

## Aldo Rossi. The architect and the cities

A major exhibition celebrating the inimitable and brilliant master of architecture, across more than 800 drawings, sketches, notes, letters, photographs, models and documents

from 10 March to October 2021

*Curated by* Alberto Ferlenga  
*in collaboration with* Fondazione Aldo Rossi

*Rome, February 2021.* Following a retrospective dedicated to Gio Ponti in 2019, **Aldo Rossi** the world-renowned architect – becomes the focus of another significant retrospective at **MAXXI, the National Museum of 21st Century Arts** in Rome, curated by **Alberto Ferlenga**, created in collaboration with **Fondazione Aldo Rossi** curated by **Chiara Spangaro** and thanks to the precious collaboration of **Fausto e Vera Rossi**, sponsor **Molteni&C** and **UniFor**.

The exhibition will take place in MAXXI's Galleria 2, from 10 March to October 2021.

Aldo Rossi, whose archive forms part of the MAXXI Architettura Collection directed by **Margherita Guccione**, is an architect who has enjoyed some of the greatest fame in contemporary Italian architecture.

The first Italian winner of the Pritzker Prize in 1990, Rossi built his international career in just over ten years, anticipating a role as a global "Archistar" - artist, intellectual and builder at the same time – a role which few before him had realised and which, in its development, we would only later observe in the practices of a handful of other architects.

**A constant notion found in his work is an attention to the reading of cities:** of their past and present, in their most visible and deepest parts, from the urban scale to design (something also seen in the architectural fantasies of his drawings, in which oversized everyday objects and architectural forms reconstruct urban scenarios).

Together with other architects of his generation, Rossi was an interpreter of the fundamental necessity of cultural reconstruction, taking place during the thrust of post-war responsibilities and owing to his extraordinary ability to "gather" and attract the best of the international culture of his time.

Taking place more than 20 years after his death and since the last major monographic exhibition in Milan, this important retrospective on Aldo Rossi offers an opportunity to not only gather extraordinary materials, spread across numerous archives and private collections around the world, but also to reflect on the specific features characteristic to Italian architecture from the second half of the twentieth century. This is an architecture that has been able to anticipate and meet the needs of a wider world, and comes on the recent fortune of an Italian architect and intellectual difficult to fit into the stereotypical schemas of a rapidly evolving profession, an inexhaustible bearer of suggestions and ideas.

### The exhibition

The exhibition presents a rich selection of drawings, models, documents and photographs mainly gathered from Aldo Rossi's archive in the MAXXI Architettura and Fondazione Aldo Rossi collections, with the participation of some important lenders such as The IUAV University in Venice - Projects Archive, the Deutsches Architekturmuseum in Frankfurt, and the Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht.

Starting from **a central presentation of the materials that contributed to the formation of Aldo Rossi's architectural practice and his cultural projects in a post-war Milan** through to a display of the photographs of **Enrico Peressutti**, the exhibition's itinerary is marked by drawings, projects, writings and archival documents that show both the complexity of a figure with multifarious and

overlapping interests and the vastness of his relationships. Ultimately the exhibition explores a process of growth of an artistic personality at the same time "obsessed" with specific recurring and "curious" themes of the world.

At the ends of the gallery **focus displays** are dedicated to the two most significant projects by Aldo Rossi, **the Theatre of the World**, in Venice, and the **Cemetery of Modena**, which are told through original materials and the photos of **Antonio Martinelli**, **Luigi Ghirri** and **Stefano Topuntoli**.

Along the gallery, in a jagged and crowded central spine like the fabric of the cities themselves, more than **40 models** – including miniature fragments of the **Città Analoga**, which, evoked several times, then reveals itself fully in a large 2 x 2 metre drawing - follow one another, establishing a close relationship with the project works, as many fragments of the narratives of the cities, poetic and realistic, converge.

Included among the projects on display are two of the most important Italian theatres, the **Carlo Felice in Genova** and the **Fenice in Venice**; projects for the **piazza di Fontivegge in Perugia** and the **Gallaratese**, a long urban building that recalls the typical Milanese gallery house, both restoring an urban role to the suburbs; the **Maastricht Museum**, the more important Museum realised by Rossi; the colourful complex of the **Schützenstrasse in Berlin**, provocative criticism of the grey reconstruction of the city, and the **Disney Headquarters in Orlando**, an example of colorful urban fragmentation in which the historical forms of the Italian city blend with the verticality of the American city.

Two display cases house the famous **blue notebooks** (*Quaderni azzurri*), a sort of diary with reflections, notes, memories and drawings from which the quotations accompanying the entire exhibition are taken.

Exhibition finishes with the famous **Piroscafo** bookshop, designed thirty years ago with Rossi's lifelong friend Luca Meda for Molteni&C, **Parigi** chairs (1989) produced by UniFor and a **videogallery** with interviews, interventions at conferences and documentaries from the 1980s and 1990s.

Drawings and photographs are on 40 tables created ad-hoc for the occasion by Molteni & C.

Especially for the exhibition, the **Inventory of the Aldo Rossi Archive** will be published in the **MAXXI Architettura Collections**. The Inventory, which represents an important tool for researchers and the broad museum audience, lists and describes his rich and diverse collection consisting of 1909 graphic drawings, 1895 photographs, 11 models, 30 folders filled with documents, correspondence and general writings documenting the professional, artistic, didactic, scientific and cultural activity of the architect. Furthermore, Electa will publish **Aldo Rossi. I miei progetti raccontati**, by Alberto Ferlenga, a collection of all the presentations written by Aldo Rossi to introduce his projects, a real parallel pathway of considerations along which his works come to life through the narration and the words hold the same communicative and emotional strength of his drawings.

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