Giovanni Leoni

Remembering (with) the Body.
Form and Experience in Post-war Memorial Architecture Dedicated to Political and Racial Deportation

/Abstract

The text explores the evolution of memorial architecture post-World War II, focusing on its role in commemorating victims of political and racial deportation. It argues that architecture must transcend traditional formalism, becoming a reflection of collective experiences and processes shaped by historical traumas. Central to this discussion is the notion of "bare life," as defined by Giorgio Agamben, highlighting the loss of individuality and humanity in concentration camps, where victims were stripped of identity and agency.

Memorial architecture faces unique challenges, as it must confront the unspeakability of the victims' experiences while also serving as a moral obligation to remember those silenced. The author emphasizes the need for architecture to facilitate a personal, embodied engagement with memory, transforming the act of visiting into an active reflection on the past. This shift from static monuments to dynamic memorials allows visitors to connect physically and emotionally with the history, bridging the gap between the past and present.

Ultimately, the text advocates for an architecture that honours anonymity and collective suffering, seeking to reconstruct a sense of place and identity for victims through thoughtful design that encourages personal interpretation and reflection.

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More recent publications on the subject are the following: Andrea Borsari, Giovanni Leoni, *Hypermnesia and Amnesia. Remembering (with) the Body and Post-Conflict Memorials and Architectures* in: AA.VV., *Questioning Traumatic Heritage*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2024: 81-89; Giovanni Leoni, *Las responsabilidades de la arquitectura en los procesos conmemorativos de personas desaparecidas a causa de crímenes políticos. Una perspectiva europea* in: AA. VV., *Procesos de memoria en América Latina y el Caribe. Encrucijadas y debates*, Bogotá: Instituto de Estudios en Comunicación y Cultura IECO Centro Editorial Facultad de Ciencias Humanas Sede Bogotá, 2024: 215 – 225; Andrea Borsari, Giovanni Leoni, *Hypermnesia and Amnesia: Remembering (with) the Body and Post-Conflict Memorials and Architectures*, «HERITAGE, MEMORY AND CONFLICT JOURNAL», 2022, 2: 29 – 38; Giovanni Leoni, *In Memory of the Other Resistance. The Places and Architecture of the Fossoli Memorial*, in: Matteo Cassani Simonetti, Roberta Mira, Daniele Salerno eds., *The Heritage of a Transit Camp Fossoli: History, Memory, Aesthetics*, Oxford, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, New York, Wien: Peter Lang, 2021: 107 – 160.

One of the themes characterising architectural research in the second half of the 20th century is the need to modify the modern structure of the project, centred on formal conception, to make it subservient to the circumstantial unfolding of life within the architectural work. In many authors, after the experience of the Second World War, the idea of an architectural language that is a direct translation of existence becomes crucial. Architecture is no longer the result of a formal prefiguration but the outcome of an action that generates forms during circumstantial events. A processual idea of the project that transforms the circumstance, the design actions of governing and reorganising the circumstance, into architectural form. The main objective of such a stance is to de-emphasise the conflict between the form individually conceived by the personality of an architect-artist on the one hand, "the life of forms", and, on the other hand, to place architecture in the flow of the "forms of life", thereby accentuating a collective, processual, impersonal dimension brought into the project.[1]

The confrontation with the "authentic myth", as Manfredo Tafuri defines the search for a "language of existence" in one of his illuminating essays,[2] the pushing "thorough the threshold of what is verifiable" that such a commitment implies, from the Second World War onwards, the confrontation with the place, both physical and inner, in which what Giorgio Agamben has defined as "bare life" appeared, that is, with the space of the Lager, a place in which "an extreme and monstrous attempt to decide between the human and the inhuman, which has ended up dragging the very possibility of the distinction to its ruin".[3]

What makes the memorial commitment of architecture applied to the theme of concentrationary space extreme and, therefore, paradigmatic is the confrontation with the component of the unspeakability of the victim's experience in such places.

This enormous theme has engaged every form of artistic expression, but architecture has a specific field of action and, therefore, responsibility.

