

Costruire le modernità

Franco Albini, Ignazio Gardella, Carlo Mollino

Costruire le modernità: Franco Albini, Ignazio Gardella e Carlo Mollino presents the work of three of the key figures in Italian creativity of the twentieth century. Albeit in different ways, all three have always been interpreted in the light of their presumed diversity with respects to what are, at least in Italy, the extremely vague canons of Rationalist modernity. In reality, these three architects considered their profession as a craft, at times – as in the case of Gardella and Mollino – associated with family engineering traditions. Construction and the site are essential elements in the identity of an architecture that is above all created in the making. However, Albini, Gardella and Mollino are also three architects who proved capable of interpreting new themes within Italian society of the twentieth century: the second home in the mountains or by the sea, the transformation of the concept of the museum, the consumer society with its new totems. Three architects moulded within regional cultures who nonetheless demonstrated an ability to interpret rather than submit to the international models proposed by their era. Three architects whose stories allow us to begin a rewriting of the history of twentieth century architecture that finally pays attention to its distribution, building techniques and materials and the at times conflictual dialogues with other professions: all elements that help piece together the rich and variegated panorama of Italian architecture of the short century.

Franco Albini (Robbiate, Lecco 1905 – Milan 1977), **Ignazio Gardella** (Milan 1905-1997) and **Carlo Mollino** (Turin 1905-1973) belong to the first generation of those Italian architects who proved capable of interpreting the most advanced principles of European modernity in the light of the national historical tradition. The motive for proposing reflections on these architects today is not only to be sought in the celebratory occasion of the centenary of their birth, but is above all to be identified in the need for debate regarding an “alternative” and shared way of experiencing the relationship between Italian modernity’s cravings for renewal and the problem of the permanence of one’s cultural roots in a period of crucial importance in the history of Italy as the country experienced Fascism, the war and then reconstruction.

The initiative is the fruit of a project bringing together three major exhibitions organised in three different cities: **Franco Albini Architetto** (at the Milan Triennale, from 28 September through to 26 December 2006); **Ignazio Gardella Architetto** (at Palazzo Ducale, Genoa, from 24 November 2006 through to 30 January 2007); **Carlo Mollino Architetto** (at the Archivio di Stato, Turin, from 12 October through to 7 January 2007).

The exhibitions, curated by an academic committee composed of Italian and international experts and coordinated so as to form a single event, will explore in depth the contribution made by the architectural poetic of each architect, examining the interweaving of the paths and the achievements of their careers within the Italian and international cultural panorama. Through the intellectual and professional biographies of three masters an attempt will be made to comprehend the characters of their respective architectural cultures, as

well as their respective professional environments, with the objective of reconstructing some of the key elements of twentieth century culture.

The academic project behind **Costruire le modernità: Franco Albini, Ignazio Gardella e Carlo Mollino** is the result of a pioneering collaboration between a number of different institutions: DARC, the Milan Triennale, Milan Polytechnic, Turin Polytechnic and the University of Genoa.

In their respective settings, the individual exhibitions will trigger a series of events and initiatives offering opportunities for discussion and in-depth examination of the most important thematic ties involving the three architects, such as their work in the fields of interior and industrial design, Alpine architecture, the construction of the city and teaching.

Furthermore, each exhibition is characterised by a virtual dialogue between architects of diverse generations thanks to design and layout projects entrusted to leading figures from the international architectural world: Renzo Piano with Franco Origoni for Franco Albini, Franz Prati for Ignazio Gardella, Alessandro Colombo (Studio Cerri & Associati) for Carlo Mollino. In 2007, the three sections making up **Costruire le modernità: Franco Albini, Ignazio Gardella e Carlo Mollino** will come together at the MAXXI museum in Rome.

Press releases and images:

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