

*The Renewed Gaze: The Narrative of Architecture in Early 20th-Century Exhibitions
Between Continuity and Experimentation
Radical Exhibited Thought. Exhibitions of Architecture in Italy, 2*

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The series is developed by the research unit of the University of Bologna (Department of the Arts) as part of the MIUR PRIN2022 project, prot. 2022, CHASRE – Radical Exhibited Thought: Exhibitions of Architecture in Italy in the Contemporary Age.

The series *Pensiero Radicale Esibito. Mostre dell'architettura in Italia* (*Radical Exhibited Thought. Exhibitions of Architecture in Italy*) aims to study exhibitions that have managed to revise the criteria of architectural design and the very concept of an exhibition in relation to cultural, social, and political changes, through the experimentation of true communicative devices specifically conceived for a given space. Architects, artists, critics, and curators have been able to create exhibition installations that go beyond the mere presentation of individual works, turning them into spaces for the experimentation of different forms of engagement. These have varied according to the time period and communicative, political, and social intentions: sometimes appearing as a machine for the spectacular persuasion of individual visitors; at other times, through provocative actions aimed at awakening a critical attitude in an audience that was no longer the traditional gallery-goer; and in other instances, with the educational aim of raising awareness among a broader public about environmental changes and the risks facing the planet. The project, over time, has become a political act of consciousness, occurring in galleries, streets, or landscapes, and has reflected on the discipline of architecture in different ways, depending on the historical period, but always with an understanding of the urgency to reconsider its creative and critical foundations and its operational purposes.

This volume of the series *Pensiero Radicale Esibito. Mostre dell'architettura in Italia*, titled *Lo sguardo rinnovato. Il racconto sull'architettura nelle mostre del primo Novecento tra continuità e sperimentazione* (*The Renewed Gaze: The Narrative of Architecture in Early 20th-Century Exhibitions Between Continuity and Experimentation*), offers a historical, formal, and methodological reflection on the various cultural phases that shaped architectural exhibitions during a time of drastic technical, stylistic, social, and urban changes. While in the early years of the Italian unification, architectural exhibitions were integrated within broader expositions that also showcased Fine Arts and industrial artifacts, by the early 20th century, architecture gained its own narrative independence as an autonomous exhibition type, engaging in a dialogue with new disciplinary dimensions, such as ethnography. Starting from the second decade of the 20th century, the influence

of the avant-garde left its mark also on the Italian exhibition scene. Examples include the *Città Futura* exhibition in Milan (1914) and the *Prima mostra di architettura futurista* in Turin (1928), reflecting a cultural environment open to experimental practices. From 1933 onwards, with the Milan Triennale, architecture began to profoundly shape the exhibitions of the time through installations that interacted with contemporary European trends, often linked to a functionalist style. Alongside avant-garde and innovative projects, there was also an emphasis on rural architectural techniques, where vernacular forms were presented as both testimonies and potential sources of inspiration for updating the language of architectural composition (Milan, 1936).

The period between the two World Wars, however, is marked by the emergence of rationalist-driven research and its presentation to the public (Rome 1928 and 1931). Italy offered a technical and formal update on architectural design, with prominent figures such as Giuseppe Terragni, Adalberto Libera, and Giuseppe Pagano giving voice to this movement in highly influential institutional exhibitions. The intense debate between the rationalist movement and a more overtly celebratory monumentalism, which glorified power, characterized the entire fourth decade of the century. This tension culminated in the triumph of the latter, which was meant to find its most internationally recognized expression in the 1942 Universal Exposition, an event that never took place. The missed opportunity of this event symbolized the end of a period of intense ferment in architectural discourse, where the staging of both temporary and permanent proposals and their communication to the public became a key interpretative prism.

Building on these premises, architectural exhibitions—analyzed through integrated methodologies that consider different design, organizational, and communication strategies—contributed to the evolution of the discourse on the goals and functions of architectural practice. In the complex dialogue between built or imagined architecture and museographic display, the historical memory of the early 20th century and today's renewed perspective on those exhibitions highlight the ruptures and continuities that continue to shape temporary and permanent exhibition forms.

This volume of the series aims to promote reflections, not exclusively, on the following thematic areas:

- Cultural and identity principles of architectural design and its communication through exhibition contexts.
- The grammar of architectural narrative: the exhibition of drawings, photographs, models, casts, etc.
- The avant-garde's disruptive influence on critical debate and within architectural exhibitions.
- New horizons and new boundaries of the city: the relationship between architecture and urban planning.

- The languages of architecture, from the revival of regional traditions to the reception of international trends, and the comparison between traditional exhibition approaches and new spatial experiments.
- The presence of Italian architects or the memory of Italian forms in exhibitions abroad.
- The celebration of new materials and technical innovations in architectural exhibitions.
 - Interior architecture: historical reconstructions and contemporary installations in exhibition displays.
- The relationship between exhibited architecture and creative industries.
- The controversies of memory: the imperial and colonial narrative and its deconstruction.
- The renewed gaze: Italian architectures and architects of the early 20th century featured in exhibitions from the late 20th century to today (e.g., centenaries, commemorations, inauguration of new foundations, etc.).

Proposals are selected through the submission of an abstract of 1,500 characters (including spaces and notes) to be sent via email to:

pensieroradicale@unibo.it

Deadline: January 31, 2025

Accepted languages: Italian, English, and French.

There are two types of contributions:

- Focus, rediscoveries, and reinterpretations: A text of 20,000–30,000 characters, including spaces and notes, accompanied by up to 6 copyright-free images.
- Article, critical essay: A text of 30,000–50,000 characters, including spaces and notes, accompanied by up to 10 copyright-free images.

Upon acceptance of the abstract, the full text must be submitted by May 31, 2025, after which it will undergo a double-blind peer review process.

The publication is scheduled for fall 2025 in both open-access and print formats (with ISBN), as part of the *Pensiero Radicale Esibito. Mostre dell'architettura in Italia* series.

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