



A.A.M. ARCHITETTURA ARTE MODERNA

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history of the activities of A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna from 1977/1978 to date

A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna is a cultural centre inspired by the charming ambition to identify an over-system of mutual relations, by drawing analogies between isolated and seemingly different systems. Its author and founder, Francesco Moschini, more recently helped by Gabriel Vaduva, has been able to create a circular link between different “skills and tasks”, as a committed intellectual and a university teacher of art and architecture history (Politecnico of Bari). The public library, “Fondo Francesco Moschini Archivio A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna per le Arti, le Scienze e l’Architettura”, is proof of his commitment.

A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna aims to create a space for reflection, where tools and materials of knowledge, analysis and history mingle with art and architecture. From this perspective, the study subjects are always different: as for architecture, the procedure goes from each architect’s planning drawings to the building of cities from a historical perspective, with the architects being the actual makers of those towns. Another objective is to combine and compare architecture with other disciplines: visual arts, photography, scenography, design, etc. There are basically four different activities involved in this effort: exhibitions, lectures with slides and discussions, publications and projects. Exhibitions are designed either to promote a single artist/architect’s work or to cover the current cultural themes, showing the interactions and interferences among the artistic disciplines.

A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna was founded in January 1978 in Rome, with an exhibition promoted by Maurizio Di Puolo and devoted to Edoardo Persico, and has gradually attained a particular cultural significance, even beyond the boundaries of the city. It should be carefully borne in mind when and where A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna started to work. 1978 was the year after the last youth revolt, when culture was being eclipsed from universities, under the pretext of a massive increase in the student numbers, thus flattening all cultural qualities. The “birthplace” was Rome, a periphery of the empire, border land and realm of individualism, but also a place in ferment, where the struggle to survive made any creative contribution look more intense and, maybe, aggressive and vital. This is where and when A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna was born, soon becoming a Study and Research Centre for the Organisation and Promotion of Cultural Activities, more recently helped by a parallel publishing activity.

Hence the need for acquainted, curious, eclectic, reliable figures. When looking back at the work made by A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna now, after so many years, it can be recognised as a real masterpiece, whose main effect so far has been to identify Rome as a melting pot within the national frame, bringing the city to the forefront as a place of cultural exchange. Among the major monographic exhibitions, let us remember those devoted to the Roman Carlo Aymonino, Franco Purini, Dario Passi, Franz Prati, Alessandro Anselmi and the Group G.R.A.U., to the Milanese Aldo Rossi, Arduino Cantafora, Massimo Scolari, Giorgio Grassi, Mario Bellini, Antonio Monestiroli, Luca Scacchetti, and then to Gianugo Polesello, Franco Stella and Francesco Venezia. Thanks to the exhibitions on “vintage shops in Rome”, which placed the city in a historical perspective, lots of new names, obscured by critics, have come to light: Innocenzo Sabbatini, Quadrio Pirani, Giuseppe Vaccaro and Giulio Magni, among the others. All this was made trying to seize the right chances at the right time, but also with watchful eyes, detailed information and credibility. These qualities allowed the organisation of exhibitions such as “Some drawings for America” (Carlo Aymonino) and “Berlín LutzowPlatz: a selection of Italian works for the event Berlin I.B.A.”; among the other exhibitions, let us not forget those devoted to international architects (e.g. Steven Holl, in 1981), and to the projects of Diana Agrest and Mario Gandelsonas, in 1983, Vito Acconci, in 1988, Heinz Tesar and Carme Pinòs, in 1996.

With the passing of the years, besides the series of architectural monographs, several exhibitions have been devoted to extraordinary graphic designers and illustrators, like Massimo Bucchi, Paolo Cardoni, Mario Cresci, Alfredo De Santis, Cinzia Leone, Riccardo Mannelli, Bruno Munari, Andrea Paziienza, Roberto Perini, Roberto Pieraccini, Chiara Rapaccini, Gianfranco Torri, Giuliano Vittori. A.A.M.’s attention has been constant especially towards artists like Carla Accardi, Carl Andre, Roberto Barni, Sigfrido Martin Bague, Alighiero Boetti, Alberto Burri, Maurizio Cannavacciuolo, Roberto Caracciolo, Nicola Carrino, Paolo Cotani, Enzo Cucchi, Stefano Di Stasio, Lino Frongia, Jannis Kounellis, Maria Lai, Felice Levini, Giancarlo

