* of contents to be understood. To be inside tradition was the guiding theme and Italian painting was hosted as a symbol of re-elaboration of tradition, the place where tradition was stronger and richer than elsewhere. The new generation of painters had to face the fact that a too strong tradition could also turn into a burden, and the merit of the new generation consisted in realizing it and in having accepted all the romantic and melancholic feelings of the past³³.

In 1950 (from April 28 to May 12, 1950) Leonardo Ricci inaugurated his personal exhibition at the Galerie Pierre in Paris with a strong speech. The text of the conference was then published in Paris and in Italy with the title “Confessione” [“Confession”], a sort of artistic manifesto dated April 3, 1950³⁴ [Fig. 40].

In the article Ricci explained his feeling about human existence at the time and how it could be translated in art: he maintained that it was necessary to use all the values felt as prisons for man up to that moment to make man reintegrate and reincarnate, without having to deny anything of the past. The past had to be left behind, only the painting had to remain because it was the first language of man and, therefore, it could not die, it was necessary to pass from the subjective to the objective, from “the mysterious” to “the revealed” through man. Ricci wanted to become that man, a man-means through which the new reality had to pass for “the other”, who had to recognize himself in this reality as a living being. This was the mission of art and artists for Ricci.

In 1951, he was invited again at the “Salon de Mai”, he took part in the “Rassegna della pittura italiana” at the Gallery “La Boetie” in Paris, then in the “Rassegna d’arte italiana” at the Gallery “Bompiani” in Florence, in the “Rassegna d’arte italiana contemporanea” at the Gallery “Numero” in Florence from August 23 to August 25, 1951, in the painting exhibitions titled “Premio del fiorino” in

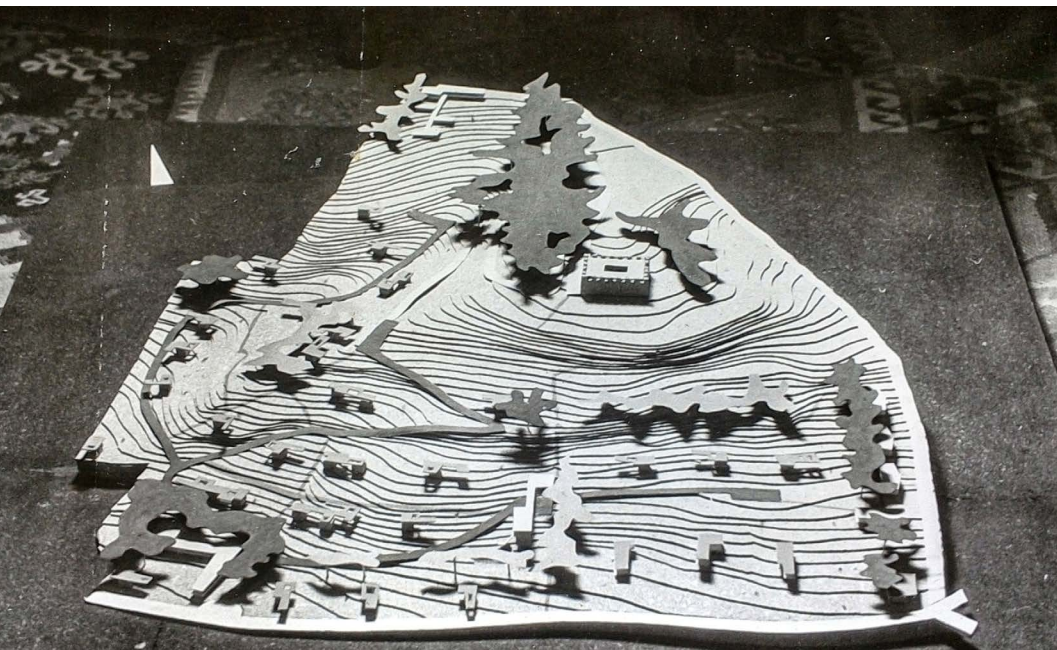


40

33 What is more, the city of the exhibition, Paris, was the place that gave birth to the most important artistic movements and vanguards that firstly broke tradition and, this was the reason why the new exhibition at the Salon had the responsibility and awareness “to break the tradition of breaking the tradition”. With their works, the exhibiting artists had been able to convey intuition and divination in the breaking of tradition, and the visitors would have recognized it. Beniamino Jappolo, “Nouvelle peinture italienne”, Catalogue of the exhibition at the “Salon de Mai” (May 9 – May 31, 1950).

34 Leonardo Ricci, “Confessione”, *Architetti*, no 3 (August, 1950): 29-32. The published text included a date at the end: April 3, 1950. That was probably the date of Ricci’s speech or the mentioned conference.

Fig. 40
Leonardo Ricci, “Confessione.” *Architetti*, no. 3 (August, 1950): 29–32, pasted in the Logbook no. 1, page 37.



41 |

Florence where he was prized³⁵, in the “Golfo La Spezia” in Lerici from July 22 to September 23, 1951, and finally in “Premio Sassari” in Sassari³⁶.

In 1952 Ricci’s paintings appeared again in Florence at Palazzo Strozzi with the exhibition “Mezzo secolo d’arte in Toscana”³⁷, and, in the same year, they travelled overseas to the United States with a personal exhibition at Landau Gallery in Los Angeles to come back Italy in 1953 for his personal exhibitions at the Gallery “Vigna Nuova” and, again, for the “Premio del Fiorino” in Florence (both in 1953 and 1954).

As an architect, in 1953 Ricci was working near Florence at the subdivision of the hill in Poggio Gherardo in Settignano with Gianfranco Petrelli, Giovanni Klaus Koenig, where they designed the Fattirolli House. For the hill of Poggio Gherardo Ricci designed another residential settlement of single-family villas, minimal apartments, stores, a guesthouse, a restaurant, a bar, and a swimming pool. The only realizations of the project were casa Fattirolli (1953) and casa Gervasoni (1954-1956), with a fan-shaped floor plan, wedged into the land behind and facing the hill with a long terrace. The themes are all there: open fan-shaped floor plans, striking overhangs of terraces, turriform vertical elements pivoting on the ground, large windows and brise-soleil, themes simultaneously developed in Monterinaldi’s houses³⁸ [Fig. 41, 42, 43].

35 Silvano Giannelli, “Scampato il “pericolo di morte” per la giovane pittura italiana”, *Il Mattino dell’Italia Centrale*, August 17, 1951.

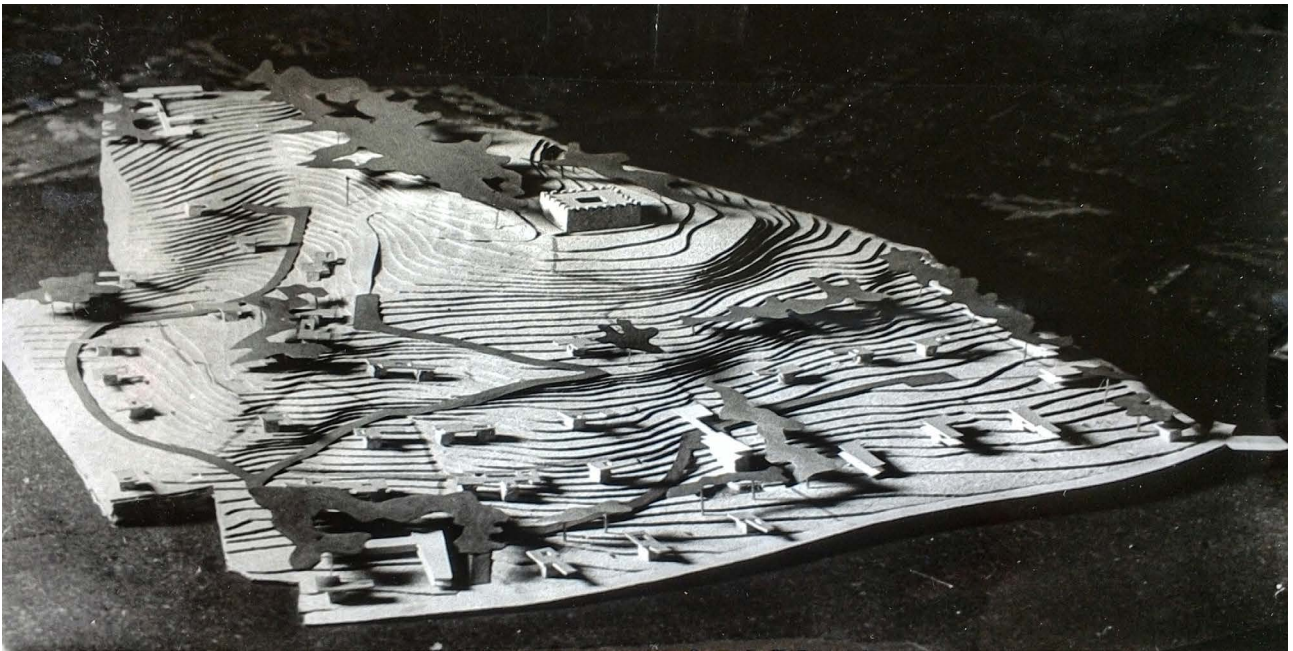
36 Carlo Cuccioli, “4 pittori fiorentini al secondo premio Sassari fanno la vera arte perchè hanno qualcosa da dire”, *L’Unione Sarda*, September 1, 1951.

37 “Destinata alla Germania. Interessante rassegna di pittori contemporanei”, *La Nazione Italiana*, October 29, 1950. The exhibition was set up at the first stage of Palazzo Strozzi and it had to be moved in Germany for the Review of Art.

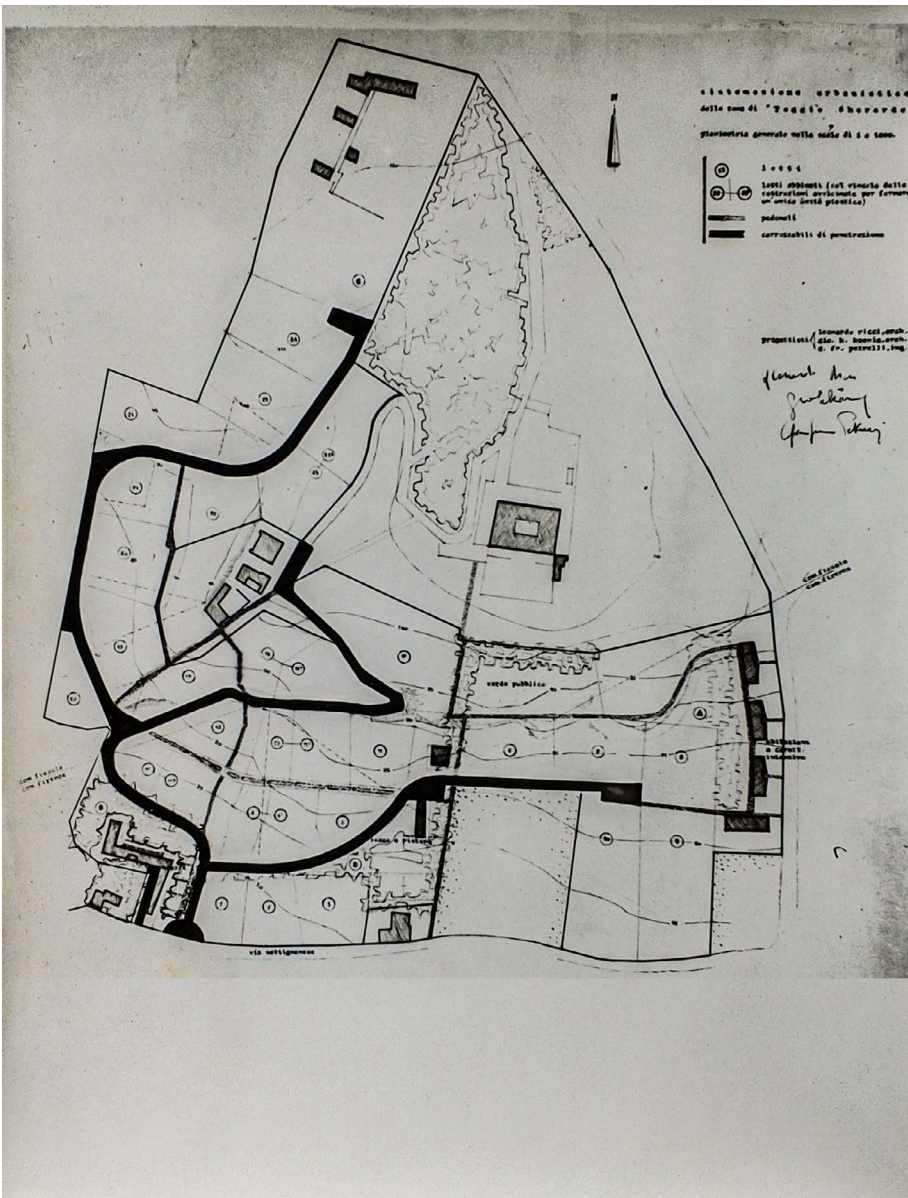
38 Enzo Trapani, “Alcuni progetti di Leonardo Ricci. Villa a Beverly Hills in California. Casa Fattirolli a Poggio Gherardo. Casa Betti a Lipari”, *Il Tecnico della Provincia e il Comune*, no. 1: 13-17; Ghia, *La nostra città è tutta la Terra. Leonardo Ricci architetto (1918-1994)*, 107; A picture of the Poggio Gherardo hill model is kept in “Logbook” n. 2 (1952-1956), page 56, Casa Studio Ricci; an external view picture of the Fattirolli House in Poggio Gherardo is glued in “Logbook” n. 3 (1956-1959), page 100, Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 41-42

Plan for the hill of Poggio Gherardo, picture of the model, Casa Studio Ricci.



42



43 |

Fig. 43
Plan for the hill of Poggio
Gherardo, general plan, Casa
Studio Ricci.

Leonardo Ricci was also a scenographer and intended the design of a set-up – either for a painting exhibition, or for an opera, ballet, or fashion show – as a design of a space embracing men: actors and spectators of a space at a time. In 1955 Ricci designed the scenography and costumes for the show “Il filo errante” in the Garden of Boboli for the conclusion of the VI exhibition of Italian fashion in Florence, but his first set up project for the scenography and dressing was for the *Orfeo* in Aix Les Bains, from July 22 to August 7, 1955³⁹ [Fig. 44, 45, 46, 47, 48]. On that occasion, Ricci thought of a very steep wooden staircase with cantilevered steps, which recalled the stairs of the Monterinaldi houses, to represent the descent of Orpheus into hell. The flames were painted at the bottom of the scene on wooden panels, which would have been a constant for Ricci’s future installations: the plastered “centinella” was used by the architect both for the installation of the Expressionism exhibition and for the 1:1 scale model of the prototype of “living space for two people” created for the exhibition “La Casa Abitata”, one year later⁴⁰.

The property of architecture to host temporality was extremely evident in Ricci’s architecture, but in the displays it was accentuated precisely for their temporary nature. The installations were for Ricci the most synthetic spatial devices, in which content and container were deeply integrated into a single set of contents and matter. In the installations, as in architecture, the path, its theatricality, the continuous movement of man in space as time flew, were fundamental because they allowed to see the relationships between the elements.

1955 was the year of the quite unknown unrealized project for the Tendi House in Fiesole which inaugurates the theme of staggered volumes and cantilevered terraces, widely developed later and also present in the design for the house of his



39 Michel Boutron, “Autres Impressions sur l’Orfeo de Monteverdi,” *Echo Liberté*, August 8, 1955, “AIX-LES-BAINS: smokings et imperméables pour applaudir l’Orfeo, de Monteverdi,” *L’Aurore*, August 8, 1955; “Un grand événement musical à Aix-les-Bains. Création de l’Orfeo de Monteverdi,” *Le Progrès*, August 8, 1955; “A Aix-les-Bains accueil très favorable avec mouvements divers de l’Orfeo de Monteverdi,” *L’Information*, August 9, 1955; “Dernière images du 2 Festival de la Danse organisé par la Municipalité le Comité des Fêtes et le Casino de la Ville d’Aix-les-Bains. Après l’Orfeo,” *Le Dauphiné Libéré*, August 9, 1955; Nicole Hirsch, “Présentation révolutionnaire de l’Orfeo de Monteverdi,” *France soir*, August 9, 1955; “L’Orfeo de Monteverdi ancêtre de tous les opéras point final du festival d’Aix-les-Bains,” *Le Monde*, August 9, 1955; Dominique Arhan, “Un Soleil Grec En Savoie: l’Orfeo,” *Le Figaro Littéraire*, August 13, 1955; Leonardo Ricci, “Presentazione dello spettacolo nel Catalogo del 2 Festival de la Danse organisé par la Municipalité le Comité des Fêtes et le Casino de la Ville d’Aix-les-Bains, Première représentation de plein air en France l’Orfeo de Monteverdi,” October 6, 1955; Ghia, *La nostra città è tutta la Terra. Leonardo Ricci architetto (1918-1994)*, 189; Vasić Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci, Architetto “esistenzialista”*, 29.

40 Some of the most beautiful drawings by Ricci for the “Orpheo” were published in HPA issue no. 9, in the archival sheet titled “Orpheo” Scenographies and Dressing”, pages 95-96.

Fig. 44-45-46-47-48
Articles and pictures on the “Orfeo di Monteverdi” presented at the festival d’Aix-les-Bains, Logbook no. 2, pages 71-75, Casa Studio Ricci.

