

**Zero Gravity**  
**Franco Albini Architetto**  
**Costruire le modernità**

The Milan Triennale and the DARC (Department for Contemporary Art and Architecture) present the exhibition *Zero Gravity. Franco Albini. Costruire le modernità* on the occasion of the centenary of birth of the Milanese architect and lecturer.

The original exhibition design and layout by Renzo Piano (together with Franco Origoni) cleverly expresses the poetic significance of Franco Albini's work in an ideal tribute to the great master from his great pupil. A suspended web of slim steel cables captures a collection drawings, photographs, models and audiovisual material. Following a chronological order through the Galleria spaces on the ground floor of the Triennale, the objective is to offer a new critical contribution to our understanding of one of the most important periods in Italian architecture.

The exhibition, coordinated for the Triennale by Fulvio Irace, is organized around thematic sections entrusted to different curators: *Macchine celibi*, curated by Fulvio Irace; *La Città Nuova: Milano e l'architettura razionale*, curated by Matilda Baffa; *Spazi atmosferici: l'architettura degli allestimenti*, curated by Federico Bucci; *Gli oggetti dell'abitare*, curated by Silvana Annicchiarico; *Stanze della memoria*, curated by Marco Albini; *Modernità e tradizione*, curated by Augusto Rossari; *L'arte del porgere: il museo tra Albini e Scarpa*, curated by Marco Mulazzani and Orietta Lanzarini; *La tecnologia e la città*, curated by Claudia Conforti.

The exhibition was made possible thanks in part to the contribution of Ras.

## **Macchine celibi**

Curated by Fulvio Irace

This section aims to explore, through the analysis of two remarkable exhibition designs, the dialectical relationships between two concepts of architecture hitherto located at opposite poles. Comparing Albinì's celebrated design for the "Room for a Man" at the VI Triennale of 1936 with Mollino's "visions" of the "House of Oberon" and "Farmhouse in a Rice Field" raises the hypothesis of a convergence towards a surrealist and self-referential interpretation of the classic Rationalist theme of domestic habitation.

## **La Città Nuova: Milano e l'architettura razionale**

Curated by Matilde Baffa

In 1930, Franco Albinì embarked on his professional career in association with Renato Camus and Giancarlo Palanti. From this point on, his work in the field of popular housing became one of the research themes in which Albinì best expressed his particular sensitivity to the organization of space. To an even greater degree than the technical and typological contents of his research into minimum housing and the house for all, however, his experimentation in the field of residential building became an opportunity for a scientific treatment of the theme of the new town and social space. In particular, the exhibition will feature plans, models and drawings from the major competitions for the public residential quarters (R. Giuliani, Baracca, Ponti, D'Annunzio) and the experiments with a new metropolitan vision (designs for the four satellite towns and "Milano verde").

## **Spazi atmosferici: l'architetture degli allestimenti**

Curated by Federico Bucci

From the very beginning of his career, Franco Albinì boldly interpreted invitations, above all from Edoardo Persico, to seek out an "Italian way" within the "European Renaissance". This led to the creation of works extremely well received by critics and public alike, such as the INA pavilions at the Milan Trade Fair and Bari's Levante Fair (from 1933 onwards), the designs for the Aeronautics Exhibition (1934), for the VI (1936) and VII (1939) Milan Triennales and for the exhibition *Scipione e il bianco e nero* (1941) held at the Pinacoteca di Brera. These works of interior architecture saw the development of the dual nature of Albinì's research devoted to the composition of "atmospherical spaces"; that is to say, spaces constructed "with air and light". The temporary sets and the furnishings created by Albinì in the decade 1930-40 on the one hand initiated a series of experiments with serial production and on the other gave rise to extraordinary inventions in which the architectural elements (such as the "suspended" stairs, the supports, the perforated false ceilings and so on) define the creation of a "room within a room".

## **Gli oggetti dell'abitare**

Curated by Silvana Annicchiarico

Franco Albini's industrial design objects are "minimum machines" combining the utmost structural efficiency with the lightness of a form that is always conceived as the result of a rigorous investigation into the technological possibilities of the project and material. This section of the exhibition documents the work of Albini the industrial designer, from the experiments of the first Triennales of the 1930s to the serial production of the post-war period, attempting to highlight both the remarkable technical characteristics of his objects (tension, dynamic equilibrium, suspension of weight and connections between the parts) and the unmistakable seal of Albini's taste and style. The exhibition features solely original objects.