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1   The subject is difficult to summarise as it spans entire design researches. Limiting ourselves to theorisations and just a few examples directly related to the present discussion, we could cite the writings, as early as the 1940s, of Ernesto Nathan Rogers in the magazine *Domus* (Ernesto Nathan Rogers E.N. (1940-41) "Confessioni di un Anonimo del XX Secolo", *Domus*, no.158: 45; no.159:67; no.160: 59; n.161: 69; no. 162: 69; no. 164: 31; no. 167: 17; no. 170: 94; no.176: 333) and Leonardo Ricci's text dedicated to the Anonymous (Leonardo Ricci. *Anonymous (20th Century)* (New York: Braziller, 1962; translated into English by Elisabeth Mann Borgese). Rogers writes as an author on the verge of being personally affected by the racial laws, Ricci, twenty years later, puts the theme of the Anonymous in close connection with the questions opened by the Shoah. In this regard, we refer to Giovanni Leoni, "Anonymous as a theme of discontinuity in the culture of Italian architecture between the first and second halves of the 20th century: E.N. Rogers and L. Ricci" in *Progress(es) - Theories and* Practices (Leiden: CRC Press Balkema Taylor and Francis Group, 2017), 9-13; Giovanni Leoni, "L'Anonimo come tema di discontinuità nella cultura architettonica italiana tra Primo e Secondo Novecento" in: AA VV, *Un palazzo in forma di parole. Scritti in onore di Paolo Carpeggiani*. (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2016), 463 - 47.

2   "It has been said that the humanistic Renaissance of the antique gods 'mythologized' life… For Sansovino, acceptance of the Venice of Leonardo Moro seems to have signified a traumatic, if liberating, encounter with authentic myth: one embodied in the life and legitimized by interiorized traditions… Once again, the beginning and the end of our reflections touch. The unfounded condition we have read between the lines of Alberti's text is fused wit Sansovino's immersion in the language of existence, which provided an alternative to the artificial tradition legitimized by those very same pages. To those who would maintain that: in our readins, we have passed thoroughthe threshold of what is verifiable (*l'accertabile)*, this *complexion oppositorum* has – or so it seems – little to say. Yet, for the author, it puts into question – without anticipating the answer – the rootlessness that our historical condition must confront." Manfredo Tafuri, *Ricerca del Rinascimento. Principi, città, architetti,* (Turin: Einaudi, 1992) eng. trans. Manfredo Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance. Princes, Cities, Architects* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 2006), 257-258.

3   Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 22.

The specific field of architecture is that of the component of invisibility, as well as unspeakability, of the deportation and concentration experience, which derives from a deviant structure of the design of the places in which it took place.

The bodies that move, as victims, in the "exceptional space" of the Nazi concentration camps are deprived of identity but also of the possibility of individual experience, of making sense of space other than the imposed one, of constructing a temporality other than the constant present of pure survival.

From the perspective of the discipline of architecture, we could say that the prisoner of the Nazi concentration camps lives deprived of the possibility of designing the place into which he is forced, meaning, by design, the process by which everyone reconstructs and adapts the places he inhabits to his own individual experiences and sensibilities, modifying them physically or mentally. He is thus deprived of the possibility of generating a physical imprint of his own existence, an individual imprint that, combined with others and thus becoming collective, is a usually central component of the changing of places over time. A stratification of traces over time that is here denied and that is the basic material for every design action connected to memory in the field of architecture.

However, in the concentration camps, the absolute loss of design power by the inmate does not only concern space; it also concerns the body. Carefully elaborated and cruelly imposed practices - shaving, nudity, insufficient nutrition - lead the prisoners' bodies to be, very quickly, all alike. The "demolition of a man", of a man's corporeity, perpetrated in life, such that, as Primo Levi writes, "we became aware that our language lacks words to express this offence".[4]

From denying deportees any possibility, even the slightest, of "designing" their own lives, a denial which begins at the very moment of arrest, it follows that the architecture of the Nazi camps and every space connected to them to form the concentration camp system, if taken in their naked physicality, bear witness to the will of the executioner, leaving the victim only the trace of what the executioner wanted them to be. This "silence", this invisibility of the places of deportation, attributes, even to architecture, a " moral obligation towards those who were silenced", as Levi defines it in the chapter *Shame* of his *The Drawn and the Saved*.[5] The obligation, we might call it, to restart the deviant design of the camp in favour of and in memory of the victims. The exercise of this "moral obligation," Levi himself defines as inevitably failing and yet, precisely because of this, necessary, presents specific torments and difficulties in every expressive discipline. Architecture, too, has found and finds, in its confrontation with the

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4   Primo Levi, *If This is a Man*, trans. Stuart Woolf (New York: The Orion Press, 1959), 21.