Sous le Haut Patronage de
Messieurs le Président de la République

2^e FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE LA DANSE

organisé par
LA MUNICIPALITÉ
LE COMITÉ DES FÊTES
ET LE CASINO
de la Ville d'Aix-les-Bains

22 JUILLET - 7 AOUT 1953

SAVEDI 6 AOUT
soirée de gala

DOMINIQUE 7 AOUT
soirée d'opérette

THÉÂTRE DE VERDURE DU PARC DES THERMES

PREMIÈRE REPRÉSENTATION DE PLAIN VIE EN FRANCE

"L'ORFEO" DE MONTEVERDI

Légende en musique représentée à Montreuil en l'an républicain et renouvellement remis à jour pour le

II^e FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE LA DANSE D'AIX-LES-BAINS

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L'ORFEO DE MONTEVERDI

Direction artistique : LEO RICCI

Distribution musicale : MAURICE LE ROUX

Musiciens des chœurs : SINGER

Chœuriste : FRANCIS AUBRY

Musicien soliste : R. GILLIAT DE BOER

Régisseurs : SYDENBONAT

Commissaires de DANSELBORN, de l'Université d'Amsterdam

LA SCALA DE MILAN

LE BALLET DU NÉDERLANDSCHE OPERA D'AMSTERDAM

L'ASSOCIATION DES CONCERTS CHAMON

LES CHOEURS DU CONSERVATOIRE DE CHAMBERY

Traduction : MICHEL LUMBARD

40

L'ORFEO DE MONTEVERDI

DISTRIBUTION

GIUSEPPE VALENGA (de la Scala de Milan et du Metropolitan de Milan) ... L'ORFEO

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HUGO CASINO (directeur de la Scala de Milan) ... CHORUS

EUGÈNE JERRY (de l'Opéra de Paris) ... OPERA

LYDIA ARDRE ... CHORUS

ANDRÉ MERCURI (de la Scala de Milan) ... CHORUS

GIUSEPPE VALENGA (de la Scala de Milan) ... CHORUS

NATHALIE DE WIT ... CHORUS

LES CHOEURS DU CONSERVATOIRE DE CHAMBERY

LA SCALA DE MILAN

LE BALLET DU NÉDERLANDSCHE OPERA D'AMSTERDAM

Traduction : MICHEL LUMBARD

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Le festival d'Aix-les-Bains par l'image

UN GRAND ÉVÈNEMENT MUSICAL A AIX-LES-BAINS CREATION DE "L'ORFEO" DE MONTEVERDI

Le programme 1953

En marge du festival de danse à Aix-les-Bains Quelques minutes avec Gisele Casadesus

Le programme 1953

Le Festival International de la Danse d'Aix-les-Bains ORFEO, un très grand spectacle

Accueil très favorable avec mouvements divers de l'Orfeo de Monteverdi

AUTRES IMPRESSIONS sur l'Orfeo de Monteverdi

L'Orfeo de Monteverdi au point final du festival d'Aix-les-Bains

74

Un soleil grec en Savoie « Orfeo »

Toute la DANSE dans les lettres et la MUSIQUE

L'ORFEO DE MONTEVERDI

Présentation révolutionnaire de l'« Orfeo » de Monteverdi avec la musique authentique du maître

MAISON F&M 1953

AIX-LES-BAINS (Aix-les-Bains) et ses environs

DERNIÈRES IMAGES DU FESTIVAL D'AIX-LES-BAINS

Après l'Orfeo

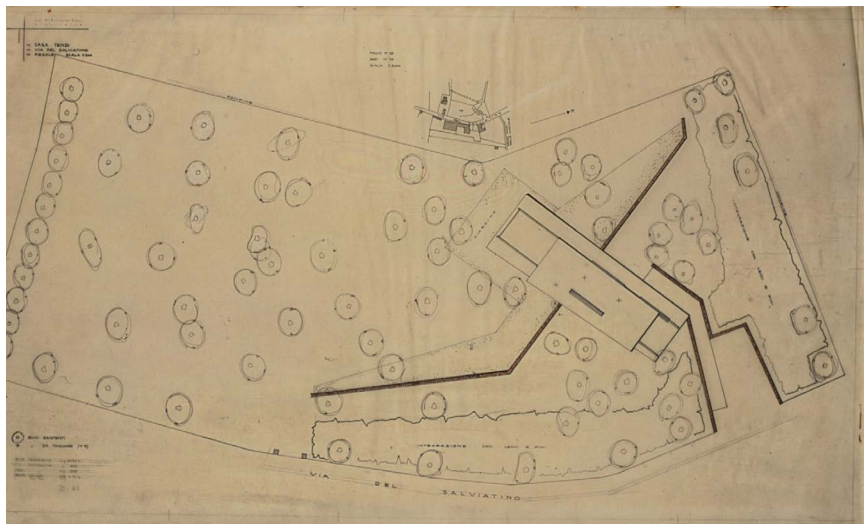
AT LA BIENNE HOTEL PIERRE

75

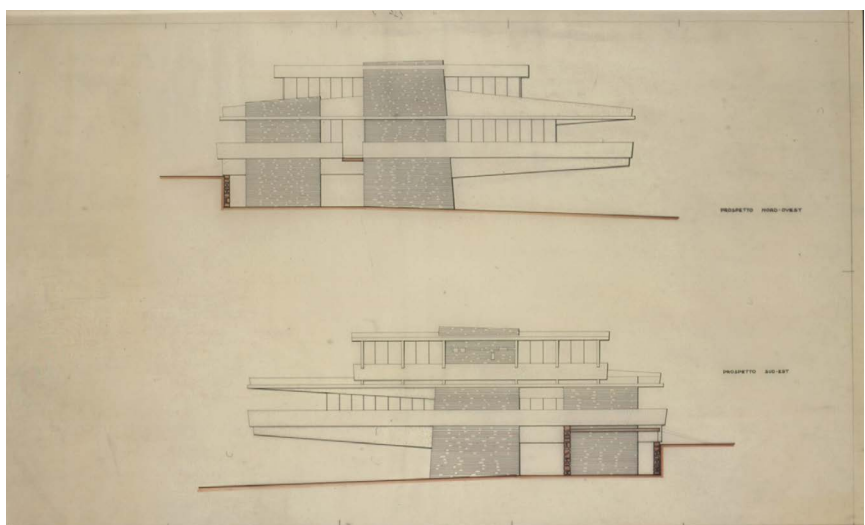
brother Arnaldo Ricci in Ginevra⁴¹. In the same year Ricci was consultant then competitor in the national competition of the "Fondo per l'incremento edilizio" for which Ricci designed the prized project residential center called "Isootto" on the hill of Sesto Fiorentino with Leonardo Savioli, Danilo Santi, and Gianfranco Petrelli [Fig. 49, 50, 51, 52, 53].

One of the essential features of the recent Florence Master Plan is the organic development of the city in the open countryside by means of satellite cores, designed for about three thousand people. The fundamental direction of this development, as has long been felt, is the Florence-Prato line, along which considerable industries and urban clusters have rapidly sprung up. In the program of P.R. implementation, the Castelli area where numerous industrial, commercial, craft and agricultural activities now take place, was chosen at the time by the planners for the inclusion of the new neighborhood. The new housing cores are designed to complement the centers of Quinto in Castello, and between them divided by large areas set aside for free private initiative. The subsidized constructions are mainly arranged along the three lines that connect the collective facilities and form the backbone of the neighborhood.

The area had three sectors with different landscape characteristics: the one to the east, facing Florence (from the dwellings of which there should be a beautiful view), the one to the west facing the plain, and finally the one to the north where the existing church-convent is located, to be enhanced. The clear division between pedestrian and mechanized traffic was planned. By the creation of elevated street levels adapting to the terrain the manufacture of tall buildings with those of lesser height, six types of dwellings are planned, up to the executive plans: twenty paired houses, twenty-six ramp houses, one hundred and two row houses, ninety-six four-story houses of twenty-four dwellings.



49

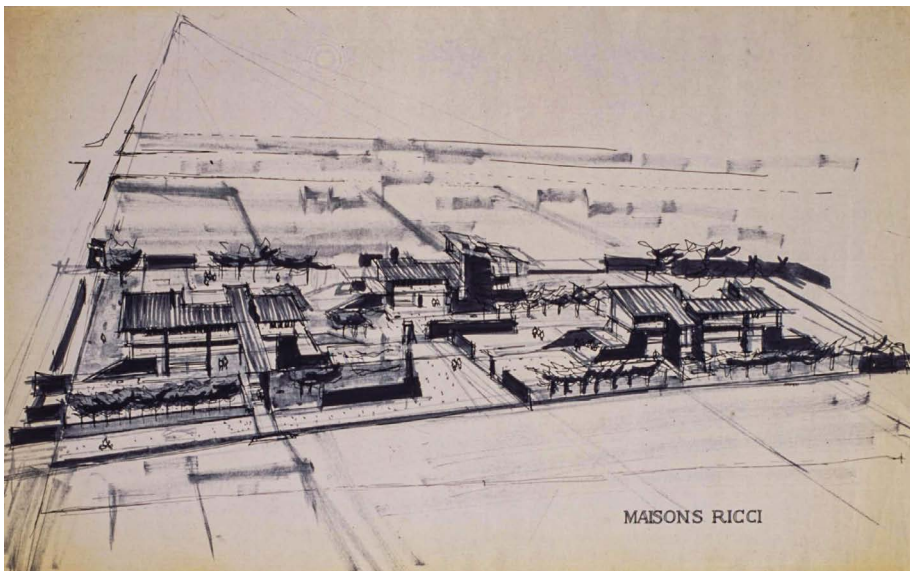


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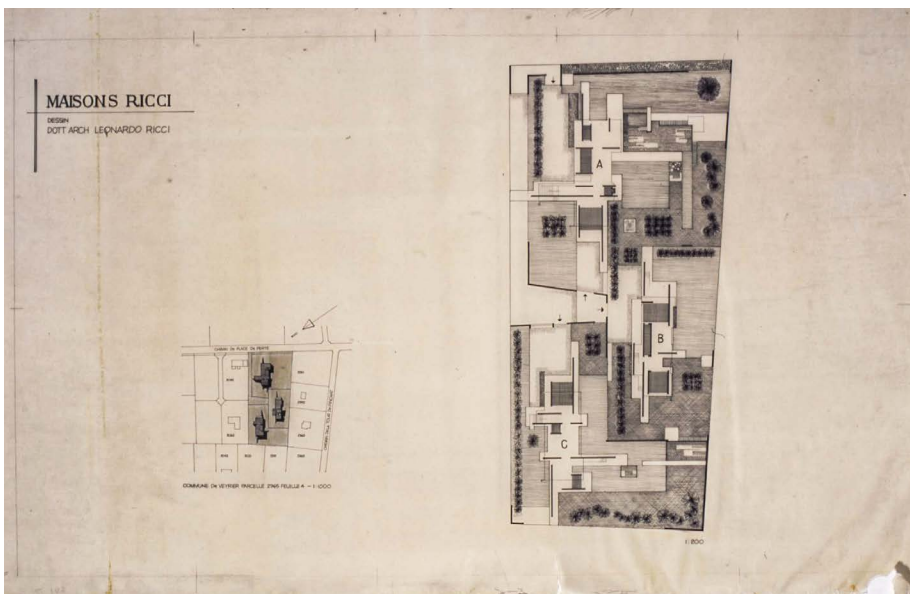
Fig. 49
Project for Casa Tendi,
planivolumetric, scale
1:100, Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 50
Project for Casa Tendi,
north-east and south-west
elevations, Casa Studio
Ricci.

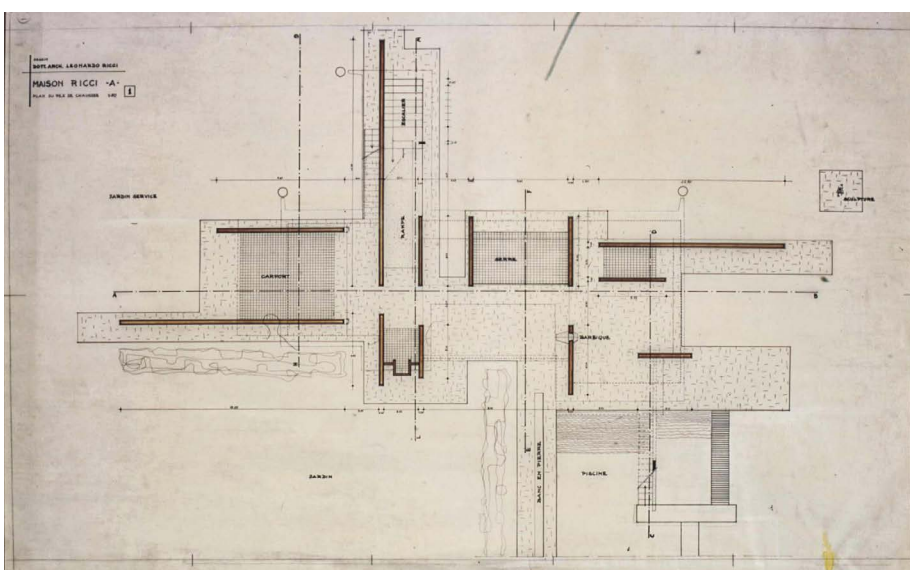
41 Ghia, *La nostra città è tutta la Terra. Leonardo Ricci architetto (1918-1994)*, 107, 109.



51 |



52 |



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Fig. 51

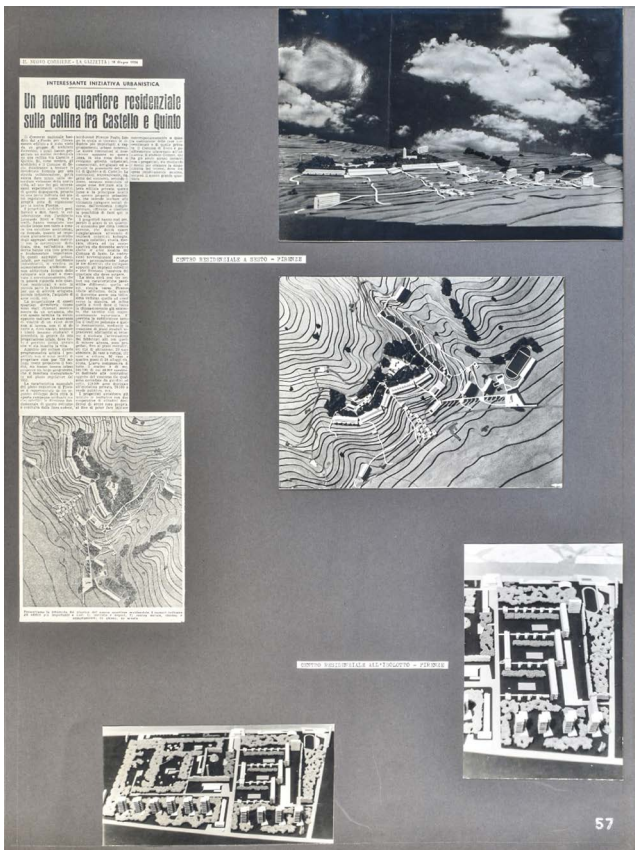
Project for three "Maisons Ricci", general view, B038550S, CSAC.

Fig. 52

Project for three "Maisons Ricci", general plan, scale 1: 200, ink on transparency, B001091S, CSAC.

Fig. 53

Project for Arnaldo Ricci House, plan, scale 1:50, B001089S, CSAC.



The total area of the core was 295,700 sq. m., of which 46,900 were for the constructions of the object of the competition (accompanied by gardens and vegetable gardens), 119,300 areas for private initiatives, 70,100 for public green⁴² [Fig. 54, 55].

As it is easy to infer, the Fifties were a rich period for Leonardo Ricci both in architecture and painting: he took also part in several exhibitions in famous American galleries⁴³. When Leonardo Ricci had come back home from France and had begun the building of the Village of Monterinaldi, in Florence Fiamma Vigo involved Ricci, who was exploring the themes of myths and archetypes, approaching the search for the primitivism of some artistic avant-garde and to Picasso, Schiele, Giacometti, Ernst and the Surrealists he had known in Paris, in her work⁴⁴.

The collaboration between Ricci and Vigo gave birth to the Exhibition “La Cava. Mostra internazionale all’aperto di arti plastiche” [“The cave. International outdoor exhibition of plastic arts”] realized in 1955 in Monterinaldi. The exhibition

42 *Urbanistica*, no.12 (1953); “Un nuovo quartiere residenziale sulla collina fra Castello e Quinto,” *Il Nuovo Corriere - La Gazzetta*, June 10, 1954; *Urbanistica*, no.14 (1954); articles and pictures of the Centro Residenziale all’Isolotto model collected in “Logbook” n. 2 (1952-1956), pages 57-58, Casa Studio Ricci.

43 At the North “La Cienega” Gallery in California (19 January-27 February 1953) and at the International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting in Pittsburg (13 October-18 December 1955).

44 Primitivism as a symbol of an uncorrupted and pure state of nature had led Ricci in those years to make «handprints stretched out, feet walking on cliff or cave bottoms, archetypes of all time, totems and taboos that had survived up to dawn of myths, mostly more pictorially expressed in large or very large formats». Giovanna Uzzani, “Pittura liberata e libera”, in *Leonardo Ricci 100. Scrittura, pittura e architettura. 100 note a margine dell’Anonimo del XX secolo*, eds. Maria Clara Chia, Clementina Ricci and Ugo Dattilo (Firenze: Didapress, 2019), 28.

Fig. 54-55
Plan for the area between Quinto and Castello, articles collected in Logbook no. 1, pages 57, 58.

was the first expression of the synthesis of the arts Ricci pursued for all his life: it represented a meaningful moment of reflection for contemporary art about the relationship between art and the habitat, about that close interaction between architecture and figurative arts, which were melting and working as complementary fundamental expressive elements of a whole. Andréé Bloc took part in the exhibition and decided to install a sculpture in the panoramic point on the terrace of the Ricci Study-Home, right where the dome of Brunelleschi was visible. The idea of the synthesis of the arts was still alive in Ricci's mind since the very beginning of his career, when he worked with other artists, craftsmen and intellectuals attracted by this existential tension. Lionello Venturi supported Ricci and Vigo's initiative, as he highlighted in a letter he addressed to them:

Dear friends, Fiamma Vigo and Leonardo Ricci, I have full faith in you and in your initiative. The unity of taste in painting, sculpture, architecture is today's most imperative need in the art world⁴⁵.

The exhibition was successful as the numerous Italian and foreign articles demonstrated⁴⁶, it hosted sixty-six Italian and foreign artists in the streets of Monterinaldi, in Ricci's studio, in the external walkways of the house and in the large steep garden along the slope. The importance of the company laid in setting up a dialogue between the work and the space in a place that was not originally thought of as an exhibition hall, but which was the right one to compare painting, sculpture, and architecture. The arts had remained separated in their research so far, while the exhibition was melting them: the works merged with stones, wood, perspectives on the house or landscape, glass and, in this way, they demonstrated their foundational role to human life. Ricci wrote on the catalogue of the exhibition that they wanted to prompt the collaboration among artists, architects, and craftsmen, to give them the possibility to exhibit their works and let the visitors buy the most suitable objects for their life⁴⁷. Ricci avoided the function of art as ornament, but he intended it as an expression of life. Therefore, he moved from primitivism and abstract art to explore the informal, by representing matter in all its colors and textures and indulging in the act and strength of the gestural experience⁴⁸.

Between 1954 and 1956 Ricci continued his work in Poggio Gherardo, while in 1955 he won the II prize with Leonardo Savioli, Danilo Santi, Gianfranco Petrelli in the competition for the urban redevelopment and requalification of the San Frediano neighborhood announced by the City of Florence. The group presented a project for the rehabilitation and building rearrangement of the San Frediano

45 "Logbook" n. 2 (1952-1956), page 76, Casa Studio Ricci.

46 Some of them are: Gillo Dorfles, "Una mostra all'aperto di arti plastiche", *Domus*, no. 313 (December, 1955): 61-64; Giovanni Colacicchi, "Un esperimento di grande valore a Firenze. Arte all'aperto", *La Nazione Italiana*, November 1, 1955; "Palast im Steinbruch", *Der Standpunkt*, January 20, 1958. These articles are collected in "Logbook" n. 2 (1952-1956), pages 64-65, 76-77, Casa Studio Ricci.

47 Alessia Lenzi, Susanna Ragionieri, Maria Grazia Messina, Rosalia Manno Tolu, and Loredana Maccabruni, "Fiamma Vigo e 'numero' una vita per l'arte", catalogue of the exhibition (Firenze, Archivio di Stato, 7 October-20 December 2003) (Firenze: Centro Di, 2003).

48 Alberto Busignani, "Cinque pittori fiorentini", *Domus*, no. 360 (November, 1959): 26-28.

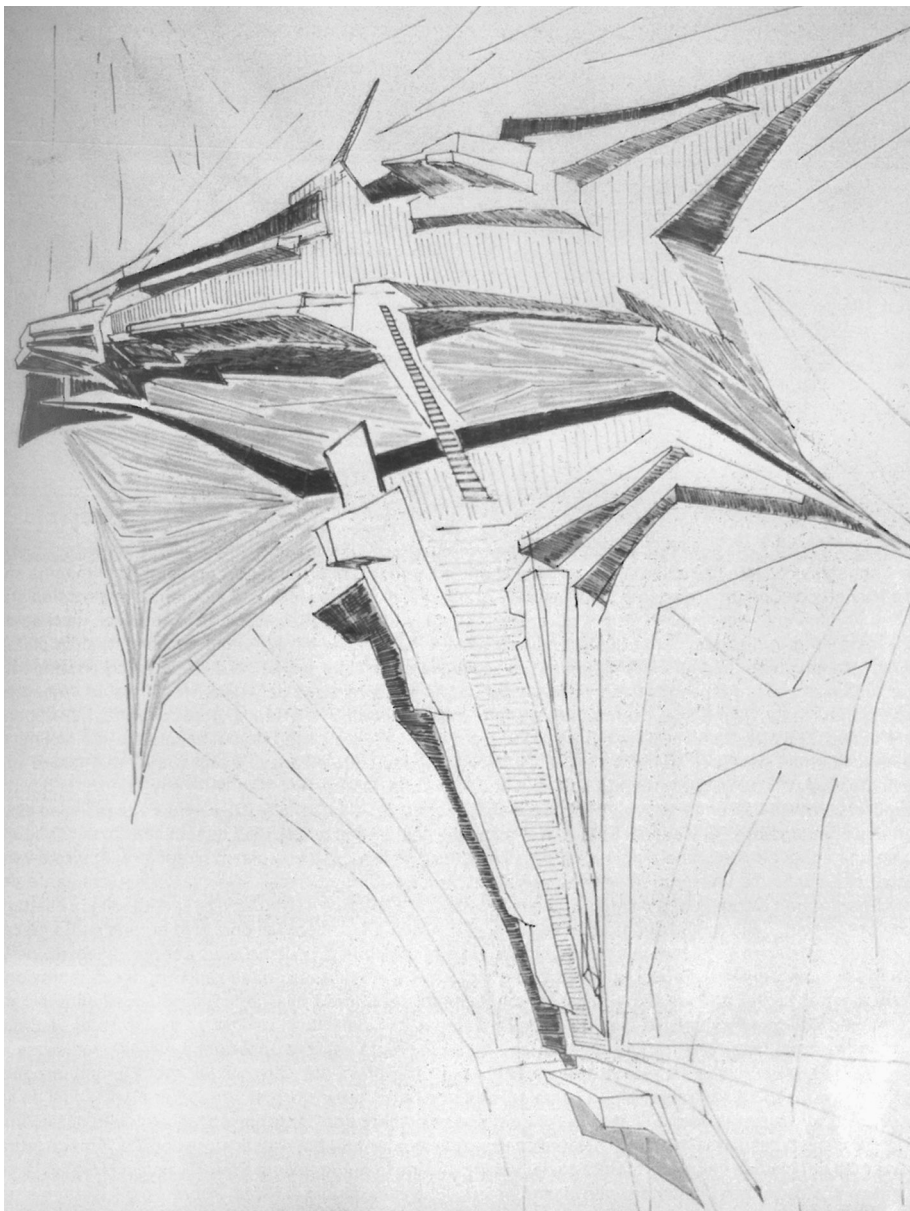
district, which was in a degraded condition, both from the hygienic and housing point of view. It involved an intervention in a vast area of the Oltrarno, divided by the walls adjacent to the San Frediano gate into two qualitatively different zones with respect to historical-architectural pre-existences, urban characterization, and population density, which required differentiated but coordinated solutions. The project received the second prize and much acclaim: particularly appreciated were the proposal to value the oldest area of the neighborhood through a system of pedestrian paths through green areas inside the blocks and the solution of a large public park on the bank of the Arno⁴⁹.

