

## The rational space of art Pietro Lingeri and the Installations of Lisa Borgiani

Alessandro Colombo

### Abstract

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This essay aims to present some original experiences in the relationships between Art and Architecture, thanks to lightweight exhibition designs that add a new element to temporary and sustainable use of modern architectures, even as part of a potential restoration. We revisit the history of the Italian Rationalism, with particular attention to its origins in Lombardy and the school of Como through the work of Pietro Lingeri. Lisa Borgiani, a contemporary artist, approaches these examples of the architectures of the 30s, with a series of lightweight and reversible installations that utilize an existing industrial material – a nylon net – in a completely different context, kick starting a new reflection on the rational space of art, outlining new potential approaches to the sustainable and reversible use of modern architectures. This contribution suggests a new potential way to temporarily use architectural and urban spaces while waiting for their complete restoration, giving them a new function once the original one has gone.

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### The Rationalist Architecture in Italy

“È nato un nuovo spirito” (A new spirit is born). In 1926, from the pages of "Rassegna Italiana", the Gruppo 7 – a team of architects from the Politecnico of Milan, including Luigi Figini e Gino Pollini, Guido Frette, Sebastiano Larco, Carlo Enrico Rava, Giuseppe Terragni and Ubaldo Castagnoli, who would be replaced the following year by Adalberto Libera – quote Le Corbusier and founded the Italian Rationalism.

The aesthetics of new materials – concrete, iron, glass and glass blocks – originated in Milan, often considered the most European city, where there were a number of forward-thinking industrialist customers open to new ideas.

Architecture should be “no longer individual”, subjective to the single “architect-artist”, but had to go back to logic and rationality, following the ideas and methods of the *Movimento moderno*, from Le Corbusier to Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. The entire architectural language had to change – in Italy after the great Eclecticism of the ‘800s and the Art Nouveau, the Futurism failed to leave a mark – through a revolutionary spirit. This led to the fascination with Fascism, which remembered the classic models and used them as cultural roots.

In 1928, the Gruppo 7 and the entire rationalist movement went to Rome to participate to the first Esposizione Italiana of Architettura Razionale – sponsored by the group leader, Adalberto Libera – to legitimize their work as the *Architettura di Stato riconosciuta ufficialmente dal regime Fascista* (State Architecture Officially Recognized by the Fascist Regime). This led to the foundation of the MIAR (Movimento Italiano per l'Architettura Razionale; Italian Movement for Rational Architecture) and the following debates found their way into “Casabella” (thanks to Giuseppe Pagano and Edoardo Persico) and “Quadrante” (directed by Pier Maria Bardi and Massimo Bontempelli).

### The Lombardy Experience, Between Milan and Como

In Milan, the new Rationalist movement witnessed the construction of houses, factories, public buildings, exhibitions, shops and booths. It was the great moment of the exemplary architectures of the Triennale, including the great Stage of Palazzo dell'Arte by Muzio and Simplon Park. The *machine à habiter* created simple and stereo metric designs, flat roofs, ribbon windows, free plants and structural frames, all included in buildings that achieved their purpose without any apparent decoration. Among these works, it's important to remember Figini's house at the Villaggio dei Giornalisti, Belgioioso's Casa Feltrinelli, Mario Pagano's Bocconi University, Figini and Pollini's overlapping houses and, last but not least, the five houses in Milan by Giuseppe Terragni and Pietro Lingeri (Casa Rustici, Casa Ghiringhelli, Casa Lavezzari, Casa Toninello and Casa Comolli Rustici).

Milan is often compared to Como, especially the around surrounding the Novocomum and the Casa del Fascio, the two works that made Terragni the most important voice of the modern Italian architecture. The Rationalism of Como was also reinforced by the works of Lingeri and Cesare Cattaneo, both in the city and on the lake, highlighting this new architectural language in many important works.

### **The Movimento Lariano**

In Como, the modern architectural movement started with the young Giuseppe Terragni and Pietro Lingeri: the *Novocomum* house building (1927-1928) by Terragni is the first true example of Rationalist architecture in Italy, which spawned many other initiatives in Como: the project for the Casa del Fascio – Terragni 1932-1936 – the town planning of 1934 and many other projects in the city and on the lake, especially by Lingeri and Cattaneo. A very active group of professionals, led by Alberto Sartoris, united around Terragni and the *Quadrante* magazine – founded in 1933 by Massimo Bontempelli and Pier Maria Bardi – including architects like Lingeri, Cesare Cattaneo, Ico Parisi and Luigi Zucconi, but also artists like Manlio Rho, Mario Radice, Carla Badiali, Carla Prina and Aldo Galli. These painters would become key figures of the abstractist movement centered around the Milanese Milione gallery. In 1938, some members of the movement contributed to the foundation of the *Valori Primordiali* magazine – directed by Franco Cilimberti – and since some of them were members of the Fascist party, modern art avoids the worst repressions that followed the “Degenerate Art” show in Munich and the Italian Racial Laws. Around this time the group also consolidated the relationship with Marinetti, under the banner of “Como, city of Antonio Sant’Elia”, recognizing the natural continuity between Rationalism and Futurism, up to the foundation of the *Gruppo primordiali futuristi Sant’Elia* (1940). The short, but extremely productive, the season of the rationalists of Como ended in 1943, with the death of Terragni and Cattaneo. Many other protagonists would continue working after the war, especially Lingeri and Ico Parisi, achieving great autonomous results.

