

ROBERTO SEGRE

The Meaning of Italian Culture in the Latin American
Architecture Historiography. An Autobiographical Essay.



Roberto Segre

Picture: Meindert
Versteeg (2010)

The first years

The decision of writing an autobiographical narrative is a difficult task, assuming as guideline the meaning of Italy and its culture, for seven decades dedicated to the history of Architecture. It gives the impression that telling your own life story is somehow associated with an egocentric, self-recognition content; with the illusion of an idea that personal experiences would be useful to eventual readers. However, at the same time, there is in the world a persistent and intense desire of knowing the individualities that through their work contributed to the development of culture and ideas that had some influence on the social development; those who fought for transforming reality by generating new empirical contents, interpretations, discoveries and experiences that could be embraced by future generations. Therefore, reaching an advanced age, we feel the need of stopping, of looking back to the past and following the singer Paolo Conte's suggestion: "*dai, dai, via, via, srola la pellicola*", and thus, reviewing the most significant moments of life: the discoveries during travels, the contact with the masters, the aesthetic and architectonic experiences. Undoubtedly some autobiographies are still paradigmatic, such as the ones by F.L. Wright and Oscar Niemeyer; or the more intimate and personal ones by Peter Blake, V.G. Sebald or Eric Hobsbawm. While always being a history lover, I remember that when I was a teenager I would devour the biographies of political or artistic personalities that attracted me – Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Napoleon, Julius Caesar, among others. And my first essay published in an ed-

ited book on the history of modern architecture in Argentina, in 1959, was a book review of *Kindergarten Chats*, by the American Louis Sullivan. His book transmitted to the young people his emotive and sensitive thoughts and his new ideas on Architecture. It was a moment when radical changes on the academic tradition rationale were approaching. And, at the same time, as observed by Gillo Dorfles in the epilogue of a recent and brief autobiography, there is also a modesty, the shyness, the resistance of revealing the details of our own life – mainly intellectual – connected to the everlasting doubt of its positive value.

I was born in Milan in 1934, the twelfth year of Mussolini's Era; shortly after the CIAM where Athens Charter was written; only one month after the scenographic Nuremberg Congress clearly defined the tragic political, ideological and military objectives of Adolf Hitler; and two months prior to the murder of Sergei Kirov, a Russian Communist Party member, fact that was used as the main reason for the breaking out of Stalin's violent executions. Those were not light years in an unsteady Europe during the inter-war period. My father, following my grandfather's steps, was a broker in the Milan Stock Market, and had a good intellectual education. He got a degree in Economics at the prestigious Bocconi University. Luigi Einaudi, who would become the first president of the Republic of Italy, had supervised his monography dedicated to the stock market theme; it became a book and was published by Einaudi's publishing company in Turin. The Jewish surname Segre was prestigious due to the participation of some family members in both Turin and Milan's Italian cultural and political life. Emilio Segre was awarded a Nobel Prize in Physics (1959), when he participated with Fermi on the development of the atomic energy; Roberto Segre was a general in the Italian army during the First World War, according to a research report by Anat Falbel. In Italy, Jewish people would first consider themselves Italian and then Jewish, since there was neither persecution nor segregation, as it was seen in other Central European countries. Following this principle, Bruno Zevi used to say that his family's origins would remount to the Roman Empire period, when even Jewish people could live with no problems in the Eternal City, close to the Vatican. The crisis affecting Italian Jews during the fascist period started with the racial laws promulgated in 1938. It became extreme when Germans invaded the peninsula, and massive deportations to concentration camps started. In a visit to Peter Eisenman's Holocaust Memorial in Berlin, I observed that 15 members of the Segre family died in Auschwitz.