Later, in 1957, Ricci participated in the design of another Florentine district: Sorgane. The popular neighborhood was designed by a group of 37 designers, including Ricci and Savioli, guided by Michelucci.

In Casa Studio Ricci two drawings of the general plan of the CEP district of Sorgane are kept, one by Leonardo Ricci and one by Giovanni Michelucci. Ricci's drawing showed the architect's desire to organically blend city and landscape in an architectural and urban *continuum* consisting in the connection between a lower part of the city on the plain and the upper part where he drew a bastion square with a small building in the center. The two drawings are particularly similar especially in the general layout, but only in a second drawing, Ricci defined the "L"-shaped square of the lower part, surrounding it with long buildings and connecting it with the upper square thanks to a staircase which crosses the wooded belt that separates the two parts. Ricci's general plan is monumental and his organic-expressionist design underlines his intent between reality and utopia [Fig. 56, 57].

In the detailed plan of 1957, the "upper town" was configured as an area for the service structures and an irregular open square that housed the church of the neighborhood. Ricci repeated the fan-shaped structure numerous times both in the design of neighborhoods and private residences, exploiting, in most cases, the natural slope of the land on which his interventions were grafted. According to Corinna Vasič Vatovec, the similarity of the drawings by Ricci and Michelucci was symptomatic of a close collaboration between the two for the Sorgane project, for which the master «aimed to re-evaluate spontaneity, to enhance everyday behavior, to reassign the meaning of a path to the street human and to the square the function of attraction for community assemblies, imagining the equivalent of a "village" nestled in nature». According to Vasič Vatovec, despite the evident collaboration with the master, the fan shaped system of the project, underlined in the design of the square on the hill and on the settlement of the lower part, was certainly to be attributed to Leonardo Ricci, because he used it in a number of projects. That shape basically allowed him to resolve the organic integration between

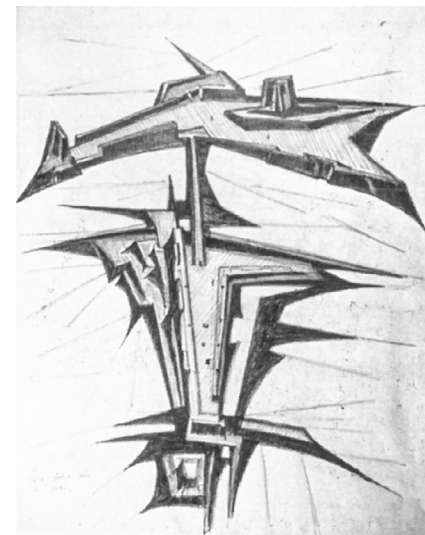
49 Aurelio Cetica, "Concorso per la sistemazione urbanistica del quartiere di San Frediano", *La Regione*, no. 4-5 (1955); 30,40; S.A., "L'esito del concorso per il risanamento di San Frediano," *Il Nuovo Corriere - La Gazzetta*, November 4, 1955; S.A., "Il risanamento di San Frediano," *Nazione Sera*, November 7, 1955; collected in "Logbook" n. 2 (1952-1956), pages 69-70, Casa Studio Ricci; Vasič Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci. Architetto "esistenzialista"*, 30.



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nature and architecture thanks to a gradual expansion of space and a gradual arrangement of the rooms following the natural slope on which Ricci's projects were often grafted, as in the large hall of the community village of Agàpe (1946/1948-expansions 1951), in some houses in the Monterinaldi village, in the villa Fausto Maria Ricci in Beverly Hills (1952), Casa Fattirolli in Poggio Gherardo (Florence, 1954-1956), Casa Perrone (Lecce, 1955), Casa Mann-Borgese (Forte dei Marmi, 1958-1960), and Casa Pleydell-Bouverie (Marciana – Isola d'Elba, 1958-1960).

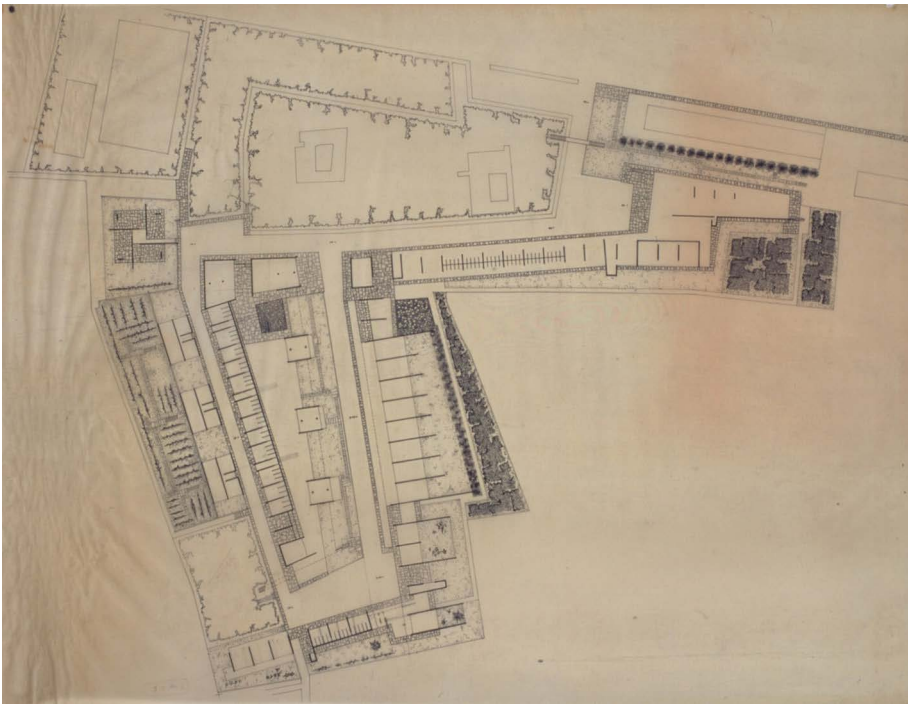
The collaboration between Ricci and Michelucci on the Sorgane project is told by a number of letters kept in Casa Studio Ricci. In those letters Leonardo Ricci explained to his master the designers' group opinions and summed up his view, always centered on the existential value to be preserved between the environment and the buildings, to be found in the relation between architecture and urban design. Moreover, since the project was conceived by a group of



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Fig. 56
Sketch of Sorgane, general plan, Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 57
sketch of Sorgane, general plan titled "Visione plastica delle due piazze" ["Plastic view of the two squares"], Casa Studio Ricci.



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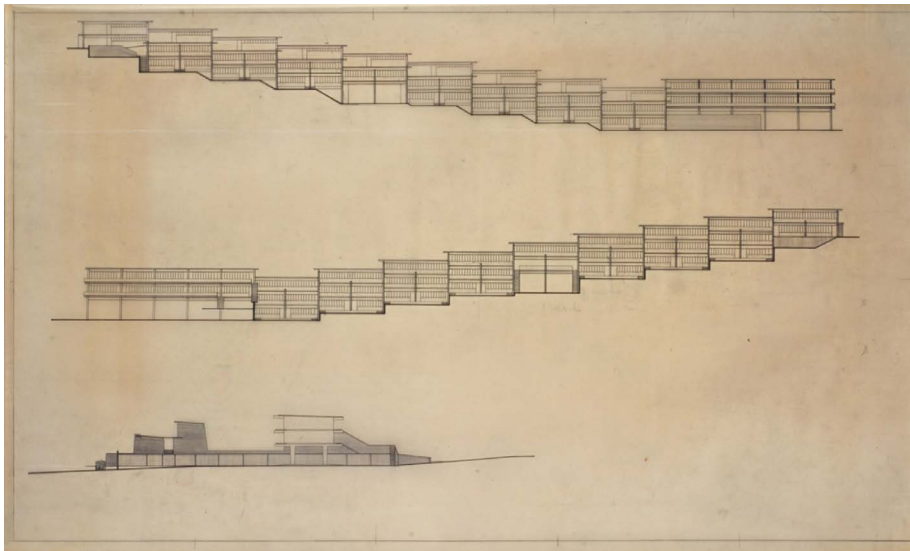
architects and engineers, it was important to Ricci to solve the urban-architectural relation in a unified way. The passage from the master plan to the design of habitat units by the different groups was the most important one and, in Ricci's opinion, each single designer had to consider that homogeneous character as the first design principle⁵⁰ [Fig. 58, 59, 60, 61].

In 1958 Ricci exposed at the collective exhibition of sacred art at the "Chiostro Nuovo" in Florence, a personal exhibition at the Gallery "La Bussola" in Rome, and was invited at the "Rome-NewYork Art Foundation" in Rome.

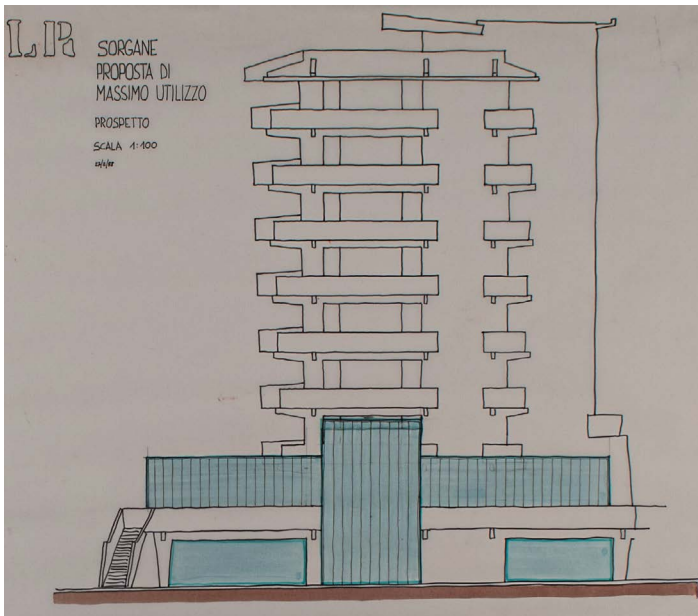
He approached the Gallery "La Bussola", once introduced by Lionello Venturi: «Form and composition enhance the color to reach the expression, which encompasses all the visual elements, and goes beyond revealing a particular

50 Leonardo Ricci's letter to Giovanni Michelucci (undated); "Firenze Ha Bisogno Di Sorgane per Essere Più Bella," *Il Giornale Del Mattino*, February 20, 1957; Giovanni Michelucci, "Una Lettera Del Prof. Giovanni Michelucci. Non Sono Argomenti Validi Quelli Dei Critici Di Sorgane," *Il Giornale Del Mattino*, February 24, 1957; "All'invito Dei Progettisti Di Sorgane Replicano Le Personalità Della Cultura," *La Nazione Italiana*, March 20, 1957; Ottavio Cecchi, "Firenze Indecisa: Verso Est o Verso Ovest?," *Il Contemporaneo*, May 25, 1957; Bruno Zevi, "Sette Accusati a Firenze," *L'Espresso*, June 23, 1957; Giovanni Michelucci, "Sorgane. Quartiere Autosufficiente," *Edilizia Popolare*, no. 16 (June 1957): 8–12; Giovanni Astengo, "Firenze: La Polemica per Sorgane," *Urbanistica*, no. 22 (July 1957): 2–8; "Modifiche al Progetto Di Sorgane in Una Riunione Romana Ad Alto Livello," *La Nazione Italiana*, November 28, 1958; collected in "Logbook" n. 3 (1956-1959), pages 103-108, Casa Studio Ricci; "Non Sono Basate Su Motivi Consistenti Le Opposizioni al Quartiere Di Sorgane," *Il Giornale Del Mattino*, January 29, 1960; "La Polemica Degli Oppositori Di Sorgane è Degenerata nell'equivoco," *Il Giornale Del Mattino*, January 31, 1960; "La Costruzione Del Quartiere Di Sorgane Avrà Inizio a Marzo," *Il Giornale Del Mattino*, February 10, 1960; "Una Serie Di Falsi Ha Affiancato La Campagna per Impedire La Realizzazione Di Sorgane," *Il Giornale Del Mattino*, February 13, 1960; "Logbook" n. 4 (1956-1963), pages 156, 157, Casa Studio Ricci; Bruno Zevi, "Unità d'abitazione a Sorgane, Firenze," *L'Architettura*, no. 14 (157) (November 1968): 546-549; C. Benbow, "Überbauung Sorgane Bei Florenz," *Werk* 56, no. 5 (May 1969): 323-325; Zevi, "Il Quartiere Di Sorgane a Firenze/L'edificio Città Di Leonardo Ricci": 298-301; Bruno Zevi, "Processo al Quartiere Di Sorgane/A Firenze Un Boomerang Di Ritorno," *L'Espresso*, then collected in *Cronache di Architettura vol. II*: 396-401; Raja, "Un Sogno in Città (Intervista a Leonardo Ricci)": 176-182; Carlo Cresti, *Firenze capitale mancata: architettura e città dal piano Poggi a oggi* (Milan: Electa 1995), 339-344; Emanuele Masiello, "Architetture Di Leonardo Ricci in Toscana," *La Nuova Città*, no. 5/6 (1999): 66–84; Fabbrizzi, Macci, and Tramonti, *Opere e progetti di scuola fiorentina, 1968-2008*: 130-143; Vasic Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci. Architetto "esistenzialista"*, 60-65; Giovanni Bartolozzi, "Leonardo Ricci. Un Nuovo Inizio," *Archphoto*, 2014; Sandro Gioli, "Lettera per Leonardo Ricci 100. In Memoria Di Leonardo Ricci," *Cultura Commestibile*, no. 267 (June 16, 2018): 6; Matteo Zambelli, "Buon Compleanno Leonardo (Ricci)"; Silvio Berselli, "Fino al 26 Maggio a Firenze Una Mostra Presenta, Con Materiali in Gran Parte Inediti, Le Opere Dell'architetto Che Amava Definirsi Un 'Anonimo Del XX Secolo'".

Fig. 58
Sorgane, general plan,
B038589S, CSAC.



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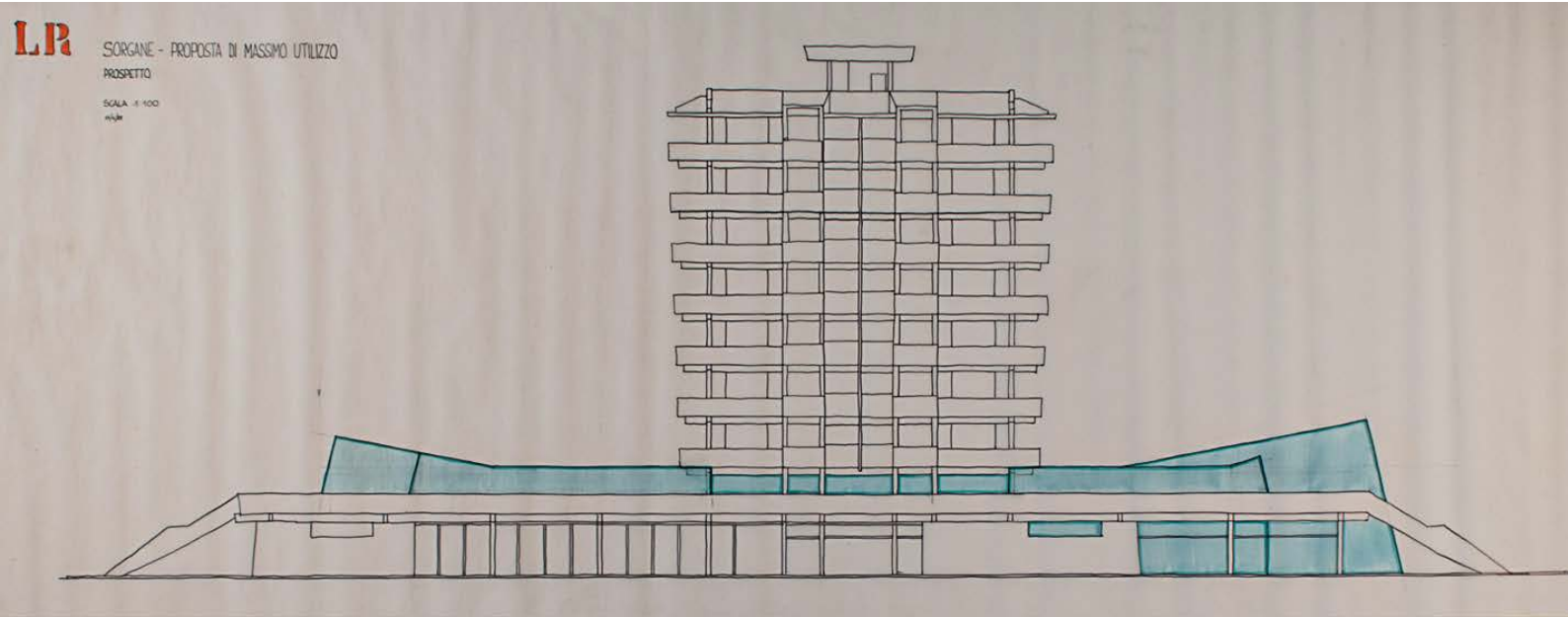


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Fig. 59
Sorgane, Building type
A, elevations, B038590S,
CSAC.

Fig. 60
"Sorgane, purpose for a
maximum use", elevation,
scale 1:100, Casa Studio
Ricci.

Fig. 61
"Sorgane, purpose for a
maximum use", elevation,
scale 1:100, Casa Studio
Ricci.



tension. Tension is the reason for the work, the vitality itself, the aspiration to investigate the world through painting⁵¹». The same tension that represented the soul of Ricci's informal painting was what most characterized Ricci's paintings of the last half of the 1950s and it indicated his "cultured" quality and the possibility of communicating with the other painters⁵².

In 1959 Ricci's exhibitions in Italy were: "Prima Mostra Regionale d'Arte Toscana", "Mostra di pittura di gruppo" alla "Galleria Michaud", "Pittori astratti fiorentini" alla "Galleria Michaud" (1959-1960), all in Florence, and the "Esposizione di pittura" al "Festival dei due mondi" in Spoleto, while in 1960 Ricci exposed at Trabia Gallery in New York (29 March-30 April 1960). Besides, Ricci was in the United States in 1959 when he was entrusted of the project for the Goti Spinning Factory in Campi Bisenzio. He was Boemis visiting professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, when Nazareno Goti entrusted Ricci the project, then carried out with the help of Enzo Trapani and Fabrizio Milanese.

The Goti factory was an industrial plant of textile products that lies between Prato and Campi Bisenzio in Tuscany. In this project, the monumental ambitions of the imposing exposed structures of the brutalist district of Sorgane were announced, which heralded the macrostructural projects then studied and built by Leonardo Ricci in the United States. In the Goti factory the power of the structures left exposed was manifested above all in the interiors.