### **The Relationship Between Art and Architecture in the Site-Specific Experimentation and the Problem of Modern Restoration**

The work of Lisa Borgiani in the field of artistic experimentation sits among the attempt many attempts of site-specific installations that some many illustrious colleagues looked for in the last decades.

The key feature of this work is how it connects with the architecture, marking a shift in the relationship and balance between space and work of art – container and content – which attempted to become freer ever since the first experiences of the Modernist movement and the Avant-garde of early 1900. It's the relationship with architecture that opened new most interesting perspectives for the present and future works of Borgiani. One field of application is renovations, especially if unfinished due to the lack of funding, finished but without a new properly defined new function for the building – after the original one was lost – or with a new improper function. Buildings are complex ‘living’ organisms that evolve over the years and requires constant attention and care, especially if their primary function is lost. Modern renovations require an economic, but also cultural and intellectual sustainability, which suggest that the lightweight installations might become a way to fill and revitalize the spaces of modern architecture and become an inspiration. For modern structures that can no longer fulfill their original purpose – due to the limits of its specialization – these installations (interesting, highly compatible, lightweight and sustainable) are a way to remain vital, waiting for a permanent solution. These spaces can be places where we can cultivate the creative side of our society, canceling the differences and overlapping the fields of architecture, design and art installation, creating a synergy where the artist uses the architectural space as his raw material, combining formal, spatial and compositive elements.

### **The Exhibition Design**

#### **An Italian History in the middle of the Modern Architecture History**

(from Alessandro Colombo, *Allestimenti Urbani - Milano - Dieci anni di Ricerca*, Smown Publishing, Milan, 2018)

The roots of Exhibition Design are old and they hatch from the great World's Fairs of the Nineteenth Century. Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace of 1861 is a terminus a quo, a starting point, as regards to buildings created to host, show and communicate. These are the brainchild of the tiny separation between architecture and design that was starting to emerge. It was a new world, positivist, which looked at the new economic, technological and social development with great hope and discovered the importance of great public events. Italy wasn't exempted from this process and the fairs became important events after the unification.

Milan took the spotlight with the 1906 World's Fair, dedicated to new means of transportation, showing the Simplon Tunnel as one extraordinary result that allowed to cut down travel times across Europe and linked Paris with a major road axis that is still one of the most important of the continent.

The two great areas designed for the event coincide with the Simplon Park and the old Trade Fair, currently known as "City Life". Two examples of that period – even after the removal of all temporary structures – are the Acquario Civico (the Aquarium) and the Caselli of Via Domodossola, which show a very clear approach: an architecture aimed at a singular scope. Still, there are even older examples: a badge showing a temporary triumphal arc built at Porta Venezia for the arrival of Emperor Franz Joseph and an image of a pavilion in the area of the Lazzaretto (leper hospital).

Both show the use of exhibition techniques to create, at short notice, what traditional architecture couldn't. After World War One, the rise of the Avant-garde movement, Italy provided a great contribution to Western culture with Futurism and Rationalism. Depero's "Reklame Architektur" and the rationalist designs of many cities are the noble parents of exhibition design and, thanks to the cultural hub of Politecnico of Milan, the architect became a professional capable of meeting the need of society and cities operating in many fields, from urban development to interior design, from product design to communication and exhibition planning. Depero, Pagano, Baldessari, Ponti and Albini – to name just a few of the best – designed interiors, exhibitions, fairs, but also significant intervention upon the urban landscape, establishing the foundations for a cultural expression that is exquisitely Italian.

After World War Two the terrible needs of a wounded nation and the drive to rebuild placed a great deal of strain on the professionals that were educated before the war. Thanks to their ingenuity and skills, these professionals were able to reconcile urgency and quality, leaving a mark on the history of architecture, design and exhibition. Every theme is explored and addressed, from self-production to the relationship with industry: because of the lack of furniture, new components had to be designed from scratch. This was the beginning of the extraordinary ventures of Caccia Dominioni and Azucena, Zanuso and Arflex, Castiglioni and Cassina, Flos and many others who deserve a place in history. With the revival of industry, fairs, museums and great exhibitions experienced a renaissance. The Triennale became an international landmark and in 1961 there was the first Salone del Mobile. All these locations required both interior and exterior exhibition design. This was the time of old and new masters: Ponti, Albini, Helg, Castiglioni, Zanuso, Magistretti, Mangiarotti and Morassutti merged architecture, design and exhibition while working side by side with Max Huber, Albe and Lica Steiner, Boggeri Studio – who handled graphic design and communication.