Limoni, Sergio Lombardo, Teodosio Magnoni, Renato Mambor, Fabio Mauri, Ana Mendieta, Elisa Montessori, Carmengloria Morales, Costantino Nivola, Luigi Ontani, Giulio Paolini, Gianfranco Pardi, Achille Perilli, Roberto Pietrosanti, Emilio Prini, Mario Schifano, Ettore Sordini, Mauro Staccioli, Marco Tirelli, Giulio Turcato, Giuseppe Uncini, Claudio Verna, Stanley Whitney.

From an artistic standpoint, A.A.M. has always been characterised by “planned” actions: the acquisition of works is purely based on methods of research and experimentation aimed at finding similar artists and developing targeted cultural policies.

The elaborate and composite avant-garde artists, who found their interdisciplinary approach to art in the Rome of the sixties, have been voiced in the series “Ut pictura architectura: the logical construction of the work” (Paolo Cotani and Ettore Sordini), with the photographic exhibitions by Gianni Berengo Gardin, Gabriele Basilico, Roberto Bossaglia, Antonio Biasiucci, Fernand Léger (with Charlotte Perriand and Pierre Jeanneret), and with the still unknown exhibitions devoted to theatre companies like “Altro”, with Achille Perilli and Lucia Latour, “Falso Movimento” with Lino Fiorito, “Giardini Pensili”, “Societas Raffaello Sanzio”, “Compagnia Solari-Vanzi”, “Sergio Tramonti”, “Teatro della Valdoca” with Antonio Annichiarico.

A.A.M. was the first to conceive the successful “encounter” between an architect and a painter: on the occasion of an exhibition, they can compare the similarities of their language, form and space. Memorable are the first “Duets”, between Enzo Cucchi and Dario Passi, Costantino Dardi and Giulio Paolini, Vittorio Gregotti and Elisa Montessori, Franco Purini and Giuseppe Uncini, Alighiero Boetti and Ettore Sottsass, Alessandro Mendini and Luigi Ontani. These experiments were carried out during the years of cultural cooperation between Francesco Moschini (A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna) and Gruppo Ferruzzi.

Last but not least, A.A.M. has been able to develop into a research centre for the organisation of Planning Workshops, with the help of the Assessorato per gli Interventi sul Centro Storico: they have been created as an occasion for reconsidering and planning Rome’s architecture, in order to gather several Italian cultural representatives for a consultation on the problems of the city and its old town.

After over thirty years from its beginnings, A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna has now recognised the need to think back on its story and take stock of its maieutic role towards contemporary art and architecture, in order to compose, with the various “tesserae” piled up year by year, a wide-ranging mosaic, which is difficult to control, but clearly defined in its artistic and publishing projects, which are guaranteed by the series of volumes edited by different publishers.

Besides the annual exhibitions organised by A.A.M. in Rome and Milan, the rich volume production includes catalogues and several series of architecture books (mostly published by Kappa). Among these are “Città e progetto” (“City and Project”), “Progetto / Dettaglio” (“Project / Detail”), “Quaderni di progetto e dettaglio” (“Books of project and detail”), “Interni di progetto e dettaglio” (“Descriptions of Project and Detail”), “Architettura / Materiali” (“Architecture / Materials”), “Esercizi, testi e Immagini” (“Exercises, texts and images”), “Quaderni dell’A.A.M.” (“A.A.M.’s Books”). Among the most important volumes published in Italy, in the second half of the twentieth century, are Franco Purini’s “Luogo e progetto” (“Place and Project”, 1976), about the role of drawing in architectural conception, and “Alcune forme della casa” (“Some house shapes”), released on the occasion of the exhibition with the same title. Let us not forget Costantino Dardi’s “Semplice, lineare, complesso” (“Simple, linear, complex”), about the relations between the architectural object and the urban context, Mario Ridolfi’s “Poetica del dettaglio” (“Poetics of Detail”, 1997), and “Centro Di”’s monographs in series, with catalogues devoted to Aldo Rossi, Massimo Scolari, Giorgio Grassi and Paolo Portoghesi’s works. A.A.M. has thus gone beyond exhibitions to enter into the domain of catalogues about the cultural activities taking place in Rome, but not limited to its architecture. All this is explained in detail in the volume “Disegni di architettura italiana dal dopoguerra a oggi” (“Italian architectural designs from the postwar period to the present day”), published on the occasion of the exhibition held in the Medicean Stables in Poggio a Caiano (2002), which shows the impressive collection of architectural creations by Francesco Moschini. By presenting the most influential results of the “designed architecture season”, the corpus containing over 2500 drawings belonging to the Collection “Francesco Moschini and Gabriel Vaduva A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna” is one of the most important archives as to the research and study of architecture and visual arts: thanks to its thirty-year story, it shows a way of thinking about research and culture dependent on the prestige and generosity they need to have to be offered to the general public, despite what art may often tell us. Besides the exhibitions, A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna has played a major role, over the last few years, in producing and promoting cultural activities for national and international public and private bodies and institutions.