The project started in October 1959, when Leonardo Ricci was entrusted by the industrialist Nazareno Goti, who wanted to build a large yarn factory on the state road to Prato, leaving to the architect a complete freedom in the design, but only setting him the economic limit of the usual costs of an industrial warehouse and the goal of realizing a beautiful working space. Leonardo Ricci carried out the brilliant project with the collaboration of the engineer Enzo Trapani and the architect Fabrizio Milanese, who took care of the interior design. The factory was ready in 1960. The project program integrated various functions such as residences for workers, production and commercial spaces. The system designed by Leonardo Ricci, characterized by a broken line roof and tricuspid reinforced concrete support pillars, was aimed at favoring, even in this case, the continuity of space and the movement of the workers in their different job activities at all levels. The intent of the architect was to oppose the man-machine binomial, widespread in industrialized society, to re-propose a new space in which machines and men coexisted in balance, trying to overcome the model of the shed covered with a brick vault. Ricci used local stone, reinforced concrete and glass to create a large central hall intended for industrial work to which a stairwell with a glass tower with brise soleil was added

51 Giornali di bordo – "Logbook" n. 3 (1956-1959), page 102, Casa Studio Ricci.

52 Alberto Busignani, "Cinque pittori fiorentini", *Domus*, no. 360 (November, 1959): 26-28. The five painters are Berti, Bueno, Loffredo, Native and Ricci. For Ricci's painting, Busignani quoted Lionello Venturi's words on "tension", and read it in function of the work of the other artists: all five, according to the author, were driven by an undisputed vitality but also by a certain rigor, "a true norm of meditation and common expression in a vaulted work which is substantially original and individually different".

and two lateral bodies were inserted into the main rectangular compartment with warehouses and service spaces. The project was completed without the residential tower envisaged by Ricci's project. According to the chronicles of the time, Ricci's factory was an industrial building «very different from the hundred and one hundred spinning mills and weaving mills already scattered throughout the territory of the Municipality of Prato». The importance of Ricci's project and the beauty of the factory, in its subdued tones in the gray of the concrete and in the black of the large luminous windows' frames, laid in the spatial quality achieved, in which the emerging productive capacity of the Prato textile industry was enhanced and constituted an important factor in the implementation of the work. To Ricci, the commission of the factory marked a turning point in his design since he had mainly dealt with villas and residential houses so far. The building occupied 2600 square meters and a volume of 28,600 cubic meters. It included a single main hall, a very large room that housed all the activities of the factory equipped with a bridge placed at half of the total height, used to house machinery and men.

The cost of the "Y" pillars, inspired by the "tree" reinforced concrete pillars firstly conceived by Michelucci, was higher than that of normal pillars, so the architect decided to use them for a room that was twice as high as a usual shed and built the bridge to increase the available working surface (11 meters wide and 67 meters long). The pillars were all inclined according to the static requirement: they separated into three branches, one supporting the cantilever-terrace shelf, two supporting the bridge beams and extending to support the gables of the roof. The pillars were the most characteristic elements in the single and uniform main room.

I wanted to transform the classic pillar so as to make it a free thing, [...] it was the first time I had a factory problem and I wanted to interpret the man-machine relationship, which so far I have seen expressed in a symbolic way. The terms of the natural man-machine relationship, a relationship that was as natural as that of the individual in front of his furniture, his home, and I tried to restore a balance. Man no longer lost in front of the machine, but contained like her in a single living space⁵³.

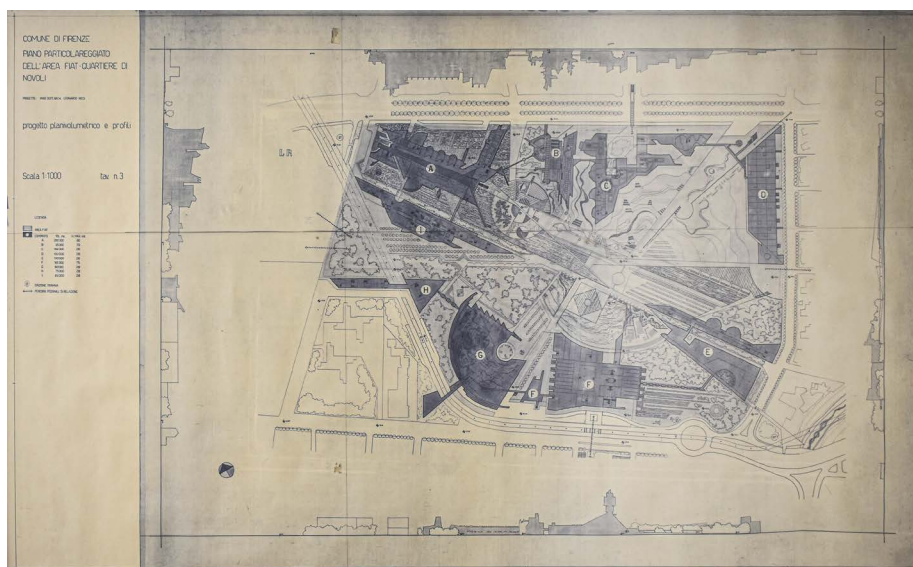
Leonardo Ricci's project, in addition to solving economic and social issues, managed to make space issues facilitate the production process. Therefore, the main activity of the company, the industrial process, was simplified by a correct combination of vertical and horizontal paths in order to minimize the time for workers to move from one work area to another and the industrial cycle. The placement of the managers' or employees' offices, two apartments for workers, rest rooms and changing rooms were designed on one side of the main body. The loading points and the warehouses were perpendicularly inserted to the main body in correspondence of the spaces used at the end of the industrial cycle, while

53 Lattes, Wanda. "Perché è nata la fabbrica "bella" *Il Giornale del Mattino*, July 31, 1960.

the spinning department mirrored the volume of the warehouses on the opposite side⁵⁴.

The 1960s were a meaningful decade for Ricci, that began with the project for the Fitzgerald House in Fiesole (1960), never realized. Those years were permeated by the appointment of the detail plan for the Novoli area of the General Urban Plan of Florence. Ricci was the leader of the group composed of Dusan Vasić, Fabrizio Milanese, Ernesto Trapani. In 1962 the City of Florence instructed Bruno Zevi to oversee the drafting of the Detailed Plan for the Novoli Area, and Leonardo Ricci was convened along with his mentor Giovanni Michelucci, precisely entrusted with the Palace of Justice project, and twelve other leading architects. In addition to an initial meeting, the draft design was refined during three workshops at the end of which a plan for the Palace of Justice was agreed upon. Various misunderstandings and unpleasant events lead to the dissolution of the commission of architects and the project is entrusted to Leonardo Ricci, then blocked by political issues and realized after the architect's death with numerous variants.

The Palace of Justice is set in an eighteen-hectare park connected to new infrastructure and buildings. It is proposed to solve the integration problems of the Novoli area and to become a driving force for a suburban area of Florence inserted in an urban park. Ricci had planned to subdivide the large central green lung with water mirrors initially thought by the group of architects to achieve a diffuse park, and a diagonal axis described by the body of the Palace of Justice emphasized by an alternative driveway, to relieve traffic, and a settlement system [Fig. 62, 63, 64].



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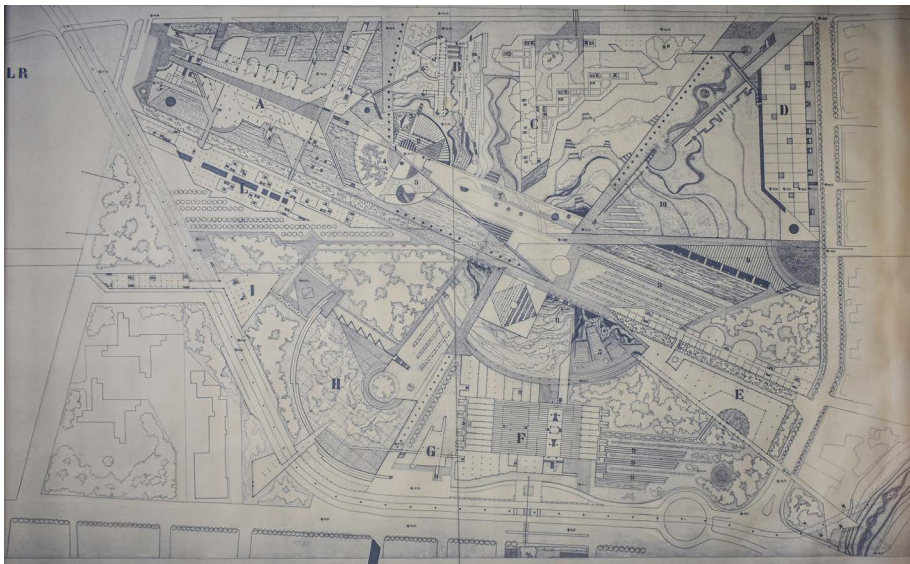
The signals of this shift to a bigger scale had always been present in Ricci's work—one only needs to think of certain episodes in the Sorgane neighborhood in Florence (1962); however, it was since the 1970s that this tendency

54 Ricci, Leonardo. "Space in Architecture: the visual image of environment," *Journal of University of Manchester Architectural and Planning Society*, no. 7 (1956): 7-11; Lattes, Wanda. "Perché è nata la fabbrica "bella", *Il Giornale del Mattino*, July 31, 1960; Ricci, Leonardo. *Anonymous (XX century)*. New York: George Braziller, 1962; Vasic Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci. Architetto "esistenzialista"*, 38; Ilaria Cattabriga, "Leonardo Ricci and the Project for the 'Man-Machine Space': the Goti Factory (1959)", *Histories of Postwar Architecture*, no. 9 (June 2021): 68-86; Ilaria Cattabriga, "Leonardo Ricci e il progetto dello spazio uomo-macchina: Fabbrica Goti (1959)", proceedings of the conference "Archivia, lezioni dagli archivi", Dipartimento di Architettura, Università di Firenze, May 12, 2021 (Florence: Didapress, 2023). The pictures of the Goti Spinning Factory model are collected in "Logbook" no. 4, (1956-1963), page 167, Casa Studio Ricci. See also the Archival Source on the Goti Factory published in *Histories of Postwar Architecture*, no. 9 (June 2021): 65-67.

Fig. 61
Plan for the Novoli Area,
planivolumetric and, elevation,
scale 1:1000, Casa
Studio Ricci.



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had become a fixed trait. Approaching the 1980s, the gigantism was often accompanied by a certain isolation of the construction bodies, which did not occur in Ricci's previous megastructure projects, which aimed to the construction of a single unity, complicated by endless sequences of volumes just like the assignments that Ricci gave to the students of his courses at the University of Florence, or at the American universities where he was visiting professor, or for the competition project for the restoration of the Fortezza da Basso (1967)⁵⁵.

55 Francesco Bandini, *Progetti per l'area direzionale di Firenze: concorso nazionale per la progettazione planivolumetrica di un'area direzionale situata sul territorio fiorentino all'interno dell'area centrale metropolitana*. (Florence: Centro Di, 1978); Giuseppe Campos Venuti, Pierluigi Costa, Luciano Piazza, Odoardo Reali, *Firenze. Per una urbanistica della qualità. Progetto preliminare di piano regolatore 1985* (Venice: Marsilio, 1985); "Il gran rifiuto di Michelucci. Perché non vuole progettare il nuovo palazzo di giustizia," *Il Corriere di Firenze*, December 20, 1987; Paolo Baldeschi, "Leonardo Ricci e il progetto del Palazzo di Giustizia di Firenze," *Dossier di urbanistica e cultura del territorio*, no. 16 (December 1991): 4-13; Leonardo Ricci, "Progetto per il Palazzo di Giustizia sull'area Fiat a Novoli, Firenze," *Zodiac*, no. 5 (1991): 203.

Fig. 63
Plan for the Novoli Area,
territorial framing, Casa
Studio Ricci.

Fig. 64
Plan for the Novoli Area,
general plan, Casa Studio
Ricci.

The year 1963 saw the downsizing of the plan for Sorgane, the so-called "Sogane Ridotto", by the group headed by Ricci and composed of Antonio Canali, Luigi Cencetti, Fabrizio Milanese, Gianfranco Petrelli, Ernesto Trapani, Ferdinando Poggi and Leonardo Savioli. By studying the archival documents, we can draw a detailed report of the buildings to be designed in chronological order :

- 1962-72: building "Ricci A" (via Enrico De Nicola n. 11)
- 1963-72: building "Ricci B" (via Enrico De Nicola n. 2)
- 1964-78: building "Ricci D" o "La Nave" (via Tagliamento n. 3-17)
- 1964-82: building "Ricci C" (via Enrico De Nicola n. 1-3)
- 1964-81: building "Ricci E" (via Tagliamento n. 27)
- 1961-87: building "Ricci F" o "Casa Torre" (via Livenza n. 3-5)

Moreover, during the evolution of the Sorgane neighborhood, in 1964 Ricci was entrusted of the set up for the exhibition titled "L'espressionismo: pittura, scultura, architettura" in Palazzo Strozzi he completed thanks to Fabrizio Milanese as coordinator of the works.

In 1964, Expressionism was the theme of the *Maggio Fiorentino* and many events were organized in which various artistic disciplines intervened together including theater, music and art. Ricci chose for the exhibition at Palazzo Strozzi to make the expressionist works "scream" in a silent and balanced Renaissance palace. Therefore, he refused the ideas of designing a new architecture and a new expensive set up in the ancient Florentine palace, or of simply laying out pictures and drawings on the walls, trusting in the overwhelming force of colors and shapes, in their ability to dominate the static cavities of the rooms, because he had to enhance the pictures and their meaning first. Architecture could only sprout from this need and from the due to serve painting⁵⁶.

In painting the Informal manifested the refusal of predetermined formal schemes and this expression of painting was experienced by Ricci and became subject of the volume *Opera Aperta* by Umberto Eco. Bruno Zevi explained Ricci's "informal" attitude towards painting and architecture dealing with the architect's set up of the Expressionism Exhibition at Palazzo Strozzi in Florence (1964): he defined it an informal work of art itself, overcoming the boundaries of the arts by melting architecture and sculpture. Ricci's set-up of the exhibition "Espressionismo: pittura scultura architettura" ["Expressionism: painting, sculpture architecture"], then awarded with the "Fiorino d'Oro" in the same year, took shape in the wake of the experiments conducted by Friedrich Kiesler and André Bloc, spread also in Florence in the Sixties. The Expressionism exhibition in Florence was supervised by Palma Bucarelli for the figurative part, and by Giovanni Klaus Koenig for the architectural one, it was realized in the climate of re-evaluation of the power of exhibitions encouraged by Carlo Ludovico

56 Giovanni Bartolozzi, "Allestitimenti come concentrazioni di materia", in *Leonardo Ricci 100. Scrittura, pittura e architettura*, 161-165.

Ragghianti since the immediate post-war period. Ragghianti had studied the importance of the exhibitions as mediators between public and museum, as a response to the aesthetic education of the public thanks to their “discursive power”. The exhibition was in fact for Ragghianti a device that let the work to express itself at its best thanks also to the combinations with other works that allowed it to be read as a system with the text of the history of art.

According to Bruno Zevi, Ricci thought of an “archi-sculpture”: a series of winding walls, covered with rough plaster, dense with cracks, on which the names of the artists were written in red, freehand and without fear of draining. It constituted a shell for content of the exhibition, in dialectical contrast with the ancient environment⁵⁷. The rooms of Palazzo Strozzi however remained in view of the spectator, the vaults rebalanced and framed the winding path designed by Ricci⁵⁸.

Ricci’s project for the Expressionism exhibition was a strong example of architecture free from lexical or compositive rules and freed from the set-up concept of placing the paintings in a wall layout, they were displayed without caring distances, proportions, regular distribution, but they crowded portions of panels, they were isolated sometimes and sometimes they stood out against the visitor, according to the message they conveyed.

In the architectural section the landscape images of Bruno Taut followed the designs for suspended cathedrals of Paul Giesch and Carl Krayl, the constructions of the Luckhardt brothers, Gropius, Hans Poelzig, a truly excessive series of sketches by Hermann Finsterlin. The famous Einstein tower in Potsdam, by Erich Mendelsohn, was documented by original slides and the exhibition closed with Hans Scharoun’s Berlin Philharmonie of which some extraordinary drawings were exhibited. Those expressionist architectures were the symbol of the Twenties’ idea to escape from reality as far as form completely dissolved.

The set up invented by Ricci both for the painting and for the architecture sections was informal itself, an informal wall changing dimensions, directions and height along the path arranged for the audience who could follow the astonishing exhibition while becoming part of the informal walking. In that project Ricci melted two worlds and created a break between them: the Renaissance world with man as center of the universe and the expressionist man and artist who tried to escape reality and reach a metaphysical, obsessive, and evasive reality. The experiment was difficult because the project had to combine two different kinds of spaces: the measured, self-restrained and refined space of Palazzo Strozzi and the dynamic, action, the daily space of Expressionism, the quiet vaults of the historical palace and the pain, anxiety and screams of those painters. The spatial problem was only the first of a list of four main problems the design should have solved: the second problem was to quadruple the number of square meters needed for such a large number of works to be exhibited, the third problem was to allow the comparison

57 Bruno Zevi, “Mostra dell’Espressionismo/temporalità antilessicale e sdegno materico”, *L’Espresso*, then collected in *Cronache di Architettura vol. V*, (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1971), 318-321.

58 Zevi, “Mostra dell’Espressionismo”, 318-319.

between the different results achieved by the artists, who despite coming from the same historical and cultural background, had developed different expressions and treatments of problems from distant angles and periods. The fourth problem consisted in bringing back into a museum a painting that was not born for museums but as a protest to denounce the drama of a historical moment.

In his report Ricci explained his design choices which moved from these problems. He decided to leave the Renaissance palace walls free from every possible duty as if they were «spectators of the painters' drama⁵⁹». In the set-up he decided to build a continuous sculpture crossing the rooms of the palace which would have allowed a journey through both the single stories of each author and the collective artistic experience of Expressionism. That long and jagged path let all the works to be displayed and succeeded in going with the visitor from the very beginnings of Expressionism, across the different single authors' experiences to the last expressions of the movement, when it was nearly becoming an academic protest.

The reference Ricci followed to design that kind of space was the staging of an exhibition arranged by the expressionist painters themselves in which they decided to build simple walls in bricks painted in white to exhibit their works. Therefore, Ricci decided to build white walls for them inside Palazzo Strozzi trying to be one of them and imagine what those artists would have chosen for the set-up of their works⁶⁰. Following the path, the spaces fitted both to the quality of the works of the artists and to the different expressions, more or less strong, of the pain and anguish of the artists, until they reached spaces such as the one set up for Klee and Kandinsky, Ricci's favorite piece of the exhibition where a new world was taking shape⁶¹. In some points of the path there were the rooms of the drawings and graphics to let the visitors relax and admire the most famous works, suitable for a more daily distribution. The architectural section was a minor part of the exhibition that hosted the architects' drawings explaining the birth of some famous works of expressionist architecture. The drawings were preferred to the pictures because more exhaustive of the process of birth of the buildings, the pictures instead were reproduced by means of a projector⁶².

Ricci's work as curator and designer of the exhibition was appreciated by Bruno Zevi, who wrote a review for *L'Espresso*, Palma Bucarelli and Giulio Carlo Argan, who took part in the organizing committee, but it was criticized by Nello Ponente⁶³, whose criticism was sent by the Director of Palazzo Strozzi to Leonardo Ricci. Ricci decided to answer all his disapprovals in a letter to the

59 Leonardo Ricci, "Una mostra dell'espressionismo a Palazzo Strozzi", report by the author, 1, then published in the exhibition catalogue, Casa Studio Ricci.

60 In his report, Leonardo Ricci remembered that during the exhibition, the painter Rolf's wife told him about the same exhibition he took inspiration from, and that this event gave him the confirmation of having done a good work for the set up. Leonardo Ricci, "Una mostra dell'espressionismo a Palazzo Strozzi", report by the author, 2.

61 Leonardo Ricci, letter to the Director of Palazzo Strozzi replying to Nello Ponente, kept in Casa Studio Ricci, 1.

62 Leonardo Ricci, "Una mostra dell'espressionismo a Palazzo Strozzi".

63 Art critic and historian (Velletri 1925 - Rome 1981); student of Lionello Venturi, professor of contemporary art history (1974) at the university of Rome. Author of numerous essays and monographs on problems and exponents of contemporary art: *Tendances contemporaines* (1960); *Paul Klee* (1960); *Modigliani* (1967); *Magnelli* (1973); *Paul Cézanne* (1979). Source: <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/nello-ponente/> (last accessed May 26, 2020).

Director attached to his report⁶⁴. In Italy, all art galleries were turning into cultural institutions where the exhibition rooms could work with libraries, laboratories, rest rooms and further cultural organisms to allow everyone to visit museums and temporary exhibitions. Therefore, Ricci specified to the Director that the aim was to avoid the common idea of museums as “temples of the arts” separated from men, as they exposed human life and the human works of art⁶⁵.