5   "I must repeat – we, the survivors, are not the true witnesses. This is an uncomfortable notion, of which I have become conscious little by little, reading the memoirs of the others and reading mine at a distance of years. We survivors are not only an exiguous but also an anomalous minority; we are those who by their prevarications or abilities or good luck did not touch bottom. Those who did so, those who saw the Gorgon, have not returned to tell about it or have returned mute, but they are the 'Muslims', the submerged, the complete witnesses, the ones whose deposition would have a general significance… We speak in their stead, by proxy. I could not say whether we did so or do so because of a kind of moral obligation towards those who were silenced, or rather in order to free ourselves of their memory; certainly we do it because of a strong and durable impulse." Primo Levi, *The Drawn and the Saved* (London: Michael Joseph, 1988), 63-64.

theme, new tasks that lead it to a ruthless as well as illuminating confrontation with structural aspects of architecture as a discipline.

First, the memorial task of architecture dedicated to the Shoah addresses the outcome of a deliberate human action of violence whose aim is to erase all physical traces of the victim. This does not allow one to draw on a well-established field of memorial architecture, namely monumental celebratory production, since nothing, in this case, is to be celebrated.[6]

It is also impossible to take funerary architecture, whose purpose is to preserve the memory of the lives of those no longer alive, as a reference. An architecture, therefore, that, if it certainly bears witness to a loss, nevertheless draws on positive content, expressible in an affirmative form.

Instead, the task here is the memory of annihilating violence, an experience of death in life that offers no positive values and thus raises the question of how to express the absence generated by violence.

Secondly, the memorial task of the architecture dedicated to the Shoah concerns a loss that unites millions of individuals with very different fates in a shared experience/non-experience. Individuals whose personalities were, because of a deliberate political project, erased in life or through mass murder. This gives rise to a second paradox that undermines the established tradition of memorial architecture.

The memorial architecture dedicated to political and racial deportation during the Second World War is not only at the service of collective memory, it is not only at the service of individual memory, but it is at the service - if we look at its most difficult and primary task - of an experience of anonymity, of the loss of individuality and of the very sense of belonging to a community. One could call it an anonymous memory.

For if memorial literature restores personal stories, if history restores the collective experience that deportation was, there is an "immemorial" component to borrow a concept from Giorgio Agamben, who makes the distinction between "immemorial" and "archival" memory.[7] The expression, thus the entrusting to memory time, of an "immemorial" component, adds a paradox, a challenge if you like, to the "moral obligation" of giving voice to "those who were silenced". A challenge that, by disciplinary statute, history, which has the archive as its foundation, cannot take on and that must be entrusted to creative disciplines.

Therefore, we could say that memorial architecture is faced with a double

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6   "Here in Italy, there is a great tradition of celebratory architecture, but not only in Italy. However, there is a fact to be considered. It is easier to remember a victory than to remember such suffering… Usually, one celebrates victories, never defeats. In the case of the concentration camps, it was complex. First, the phenomenon was very broad because it was not just soldiers but an entire population that was sacrificed and killed because of a different thought or a different race. It still happens. Why do we still insist, we veterans?… because from Chile to certain Siberian camps, they do it, now; it's still quite widespread. And these are things that are usually kept hidden. If Germany had won, nothing would exist here any more, they would have swept everything away". (from a private conversation between the author and Lodovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso, held in Milan in June 1989).

7   Agamben clearly relates this distinction to themes of architecture when writing about the *Memorial for the Murdered Jews in Europe* by Peter Eisenman. See: Giorgio Agamben *"Die zwei Gedächtnisse"*, *Die Zeit*, 4 Mai 2005, but see also Giorgio Agamben, *Idea dell'immemorabile* in Giorgio Agamber, *A cui punto siamo?* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2020).

1a

1b

lacuna: the absence of a place and a body to remember on one side and, on the other, the absence of an individual personality to remember. In other words, translating this double difficulty into an operational task, memorial architecture finds itself in the need to restore place and body to memory and in the need to restore name and identity to the victim. A double action that takes the complexity of the usual structure of the architectural design process to the extreme.