Mario Segre (1900-1980), my father, had poliomyelitis when he was four years old, but he was able to have a fairly normal development and do his job during his difficult life. Undoubtedly he had a successful professional life, for when he married his young secretary in 1933 – Noemi Prando (1914-2010) they settled in a comfortable apartment in Via Vincenzo Monti 4, a residential bourgeois neighborhood near Parco del Sempione, where I was born. They decided to ban the religion theme from their family life after consummating their mixed matrimony, which defined my totally atheistic formation. I also assumed the exist-

ing duality of my father's bourgeois culture and the proletarian heritage of my mother, raised in a modest working class family that lived in the poor Bovisa neighborhood. An Austrian architect designed our apartment's sophisticated interior decoration in Art Déco style and also the fine furniture; fortunately the decoration pieces accompanied me for a long time, until they were taken from me in Argentina. Having a Swiss nanny allowed me to learn both Italian and French simultaneously. However she made a mistake of putting my life in risk, when she took me for a walk in the Sempione Park during the winter without the ears protection, resulting in a strong and serious ear infection. In my first childhood years, daily life was serene and calm in this comfortable and high aesthetic quality environment – my father always had a passion for art books that he collected. In 1938, the family situation became complicated: my mother had tuberculosis and was hospitalized in a clinic in Courmayeur, close to the Swiss border; meanwhile my father, also involved with journalism – he once mentioned he was one of the first in Milan to write about the beginning of the October Revolution in Russia in 1917 –, was arrested after writing critiques to the Mussolini government, and condemned to five years in a prison in the small village of Amantea, in Calabria. I stayed in Milan in the care of the nanny and my parents' relatives. This difficult situation was finally solved with the help of a judge who authorized our immigration to Argentina in April 1939, a few months before the start of the II World War.

The first years in Buenos Aires were difficult. In order to provide for the family, my father had to look for jobs unrelated to his profession as an economist. First, we lived in a suburban neighborhood – Flores – in a house with a patio. I have a memory of large glass bottles containing disinfectant for the cleaning of milk containers he used to produce and sell. In the beginning of the war in Argentina – a nation that supported the Axis until 1944 – the Italian colony was essentially fascist and did not support my father's settlement for his declared leftist and antifascist beliefs. After some years, he got a job as a journalist in *El Sol* – an economics focused newspaper. Then, we were able to move to an apartment in the neighborhood Bairro Sul, where I was enrolled and attended a public elementary school. Argentina has always had a good level of public education; private schools were rare and normally related to a religious formation. In my case, the education I received was acceptable, but the cultural level to which I had access to, was similar to that found in a poor neighborhood, with scarce incentives for major developments. Similarly, at home the Italian heritage did not have a strong influence in my first teenage years, since the family concerns were focused on the II World War unfolding. I remember having a large map of Europe in one of the living room walls, where pins were set showing the Allies' progress. I also remember a visit to Praça Francia, near Recoleta, when France was set free, where we sang the *Marseillaise* with my parent's antifascist friends. Meanwhile, I was deeply shocked when, looking into the office's drawers, I found pamphlets with graphic documents showing the atrocities committed by Nazis against Jews in the concentration camps. In

addition, we also experienced complex years in the Argentinean political dynamics: in 1944, there was a military coup against the persistence of right-wing governments – which characterized the so-called “Infamous Decade” – and not long after that, in 1945, the populist government of General Perón won the elections, soon becoming a dictatorship in the 1950s. Those days of October 1945 were printed in my teenager mind: a huge crowd of workers from the industrial neighborhood of Avellaneda passed by in front of our apartment building, with torches in the direction of Praça de Maio, where they spend the night demanding freedom for Perón, imprisoned in the island of Martín García.

In 1947 we travelled to Italy to visit relatives that lived in Rome and Milan. The country’s general conditions were still precarious and the scars of war persisted, especially in Milan, where ruins of buildings destroyed during the bombing were still visible. Despite the elapsed time since then, I still have a strong and persistent memory of this first important trip of my life. First, for the experience in the modern *Panair do Brasil* airplane, Super-Constellation, and the never-ending 36 hours flying from Buenos Aires to Rome. Secondly, our stay in the modest, obscure and gloomy hotel *Santa Chiara*, located in the back of Pantheon; our aunts had reserved it for us since they thought we had a precarious financial situation to fund our touristic visit. This was not quite true because, after the war, Argentina had quite strong money compared to the *lira*. Besides, because of my father’s economic situation this was one of the rare occasions in my life I stayed in luxury hotels: Eden in Rome, near the elegant *Via Veneto*; the Continental in Milan – currently demolished –, a great hotel of the *belle époque* near Scala and Galleria, with Louis XIV style rooms and great halls marked by the elaborated baroque paintings in the ceilings. In this conscious re-encounter with Italy, the first artistic and architectonic experiences occurred, when my father’s sister took me to visit museums in Rome, and to walks to the Roman Forum through squares with Bernini fountains. They became visual records that started to settle in my memory, but still did not trigger any special interest for the broad universe of the history of art.