Every element contributed to a singular idea, the creativity was so powerful that there was no need to separate the different fields. The quality was so high that even with those designs that hatched from collaboration, it was impossible to tell apart the merits of graphics, architecture, exhibition and product design. Still, this was also the time when many of these disciplines were codified. From this moment on it would be possible to speak of architecture, communication, and graphic design, product design (often erroneously defined just as "design", it should be called industrial design), interior design, exhibition design for museums, outlets or events and also urban exhibition design. From this moment it's possible to track the course of each discipline separately and consider their systematization and the subsequent definition of individual courses of studies. The error, so to speak, was forgetting how we had come to this point, how architecture was, according to the Italian tradition, the great mother of all these autonomous disciplines.

The fragmentation of knowledge and teaching – perhaps a byproduct of the Anglo-Saxon tradition – led us to courses, students and, as a result, professionals that forgot the historical dimension and worked in a sector-based environment that produced only partial results and didn't connect with tradition.

### **The Installations of Lisa Borgiani in the Works of Pietro Lingeri**

#### **A Possible Path**

The work of Lisa Borgiani exist in this particular historical and methodological path, which starts a series of lightweight, site-specific installations that gain their *raison d'être* and shape – thanks to a subtle game of mobile tension points – from the architectural space. This allows a sustainable, reversible and delicate intervention on the historical space of modern architecture, creating a fruitful meeting between Art, Architecture, Design and Exhibition, giving birth to a new methodology.

We are going to examine the installations at “Casa per Artisti A” on the Isola Comacina and at Villa Leoni in Ossuccio. Both are exceptional works of Pietro Lingeri, a central figure of the Rationalist movement.

### Isola Comacina Installation

(from Alessandro Colombo The Rational Space of Art, in *ArteIN* Sept/Oct 2018)

In a moment that was as short as it proved profitable – although it dramatically took place between the two major wars of the short twentieth century – art, architecture, graphics and design (which was not real design yet, at least in Italy) gathered in avant-gardes to imagine, propose, and sometimes creates prototypes and pilot projects of a world everyone believed to be the best possible one, in the pursuit of hopefully unstoppable progress. Como and its lake became one of the epicenters of what was later called Rationalism and, as such, it was the scene of some of the best and most beautiful creations by a handful of highly innovative architects. Whereas some buildings, such as Figini and Pollini's electric house and Albini's apartment for the (sports) man, can be now observed only in photographs, people can still admire the Casa del Fascio, the Sant'Elia kindergarten, Terragni's Novocomum and the three houses for artists designed by Lingeri on **Comacina Island**, which are still solid and offer their rooms, elegant stone walls and rational wood structures to the sun that kisses this spot, which is one of the most picturesque in the world. Mostly deservedly and in continuation with history and tradition, these small and measured villas offer their rooms, calm and quality to selected artists from Italy and abroad, who can dwell here during the summer months. Lisa Borgiani perfectly understood the vocation of the house, which was given to her for a short and yet profitable period; not without courage, she wanted to deal with the most precious and complicated heritage of Rationalism: space. Because here every centimeter is thoughtfully arranged; space plays under the knowing light that filters through the doors and windows, and fulfills all needs without leaving anything to decoration or uselessness; here space, in its plain and placid perfection, inspires silence and contemplation. Lisa Borgiani approached this space with her own creativity, which was rendered into three dimensions by the tensions of a yellow mesh that has its anchorages in the innermost heart of the house, and that unfolds in thousands of possible forms of which the only one was chosen. This unique form was eternalized by the lenses of the camera and must deal with a fourth dimension, time, which is marked by sunlight, and which draws delicate grids and soft shadows on the shiny and rational spaces designed by Lingeri. A spot where art and architecture meet conveyed through a gesture that is as simple as it is complicated, and that renders the freshness of an installation able to fill the heart and the mind.

The reasons for a diary

(from Alessandro Colombo, edited by, *Punti di Tensione, Diario di una installazione*, Jan 2019, Milan)

