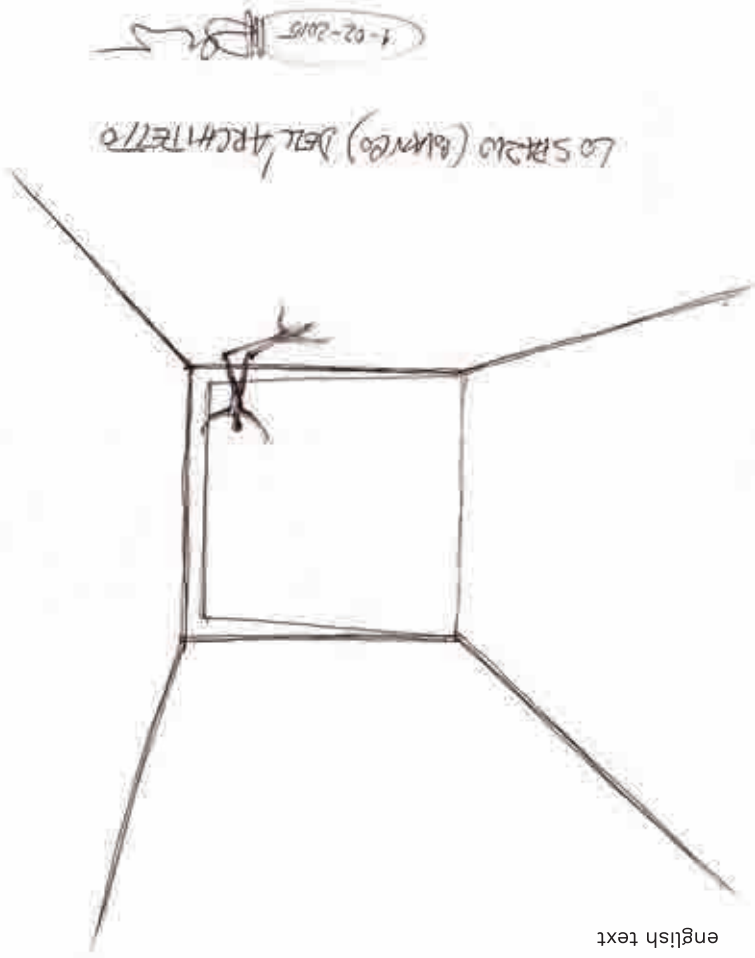




MARIO BELLINI



english text

12 settembre
5 ottobre 2018

Il disegno
del progetto

The exhibition presents over two hundred sketches and drawings made by Mario Bellini and his studio in the last forty years, concerning some of the most significant projects developed in his long and prolific career.

It is to be considered an introductory review ranging from design to architecture, with some fantastic digressions; four architectural projects in chronological order; nine furniture design projects.

Looking at the sequences of drawings, witnesses of the different design paths undergone by Bellini, it is clear that the drawing is **the place where the project takes shape**. Drawing becomes an instrument of research, of thought, of examination of reality; an effective means of communication to visualize, verify and share an idea; a powerful memory aid, which refers to the personal repository of images and references, stratified over time, which the architect can use - even unconsciously - whenever he undertakes a new interpretative or design adventure.

This exhibition is also an opportunity to reflect upon **the development of the architectural drawing and designing tools** from analogical to digital, where the sketch remains the indispensable element of continuity in the heuristics phase of the project.

Much of the materials on show are project sketches made by Mario Bellini: often fragmentary and immediate, these annotations are aimed at fixing a thought, an impression, a suggestion, at crystallizing an idea that is still blurred and contradictory. They deal with the initial intuition and ideation, therefore being the depositaries of infinite potentialities. The first sketches of a project, in fact, contain in nuce everything the project will be and also what it will never be, but could have been. The successive sketches summarize the initial ones: selecting, deepening, refining, perfecting the initial idea, tracing a path that becomes little by little univocal, insofar as the alternative solutions are eliminated, within a dynamic process of the reduction of the indeterminate. In the sequences on display, the role of the sketch as a key moment in the design process emerges clearly: it is a non-linear process, often dominated by unconscious and non-objective elements. Here *téchne* and *inventio*, technical know-how and inventive capacity, constraints imposed by the functional program and references deposited in the architect's knowledge, culture and personal memory meet.