The year of 1947 was a significant one in my life. As my father’s economic situation improved, he was then a broker at Buenos Aires Stock Market, we moved to the noble zone of Bairro Norte, living in a good apartment building built in the 1930s. It was rigidly rationalist – with a German influence – and had careful finishings imported by Germanic developer firms established in Argentina. However, the most important change was my enrollment in the most prestigious Argentinean high school: *Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires*. Argentinean personalities and politicians studied in the school, founded in the 19th century; it was directly linked to the University of Buenos Aires, and had an education system of European level. The admission in the school was limited by the rigorous enrollment selection exam. Because of the school’s directory nationalist orientation, the admittance of foreigners was not favored, even less for those with Jewish names. Miraculously I was able to pass the exam with the help of

the unforgettable teacher Mrs. Elsa Barg, who later also helped me to overcome my everlasting deficiencies in Math and Sciences, subjects that had always been incomprehensible and inaccessible to me. I will be always grateful for this help that allowed me to have the best high school education in Argentina. The school was located in a monumental and eclectic building of the beginning of the 20th century. It was near Praça de Maio and the so-called Manzana de las Luces (Block of the Lights), where the churches of San Ignacio, and the School of Architecture and Exact Sciences were located in 18th century buildings. They had belonged to the first religious and political institutions of Buenos Aires. Thus, I lived twelve years of my life studying in this historic and prestigious neighborhood.

The six-years period in that school were memorable. I believe that the solid base received defined my intellectual path; discipline, seek for perfection, seriousness and devotion for work were forged during this phase. Despite the school's nationalist character, the education had a cosmopolitan, humanist and essentially lay content. Most of the teachers were prestigious intellectuals and professionals recognized nationally and internationally; no matter their ideology - there were teachers from both the old political group and also leftists - all of them were always aware of the ethics and morality that characterized the democratic political system. Finally, the government intervened in the school in 1952, for its leaders' anti-Perón radicalism and declared opposition to the regime. The organization efficiency, the seriousness of the courses and the severe requirements in the exams resembled the dynamics of traditional English colleges. This forced me to adapt to these tough circumstances, without considering them as personal sacrifices. Because of my family's asceticism – due to my father's mobility problems caused by poliomyelitis – I used to spend much time at home involved in reading and doing homework. I was mostly attracted to humanistic matters and teachers, and least attracted to the scientific content ones. I must recognize that, in the incorruptible school structure, in which any student caught cheating during exams would be immediately expelled, I had the courage of taking the risk and developing a sophisticated system in order to overcome the incomprehensible technical subjects; for that accomplishment I was admired by my classmates. This made me learn to write with very small characters and from this experience emerged the system of book reading recording cards, which I still use nowadays. When the Spanish teacher, Florentino V. Sanguinetti forced us to read for many months the Cervantes book *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, the monthly exams were on the chapters of the book. Therefore, in order to remember its contents I started to write a set of cards with small characters, making a summary of each chapter studied. By the end of the course, he was impressed with my seriousness and discipline developed with the cards condensing *Don Quijote*, a system adopted later when I started to develop a methodic book reading and recording.