The staging of the Expressionism exhibition was a clear example of architectural sculpture, of the influences and melting of the arts. Bruno Zevi introduced Ricci's work dealing with the “sculpture à habiter”, that was, a new architecture born from the fusion with sculpture, which produced new non-boxlike living spaces. The continuous sculpture was an autonomous space containing the world of Expressionism⁶⁶. At a time when plastic research was living its crisis and architects seemed unimaginative, perhaps a new impulse could have sprung from spontaneous architecture, as the exhibition *Architecture Without Architects* shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York from November 9, 1964 to February 7, 1965, denounced⁶⁷, and from the union of architecture and sculpture. The crisis of Rationalism brought the rediscovery of artists such as Antoni Gaudì, of the visions of Hermann Finsterlin, Frederick J. Kiesler's *Continuous House* and *Universal Theater*, that became examples to be explored, but, above all, of the work of André Bloc which definitively raised the problem from the magazines *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* and *Aujourd'hui*⁶⁸.

64 Leonardo Ricci, letter to the Director of Palazzo Strozzi replying to Nello Ponente, Casa Studio Ricci, then published Leonardo Ricci, “Risponde Leonardo Ricci”, *Marcatré*, no. 8-9-10 (1964).

65 Leonardo Ricci, letter to the Director of Palazzo Strozzi replying to Nello Ponente, Casa Studio Ricci.

66 To Bruno Zevi «the real architecture [was] not the product of a few intellectuals, but the fruit of spontaneous activity, of the common heritage of a whole people and [developed] under the influence of collective experiences. [...] As the abstract movement [followed] the informal movement, an industrialized, standardized and increasingly inhuman architecture [reacted] by shaking off the entire baggage of rationalist rigor». Bruno Zevi, “Sculpture à habiter/In Francia si torna alle caverne”, *L'Espresso*, then collected in *Cronache di Architettura vol. XII*, (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1970), 276. In Zevi's opinion, the future of the new ideas of France Charles Letrosne in Vincennes, Frei and Hunziker in Switzerland, Herbert Goldman in California, Mathias Goeritz in Mexico, Giovanni Michelucci in the Church of S. Giovanni Battista, and Leonardo Ricci with the project for the integrated city was unknown and they risked falling into folklore and the vernacular. It was yet a way to revive architecture, which nevertheless took new impulse from this movement, which emerged from sculpture and denounced how modern architecture, bought by neo-capitalism, betrayed its original contents and the space research. What was important was that it suggested new solutions based on light, scale ratios and visual dimensions. Bruno Zevi, “Sculpture à habiter”, 274-277.

67 «[...] The ‘architecture without architects’ was rediscovered with Bernard Rudofsky set up for the large exhibition of exotic buildings titled *Architecture Without Architects* shown at the Museum of Modern Art in New York from November 9, 1964 to February 7, 1965. The exhibition was financed by the John Simone Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and by the Ford Foundation, which helped to finance the research on the project by awarding fellowships to the director of the exhibition for a study of non-formal, non-classified architecture. The exhibition was also possible thanks to the help of the architects Walter Gropius, Pietro Belluschi, José Luis Sert, Richard Neutra, Gio Ponti and Kenzo Tange». Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture without Architects: An Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture* (Museum of Modern Art: New York, 1964), acknowledgements.

68 Frederick J. Kiesler designed the project for the Endless House dealing with the study of the problem of living which was not a simple physiological function to be fulfilled, but rather an art whose rules had to be continually sought and understood. “Man was in fact a complex entity, biological, psychological and socio-political which had to regain the general and complex sense of living through creativity (...)”. It was according to these principles that the fluid forms and volumes of his project were freely combined in search of a spatial continuity that precisely represented the idea of the Endless Space. The space was dynamic and flew inside following the unfolding of human action. The distinction between the floor, walls and ceiling was confused creating a flexible and organic environment.

André Bloc produced from 1962 to 1966 several Sculpture habitacles. This research marked the evolution of the sculptor from geometric abstraction towards free forms. Architecture and sculpture mixed in organic imbrications, staggered to form different levels and fortunes, opening the visual unity of form to a physical and space-time experience, such as Kiesler's Endless house. Bloc allowed light and air to penetrate through simple and complex paths, conveying in the habit of sculpture a continuity of the visual and internal exterior through a system of interpenetration of space, thus multiplying relationships, contrasts, and changes in volume. Mélanie Fortier, “André Bloc” (Centre-Val de Loire: FRAC Architecture Sculpture, 2016).

Informal architecture did not exist and it would have been impossible, although the architects remained influenced by reviving the surfaces, shaping them, and giving them a material aspect: smooth, pasty, lumpy. However, it was a matter of releasing the buildings from a stereometric rigor. The informal in architecture could not be intended as in painting, where the separation of the project and the execution was denied: in architecture they were separated facts, and no one could have melted them⁶⁹.

In the Spring of 1965, from March 6 to May 2, the first edition of the exhibition "La Casa Abitata: biennale degli interni di oggi" was inaugurated. The organizing committee formed by Giovanni Michelucci, in the role of president, Domenico Benini, Tommaso Ferraris and Pierluigi Spadolini, proposed as main exhibition theme the interior living of a house, since the subject was increasingly moving away from the interests of architecture and urban planning, more concentrated on the metropolitan dimension rather than on the private life of man and on the human «right to sociality, to ethics, to the need for community factors⁷⁰». The theme of living the inside of a house and its possible configurations had to be reexamined in function of the mass culture, of the industrial and technological society⁷¹. Some of the most qualified Italian architects were called to answer, including Leonardo Ricci, Leonardo Savioli, Giovanni Bassi, Carlo De Carli⁷², Achille e Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Marco Zanuso, Angelo Mangiarotti, Luigi Moretti, Vico Magistretti, Edoardo Gellner, Eduardo Vittoria, Giovanni Bassi, Gregotti Meneghetti Stoppino. They were not asked to provide definite solutions but to think and propose solutions that would have welcomed the spontaneous flow of family life and its continuous change. The interior architecture proposals had to host the spontaneous and autonomous variability and modification that reflected the trend of psychological, social and economic changes of the inhabitants of an average house. Besides, the house could be defined as "inhabited" when it allowed the "sentimental stratification" of life. The proposals could concern possible interventions on pre-established spaces or new integrated spaces, that were «constituting an "open formativity", capable of reciprocal, lively and usable

69 Umberto Eco, *Opera Aperta*, (Milano: Bompiani, 1962); Lara-Vinca Masini, "A Firenze la mostra dell'Espressionismo," *Domus*, no. 416 (1964); Leonardo Ricci, "Risponde Leonardo Ricci," *Marcatre*, no. 8-9-10 (1964), then published in HPA no.9 with the title "A Sculpture that Allows a Journey through Expressionism": a Reply to Nello Ponente", pages 91-94; Marisa Volpi and Giovanni Klaus Koenig, eds., *L'espressionismo: pittura, scultura, architettura: mostra in Palazzo Strozzi: Firenze, maggio-giugno 1964*, catalogue of the exhibition (Florence: Vallecchi, 1964); Leonardo Ricci, "Una mostra dell'espressionismo a Palazzo Strozzi," report by the author, 1, then published in the exhibition catalogue: *L'espressionismo: pittura, scultura, architettura: mostra in Palazzo Strozzi: Firenze, maggio-giugno 1964*, catalogue of the exhibition (Florence: Vallecchi, 1964); Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti, "Le rassegne d'arte in Italia"; *Critica d'Arte*, no. 69 (1965): 65-70; Bruno Zevi, "Mostra dell'Espressionismo/temporalità antilessicale e sdegno materico," *L'Espresso*, then collected in *Cronache di Architettura*, vol. V, (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1971): 318-321; Vasič Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci. Architetto "esistenzialista"*, 38; Giovanni Bartolozzi, "Allestimenti come concentrazioni di materia," in *Leonardo Ricci 100. Scrittura, pittura e architettura*, edited by Maria Clara Ghia, Clementina Ricci, and Ugo Dattilo (Firenze: Didapress. Department of Architecture, Università degli Studi di Firenze, 2019): 161-165. Some of the most beautiful drawings by Ricci for the Expressionism exhibition were published in HPA issue no. 9, in the archival sheet titled "Staging of 'Espressionismo: pittura scultura architettura'", pages 89-90.

70 Mario Miccinesi, "Una mostra a Firenze: La Casa Abitata", *Rivista dell'arredamento*, no. 130 (1965): 9-29.

71 Miccinesi, "Una mostra a Firenze: La Casa Abitata", 10.

72 Carlo De Carli designed the introductory hall of the exhibition dedicated to the "Liberty" and to the living solutions it suggested for the contemporary living.

relationship between the various elements that [made] up the house⁷³». If the first edition of the exhibition aimed at formulating those proposals, the second one had to focus on the relations.

Giovanni Michelucci exposed the problem of the “inhabited house” in his introductory speech, giving to the problem a high cultural value. To Michelucci the theme reconnected the social, human, architectural and urban dimensions because every solution proposed, if inserted in a city, could lead the city towards the definition of a precise form. The theme, according to Michelucci, was stigmatized in the relationship between architect-population and among the habitat-city-metropolis, starting from the small to the large scale⁷⁴.

Leonardo Ricci’s contribution intended to promote the idea of a «continuous architecture, which [took] place outside the usual concept of closed form, but in that of open format, according to the dynamic needs, of choice, which [allowed] new relationships between living and other human acts such as working, educating, moving around, the integration of a single organism open to all functions that [were] sectorially separated, in an architecture on an urban scale⁷⁵». The project presented by Ricci looked as a detached cell of the already described macrostructure for an integrated city, the model elaborated with the students of the Pennsylvania State University in the same year, and presented at the Montréal Expo two years later⁷⁶.

Almost perfectly following the words of the master Michelucci on the exhibition, Ricci described his proposal as a possible model to be inserted in a macrostructure, in which all the housing units and services had to be distributed in such a way as to be easily accessible both in the vertical and horizontal direction.

Within Ricci’s “livable space for two people” any user could have been the interior designer of his own house in order to allow life to develop according to elementary needs, once freed from all the unnecessary. Indeed, the exhibition regulations assigned an area from twenty-five to thirty-five square meters to the exhibiting architects, as the possible dimensions of minimal existence rational cells, and it wanted to offer an alternative model of “Existenz Minimum”. The habitat model proposed by Ricci was a sculptural envelope in which there were no internal partitions, but the shape followed the hypothetical flow of human actions inside, thinking of a limited internal space connected to an open space outside the cell, without rooms. Ricci called his model “form-space”, it was in “centinella” wood, suspended from the floor by means of small and low stone walls as those on which Ricci’s houses were also suspended.

The prototype was in real scale and accompanied by the architect’s sketches. It effectively suggested a unique “form-space” derived from the inhabitants’

73 Miccinesi, “Una mostra a Firenze: La Casa Abitata”, 11.

74 Miccinesi, “Una mostra a Firenze: La Casa Abitata”, 12.

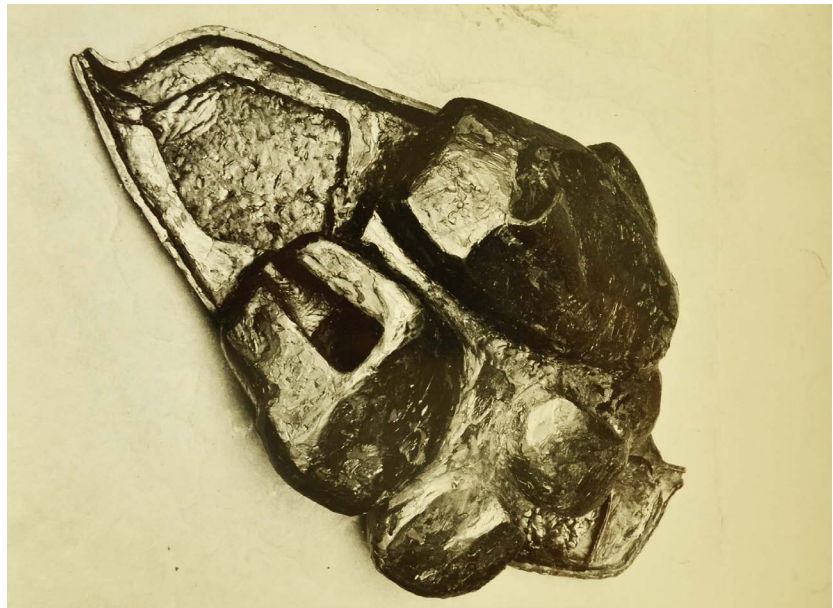
75 Ricci’s report about his project was published in Miccinesi, “Una mostra a Firenze: La Casa Abitata”, 13.

76 See Ilaria Cattabriga, “A Project of the Synopia of the Future Integrated City. MODEL I: Harbor-Center with Water-Sea-Earth Communication Routes”, *Histories of Postwar Architecture*, no. 9 (June 2021): 114 – 137.

possible movements and could change thanks to moving elements. The model embraced the fundamental principle of variability both in the way of life and in the use of different materials and colors. Ricci presented a full-scale "Livable Space for Two": between the sculptural and the architectural, enveloping like the cavern of a cave, a primordial cell in the manner of Frederick Kiesler. From the preparatory sketches Ricci imagined a warm, sensual, uterine environment. The bed, bathroom, living room and kitchen were molded into a single surface, minimizing any division between the acts of the inhabitants, free or mechanical acts, spiritual or material, because any separation was a "waste of life". That space could be made industrially or by hand, designed for a certain form of industrialization or used independently of structures. The fixed furniture was integrated into the space itself and shaped with the organic external shell, while the moving elements could be varied and differentiate the interior⁷⁷ [Fig. 65, 66].



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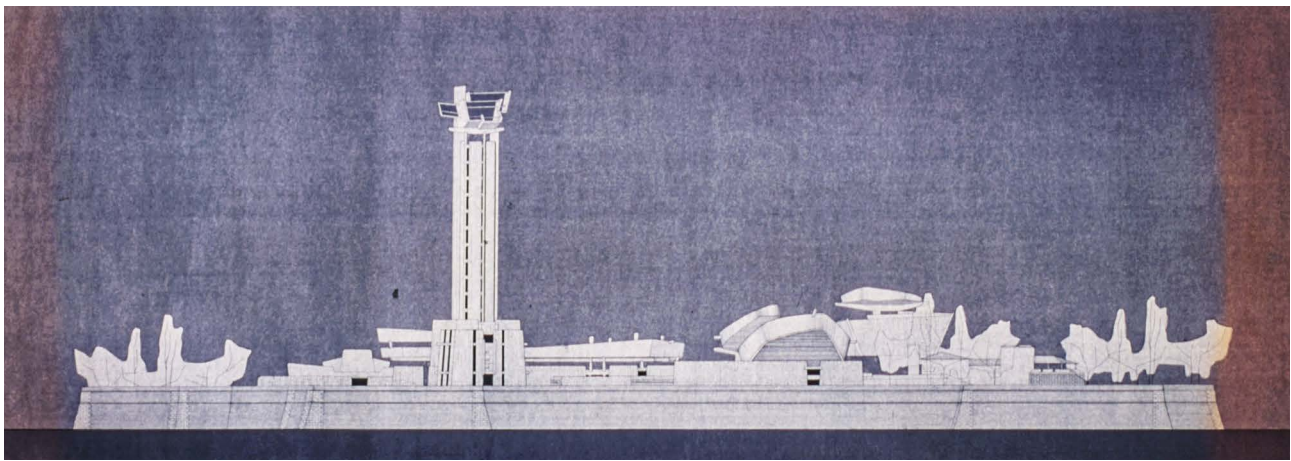


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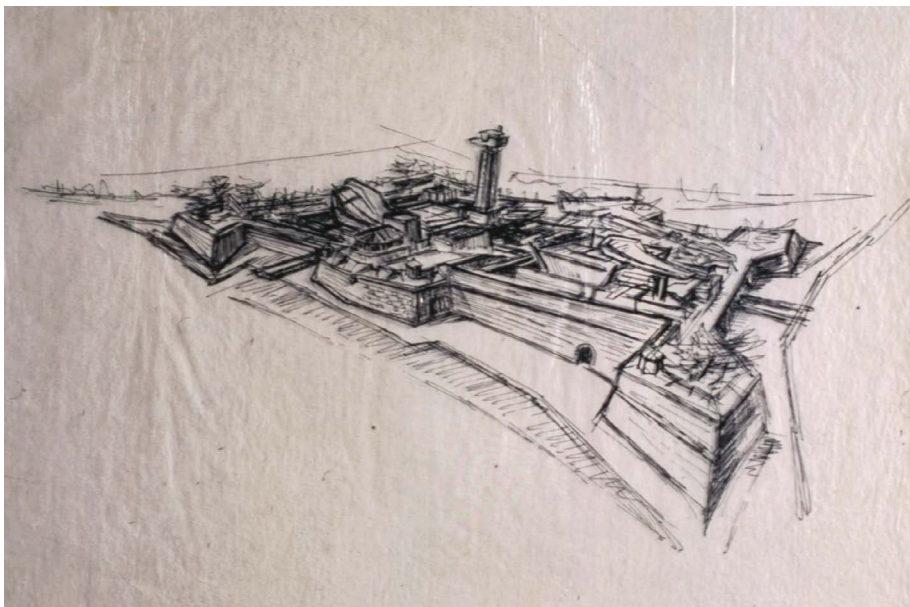
In 1967 Ricci took care of another set up. Created for a national competition of ideas, announced in 1967 by the Florence International Handicrafts Exhibition Authority for the urban and architectural arrangement and restoration of the Fortezza da Basso, the project related to a 16th-century pre-existence located near Santa Maria Novella station. Ricci participated with Ezio Bienaimè, Leonardo Savioli and Danilo Santi as consultants. More precisely, Savioli and Santi also collaborated on the project, appearing in the competition affair in the dual capacity of candidates and consultants to Ricci and Bienaimè's project. They submitted a project entitled "Three by Three," which did not win but was judged worthy of mention and thought of a new use for the building, changing it from a National Crafts Center to a cultural equipment for all plastic and visual arts, and they design a complex building, articulated in several volumes held

77 Lara Vinca Masini, "Mostra Della Casa Abitata a Firenze", *Marcatrè*, no. 16-17-18 (1965): 215-17; Lara Vinca Masini and Agnoldomenico Pica, "Intenti e Aspetti Della Mostra "La Casa Abitata". Leonardo Ricci Uno "Spazio Vivibile" per Due Persone. La Casa Abitata: Arredamenti Di Quindici Architetti Italiani, La Mostra a Firenze, Palazzo Strozzi, Dal 6 Marzo al 2 Maggio", *Domus*, no. 426 (May 1965): 29-56; Miccinesi, "Una Mostra a Firenze: La Casa Abitata", 9-29; Vasič Vatovec, Leonardo Ricci. Achitetto "esistenzialista", 39.

Fig. 65-66 pictures of the bronze model for the "form-space" model, "Spazio vivibile per due persone", realized for the "La Casa Abitata" exhibition, Casa Studio Ricci.



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together by the massive ancient walls, which act as an anchor for the edifice. Thus, on the one hand, the pre-existences were respected, equipping, for example, the empty ramparts with pedestrian paths, but on the other hand, modernity was not renounced, neither in language nor in function, and the building was expanded by drawing inspiration from its being “unfinished” by inserting new volumes such as that of the sample tower, a turriform body, which formed the pivot of the composition and whose image referred to the vertical element of the later Dog Island project, or an inverted pyramid museum⁷⁸ [Fig. 67, 68].