In fact, memorial action may concern the space of loss itself - the places where events occurred[8] - or spaces of memory, which may or may not coincide with the places of events, giving rise to memorials, museums, and monuments. Such spaces - of loss and/or memory - can be physical and/or mental, individual and/or collective, existing and/or erased by time or human action. Each of these conditions tests different established areas of the project: conservation, reconstruction, restoration, and design from scratch.

If we then consider the actors involved, the picture is no less complex.

8   The obligatory reference in relation to the definition of the "place of memory" as a concept and as a field of operation is Pierre Nora's studies (Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, 3 vols). (Paris: Gallimard, 1984-1992).

Fig. 1a - 1b
M. Fiorentino et. al., *Monument to the Martyrs of the Fosse Ardeatine*, 1945-48 (ph. GL)
Sol LeWitt, *Black Form*, 1987

2a - 2b

2c

We have those who were involved in the loss directly - the witnesses whose disappearance for reasons of age we are now facing for the first time -those who witnessed the loss indirectly - and in this case, the chronology is stretched to infinity with the theme of individual and collective legacies of memory. This applies, of course, to both sides: victims and perpetrators. Memorial practices, then, as time progresses and the task becomes more and more complex, themselves involve a multiplicity of actors: the custodians of memory - direct or indirect - those who, not being direct witnesses, take on the task of preserving or restoring it - for reasons that may range from simple civic commitment to professional activities - and, finally, those who elaborate memory through creative practices. A multiplication and often professionalisation of memories that is, on the one hand, a dutiful task, on the other, hides risks of memorial excesses in which objectives linked to current events - political, social, cultural - may obscure the underlying reasons for the memorial process.

Within this framework of actions and actors, it is then necessary to evaluate certain specificities of the architecture.

Fig. 2a - 2b - 2b
A. Burri, *Cretto*, 1984 ff.
P. Eisenmann (with R. Serra), *Memorial for the Murdered Jews in Europe*, 1994 ff.

3a - 3b - 3c - 3d

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Fig. 3a - 3b - 3c - 3d

BBPR, *Monument in memory of the fallen in the concentration camps in Germany*, 1945 (ph. GL)

M. Labò, *Monument in honour of Italians*, 1955

BBPR, *Museum Monument to Political and Racial Deportees*, 1963 ff. (ph. GL)

R. Boico, *Risiera di San Sabba*, 1967-74 (ph. GL)

Fig. 4

G. Deming, *Stumbling Stones in Amsterdam* (ph. GL)

5a - 5b - 5c

First, architecture does not represent but constructs (or reconstructs or destroys) places.

Of course, this does not exempt architecture from formal tasks. But the formal invention, in architecture, is always in relation, often in tension, with the material construction, with a progressive dissolving of the represented form into a physical presence, subject to mutation over time, populated by human presences and therefore subject to circumstantial transformations beyond the control of the author of the work.

The paradoxical task described above, to serve a memory of the "immemorial", to interpret an anonymous memory, to restore body and space to an "invisible" experience, finds opportunity precisely in the process that transforms architecture from the personal conception of an author into a constructed work. In this constructive process, the architectural idea expressed as a representation becomes an objective presence and, in its existence over time, progressively becomes a multi-personal place, individual and collective, at the same time, permanent but subject to constant transformation based on multiple interpretative experiences.

The change of register with respect to the theme now enunciated is already evident when observing the first post-World War II memorial realisations, even in works not directly related to the Shoah. With a change of sensibility that reverberates on all architectural themes connected to the memories of the War,