Despite the school's nationalist tendency, in this period my Italian identity finally emerged. The Latin course lasted the six years of study with the same old teacher that we called "galego Fernández". An elderly man, he did not worry about what happened in class, and I believe that in the exams he passed all students; in fact, his dynamics was to teach who wanted to learn. I became excited with the Roman historic content and I remember having read *Catilinarias* by Cicero and presenting, in Latin, fragments of *De Bello Gallico* by Julius Caesar. However, something I never forgot was the fragment of the *Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, that Sanguinetti, the Spanish teacher, made me recite in class in front of all classmates, so I could express my Italian culture heritage. I ignore the reason he chose this romantic and poetic part of *Canto V dell'Inferno*, dedicated to Paolo and Francesca:

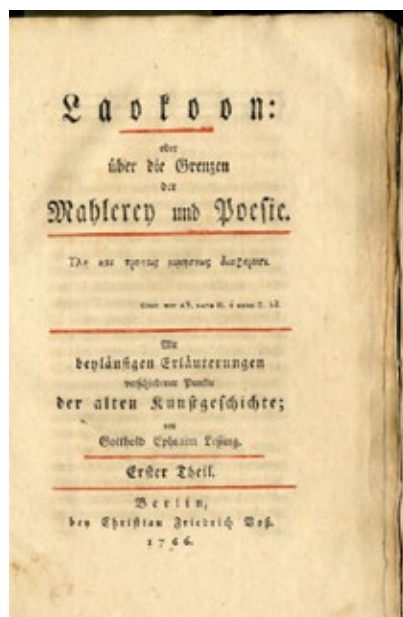
*Quando risposi, cominciai, " Oh lasso,
quanti dolci pensieri, quanto disio
menò costoro al doloroso passo!"
Poi mi rivolsi a loro e parla 'io,
e cominciai: "Francesca, i tuoi martiri
a lacrimar mi fanno triste e pio.
Ma dimmi: al tempo de 'dolci sospiri,
a che e come concedette amore
che conoscente I dubbiosi desiri?
E quella a me: nessun maggior dolore
che ricordarsi del tempo felice
ne la miseria: e ciò sa 'l tuo dottore.
Mas s' a conoscer la prima radice
del nostro amor tu hai cotanto affetto,
farò come colui che piange e dice.
Noi leggevamo un giorno per diletto
di Lancillotto come amor lo strinse:
soli eravamo e senza alcun sospetto.
Per più fiate li occhi ci sospinse
quella lettura, e scolorocci Il viso;
ma solo un punto fu quel che ci vinse.
Quando leggemmo Il disiato riso
esser baciato da cotante amante,
questi, che mai da me non fia diviso,
la bocca mi bacio tutto tremante.
Galeotto fu il libro e chi lo scrisse;
quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avanti.
Mentre che l'uno spirto questo disse,
l'altro piange sì, che di pieta
io venni men così com'io morisse;
e caddi come corpo morto cade".*

The **Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires** was the only one back then that offered a senior year subject on the History of Art. I was a lover of readings on history during this period - particularly on Old World. Encouraged by the school's brilliant professor of History, Horacio Difrieri, I had read all five volumes of *Greatness and Decline of Rome* by Guglielmo Ferrero. Meanwhile, the inexpressive professor of History of Art - nicknamed "Black Ant", for his large size and always dressing in black clothes - was forcing us to read either **Laocoonte** or texts on the frontiers between the art of painting and Gotthold Lessing's poetry, neither very accessible or comprehensible matters for that stage of our intellectual development. At that point, my interest on art works started to flourish, which was also stimulated by the documents I had access to in my father's library. I used to browse books on painting of editors Silvana and Skira; the wonderful volumes of Encyclopedia of Diderot - we had an entire collection edited before the French Revolution -; the 35 volumes of the Treccani Encyclopedia; and also a masterpiece that I fortunately still carry with me, that has been an irreplaceable reference: *Dizionario Letterario Bompiani di tutti i tempo e di tutte le letterature*. Those were both reading and aesthetic experiences that progressively placed me in the "higher" culture, however still not yet totally absorbed. For example, the prodigal child Pierino Gamba finally defeated my resistance to the classical music, when at 12 years old he conducted Beethoven's Fifth Symphony in an impressive concert at Cine-Theater Rex in Buenos Aires. During my teenage years, readings of lightly erotic books also influenced me, such as *Candide* de Voltaire and *Aphrodite* and *Les Chansons de Bilitis* by Pierre Louÿs; or the passionate sonnets written by Michelangelo Buonarroti to his beloved and inaccessible woman. But what I mostly incorporated from his ideas was his assertion: "*non ci sono danni simili a quelli del tempo perduto*".