Other works presented in the exhibition, such as hand-made technical drawings or photomontages, recount practices

and methods of expression that have fallen into disuse in a professional practice nowadays profoundly changed. In this sense, the exhibition outlines a sort of archeology of the contemporary architectural drawing, which has been so much transformed over the last two decades that it was not easy to bring to light some practices that were usual until twenty years ago, and then very quickly disappeared, and are now almost unknown to the architects in training (the handmade technical drawing, all the different kind of supports, the tools, the modalities of reproduction, etc.).

So the works on display dating from the Eighties and Nineties bring the visitor back to a very recent yet ancient world, but they do so without any nostalgic intent, instead trying to retrace the thread that led to the techniques of contemporary drawing and architectural representation, to grasp their specifics and potentials, also looking at Bellini's personal biography, with its projection into the future, its special curiosity and irony.

Bellini has always had a multifaceted and omnivorous intellectual curiosity, always in search of innovation, within the realm of design as well as of architecture, and always careful to use the new technologies a source of the

reinvention of forms (but without any enslavement to the technology itself). Precisely his curiosity seems to find in the new 3D modeling softwares a brand new horizon of possibilities in the field of form creation. This is how the projects of the 2000s were born, and the project for the Louvre Département des Arts de l'Islam is the most emblematic example. In these works the most advanced parametric design experiments become the tool to create new forms that were once only imagined, drawn from a personal vocabulary of archetypal shapes and references that range in every sphere and discipline. The use of new drawing technologies leads to a radical change in the cognitive paradigm and in the elaboration of design thought, and creates an unprecedented hiatus between the mind and the hand, changing also the epistemological status of the very act of drawing, which is no more autographic but allographic. Even in this case the hand sketching remains the indispensable instrument of thought and representation, an element of continuity in the conceptual phase of the project.

The characteristic gestures of Mario Bellini's sketches seem to be a constant and recognizable element, whereas, on the contrary, the absence of a recurrent stylistic characteristic in his works has often been highlighted. In fact, contrary to other architects and designers, Bellini has never pursued a recognizable autographic reference in his projects, but has always had a rhabdomantic, peremptorily non-self-referential propensity.

Bellini's way of drawing is free in gesture, but at the same time strictly functional; it is the witness of an untiring reflection on space, on objects, on ways of use, on forms and scale relationships. The drawing is the place of experimentation and imagination. It is aimed at finding solutions and it is often traced on impromptu supports (including poor papers or coffee shop placemats), which witness the immediacy of the assiduous

and compulsive draughtsman, applied with the same creative tension to the big work of architecture or to the small object of industrial production, to the small interior design or to a great temporary exhibition, always remaining in an anthropocentric and anthropological perspective.

For Mario Bellini the act of drawing is an instrument of the investigative process and it is a privileged terrain of representation, but, as shown by the sketches shown on the introductory wall of the exhibition, it is also a "white space" of freedom, in which imaginative thinking is manifested over and over.

Mario Bellini is a prominent figure on the international scene of Architecture and Industrial Design. He was awarded 8 times the Compasso d'Oro, and 25 of his works are in the permanent collection of the MoMA in New York, which dedicated him a retrospective exhibition in 1987. He was director of "Domus" from 1985 to 1991. He designed exhibitions project and work of architectures all over the world. Since 1980 he has devoted himself mainly to architecture. Among its best-known buildings there are the Exhibition and Congress Center of Villa Erba in Cernobbio (Como), the Exhibition Center District of Fiera Milano, the Tokyo Design Center, the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, the Headquarters of the Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt, the Museum of the History of the City of Bologna, the Département des Arts de l'Islam at the Louvre in Paris, the Congress Center at the Portello in Milan. In 2004 he was awarded the Gold Medal of the Presidency of the Italian Republic for the diffusion of Italian design and architecture in the world. In 2015 the Triennale di Milano awarded him the Gold Medal for his career in architecture, and in 2017 the Triennale dedicated him a retrospective exhibition.