Fig. 3a - 3b - 3c - 3d
BBPR, *Gusen Memorial*, 1965
BBPR, *Monument in memory of the fallen in the concentration camps in Germany*, 1945 (ph. GL)
D. Libeskind, *Jewish Museum*, 1988 sgg.
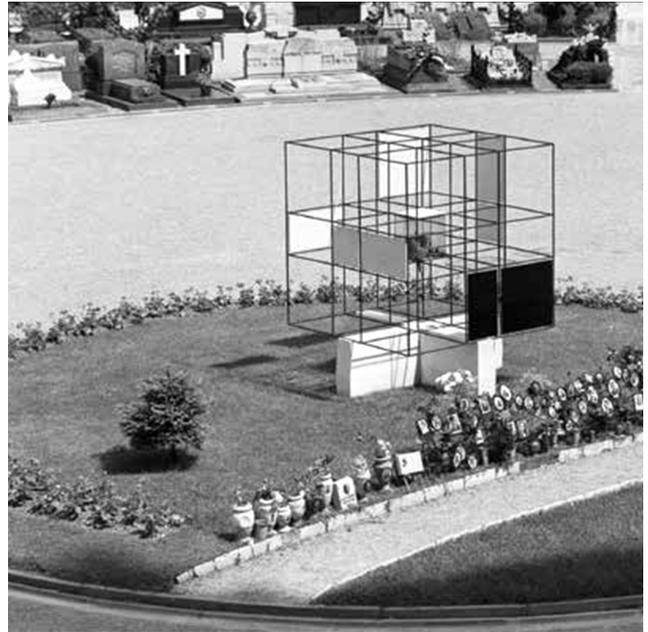
we pass from a monument understood as an object to be observed, endowed with a univocal form and fixed by the author, to a different conception of the monument, or rather to the creation of complex memorial devices that imply an active experience of walking through the places of memory by the visitor, closely connecting the physical act of walking through the places with the mental act of reflecting, rationally and emotionally, on what happened in the places.

The visit is no longer contemplation but action, and the visitor's body becomes the vehicle of this cognitive action, the measuring instrument of places. This means the constantly variable establishment of a complex physical and mental relationship with the place and its contents of memory.

Therefore, the visitor's body also becomes a kind of substitute for the victim's body. It takes on the task of understanding and reconstructing the experience, of compensating for the victim's loss of the project opportunity. The task of making visible the body and space of the victims offered by the memorial device is an individual task, therefore not fully predeterminable and circumstantial, and this constitutes a design theme.

The history of memorial architecture related to the violence of the Second World War and the fully ongoing work on the subject can thus be followed from two connected and distinct perspectives.

On the level of formal elaboration, architecture intertwines its efforts with the figurative arts in a new season of intense dialogue marked by the same difficulties and similar options for overcoming them.

Attempts to draw on symbolic form in the traditional sense are supplanted by a search for the counter-symbol to echo the established definition of counter-monument.[9]

9   James Young is a reference author for the definition and history of the anti-monument or counter-monument; among his works, see: James Young, *The Texture of Memory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); James Young, *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History* (Munich-New York: Prestel Verlag, 1994); James Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2000).

Fig. 6a - 6b
BBPR, *Monument in memory of the fallen in the concentration camps in Germany,* 1945, first version without the gravestones, final version - ph. GL − with the gravestones)

Architecture's response to the need to communicate the silence of the human, an expressive realm of the non-speakable and non-visible, is precocious. One thinks of the large out-of-scale "tombstone" of the *Monument to the Martyrs of the Fosse Ardeatine* (Mario Fiorentino et. al., Rome 1945-1948), an episode connected to the combatant resistance and not to the "other resistance" of the victims of deportation, but still an exemplary case of deliberate cancellation of the identity and body of the victims. A collective invention, the grey caesura interrupts the rich architectural and landscape narrative of the Ardeatine, anticipating by decades a public artwork such as Sol LeWitt's Black *Form* in Hamburg (*Black Form Dedicated to the Missing Jews*, Hamburg-Altona 1987).

On the other hand, one of the most powerful works of architecture centred on the expression of immemorial composition, The *Memorial for the Murdered Jews in Europe* (Berlin, 1994 ff.), was created in close collaboration with an artist such as Richard Serra and certainly with an eye towards *land art* and Burri's *Cretto* (Gibellina, 1984-89) in particular.

But the reliance on the pure expressiveness of matter in a counter-symbolic key had immediately been a theme within the memorial architecture dedicated to deportation, from the urn containing earth from the concentration camps placed at the centre of the *Monument in memory of the fallen in the concentration camps in Germany* by BBPR (Milan 1945) to the wall built by Mario Labò with the stones of the "death staircase" (M. Labò, *Monument in honour of Italians*, Mauthausen, 1955), from the cement stelae engraved with the names of the extermination camps in the *Museum Monument to Political and Racial Deportees* (BBPR, Carpi 1963 ff.), to the interplay between pre-existing structures and reinforced concrete surfaces that characterises Romano Boico's intervention in the *Risiera di San Sabba* (Trieste 1967-74).