This diary of an installation on the Isola Comacina, realized by Lisa Borgiani, is important for two reasons. The first is, undoubtedly, that linked to the artistic work and its meaning and value: in the field of experimentation of art, the work is among the best testimonies of that acting in the site-specific that many illustrious names they have practiced and researched in the last decades. The second reason, perhaps the most distinctive, is that which links the work to architecture, marking a change in the relationship and balance that, from first experiences of the Modern movement and the avant-garde of the Twentieth century, he painstakingly researched ways to free him from the sterile relationship between host space and hosted work, container is contained. It is precisely in the relationship with architecture that it is open the most interesting perspectives. The restoration of the modern, theme debated, basically little practiced and still everything to be explored in its sustainability, has been exemplarily executed in these homes for artist on the island Comacina (1) strong of a function, the residence precisely for young promises in the field of art, which remains from the thirties of the last century, the date of completion of this masterpiece of Lariana rational architecture. In others, very many cases, the situation was and is very different: the restoration, not performed due to lack of funds; the restoration performed, but the function of compatible use not found, the original one lost; still the restoration performed, but the established function is not compatible or not sustainable. If for the Pirelli skyscraper in Milan (2) the laboratory of restoration of the "modern" has returned to us an architectural structure beautiful and in perfect shape after the 2002 accident - of the continuity of its original function - for the Palace del Lavoro di Torino (3) lacks a function, a client, a restoration, a conservation. Architectures are complex organisms and 'living', that is, that they change over the years and they have need continuous care and attention especially if it fails the primary function for which they were made, as in the case of Turin.

The sustainability of modern restoration, intended as sustainability of the function not only economic, but also cultural and intellectual, suggests the light staging -that in these fields becomes extremely contiguous to the preparation and installation of art as at Comacina - certainly as a way to occupy the surfaces but, above all, to give life to the space of architecture modern and be inspired by other buildings. Modern facilities which can no longer have the original function - rather than specialized and specialized - they see, in fact, these types of installation as uses interesting, compatible and possible, light and sustainable, because these they can stay alive every day, maybe even just so temporary waiting for a restoration or a project intervention e permanent functional. These architectures can become places where to cultivate the creative dimension of our life and our society, canceling differences and overlapping skills yes between architecture and design, but also with the artistic installation, thus proposing a synergy in which the artist is the one who has the formal, spatial, compositional intuitions that inhabit the space: one for whom the subject of doing is the space of architecture.

(1) Pietro Lingeri, Three houses for artists, 1933-1940, Isola Comacina, Ossuccio (CO), restoration by Andrea Canziani and Rebecca Fant, 2009-10

(2) Gio Ponti, Antonio Fornaroli, Alberto Rosselli, Pier Luigi Nervi, Arturo Danusso, Giuseppe Valtolina, Egidio Dell'Orto, Pirelli Skyscraper, 1956-1960, Milan

(3) Pier Luigi Nervi, Antonio Covre, Gino Covre, Palazzo del Lavoro, 1959-1961, Turin

### **The Installation of Villa Leoni**

The founding idea is to create an interaction between rationalist architecture – as envisioned by Pietro Lingeri between 1941 and 1944 – and the contemporary artistic installation, built from light and flexible nets. These elements interact with the existing space (its shape, geometry and history) and the surrounding landscape, creating a dialogue between past and present, art and architecture, preservation and innovation.

The goal is to create a *mobile installation*, from nylon nets, to interact with the lines and orientation of Lingeri's work in a harmonious way, giving them new life thanks to this lightweight but powerful intervention. The mobile installation creates a continuous two-way dialogue with the surrounding space and the natural elements bring it to life. Light and wind, in particular, make its geometry ever-changing and *mobile*, offering new points of view to the audience that can experience this work in a dynamic way. The ever-changing perspective creates surprise, estrangement and interest in the audience.

The idea is to reinterpret Lingeri's work in a new way, compared to Borgiani's previous intervention at the "Casa per Artisti A" on the Isola Comacina. This new work is a mobile installation that makes use of the "landscape geometry" of the existing porch of the Villa as a base to build a new terrace based on the dialogue between art and architecture.

The "unpredictability" inherent to this installation is its strength: living, feeling and exploring this place before *working* on it with these lightweight nets that redesign the existing lines preserving their precision and transparency.

During the night, the installation is illuminated, creating new shapes, projected on the surrounding walls and the interiors of the Villa. Day and night creates ever-changing shapes in space and time.

Even the old olive tree, already noticed by Lingeri that worked to keep it and respect it, is part of this installation. The natural element is part of the dialogue.

### **Notes**

The key idea is to create an undefined number of tridimensional shapes through this mobile installation. Thanks to the nets and the mobile anchor points, it continuously transforms in time and space, in line with the work of the artist.

The idea of the mobile anchor points is based on changing the geometry and design of the nets in an infinite number of ways, creating vertexes and curves. These points are chosen based on the surrounding environment.

The shadows projected on the interior walls of the Villa are both the negative space and the trail of the installation. This projection – a highly polished game of perspective – can be considered a different installation, almost possessing a life of its own, which changes based on how the light plays with the main installation during day and night.