Figure 1

Laocoonte by G. Lessing, introductory reading to the world of art and literature and *Dizionario Letterario Bompiani di tutti i tempi e di tutte le letterature*, an irreplaceable reference.

Source: author's collection



In 1952, the last year of school, doubts started to emerge on which university career would be most suitable for my future professional life. Friends insisted that Engineering was the one with the best economic perspectives. I remember that, with no need of taking the exam to be accepted in a university – *Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires* was the only one that allowed automatic acceptance – I used to attend courses given to candidates of the School of Engineering, and also classes on technical matters, which in fact produced tormenting nightmares on me. Notably, this would not be my choice. On the other side, to enroll in the School of Philosophy and Letters meant a limited work perspective in an ultimately pragmatic country as Argentina. Amongst these uncertainties, a miracle happened: the revealing of Apostle Paulo de Tarso. Without any particular interest in Architecture, a classmate invited me to a lecture at the School of Law given by an Italian fellow: Bruno Zevi. I was shocked with the scenographic exposition on Italian Baroque Architecture space, the theatrical relationship between his speech and the slides with images Bernini's, Borromini's, Pietro da Cortona's masterpieces. When I arrived home, I mentioned about the wonderful conference and that eventually it could be an option for my university studies. After attending descriptive and not very appealing classes on the history of art, the interpretation of the architectonic space by Zevi opened up an extremely new and engaging perspective, which I had not known until then. Therefore, upon finishing high school in December, my parents facilitated my trip – in the *Conte Grande Transatlantic* – for many months to Italy, where I stayed with my aunts and grandfather, to get acquainted with Art and Architecture. Upon my arrival, my uncle, a cult Roman Lawyer, received me with the gift of Zevi's book *Saper vedere l'architettura*, which was dedicated to me: “A Roberto, futuro grande architetto”¹.

I stayed in Italy from December 1952 to April 1953, most of the time in Rome, and in visits to Florence and Milan. It was a totally aseptic and monastic life, only dedicated to Art and Architecture. The only entertainment was to travel in the end of the year holidays to Naples and the island of Capri with my aunt. In fact, it was not very common that an eighteen year-old boy would dedicate months to the academic work only, without the social and leisure activities corresponding to this age. But my desire was to take maximum advantage of this opportunity that allowed me to deeply know Italian Art and Architecture. My uncle, Ugo Battaglia, son of a local traditional family of intellectuals that had lived in an 18th century palace in downtown Rome, near *Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne*, by Baldassare Peruzzi, was an expert of Italian history and culture. Having relatives in Viterbo, it was natural that, in the weekends trips were organized to visit small historic villages near the Eternal City; so I visited Cerveteri, lake Bracciano, Frascati, Palestrina, Velletri, Orvieto, Bolsena Lago, Montefiascone, among other places. This total dedication to studies and my persistent visits to the Roman Forum annoyed my grandfather, an elder *allegro* that wanted to meet the

1. To Roberto, future great architect.

young ladies that I was supposedly dating. When I had to explain that I did not know any young fellows my age, his comment was: “*Imbecille: sei venuto da così lontano per vedere quei sassi morti*”.