## **Stanze della memoria**

curated by Marco Albini

The first attempt to clarify the role played by Franco Albini within Italian and international architectural culture was made in the 1950s by Giuseppe Samonà with a famous essay published by *Zodiac*. However, the natural reserve of the Milanese architect, combined with a detachment from all that did not belong to the concrete aspect of the profession, have by no means facilitated the task of the critics who, in a certain sense, have yet to fully capture the true contribution of the relationships spun by Albini – before and after the war – with the themes and protagonists of the most heated architectural debate. In this sense, rather than presenting individual episodes from the architect's life, the introductory section to the exhibition intends to contextualise Albini's artistic and professional development, his training, his friendships, his masters, his family background, in a broader cultural overview that from Milan and the circle of Persico and Pagano's *Casabella* magazine (with which Albini enjoyed close and as yet unexplored ties) stretches as far as the heart of modern European architectural culture.

## **Modernità e tradizione**

Curated by Augusto Rossari

This section presents some of the most significant examples of Albini's post-war work and their respective relationships with Italian architectural culture. In particular, taking into consideration a historical period ranging from the urgency of reconstruction through to the early Sixties, attention is focussed on three themes: a reflection on educated and spontaneous tradition, Neorealism and organic influences; Albini's specific point of view, the Pirovano refuge-hotel at Cervinia, the INA building in Parma, the Cesate quarter, the Olivetti villa near Ivrea and Villa Allemandi at Punta Ala (province of Grosseto); comparisons with Gardella's Borsalino house in Alessandria and the Ridolfi's houses in Viale Etiopia, Rome.

## **L'arte del porgere: il museo tra Albini e Scarpa**

Curated by Marco Mulazzani and Orietta Lanzarini

Albini's museums – along with those of BBPR, Gardella and Scarpa to cite some of the finest examples of post-war Italian museography – profoundly innovated exhibition techniques and equipment, pursuing a didactic concept of the museum while at the same time integrating ancient and modern and rising to the status of “works of art” in their own right. Palazzo Bianco, Palazzo Rosso and the Museum of the Treasury of San Lorenzo in Genoa, are masterpieces about which much has been written, but they are also works that merit further analysis, both in the light of Albini's post-war experience and in closer contact with the debate over tradition and the commitment to teaching that have projected Italian architectural culture into an international dimension. In particular, one of the themes tackled in this section is the comparison with the work of Carlo Scarpa in the museum field, from Palazzo Albatellis in Palermo to Castelvecchio Museum in Verona.

## **La tecnologia e la città**

Curated by Claudia Conforti

This section is configured around the interpretation of the city provided by Albini through certain public buildings, in particular the INA office building in Parma, the Rinascente store in Rome, the Sant'Agostino Museum in Genoa, the unsuccessful Eremitani intervention in Padua, the Saipem offices in San Donato and the Zoja spa in Salsomaggiore Terme. A comparison will be made with the urban or artificially naturalistic surroundings through original photographs and film. Furthermore, a comparison has also been established with the office and residential buildings in Via Guicciardini, Florence, by Giovanni Michelucci, the office building in Via Torino, Rome, by Adalberto Libera and the Fiuggi spa by Luigi Moretti.

## **Zero Gravity. Franco Albini**

### **Costruire le modernità**

Location	Milan Triennale Viale Alemagna 6 Tel. +39 02724341 Fax. +39 0289010693
Dates	28 September – 26 December 2006
Inauguration	27 September 2006, 6.30 pm
Coordination	Federico Bucci Curators of the thematic sections:

Macchine celibi, curated by Fulvio Irace

La Città Nuova: Milano e l'architettura razionale, curated by Matilde Baffa

Spazi atmosferici: l'architettura degli allestimenti, curated by Federico Bucci

Gli oggetti dell'abitare, curated by Silvana Annicchiarico

Stanze della memoria, curated by Marco Albini

Modernità e tradizione, curated by Augusto Rossari

L'arte del porgere: il museo tra Albini e Scarpa, curated by Marco Mulazzani  
and Orietta Lanzarini

La tecnologia e la città, curated by Claudia Conforti

Exhibition design

Renzo Piano with Franco Origoni

Opening hours

10.30 – 20.30, closed Mondays

Internet site

[www.triennale.it](http://www.triennale.it)

[www.francoalbinicentenario.it](http://www.francoalbinicentenario.it)

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