## **In Conclusion**

The path created by this installation is still developing, but it demonstrates a way to create a new constructive dialogue between Art and Architecture. This isn't just as debate between these two different languages, but a relationship where Art can take inspiration from Architecture – the shape of the mobile net in Lisa Borgiani's work is based around the balance of (mobile) forces – to a higher primary purpose: proving a new purpose, compatible and reversible, to Modern architectural spaces, often orphans of their original function. Being unable to find a new purpose for these spaces, often put the in danger of not being subjected to a compatible restoration process that would allow them to operate in a future, inevitably altered, context. These changes would continue at an ever increasing speed, often incompatible with the long times of architecture and restoration. This is why the lightweight installations – using cheap, eco-friendly and reversible technologies – is the new frontier of a “know how” that would provide our society and profession with the instruments that are not afraid of their “temporary” nature. In fact this element allows for a highly compatible use of our historical and architectural heritage and urban spaces, even when city planning, restoration and the construction industry can't provide the fast and easy answers that our world often requires. It would be highly illogical to ignore such a resource, while waiting for a situation that might not happen at all.

## **Apparatus**

### **The art of the net.**

A series, as quick as it was profitable, of installations, has allowed Lisa Borgiani to accumulate an already significant experience in the use of this artifact taken from the real world: the network. The network is the subject of the invention, and the invention is actually already a method, or perhaps a theory, which allows measuring the forces applied in points, points of tension, that unfold matter in space. The spatialized surfaces create envelopes that fascinate the volumes and in turn project other geometries, in the form of shadows, which invest, mutate, denote and connote the surfaces that from time to time lend themselves to the game, to the experiment that changes in space as it passes of time, at the turning of the sun in the darkness, of the lighting of artificial light, almost a text of descriptive geometry from seemingly elusive theorems. The surfaces involved have already been many and varied: the space of the theatrical scene between the ancient ruins of Piuro, the space in front of a factory, the sacred collection of Lingeri's rationalist architecture, the private intimacy of a house and the spaces of the relevance of a disused industrial architecture. The network matter, thus transformed into the field of mobile forces, seems to want to cross its borders, overcome its limits to expand outside the spaces given in this second by the will of the artist who seems, from time to time, to overcome in continuous research of challenging shapes and dimensions. The challenge takes on the gradation of a tension that increases its strength by involving the public in a perceptive game that is not immediately evident. The network, apparently laid down, as if it were simply placed in space, suddenly turns into tension through the points without which the form would not be given, the completed envelope. But it is a controlled force, a calibrated tension, which induces in the viewer an interest, a curiosity, perhaps a sense of uneasiness that leads him to wonder the origin in front of a phenomenon that seems nevertheless grasped, grasped, in the moment of its fulfillment in the maximum tension that leads to the finite form, the only one among the infinite possibilities that responds to the presuppositions of the artistic action.

### **Lisa Borgiani: this is my idea**

My idea hinges upon the creation of a three-dimensional installation made of nets; it also relies on mobility, that is, on the constant physical transformation of the structure in space through the use of tension points. The concept of moving tension points derives from the infinite ways in which the forms and drawings of nets can be transformed by vertexes and curves when nets are anchored in different points and are kept in constant tension. These points are studied in relation to the environment that surrounds them and to the way they interact with it (also leading the observer to interact with them). The forms generated by these nets – which are in tension on moving points – can be considered as envelopes (in the mathematical sense of the word). Points are carefully placed in different areas of the rooms, at different heights and in different positions; the tension points that are thus created (with transparent threads and hooks that are used to anchor the nets) are studied in detail, also embracing elements that were already present in the room (shutters, windows, doors, drawers, etc.) and interacting with the surrounding environment constantly. Shadows can be considered as the negative, or trace, of the installation; its projection can be seen as another distinct installation.

## Notes by Lisa Borgiani

### Notes on movable installations

The idea hinges upon the creation of a three-dimensional installation made of nets; it also relies on mobility, that is, on the constant physical transformation of the structure in space through the use of tension points.

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### The Envelope of Lines

In mathematics, an envelope of a family or group of curves in the plane is a curve that is tangent to each member of the family at some point.

\* Source: Wikipedia

Intuitively, we can think of a curve in the plane as a family of curves, for instance of straight lines, of such a kind that each element of this family, i.e. each straight line, is tangent to the curve.

\* Source: Math.it

I suggest writing a “manual of tension/instruction” in order to provide some guidelines to the creation of suitable installations/structures (for example, by specifying the degrees of the grade of points of tension, and so on).

The process of outlining movable installations is defined by envelopes of lines and points of tension:

"Points are carefully placed in different areas of the rooms, at different heights and in different positions; the tension points that are thus created (with transparent threads and hooks that are used to anchor the nets) are studied in detail, also embracing elements that were already present in the room (shutters, windows, doors, drawers, etc.) and interacting with the surrounding environment constantly.

Not only do these movable points allow the artist to transform the installation, but when s/he loosens or moves them, s/he can discover the movement and movable shadows they produce.”

Discovery, interaction and play cause a surprise; these essential elements are part of the work.

Shadows can be considered as the negative, or trace, of the installation; its projection can be seen as another distinct installation.

A movable installation is thus identified as a three-dimensional model made of nets; it defines real space while continuing to be transparent inside and, at the same time, can create a new hanging movable architecture/structure that moves according to the interaction between its points of tension and the surrounding environment.