With the help of my uncle's contacts, I was able to attend, as an observer, classes on the history of art in the School of Letters at the University of Rome; the lectures were held in the Campus monumental building designed by Marcello Piacentini. Therefore, I was able to get a deeper knowledge on themes like Italian Renaissance painting and Etruscan and Roman architecture. I had the privilege of listening to classes by Leonello Venturi on the history of Renaissance painting; by Giulio Quirino Giglioli on Etruscan art and architecture; and by Giuseppe Lugli on the Roman Forum, alternated with studies on the ruins themselves, in which the particularities of each imperial building was studied in detail. Along with the several visits to museums, Forum and squares – San Pedro, Campidoglio, Navona – I also attended weekly conferences given in the Vatican and at *Oratorio dei Filippini*, masterpiece by Francesco Borromini, contiguous to *Chiesa Nuova, Santa Maria in Vallicella*. At that point, my passions were: first, architecture of the classical world; secondly, Renaissance painters – including Giotto, Masaccio, Uccello, Masolino, Lippi, Leonardo, Piero della Francesca, Botticelli, Rafael, Mantegna, Donatello, among others. This explains my excitement when I was finally able to spend the Holy Week in Florence and visit not only museums, palaces, squares and streets, which were the nest of Renaissance art, but also visit, with neither a special knowledge nor a particular sensitivity to architecture, the works by Brunelleschi, as Santa Maria dei Fiori, the Hospital of the Innocents and the Chapel Pazzi. In this first stage of my artistic experience, modern architecture was not yet included in my architectural interests. The rationalist and cartesian education received both from my father and high school, approached me to the rigidity and discipline of the classical orders, complemented by both shyness and regularity present in the perspectives of renaissance painters.

The formation of the architect

I was a student of the School of the Architecture and Urbanism at the University of Buenos Aires from 1953 to 1960. Until the end of Peron's government in 1955, the School went through a difficult period. Because docents had to identify with *Partido Justicialista*, the more prestigious professionals were not participating in the educational system; however, there were some exceptions, such as the renowned architecture historian Mario J. Buschiazzo, who kept his distance in relation to the political requirements. In the course Introduction to Architecture, I had the luck to be part of a good assistant teacher's group – Rafael Iglesia – who gave us an approach to modern architecture. An internal cultural tension started then, which accompanied me for the rest of my life. On

Figure 2

Bruno Zevi's book *Saper vedere l'architettura*, gift from my uncle and the book by Leonello Venturi, whose classes I attended in the School of Letters at University of Rome.

Source: Author's collection



Figure 3

Figure 2: Bruno Zevi's book *Saper vedere l'architettura*, gift from my uncle and the book by Leonello Venturi, whose classes I attended in the School of Letters at University of Rome.

Source: Author's collection

one side, my passion for the classical tradition and Renaissance art conditioned me in a rigid perspective, obsessively rationalist, based on the aesthetical principles of the symmetrical and Cartesian orders. This conditioned my works in the introductory course, influenced by Bauhaus models, with the difficulties of assimilating the compositional and asymmetrical freedom of modern design. On the other side, Bruno Zevi's books readings – first *Saper Vedere* and soon *Storia dell'architettura moderna* – questioned aspects from the “organic” perspective, to the persistence of classical values and the expressive rigidity of the Modern Movement architectural cartesianism. This duality persisted intensively during my cultural education and intellectual production, the antithesis between reason and sentiment. I was very excited to read in 1953 the first issue of the magazine *Casabella-continuità* edited by E.N.Rogers, who published in a double page in *canson* paper the expressionist drawing of Einstein tower by Erich Mendelsohn. I immediately signed the magazine and kept the whole collection until Rogers renounced in 1965. I was very excited with the works by Scarpa, Gardella, Albini, Gregotti, Quaroni, Samoná, Mangiarotti, Zanuso, Viganó, among others, but did not agree with the historicist references to the Velasca Tower in Milan (1957), which promoted an international debate when this work was shown in detail in the magazine. I identified myself mostly with Reyner Banham's critique presented in the *Architectural Review* that resulted in Roger's acid reply in *Casabella's* editorial “*Lettera al custode dei frigoriferi*”.