The interplay between architecture and art, far beyond mere collaboration in the field, also occurs through sculptors and artists' commitment or creative needs. In addition to the tradition of the anti-monument, all played out on the boundary between sculpture and architecture, one thinks of an installation such as Gunter Deming's *Stumbling Stones*, started in Cologne in the mid-1990s, which takes the elementary and founding constructive act of architecture - the simple laying of a stone - as the focus of artistic and performative action. A choice that offers the extemporaneous artistic action a duration in time and an intimate belonging to the infra-ordinary dimension of the city, reinforcing the proposed memorial action.

Similar reflections could be articulated on the mutual relationships between writing and architecture that invariably mark the production we are dealing with. At times, architecture renounces its own expressive ambitions, offering itself as a simple surface for a written narrative, as very often happens, with different accents, in the production on the subject from the BBPR group (the *Monument-Museum* in Carpi, dominated by writing, but writing constantly returns in the works on the theme of the Milanese group as 'archival' support for architectural

and formal solutions). In other works, writing is at the basis of a process of generating architectural form, as is the case with the *Jewish Museum* in Berlin (1988) by Daniel Libeskind.

But, alongside the formal research that architecture shares and intertwines with other fields of expression, there is a story - and a lively field of action - concerning the specific opportunity offered by architectural design to introduce the reparation of space and a victim's body into the memorial action.

By its very nature, this component is difficult to recount in words and images since it relates, as mentioned, to the individual experience that one can have when visiting memorial architecture and goes beyond the field of representation. However, as the start of possible research, it is possible to describe what devices the architects put in place so that such an experience is possible and solicited.

The history of the experiential component of memorial architecture dedicated
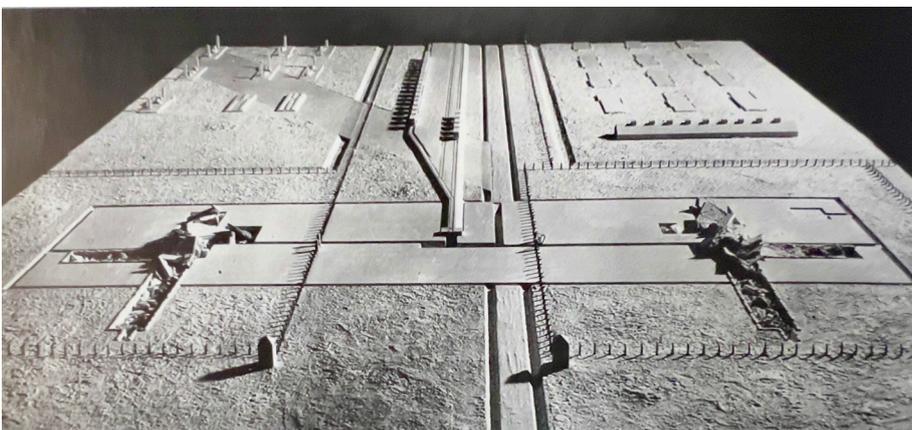
Fig. 7
M. Labò, *Monument in honour of Italians*, 1955

Fig. 8
AA VV, Auschwitz memorial, unified project (1959) (Giorgio Simoncini, *La memoria di Auschwitz. Storia di un monumento 1957-1967* (Milan: Jaca Book, 2011)

to political and racial deportation during the Second World War may begin with a failure.

The celebrated Monument erected by BBPR at the Monumental Cemetery in Milan has, in fact, a tormented design and construction history, which also includes difficulty in attributing exact proportions to the cubic grid and placing it in an appropriate position in relation to the observation of visitors. But this uncertainty, linked to perception, is accompanied by a more significant deficiency, namely the lack of an space offered to spontaneous actions of commemoration by the families of the victims (placing of photographs, remembrance of names, floral tributes). A space that is spontaneously generated over time in correspondence with commemorative moments and that BBPR then assume in the project by elaborating a new version of it.