### The Behaviour of Forces in Movable Installations

*We should always remember that the work of art is invariably the creation of a new world, so that the first thing we should do is to study that new world as closely as possible, approaching it as something brand new, having no obvious connection with the worlds we already know.*

V.LADIMIR NABOKOV\_ *Lectures on Literature*

By its nature, the geometry of movable installations is unstable, since it relies on the elasticity of the medium that is used: the net. When a force is applied to it, tension points make the net move; in line with virtual models, when a force is applied to a system, the geometry of the system changes in pursuit of a new balance. The secret is to see the effect, not the cause. Hence the system of nets, which is an act of experimenting aimed to explore the many possible balances of the structure. This act of research concentrates the full meaning of Nabokov's statement; the writer talked about the artist's passion and the scientist's patience, which are here mixed in the pursuit of a new world. Light is another movable point of tension because it casts shadows that draw a new balance of the work on the surrounding surfaces; this balance, too, is unstable, and changes with the passing of time and changing of the weather.

So, the workplaces itself in the space-time of the architectural structure that houses it, which provides it with geometry and anchorages, that is, the starting points of the forces and tensions that act on it. Experimentation becomes a method of creation of the work of art and, from a certain point of view, the work of art itself.

### **Pietro Lingeri**

Bolvedro (Tremezzo Jan 25, 1894 – Tremezzo May 15, 1968)

Pietro Lingeri is born to January 25th 1894 at Bolvedro – a hamlet of Tremezzo, on the west shore of the Lake of Como – where he works as plasterer since he was young. He attends the courses of modeling at the Scuola superiore d'arte applicata all'Industria e le scuole per artefici dell'Accademia di belle arti of Brera in Milan. Drafted at the beginning of World War 1, he serves as officer of the Alpini until the end of the war. In March 1920, Lingeri achieves the technical degree and, in 1926, he graduates as professor of architectural design at Brera.

His first job is the design the home of the Meier house, followed by two war memorials – collaborating with the painter Cristoforo De Amicis – a few burial niches and several renovations.

He soon opens a professional practice in corso Vittorio Emanuele 26 in Milan and designs many shops in the city including the Cassè restaurant, the Principe di Galles hotel, Biancardi's beauty parlor – all on corso Vittorio Emanuele – the Manin hotel and the Europa hotel. In 1930 he designs the Milione art gallery for the Ghiringhelli brothers, a haven for many European Avant-gardes artists.

In 1926, he participates to a contest, competing against Giuseppe Terragni, for Como's war memorial and win at the first draft. He also contributes, with many other modern artists and architects, to the exhibit Sartoria Moderna, funded by many industrialists of Como, and to the Mostra dello Sport in Milan.

At Tremezzo, he designs the headquarters of the Associazione Motonautica Amila in 1927 – considered by Edoardo Persico “the most appropriate for its purpose and location” – and Villa Silvestri in 1929.

In 1930 he enrolls with the architects register and becomes and affiliated of the CIAM, Congressi Internazionali di Architettura Moderna, and of the Direttorio del Sincacato Architetti. He is one of the founders of “Quadrante” magazine in May 1933, alongside P.M. Bardi and M. Bontempelli, and “Valori primordiali”. He is part of the Como branch of the MIAR, Movimento Italiano Architettura Razionale, and participated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> exhibition of Rationalist Architecture in Rome (1931), at the Bardy art gallery, showcasing his project for the Milione gallery. Together with Bardi, Lingeri designs the casa per l'artista sul lago during the 5<sup>th</sup> Triennale (1933) awarded with the first prize for architecture.

In 1934 he's part of the winning team for the city planning of Como and designs the casa a ville sovrapposte Cattaneo Alchieri (1934) and the headquarters of the Unione Fascista dei Lavoratori dell'Industria (1938) – later the unions building – together with Cattaneo, Origoni, Magnaghi, Terzaghi and Uslenghi.

In Milan Lingeri works as a member of the sanitary construction committee and works alongside Giuseppe Terragni: from 1933 to 1938 they design the case Ghiringhelli, Toninello, Rustici (for the Rustici family of Tremezzo), Lavezzari and Rustici-Comolli. He also participates in many contests: the public library of Lugano (1936), the new exhibition fair of Milan (1937, together with Mucchi, Pucci and Bottoni), the Palazzo del Littorio in Rome (1937-1938) and the Palazzo dei Congressi of the E42 (1937-1938).

Rino Valdameri, president of the Accademia di Brera, commission Lingeri the case per artisti on the Isola Comacina – designed together with the island urban planning – the studio Danteum on via dell'Impero in Rome and a series of possible solutions for the new campus of the Accademia (4 between 1934-1935 and 1946, the first two designed with Terragni) and a wooden, mobile hunting lodge at Rivolta d'Adda.