During the second part of the 1960s until the early 1970s Ricci spent a lot of months in the United States, where he taught at the Pennsylvania State University (1965-1969) and at the University of Florida (1968-1972). In 1973 Ricci abandoned

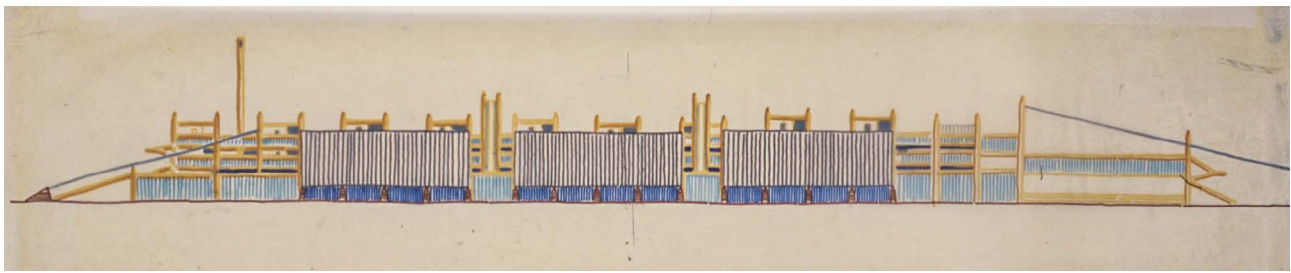
78 C. Matteini, “L’esito Del Concorso d’idee per La Fortezza Da Basso Di Firenze, 12 Progetti per La Fortezza Da Basso (Relazione Dei Progettisti),” *Bollettino Degli Ingegneri*, no. 12 (December 1968); Carlo Perogalli, “Metamorfosi Nella Fortezza/Metamorphosis in the Fortress,” *Casabella*, no. 336 (April 1969): 26–39; Corinna Vasić Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci. Architetto “esistenzialista”*, 39, 40; Sandro Gioli, “Lettera per Leonardo. Ricci 100. In Memoria Di Leonardo Ricci,” *Cultura Commestibile*, no. 267 (June 16, 2018): 6; Silvia Berselli, “Fino al 26 Maggio a Firenze Una Mostra Presenta, Con Materiali in Gran Parte Inediti, Le Opere Dell’architetto Che Amava Definirsi Un ‘Anonimo Del XX Secolo’,” *Il Giornale Dell’Architettura*, April 24, 2019; Maria Clara Ghia, Clementina Ricci, and Ugo Dattilo, eds., *Leonardo Ricci 100. Scrittura, Pittura e Architettura. 100 Note a Margine Dell’Anonimo Del XX Secolo* (Florence: Didapress. Department of Architecture, Università degli Studi di Firenze, 2019).

Fig. 67

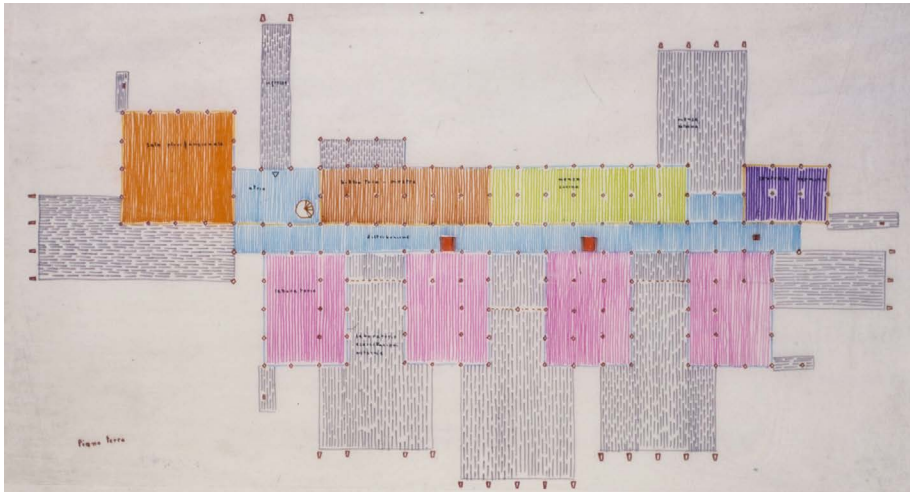
Project for the Competition for the Fortezza da Basso, main elevation, B038539S, CSAC.

Fig. 68

Project for the Competition for the Fortezza da Basso, top view, B001063S, CSAC.



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Florence after his resignation from the deanship of the Faculty of Architecture in Florence. Therefore, in those years he worked in other regions as Sicily, Piemonte, Liguria, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Lombardia, Sardegna, Veneto, Emilia Romagna and in other Tuscan cities as Pistoia, San Gimignano and Grosseto.

Ricci was back in Florence in 1974 to carry out the project for the regional pre-fabrication plan of Vaglia and for the project for the professional building school in Calenzano with Alidamo Preti (1974-1975) [Fig. 69, 70].

From 1975 to 1978 he worked with passion to the project for the Plan of the District of the Leather Area. A few publications deal with this project that represents one of the most important results to Ricci, who remembered it as the perfect result of what he intended an organic planning. The Tuscany Region had not yet established the District and Leonardo Ricci had to manage a Consortium of six municipalities with the same population of twenty thousand inhabitants: Fucecchio, Castelfranco, S. Miniato, S. Croce, S. Maria al Monte, and Montopoli. Leonardo Ricci carried on an interdisciplinary study with the help of the sociologist Paolo Giovannini and of the relations expert Cioni who cared the contacts between the planners' group and the people, with the architect Sigfrido Pascucci (coordinator with Leonardo Ricci), the architects Giovanni Censini, and Andrea Ricci (collaborators). Therefore, the plan's importance lied in its interdisciplinary, participated, and existential organic planning approach.

The so-called "leather district" was characterized by an intense industrial activity, kept alive by small and medium industries, where the territory was practically destroyed by the chaos caused by the last expansion of the Seventies.

Fig. 69-70
Project for a school in Calenzano, sketch of the main elevation and of the plan, Casa Studio Ricci.



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Fig. 71-72-73-74
Plan for the Leather District, Casa Studio Ricci.



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The local rivalry in those areas was very strong and the plan had the highest goal of planning a city consisting of the six municipalities. Ricci was proud of the work and the first step was done once the group elaborated the pre-model to be discussed with the people, to whom the group explained that they were going to pass from the scale of twenty thousand to one hundred twenty thousand inhabitants. The goal was not to assign a driving role to one of the municipalities, but rather to set up a model of city to be reconfigured in a new way on a production district scale [Fig. 71, 72, 73, 74].

According to Ricci, the success of the project laid in having been able to block the Florence-Livorno highway project that could completely destroy the territory by connecting only the two production centers. Indeed, the project had already been accomplished and under construction but they managed not to advance the work to change the joints of the freeway and to start from it the load-bearing structures of the district area.

Once the model was accepted by all six municipalities, they revised the town or manufacturing plans in each town (some of them did not have a town plan) to compose a district plan. The acceptance of the final plan was complicated both politically and socially because some politicians came from different municipalities and local rivalries were even stronger. The composite group of designers had thus secretly redesigned the territory by laying the foundations of the new city, of six municipalities, which was finally a founded and non-derivative city. The foundations for developing the area on the base of human activities, especially productive, but not only, had been laid and Leonardo Ricci's organic plan had been created, without even designing buildings⁷⁹.

A few years later, in 1977, the competition for the Directive Center in Florence was published and Ricci participated with Lonardo Savioli and the Ziggurat

⁷⁹ Antonio Nardi, *Leonardo Ricci. Testi, opere, sette progetti recenti di Leonardo Ricci*. 87-93; Leonardo Ricci, *Centro integrato «La terza Porta» al Parterre, Firenze*: 88.

Study. Leonardo Ricci participated with his project in a national competition with Leonardo Savioli and a large group of alumni designers: A. Breschi, R. Buti, G. Censini, C. Clemente, V. Giarrizzo, G. Gorelli, R. Pecchioli, A. Ricci, D. Santi, W. Saraceni, and the urban sociologist P. Giovannini. The group did not want to propose a new pole in which powers were concentrated, but, on the contrary, they thought of an integrated complex of services and facilities ordered in three main groups: the complexes of the Region and Justice, the block of cultural and scientific facilities, combined in a new system, and a propelling center for the city. This also made it possible to unify the different design conceptions of the group members, using as a unifying element, of functions and intent, an articulated system of physical or visual connections such as a lake, new pedestrian paths, the subway line and the Florence-Prato freeway axis, among other services and facilities⁸⁰.

Afterwards, Ricci's work went on in the 1980s in different project phases: from 1981 to 1987, and from 1987 to 1988 with the architect and Ricci's second wife Maria Grazia Dallerba. Ricci designed his version of the Court of Law of Florence in Novoli road, but the project was revised and changed by the following workshops and meetings until 1990s⁸¹.

In 1982 Ricci also worked at the project for the integrated center "La Terza Porta" with Maria Grazia Dallerba and his son Andrea Silvio Ricci. This project, never realized, represented for its architect the possibility to build the new town, a possible fragment of the City of the Earth. The site, the Parterre, on the edge of Piazza della Libertà in Florence, once a garden donated by the Lorenas to the city of Florence, constituted a stretch of the city that united city and countryside but it had been destroyed by the construction of out-of-scale and symmetrical architecture in the 1920s. However, to Ricci that area represented the opening of the city of Florence towards the north, towards Bologna, and towards the Mugnone river, largely canceled by the new constructions.

Ricci was entrusted with the design of this area in 1982 and the project he elaborated tried to take into account, on the one hand, the historical evolutions of the project area, the expansions of the city of Florence, and, on the other hand, both the needs of the district council, more specific, concerning traffic congestion with daylight and abandon in the night, and the needs expressed at an urban and territorial level, which required the inclusion of cultural facilities and administrative decentralization.

After the destruction of the ancient walls at the behest of the Superintendent Giovanni Poggi, a ring boulevard and a square welcomed the symmetry of the surrounding buildings for Florence which was to become the capital. The

80 Vasič Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci. Architetto "esistenzialista"*, 44; Silvia Berselli, "Fino al 26 Maggio a Firenze Una Mostra Presenta, Con Materiali in Gran Parte Inediti, Le Opere Dell'architetto Che Amava Definirsi Un 'Anonimo Del XX Secolo,'" *Il Giornale Dell'Architettura*, April 24, 2019.

81 See Lorenzo Mingardi, "Leonardo Ricci's Palace of Justice in Florence. A Desolate Fragment of an Urban Ideal (1987-1994)", *Histories of Postwar Architecture*, no. 9 (June 2021): 220-243. Some of the most beautiful drawings by Ricci for the "Orpheo" were published in HPA issue no. 9, in the archival sheet titled "Directional Center of Florence", pages 217-219.

destruction of the walls had occurred because they were considered anachronistic for that moment, when the city no longer had to defend itself from external enemies. On the contrary, Ricci was convinced that the walls conferred the shape of the city with respect to the countryside and proposed the city as a single composition, as a single house. The two doors, now only remained as "monuments" in an unqualified garden island, were made unlivable by the chaos of traffic. He was worried about the economic problems that could have affected the realization of the project, but he thought that if the project could offer the Municipality and the citizens something useful and vital, it could find the necessary funding. He then thought of giving the city a new entrance, a new door for those who, like him, had always enjoyed the view of Florence from above, but then, just arriving in the city, lost any kind of perceptive reference they had from the hills to the plain.

Ricci's non-academic words best explain the project:

«Thus was born the idea of the "Terza Porta". With two different faces. Towards the center like an altarpiece. Materials: stone, white and black marble; an Albertian facade. Towards the hills, steel, aluminum, and glass. In the doorway, for an intuition, I projected the two shapes of the existing doors. Not for a scenographic desire. To add to the space the celebration of the time dimension. For an upward measure. Perhaps to indicate that today we must not be more shy than those who preceded us».

He began an uninterrupted series of sketches, until I was satisfied with the form, with the scale in relation to the square. As regards contents, it could offer spaces for decentralized municipal or regional functions, connected to the neighborhood services that already perform some of these services. Those spaces had to be enriched with tourism and commercial routes.

As a model, just think of Palazzo Vecchio. Not to a Kafkaesque castle, a symbol of power, which hides the mayor and administrators, but a space where different moments intersect. City management. The great exhibition. The testimony of a different public power. Ultimately what was missing was a heart, a knot of exchange matching the quartier and the administration needs.

Ricci stated that Alberti gave him inspiration for the façade, while Brunelleschi, for the creation of an exchange node for the inhabitants, for which he also found inspiration in the church of Firminy by Le Corbusier.

However, while Le Corbusier's structure was an empty shell for a closed space, Ricci's building had a load-bearing structure with different functions: at the base and in the mezzanine floor it had places of exchange for the neighborhood such as a theater, a suspended library and a space for music, in the upper part a trade center, a coordination center that offered work spaces to Tuscan artisans, exhibition spaces for products, as well as social spaces for operators and the public.

To reach the main goal of connecting the different parts and the building with the surroundings it was necessary to think how to treat the existing buildings and the connections. Ricci decided to preserve the existing and built parts that in plan represented the ellipse of the square and to define connections with the Piazza della Libertà, with the Mugnone river, with the horticultural garden, with the hills and with the Via Bolognese. He decided, after various attempts including that of raising the riverbed, to decrease its section to be able to build a flow artery in the remaining area without excessive costs. In this way, floods - such as that of 1966 - could have been avoided since the river would have overflowed into the street rather than into the city.

To characterize the path that led from the Parterre to Fortezza da Basso Ricci proposed an elevated path that could connect the ancient houses on the river with the castle and its garden, the other houses, and the Parterre. The path could then be animated by further production and commercial spaces for the artisans, thus decentralizing administrative, cultural, and commercial functions. Other minor paths could have been connected to this up to the horticultural garden and all, in the green spaces and the Via Faentina, inside the Via Bolognese, could lead through other inhabited and uninhabited landscapes of the hills. The car parks were positioned at the junction of the connections with the main infrastructures. Therefore, they constituted a separate system that went from Piazza della Libertà to the Parterre, to the sliding axis. In this way it was also possible to put the underground parking in Piazza della Libertà in contact with a parking system above.

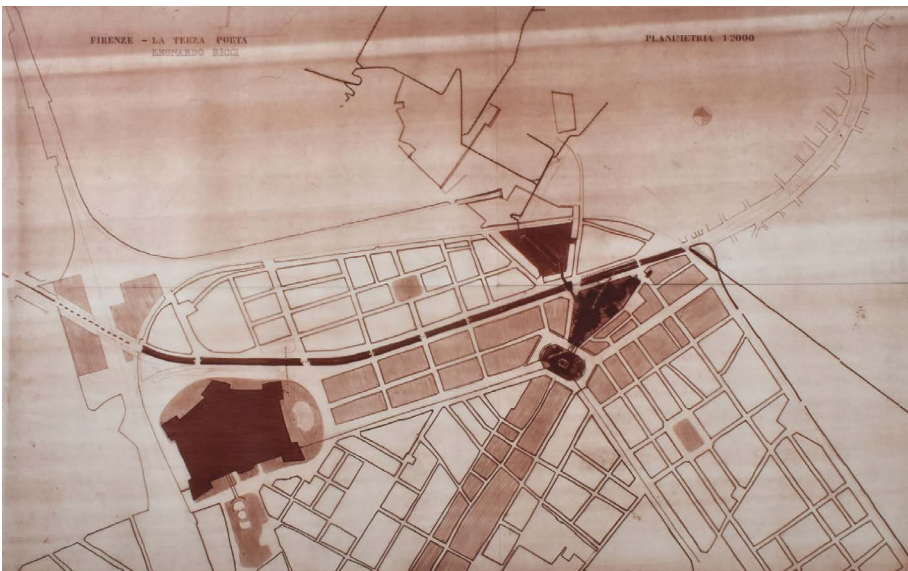
Ricci had designed an integrated system of functions, connections, services, and infrastructures for the Terza Porta project that connected the old city with the new one, re-establishing the harmony of the asymmetry of the ancient avenues, using the part between the sidewalk and the busy streets. His hypotheses, however, remained on paper due to economic and administrative problems⁸² [Fig. 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81].



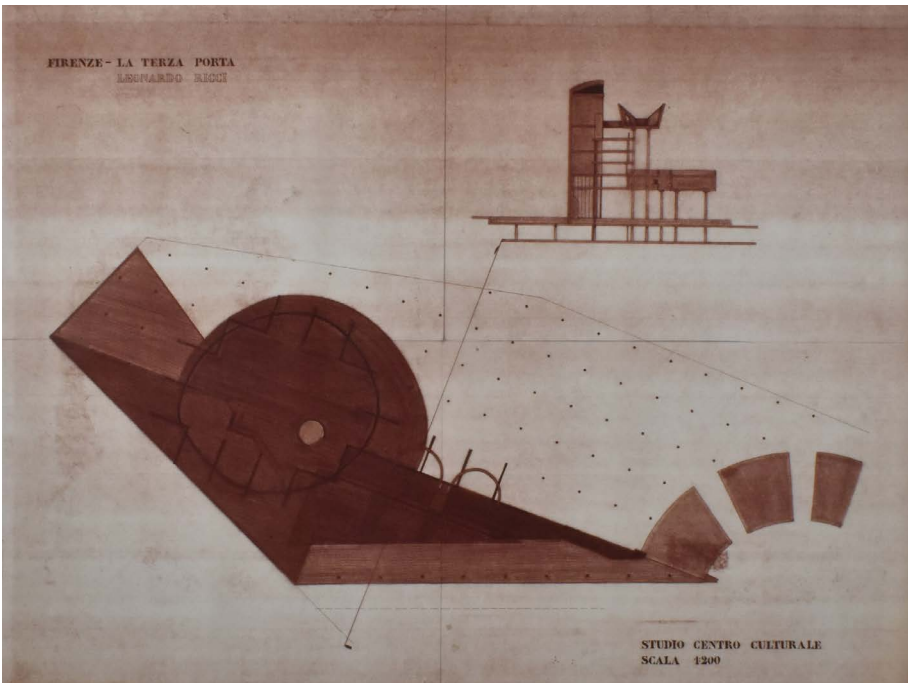
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82 All quotations are taken from Leonardo Ricci, "Centro integrato «La terza Porta» al Parterre, Firenze", *Catalogue of the exhibition of the project*, Parterre, Piazza della Libertà, Florence, July 2-10, 1983; published in Antonio Nardi, *Leonardo Ricci. Testi, opere, sette progetti recenti di Leonardo Ricci* (Pistoia: Edizioni del Comune di Pistoia, 1984): 87-93. Further bibliographic references are: Corinna Vasič Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci. Architetto "esistenzialista"*; 65, 66; Fabio Fabbrizzi, "Leonardo Ricci," in *Opere e progetti di scuola fiorentina*, 1968-2008, ed. Fabio Fabbrizzi, Loris Macci e Ulisse Tramonti (Florence: Alinea, 2008): 130-143.

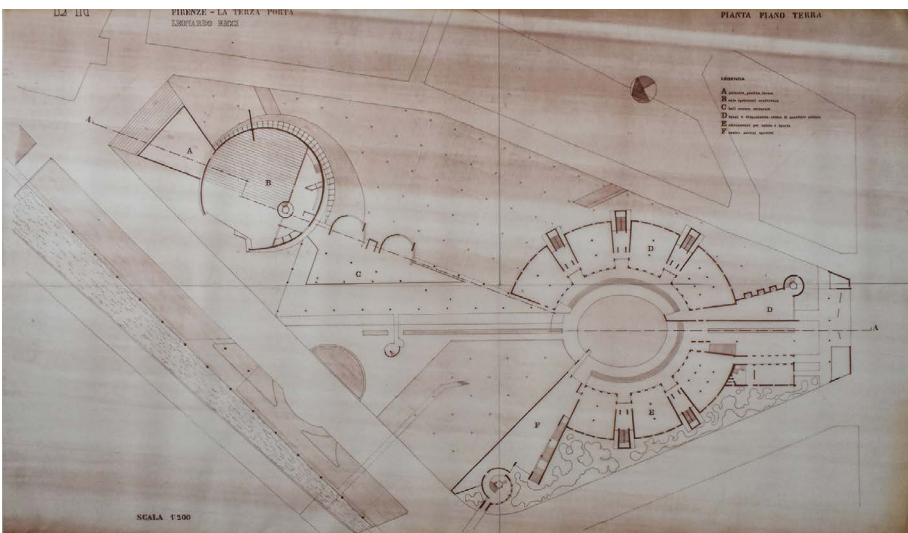
Fig. 75 Project for "La Terza Porta", poster of the project Exhibition (July 2-10, 1983), Casa Studio Ricci.