The availability, the offering of a scene, of an occasion for spontaneous commemorations is instead the choice that characterises Labò's *Monument in honour of Italians*. In fact, Mario Labò, a refined and cultured architect, decides to renounce all personal formal invention to reuse a material found and charged with painful experience, such as the stones of the infamous "death staircase" and to offer, in the elementary form of a wall, a surface available to spontaneous commemorations. A direct, personal, unguided interrogation of the painful material of which the camp was made up that we can consider extreme and exemplary with respect to the theme of an architecture that leaves room for spontaneous memorial rituals.

The complex affair of the *Auschwitz-Birkenau International Monument* (1957-77) certainly inaugurates another no less decisive and subsequently often recurring theme, namely the crossing, the exploratory, cognitive, meditative and emotional journey based on the conviction that there is a coincidence between memorial site and monument.[10] A theme anticipated and radically developed in an intervention of lesser international resonance but of extraordinary quality, such as the 1953 Kampor Memorial on the island of Rab by Edvard Ravnikar. Lacking the celebratory component, the memorial act is entirely entrusted to an interpretative action of the place that architecture must not completely

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10   See Giorgio Simoncini, *La memoria di Auschwitz. Storia di un monumento 1957-1967* (Milan: Jaca Book, 2011), especially the chapter *"Il Monumento è il Campo"*, 23-31.

Fig. 9
E. Ravnikar, *Kampor Memorial,* 1953 (ph. GL)

predetermine because there is an immemorial content that cannot be entrusted to a positive expression fixed by the author of the architecture. The project must, however, offer the visitor the tools and the occasion to search for the immemorial component in a repeated and necessarily individual investigation. An open action that is not entrusted to the hypostatisation of memory in a monument but is based on a process of constant and repeated effort to remember through bodily actions. Of course, all the "visiting experiences" offered by the preservation and/or reconstruction of the Nazi camps or other places connected to the concentration camp system are also part of this framework. Performative experiences, one might say, to which the visitor is called.

BBPR's *Monument-Museum* in Carpi is the first work that masterfully summarises and reinvents the combination of actions required of the visitor: historical knowledge, artistic suggestion, and emotional participation. The actions are clearly distinguished and intertwined in the project. The visitor must wander through the rooms of the museum, reading evocative phrases and observing images on the blank page of the walls of the castle, as if they were a normal place of art whose theme is memory. During the visit, he must look out over the uncovered tombs of the showcases where he finds the "few remains" of the concentration camp experience, the personal contact with the immemorial. An explicit design instruction by Lodovico Belgojoso makes it clear that the two paths must not interfere and that they are two distinct experiences. Again, the visitor must take himself to the *Hall of Names*, where the reading changes from evocative to testimonial and where the immemorial is healed through the process of naming. A use of the name that is reversed in meaning in the *Stele Courtyard* where the inscriptions recall not the victims but the names of the camps. The stelae, pre-monumental elements in themselves, thus become - in their remembrance not of the victim but of the place of the crime, admonishing rather than celebrating as the designer himself implies - radical forerunners of the anti-monument. The visitor is asked, in the face of the use of the same medium, a vigilant attitude that allows him to grasp the semantic gap in the use of the written text: evocation in the *Letters*[11] collected by Nelo Risi etched on walls, reparation in the *Hall of Names*, warning in the *Courtyard of the stelae*. Only at the end of the exhibition itinerary could one access a library room (never realised) to acquire historical knowledge. But, as the designers specify in the project report, "The emotional succession depends above all on the variations of the
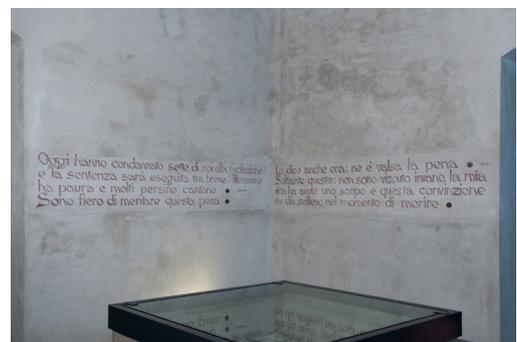
10a - 10b - 10c

Fig. 10a - 10b - 10c
BBPR, *Monument in memory of the fallen in the concentration camps in Germany*, 1945
(ph. A. Chemollo)