Galleria del progetto
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Ingegneria delle Costruzioni
Politecnico di Milano, via Ampère, 2 - Milano
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Comitato Scientifico / Scientific Committee
Marco Biraghi, Rossella Salerno,
Camilla Casonato, Marco Muscoguri
Progetto dell'allestimento / Exhibition Design
Mario Bellini Architects
Prestatori / Lenders
Archivio Mario Bellini
Progetto grafico / Graphic Design
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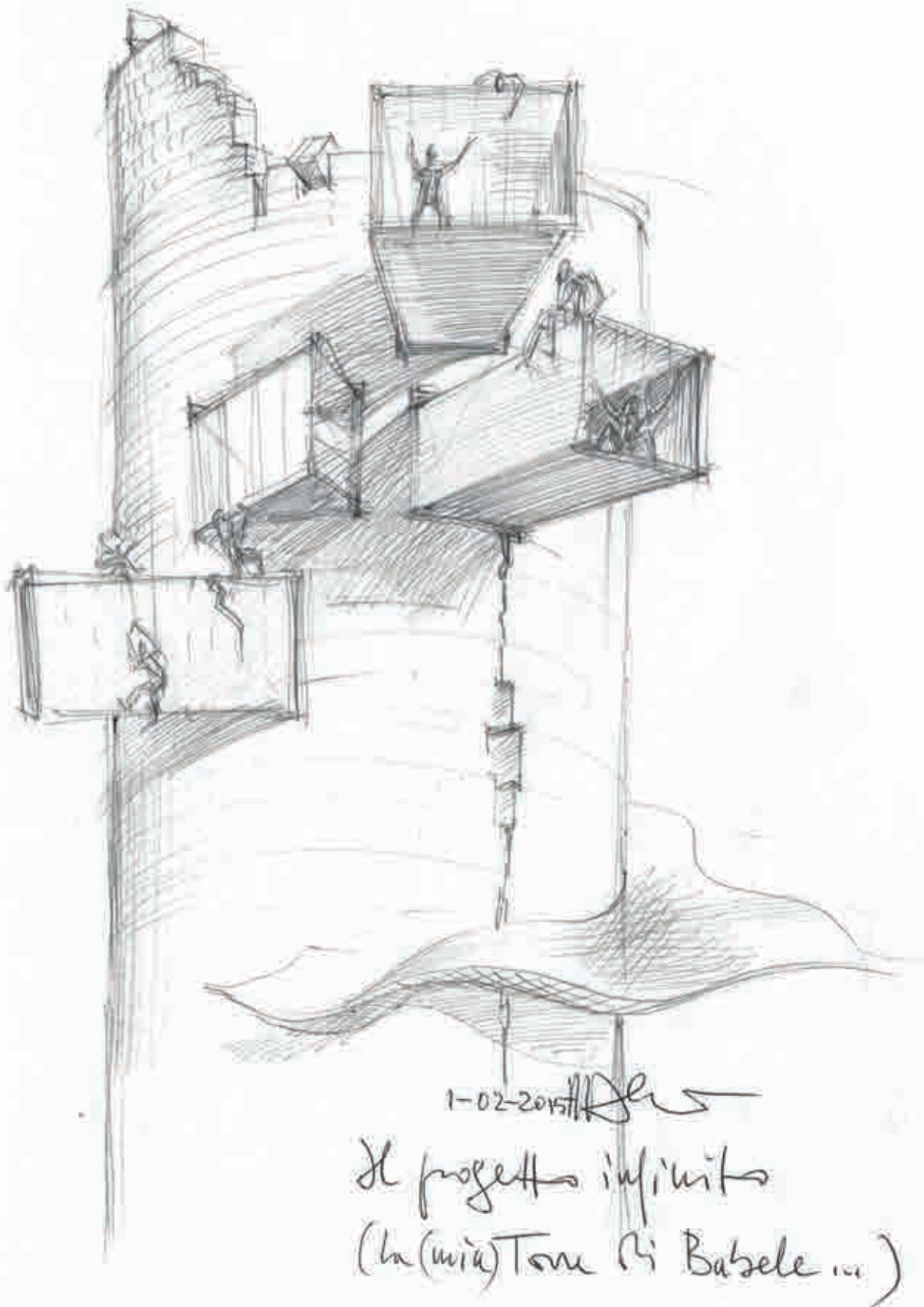
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**Scuola di Architettura Urbanistica
Ingegneria delle Costruzioni**

Politecnico di Milano, via Ampère, 2 - Milano

Mostra a cura di / Curatorship

Camilla Casonato, Marco Muscogiuri



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