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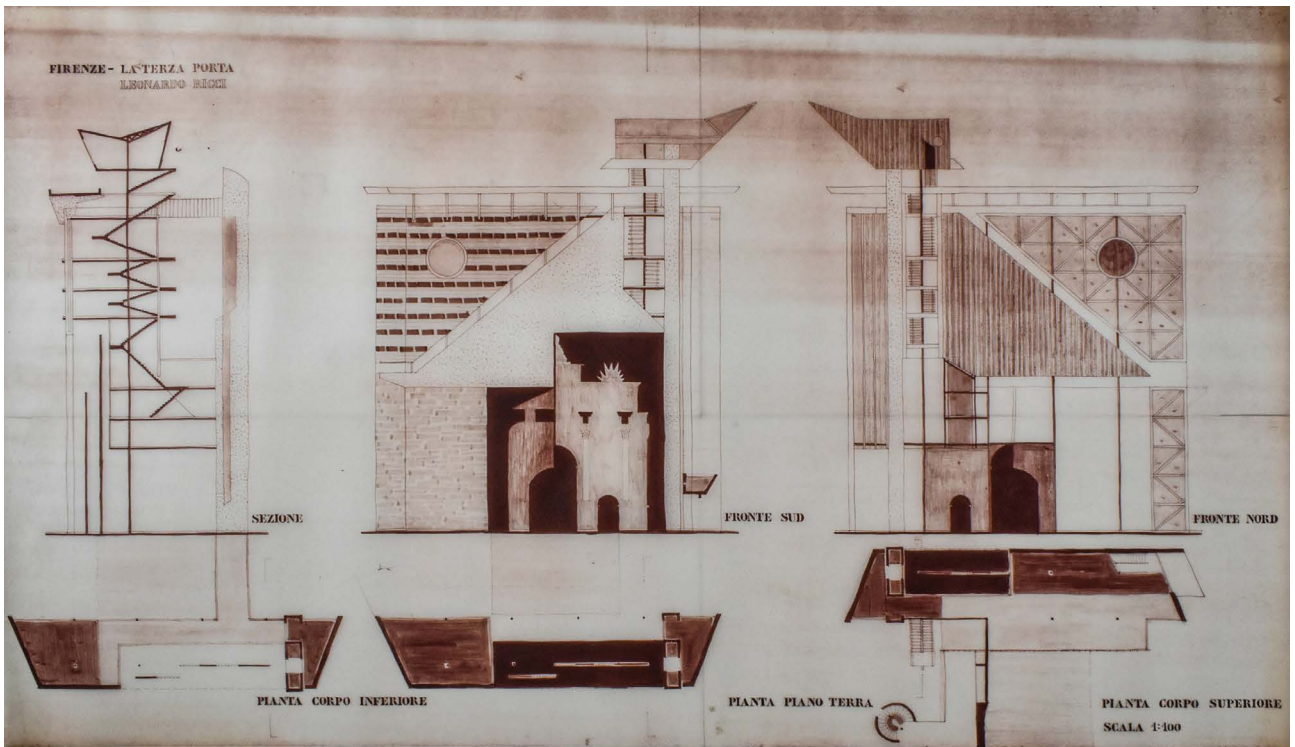


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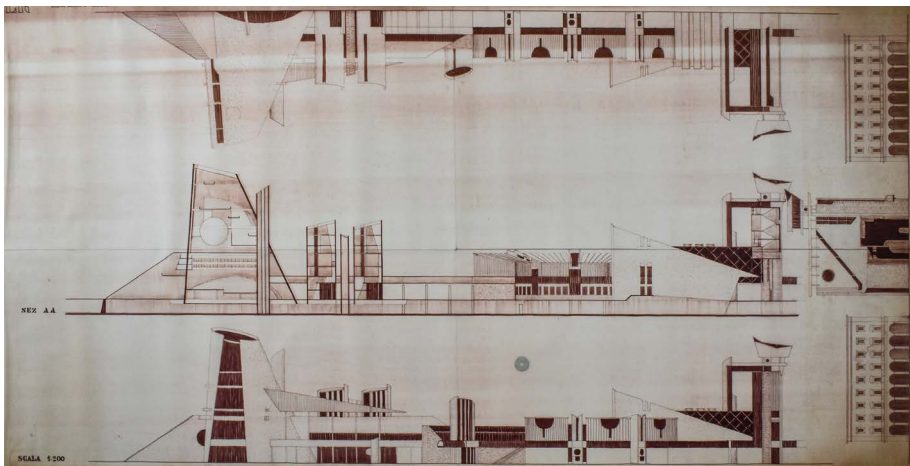
Fig. 76
Project for "La Terza Porta",
territorial framing, Casa
Studio Ricci.

Fig. 77
Project for "La Terza Porta",
study for the cultural center,
scale 1:200, Casa Studio Ricci.

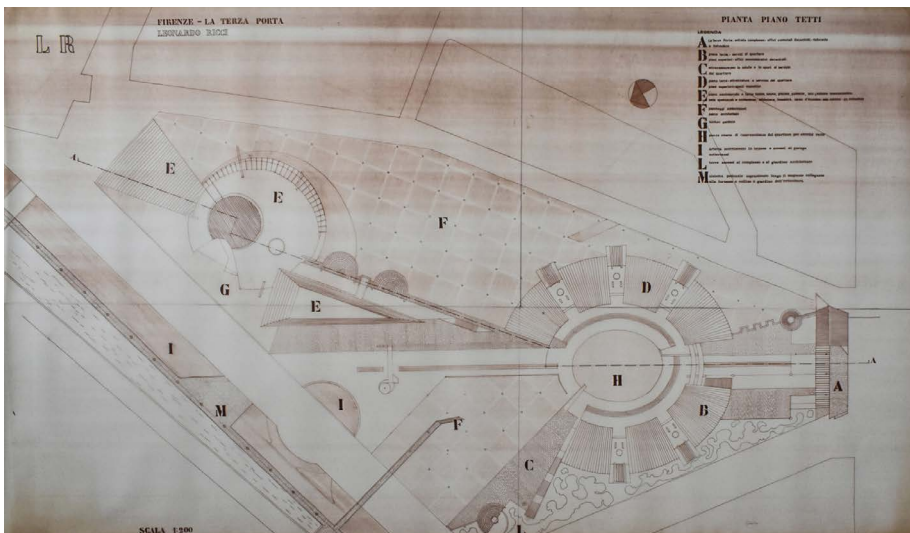
Fig. 78
Project for "La Terza Porta",
plan of the ground floor, scale
1:200, Casa Studio Ricci.



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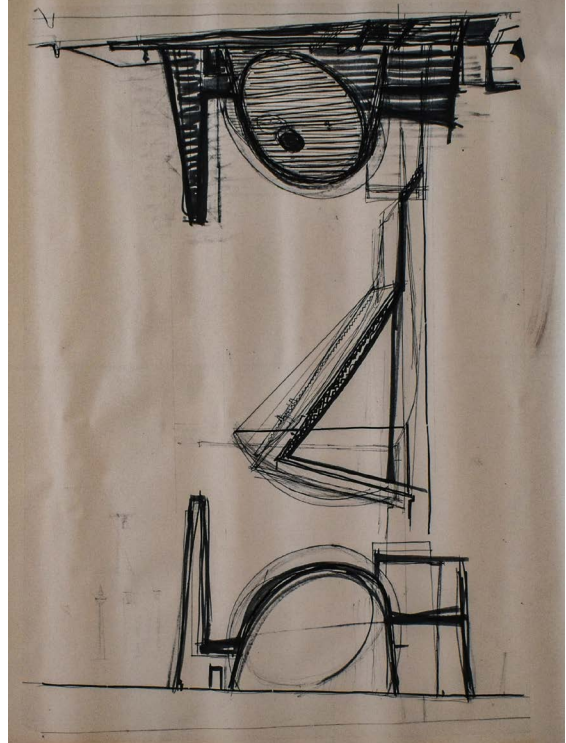
Fig. 79
Project for "La Terza Porta", section, south elevation, north elevation, plan of the lower floor, ground floor, plan of the upper floor, scale 1:200, Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 80
Project for "La Terza Porta", sections and elevations, scale 1:200, Casa Studio Ricci.

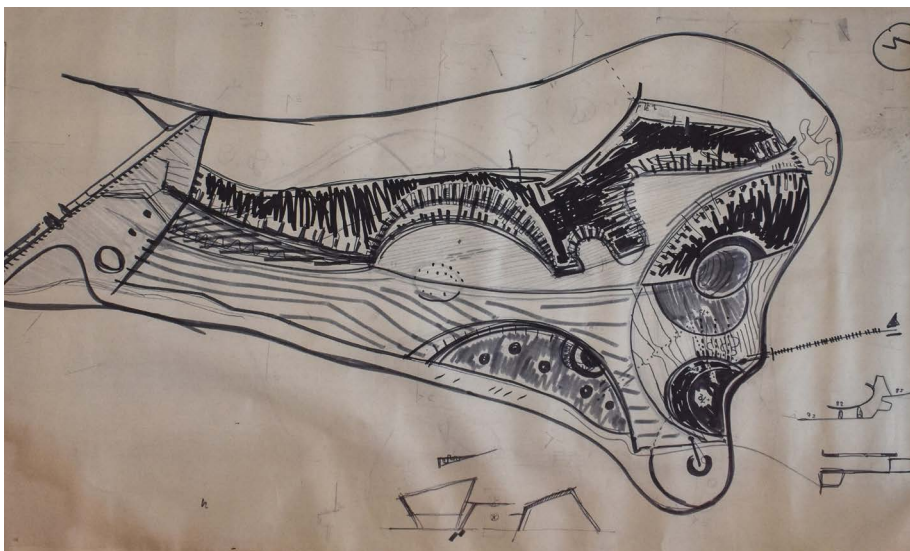
Fig. 81
Project for "La Terza Porta", section, south elevation, north elevation, plan of the roof, scale 1:200, Casa Studio Ricci.

One of the last projects by Ricci for Florence was the project for the new cemetery of Scandicci of 1984, designed with Maria Grazia Dallerba and Andrea Ricci. The drawing for the cemetery in Scandicci, dated 1984, was inspired by the theme of the “great mother” that also returned assiduously in his pictorial production. The earthen walls created no clear separation with the landscape, while the heart of the project was the “head” of the woman, still reminding the Village “Monte degli Ulivi” Ecclesia: a “home for all”. This part was shaped as a truncated cone, upside down, facing the sky, Ricci led back to a memory of the eye of the Pantheon in Rome [Fig. 82, 83, 84, 85, 86].

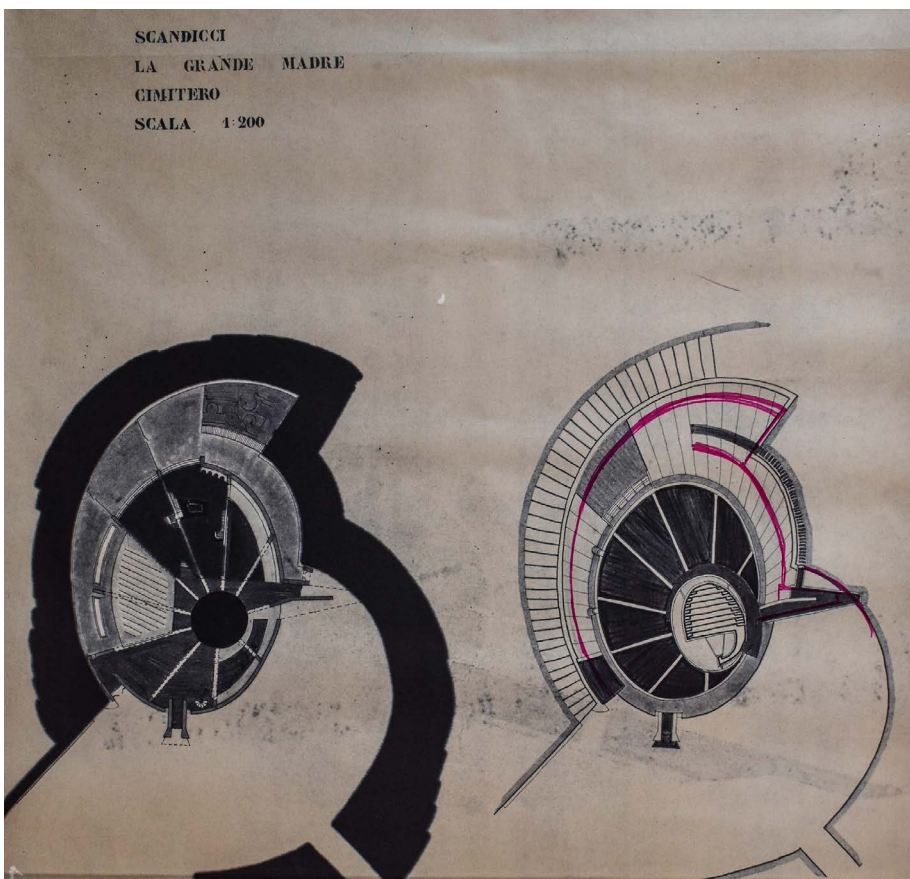
Franco Borsi analyzed these aspects by comparing Ricci and Michelucci’s drawings: in Michelucci’s drawings Borsi



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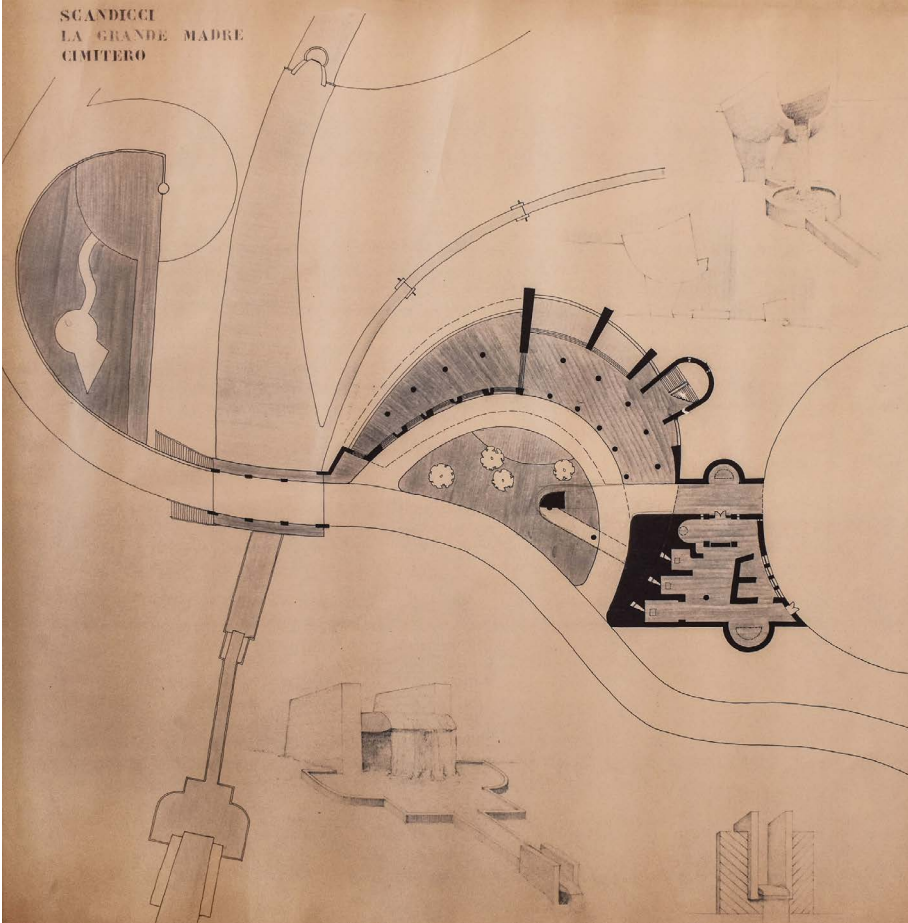


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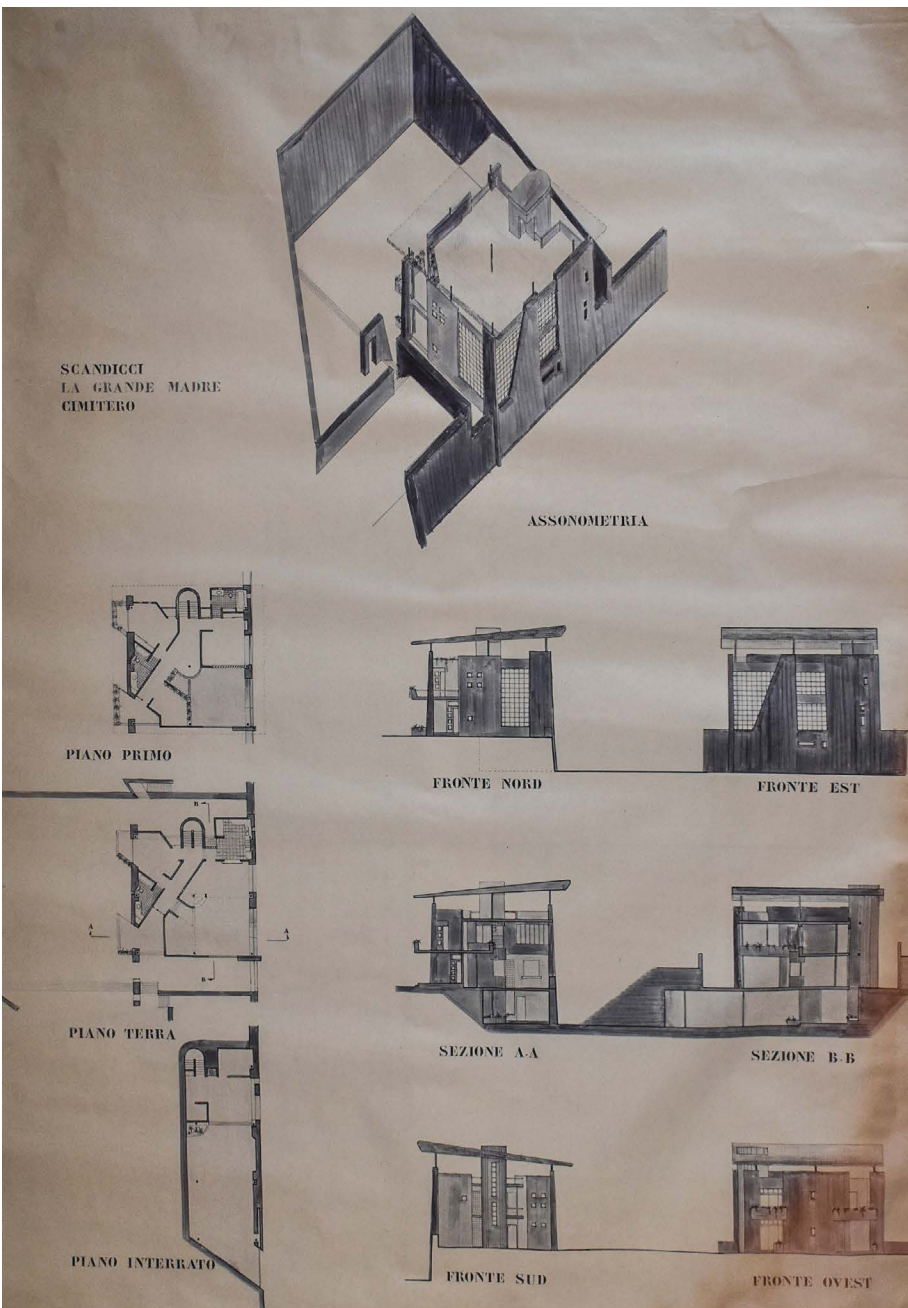
Fig. 82
Project for the Scandicci Cemetery, study sketches of the elevations, Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 83
Project for the Scandicci Cemetery, study sketches of the general plan, Casa Studio Ricci.

Fig. 84
Project for the Scandicci Cemetery, general plan, scale 1:200, Casa Studio Ricci.



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Fig. 85
Project for the Scandicci
Cemetery, plan of the
ground floor, Casa Studio
Ricci.

Fig. 86
Project for the Scandicci
Cemetery, axonometry and
elevations, Casa Studio
Ricci.



87

saw “the modesty of form as an initial condition of his possession”, in Ricci’s ones for the “Monte degli Ulivi” village instead the impetuosity of the artist’s gesture, also approximate, similar to that of Michelucci, which turned into a more decisive sign in the sketches for the new cemetery of Scandicci in ink and felt-tip pen. In these drawings both wanted to abolish the form but showed that they knew it thoroughly in the creation of the works. This did not happen neither in the Chiesa della Collina by Michelucci nor in the village of Agàpe by Ricci⁸³.

The last half of the 1980s see a series of unrealized projects as the complex in di Novoli road (1985-1990)⁸⁴, the integrated residential and commercial center in Figline Valdarno (1988 - group leader Leonardo Ricci, with Maria Grazia Dallerba, Sergio Mazzoni, Andrea Ricci, Enrico Manzini)⁸⁵, and the project for “Casa Protetta” (definitive project 1988-1992 - with Andrea Ricci, Enrico Manzini).