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11   The passages engraved on the walls of the Museum-Monument are taken from: Piero Malvezzi, Giovanni Pirelli, eds., *Lettere dei condannati a morte della Resistenza europea*, preface by Thomas Mann (Turin: Einaudi 1954).
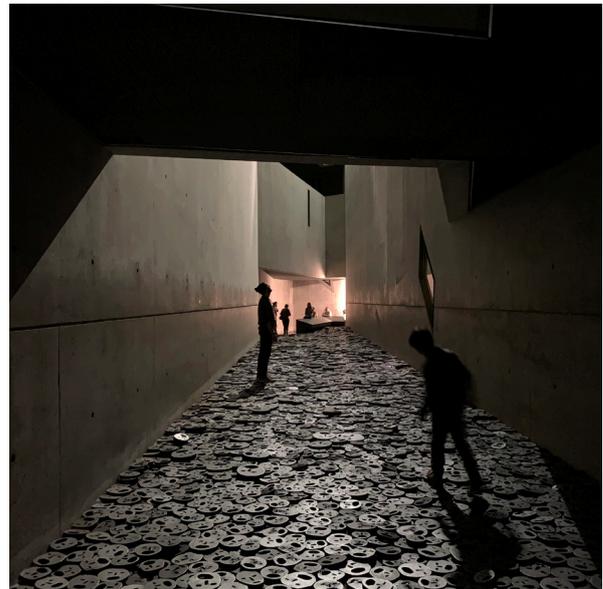
overall theme. The spectator will acquire the symbolic representation of events almost to the extent of his breathing along the winding path of the castle".[12]

The theme of the individual path, of the cognitive and emotional crossing, becomes almost unfailing in the subsequent architectures dedicated to the memory of the Shoah, from the *Gusen Memorial* by BBPR themselves (1967) to the *Risiera di San Sabba* by Boico, from the forest of stelae of Eisenman's *Memorial* in Berlin to *Jewish Museum* by Libeskind, which enriches it with real performative activities required of the visitor such as the walk - sensationally powerful - on the bed of metal discs representing the identical faces of the deportees.

The investigation into the experiential dimension of memorial architecture of the second half of the twentieth century related to the Shoah, starting with the matrix architectures mentioned here, would certainly deserve to be developed in terms of cataloguing and would benefit from a comparison with other productions in favour of victims who disappeared for political crimes. This would certainly also be challenging research in terms of methodology and means of cataloguing and dissemination since it deals with a component of architecture that escapes the usual disciplinary instruments of representation and would, therefore, require fertile disciplinary interweaving.
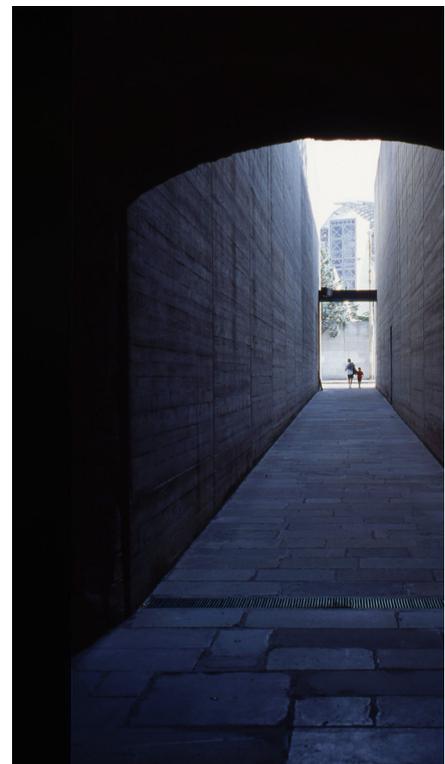
11a - 11b - 11c

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12   For a more in-depth discussion of these issues in relation to the Carpi Museum-Monument we refer to Giovanni Leoni, "In Memory of the Other Resistance. The Places and Architecture of the Fossoli Memorial" in: Matteo Cassani Simonetti, Roberta Mira, Daniele Salerno, eds., *The Heritage of a Transit Camp Fossoli: History, Memory, Aesthetics* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2021), 107 - 160.

Fig. 11a - 11b - 11c
BBPR, *Gusen Memorial*, 1965
R. Boico, *Risiera di San Sabb*a, 1967-74 (ph. GL)
D. Libeskind, *Jewish Museum*, 1988 sgg. (ph. GL)

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