In 1937, Lingeri won the gold and silver medal at international exhibition of Paris and participated at the exhibition at the Royal Institute of British Architects of London, showcasing the project for Villa Leoni at Campo di Ossuccio (Como).

In 1945, Lingeri is part of the consulting committee for the new city plan of Milan. In 1946 he's part of the MSA, Movimento di Studi per l'Architettura, and numerous city planning committees, until 1951 when he becomes a member of the INU, Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica. In 1958 he becomes President of the Collegio degli Architetti of Milan and academic of San Luca.

Lingeri's prolific post-war professional activity isn't as well known. His clients were Milanese industrialists and businessmen, who commissioned him their homes (both in and outside the city; like villa Bellorini in Stresa, villa



Bortoluzzi in Varese, villa Fraquelli in Griante, villa Bordoli in Azzano, the restoration of villa Albertoni Pirelli in Tremezzo e of the De Angeli Frua property in Positano) and the reconstruction of Milan after the devastation of the war.

Lingeri works on many apartment complexes, both high and low class, for businessmen like Dr Giorgi, Della Rosa and Giorgetti. These building are located both the center of Milan and in the areas of residential expansion (via Sacchi – were he moved his practice in 1947 – via Melchiorre Gioia, via Lomellina, via Calvaire, piazzale Dateo, via San Galdino, piazza Durante, viale Umbria, via Acerenza, Via Piranesi, via Novara, via Costa, via Petrella).

Regarding the third sector of Milan, Lingeri designs the new location of the “Centrale” in via Filodrammatici completes the works on via Boito. He works on the office building for De Angeli Frua (1947), the factories of Saronno and Omegna, the summer camps at Regoledo and Rimini and the office building of the Cassa Soccorso e Malattia for the employees of ATM (1965).

Between 1956 and 1964 he's the coordinator for the urban planning of Vialba I INACASA and for the IACP of Monte Olimpino, Como (1956). Together with Cerutti designs residential buildings in all these locations and for the Comasina INACASA-IACPM (1954-1958), the Forlanini Nuovo at Milan (1960-1962), INACASA at Biella (1951-1953) and at Abbiategrosso (1952-1958). He won the Grand Prize for Architecture at the 9<sup>th</sup> Triennale for the project of the “Casa Alta” INACASA, an 11 stories high building at the QT8 (1949-1950) the experimental neighborhood of the 8<sup>th</sup> Triennale.

He also designs many modern shops (Levi and Il Collezionista in Milan, 1947-1948 and 1948-1949 respectively; Picar in Genoa, 1954-1960), tombs (Levi at Musocco, 1948; Locati at Caronno Pertusella 1958; Maddalena Longoni at Desio, 1964) and supervise the restoration of the church of San Giacomo at Sala Comacina in 1948. In 1960 the 12<sup>th</sup> Triennale dedicated him a solo exhibit.

He dies at Tremezzo in 1968, just a year after receiving the National Prize for Architecture from the President of the Republic.

### **Lisa Borgiani**

Lisa Borgiani's work ranges from photography, installations and mobile sculptures.

She has exhibited in various galleries, museums, international art fairs and public institutions: Embassy of Italy in Washington D.C., European Parliament in Brussels, Italian Cultural Institute of San Francisco, London, Singapore and others.

For several years she has collaborated with architects, researchers, Italian and American universities, directors and economists.

The conceptual vision of her works consists in creating an interaction between the mobile installation and the architecture. Her mobile installations (created with light and flexible materials) and mobile sculptures (equipped with wheels) create, in fact, a continuous dialogue with the space that surrounds them, offering the public new ways of observing their creations.

In October 2017 her permanent installation "Waves of Light" was inaugurated at the San Raffaele Hospital in Milan.

In June 2018 her work "The unexpected meets rationalism" won the tender organized by the Brera Academy with the residence on the Comacina Island (Como), where she created an installation inside the house designed by the architect Pietro Lingeri and built in 1939.

The idea focuses on the creation of the three-dimensional form of the installation, composed of networks, and on mobility, or its continuous physical transformation in space and environment through the use of tension points.

In October 2018 she participated with the installation “enne points of tension” at the Fabbrica del Vapore as a Special Project, Step Art Fair 2018, Milan Sculpture.

In March 2019 she created the installation "The unexpected meets rationalism" at Villa Leoni, Ossuccio (CO) continuing her dialogue with the rationalist architecture of Pietro Lingeri.

Lisa Borgiani, Verona, 1979, lives and works in Milan.