This last project was commissioned by U.S.L.. Updated in March 1988 and in 1992, converted into a residence for the elderly, Ricci’s design remained on paper until, following a competition in 1999, the construction of the work passed to others⁸⁶ [Fig. 87, 88, 89, 90].

In 1988 Leonardo Ricci with Andrea Ricci and Maria Grazia Dallerba also drew up a feasibility plan for the equipped park area of the City of Scandicci in

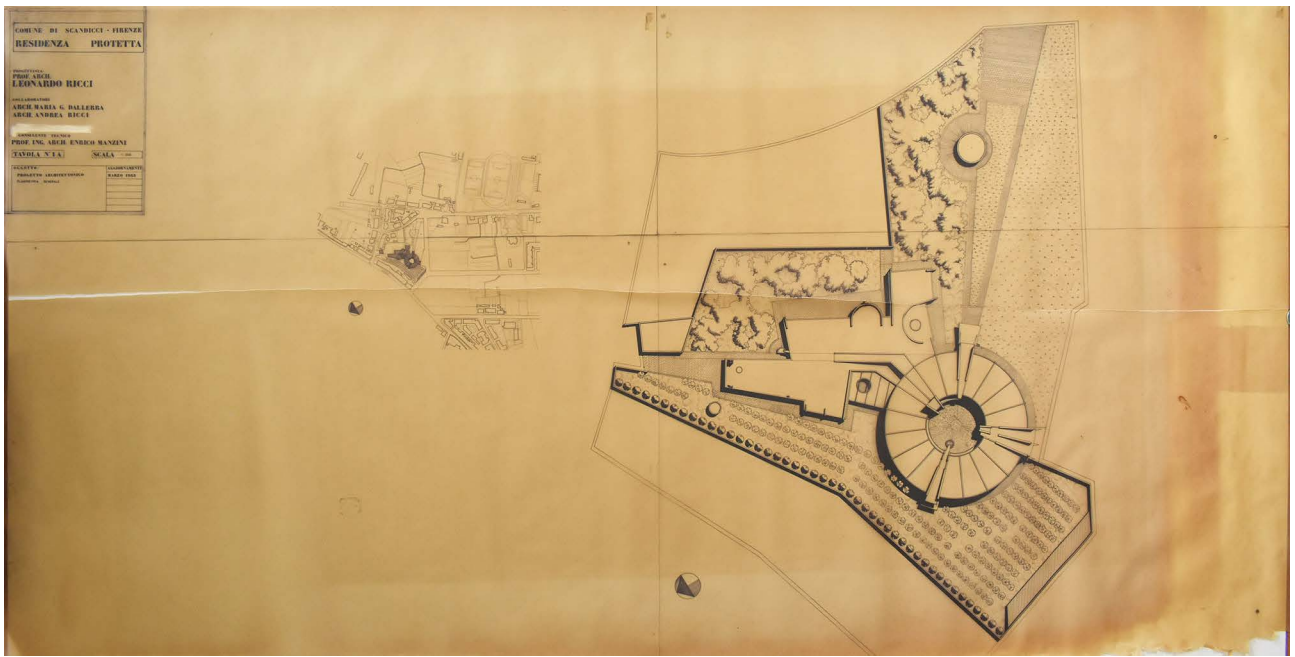
83 Franco Borsi, *Michelucci. Il linguaggio dell'architettura*; Giovanni Klaus Koenig, *Leonardo Ricci e la "casa teorica"*: 9-12; Antonio Nardi, ed., *Leonardo Ricci: testi, opere, sette progetti recenti di Leonardo Ricci* (Pistoia: Edizioni del Comune di Pistoia, Italia Grafiche, 1984): 95-98; Vasič Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci: architetto "esistenzialista"*, 48, 49; Fabio Fabbrizzi, Loris Macci, and Ulisse Tramonti, *Opere e progetti di scuola fiorentina, 1968-2008* (Florence: Alinea, 2008): 130-143.

84 Vasič Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci. Architetto "esistenzialista"*, 51.

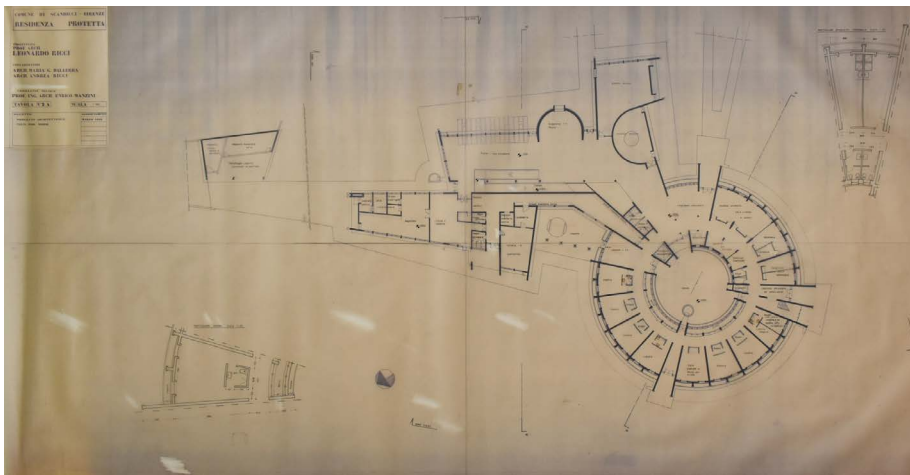
85 Luca Zevi, “Complesso residenziale e commerciale, Figline Valdarno,” *Housing and commercial complex, Figline Valdarno*, in *L'architettura. Cronache e storia*, n. 485 (1996): 134-40.

86 Vasič Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci. Architetto "esistenzialista"*, 51.

Fig. 87
Project for “Casa Protetta”,
General view, Casa Studio
Ricci.

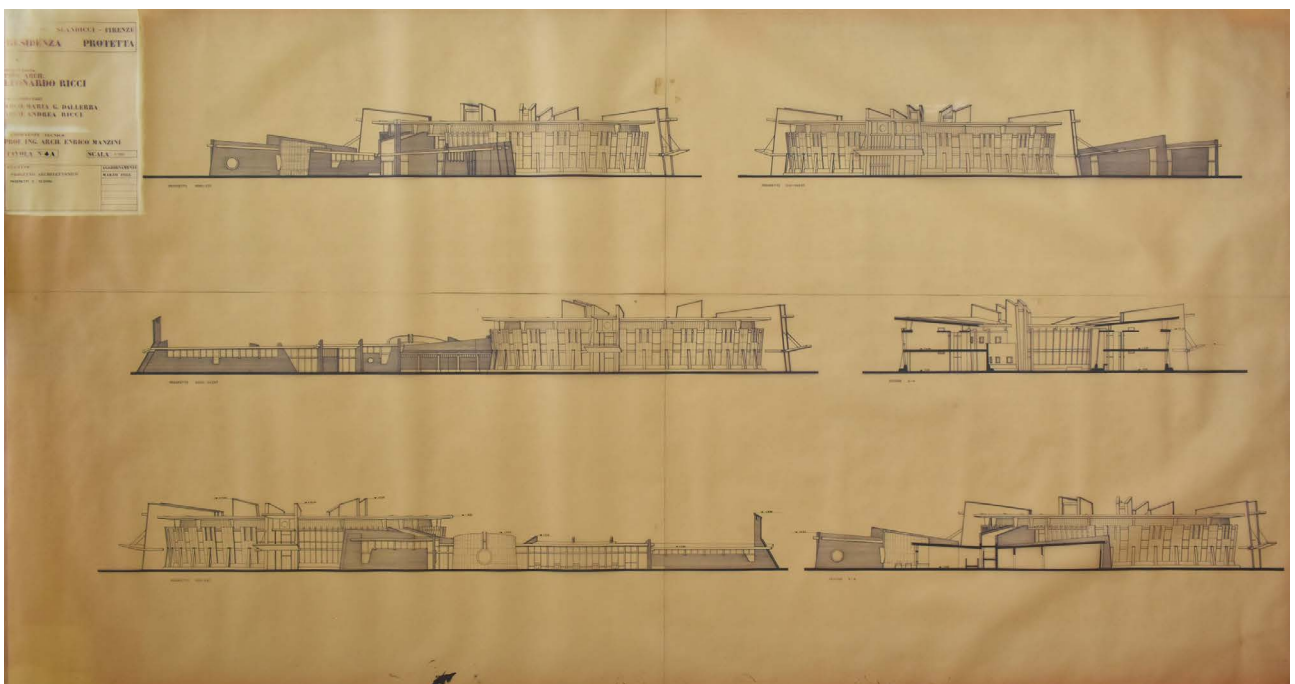


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Fig. 88-89-90
Project for "Casa Protetta",
planivolumetric, plan, elevations,
Casa Studio Ricci.



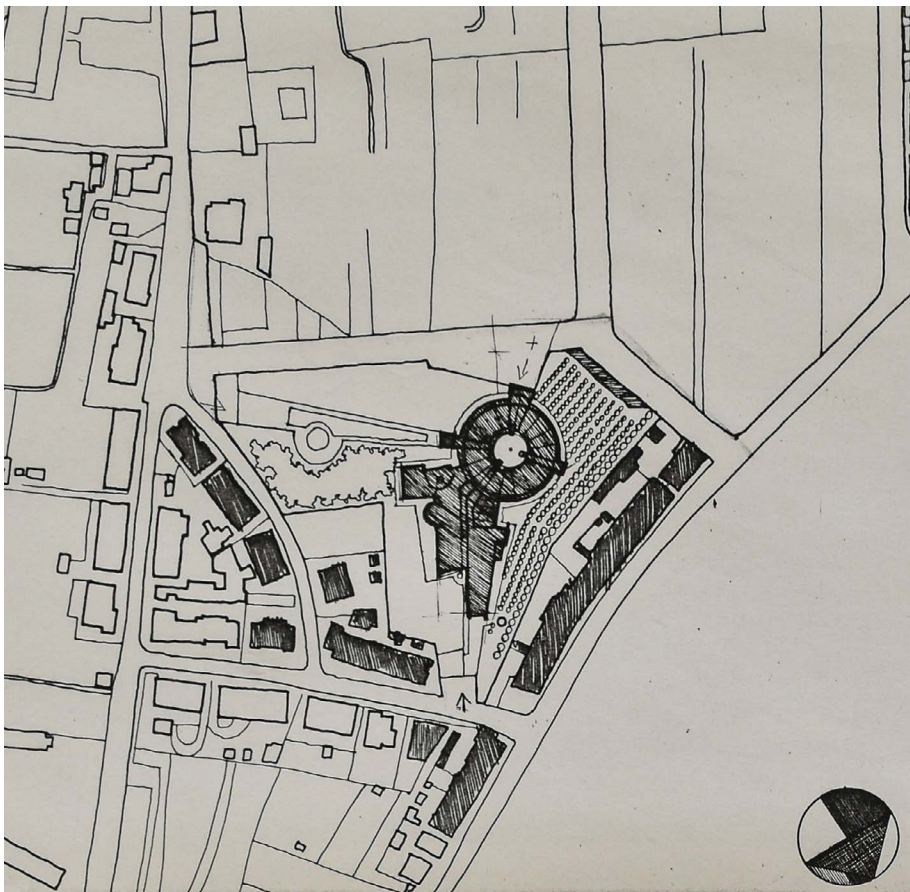
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the area between Via dei Turri and Via Facibeni, an extended area crossed by an artery that connected the two limits. The equipped park included several structures arranged over the entire area, including “la porta”, a communication center, marked with the letter “A” in the general plan, positioned on the front of Via Facibeni. It had a circular main park and three arms, one of which crossed the main thoroughfare. The other planned facilities were an indoor and outdoor swimming pool, a minigolf course, a children’s play area, showers, a funfair, a soccer field, a gymnasium, an aviary, a fountain, multipurpose spaces for exhibitions and market, and a sheltered residence. General plans, pen sketches with preliminary ideas, then pencil and ink drawings on transparencies of the communication center and swimming pool with gymnasium are kept in the archives. The two main parts, detailed by the drawings, featured pure volumetries. The swimming pool was a parallelepiped that housed one of

Fig. 91
Feasibility plan for the equipped park area of the City of Scandicci, general plan, Casa Studio Ricci.



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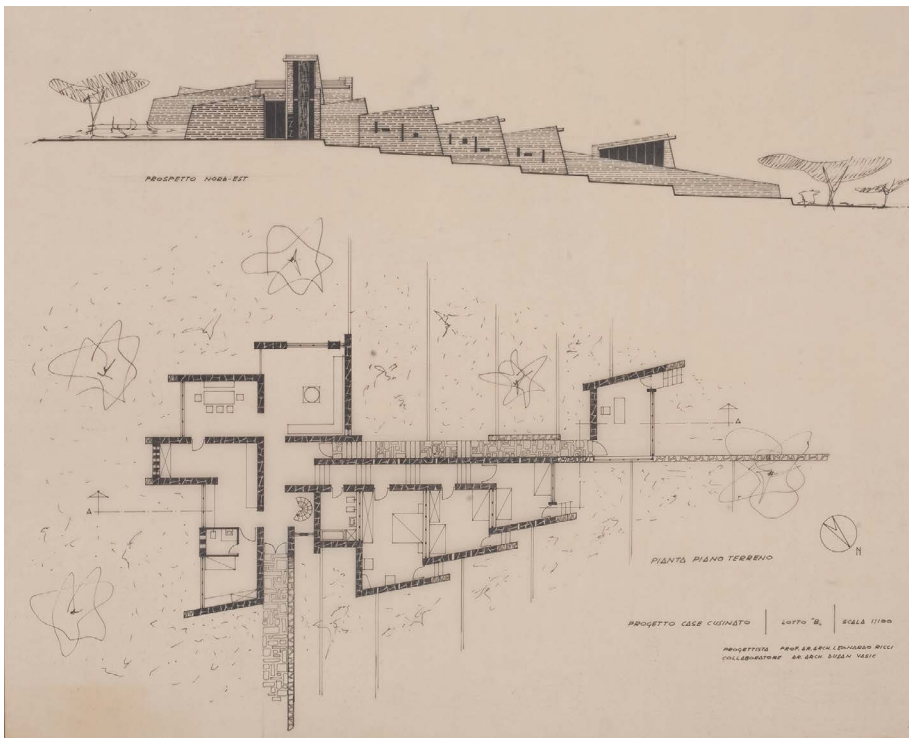
two large pools, locker rooms on two sides, two saunas, an equipment room, and a gymnasium for free exercise. On the east corner, another parallelepiped containing another large pool and a children's pool was grafted diagonally. The communication center consisted of three staggered cylindrical volumes on three different floors; on the ground floor there was an audition room juxtaposed with a club-restaurant. Opposite the entrance to the hall there was a playroom around which services and offices were arranged. The volume on the first level contained a single enclosed part with the library and archive, while the rest of the volume was occupied by a large terrace. One of the arms from this level led to a café. The third volume, which constituted the second floor, housed a television studio [Fig. 91, 92].

In the last years, from 1989, when the detail plan for the Novoli area and the detail plan of Novoli and Castello were under definition, to Ricci's death, happened in 1994, there are a few interesting undated projects found in the archival documents to be described. For instance, the project for "Case Cusinato", done with Dusan Vasić⁸⁷: the houses were to be built in the Florentine hills, more precisely on Viale Michelangelo, between Via di Santa Margherita a Montici and Via San Bernardino da Siena, and they show two solutions proposed by Ricci, different both in size and overall composition. They portrayed, with the Monterinaldi Village and the project for the village of Montepiano, the efforts made by the

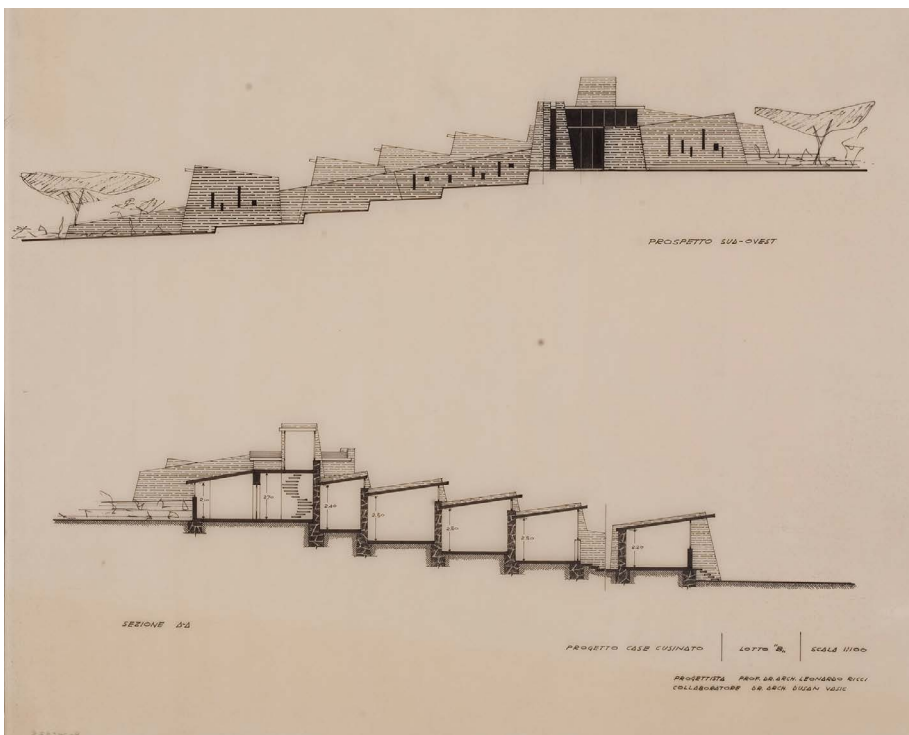
87 Beatrice Conforti, *Le forme dell'abitare nell'opera di Ricci*, (PhD dis., Sapienza Università di Roma, 2021), 137-142.

Fig. 92

Feasibility plan for the equipped park area of the City of Scandicci, sketch of the general plan, Casa Studio Ricci.



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architect during a strenuous "rapprochement" with his city, which could lead to the last hopeful project of the Sorgane neighborhood, located on the outskirts towards Bagno in Ripoli. With these works, concerning villages or allotments, Ricci faced the theme of the "search for a system" in dwellings. One can hardly consider this set of three houses a village, but it is, because of the compositional tone that the design depicted. The plan of these dwellings achieved an extreme formal synthesis that connected the interiors and exteriors with the extension of stone wall baffles toward precise, balanced directions. [Fig. 93, 94]

Fig. 93
Project for Case Cusinato, north-east elevation and ground floor plan, CSAC, B001083S.

Fig. 94
Project for Case Cusinato, south-west elevation and section A-A, CSAC, 038593S.



In the elevation there were extremely different solutions, while the walls extended upward and at an angle to chase the slope of the land with a grounding that was unprecedented as the single-story houses remained low and quiet in the hillside. Large terraces on the rooftops, reached by small spiral staircases, would have offered breathtaking views of Florence. In the project Ricci succeeded in paying attention to the study of space even with small simple gestures: the sloping roofs that descended in sequence like steps allowed soft light to enter from the northwest in addition to the view of the sky from the bedroom.

The same search for a systematic solution is traceable in the subdivision plan for the “Società Immobiliare Colle degli Ulivi” at Colle dei Mocoli, an undated project Ricci did with Lionello De Luigi. In the project it was visible the leap in scale implemented through the articulation of a system of spaces that were those already experienced in the single-family house, here connected all around the highest part of the hill. The stone baffles embedded in the ground, which fanned out towards the landscape, formed and structured an organic *continuum* around the two pre-existing buildings, almost recalling an ancient fortification system. [Fig. 95]

The floor plan could be compared to that of the Monterinaldi Village with a more mature design in its relationship between volumes. While the elevations were comparable to those of the Cusinato Houses, the appearance was that of a single, continuous monomaterial basement, which made the whole building perfectly integrated into its context. The reason why this design appeared so “balanced,” both in plan and elevation, was that the project was intended for a still small number of inhabitants. Moreover, the intervention was not to result in affordable housing but in what would still appear to be a collection of independent houses, however harmoniously aggregated⁸⁸.

Fig. 95
Subdivision plan for the
“Società Immobiliare Colle
degli Ulivi”, Colle dei Moc-
coli, general view, CSAC,
B001109S.

88 Beatrice Conforti, *Le forme dell'abitare nell'opera di Ricci*, (PhD dis., Sapienza Università di Roma, 2021), 142-143.