From a planning and architectural standpoint, A.A.M. planned and organised some Planning Workshops (“Rome ‘83”, “Cerreto Sannita ‘88”, “Toronto ‘90”, and “Cassino ‘94”), as well as a series of lectures, hosting the most prestigious and influential national and international names, such as Manfredo Tafuri, Rafael Moneo, Joseph Rykwert, Richard Burdett, Paul Chemetov.

From 1994 to 2004, A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna also promoted cultural activities, discussions and lectures in Milan, with exhibitions devoted to international names: “Ettore Sottsass and Memphis” (1994), “Heinz Tesar” (1996), “Peter Zumthor” (1998), “Antonio Citterio & Partners”, “Italo Rota & Partners”, “Carlo Mollino”, “Álvaro Siza Vieira” (1999), “Sverre Fehn” (2000), “Steven Holl” (2001), “Raimund Abraham” and “Joe Coenen” (2002) and “Juan Navarro Baldeweg” (2003).

From 1987 to 1998, A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna was in charge of the cultural activities, exhibitions and publications of the European Institute of Design, under Francesco Moschini’s scientific and cultural direction.

Besides its publishing activities and exhibitions “in situ”, A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna has always organised exhibitions for public institutions in Italy and abroad, like the most recent devoted to “Álvaro Siza” (2008) and “Steven Holl” (2010), both introduced by Francesco Moschini’s critical essays and held in the Castle of Acaya (Lecce); or the exhibitions devoted to Aldo Rossi, held in the National Academy of Saint Luke in Rome (2008) and the Politecnico of Milan (2009). Moreover, A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna has always taken part in the exhibitions promoted by national and international institutions, exhibiting materials from its own archives, on several occasions, at the Triennale in Milan (Italy), the IVAM Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno in Valencia (Spain), and the Deutsches Architektur Museum in Frankfurt am Main (Germany).

At the end of the nineties, A.A.M.’s bibliographic and documentary heritage was brought together in the “Fondo Francesco Moschini Archivio A.A.M. Architettura Arte Moderna per le Arti, le Scienze e l’Architettura”: there are over 70000 volumes among books, magazines and catalogues. This Library is currently located in the DAU (Department of Architecture and Urban planning - Politecnico of Bari), and hosts a considerable number of multidisciplinary books and one of the most complete collections of art and architecture catalogues published in the twentieth century. The Library intends to be a “space of critical reflection” about different cultural issues, and aims to establish a permanent dialogue between different languages. Among the several cultural activities promoted by the “Fondo Francesco Moschini Archivio A.A.M.”, let us not forget the Project T.E.S.I., which represents a moment of synthesis between Francesco Moschini’s educational and cultural activities. In the framework of this Project, A.A.M. has organised a series of Lectiones Magistrales about the theme Book/Library at the Politecnico of Bari, hosting illustrious names like Antonella Agnoli, Massimo Cacciari, Luciano Canfora, Mario Cresci, Gianfranco Dioguardi, Massimiliano Fuksas, Marco Muscogiuri, Ruggero Pierantoni, Franco Purini.