[www.lisaborgiani.com](http://www.lisaborgiani.com)

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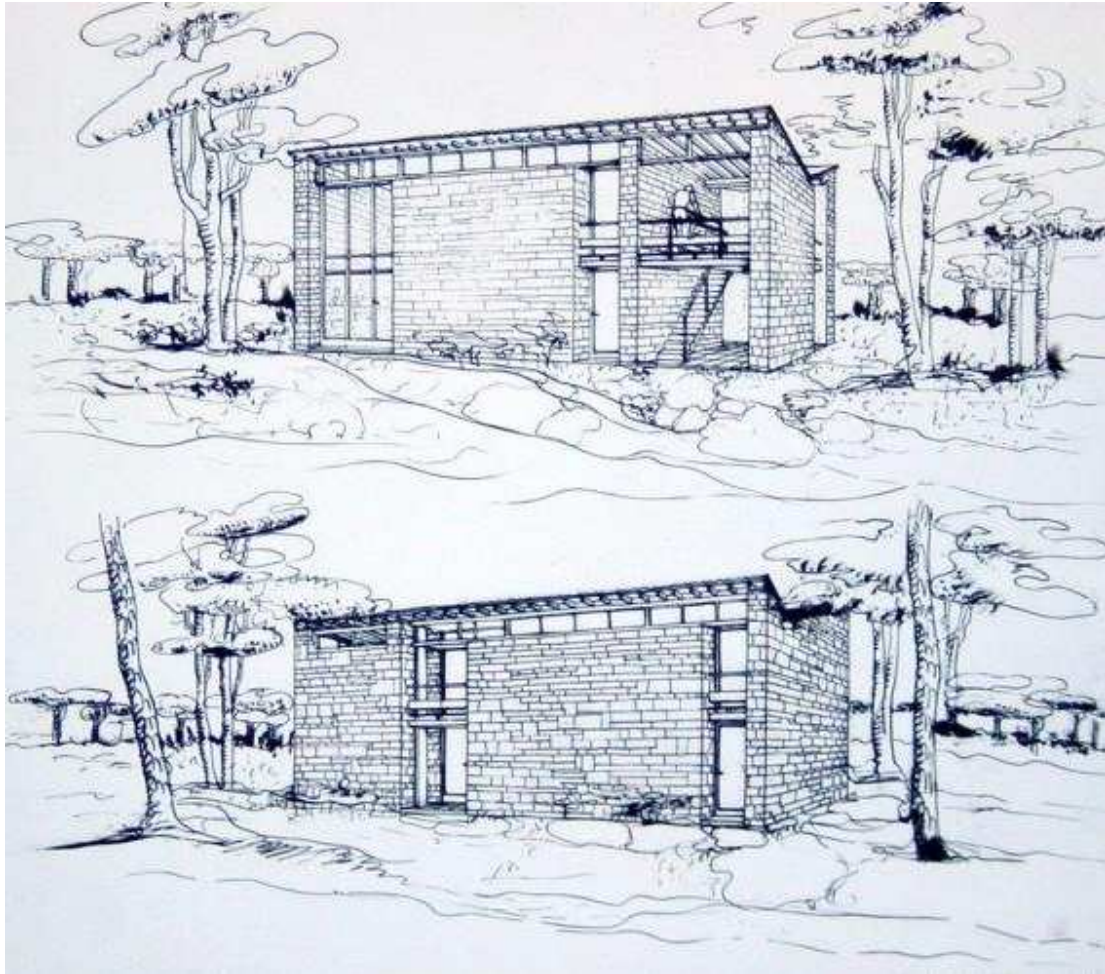












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**Alessandro Colombo**

He is born in Milan. After classical and musical studies, he graduated from Politecnico di Milano with Marco Zanuso. In 1989 he began his collaboration with Pierluigi Cerri. In 1991 he won with Paola Garbuglio the Major of Osaka City Prize, awarded by the Japan Design Foundation with the project: "Earth: Instructions for Use", showed by the major design centres in the world. In 1995 he became associate of Gregotti Associates International. With Bruno Morassutti he participates in international competitions of architecture. He designed, with Pierluigi Cerri and Risco, the public spaces and temporary structures of Expo '98 in Lisbon. In 1999 he was lecturer at the Stockholm Nobel Foundation. Since 1998 he is art director and designer for Unifor, DADA and Molteni&C. Among the awards Compasso d'Oro in 2004, Premio Nazionale Ance In/arch for his project for Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro in Milan. He is teacher at the Design school (Interior Design), at the IDEA Master in Exhibition Design of Politecnico di Milano, at Politecnico of Turin and at NABA, Milan. He is board member of IDEA, Italian Association Exhibition Designers and correspondent for *il Giornale dell'architettura*. He is curator and designer of exhibitions at the Italian pavilion at the post Expo 2010 in Shanghai. On behalf of Politecnico di Milano, he is responsible of the project of the Coffee Cluster at Expo 2015 in Milan. In 2016 he carries out the exhibition for the 60th anniversary of the laying of the first stone of the Pirelli skyscraper for the Regional Council of Lombardy. In December 2016 he was appointed Ambassador of Italian Design by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, by the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Tourism and by the Ministry of Economic Development in collaboration with the Triennale Design Museum, for the conference "Italian Design Day" held on 2017 in Vancouver, Canada, on 2018 in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 2019 in Asuncion, Paraguay. He works and lives in Milan.