The rationalist trend became more intense after my relation with the group of architects and artists followers of Tomás Maldonado. Because the architectural design education was weak at school, a small group of classmates went after a prestigious office that could lead us. We were embraced by OAM group (Modern Art Organization), where young professionals of the Argentinian vanguard used to work, in a close relation with Maldonado. Logically, *miesian* rigor and discipline were imposed to us in the architectural projects that we developed under the supervision of the architect Juan Manuel Borthagaray. Similarly, the work of Max Bill, the *Güte Form* of industrial design and the Swiss graphic cleanness, constituted a permanent model to me when I started working on the graphic of my father's magazine on economy *Camoatí*, which “modern” look I was responsible for. The Italian design started to interest me through other publications I used to sign: *Stile Industria*, *Domus*, *Comunità*, and *Civiltà delle Macchine*. On one side, I went deeper on my knowledge of Adriano Olivetti's work and his support to the innovative design and modern architecture, both disseminated by the magazine *Comunità*; as well as the relationship between industry and culture, published by *Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale (IRI)*, in the original presentation by *Civiltà delle Macchine*. However, I also followed my first master's, Bruno Zevi, production, when his new magazine arrived in Buenos Aires, *Architettura*, *Cronache e Storia*, which historic contents were more interesting than the architectural works presented and the unattractive edition's design.

Modern architecture progressively substituted my attraction for the classical world. The intense relationship with the theme assumed in Italy was still intact when Luigi Crema – author of an important history book on Roman architecture and professor of the Polytechnic of Milan – lectured at the School of Architecture on Empire monuments. Thus, when I started to work as an assistant teacher of History of Architecture I, in 1957, I made students prepare models of the Roman and Pompeii Forums, which proved to be complicated tasks that they did not assimilate very well. The continuous approach with modern architecture became possible through readings available at the Italian bookstore Leonardo. In that period I started to create my own architecture library, mostly Italian editions, which I was able to fund with my job at the Stock Market. It was also possible to find used books in downtown second-hand bookstores, which

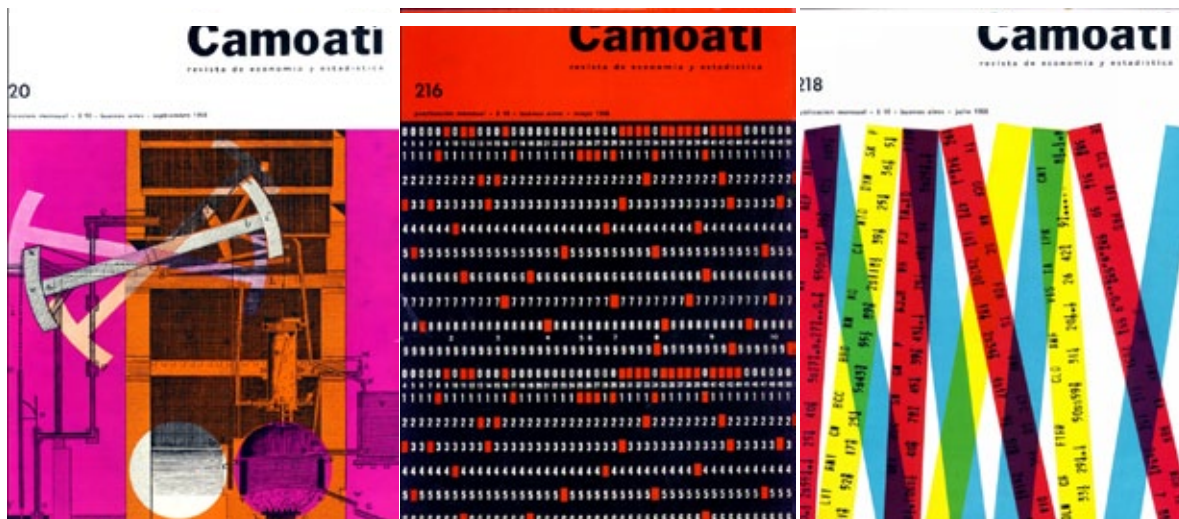


Figure 4

Magazine *Camoati* on economics, which graphic and covers I did based on Max Bill's work, the *Güte Form* of industrial design and cleanliness of the Swiss graphics.

Source: author's collection

had old collections that belonged to former Italian architects who had immigrated to Argentina. That was how, for example, I found out about the paleo-Christian, pre-Romanic and Romanic architecture textbooks written by Giulio Carlo Argan, in the beginning of his career in the 1930s, when he used to lecture in Florence and in the south of Italy. After reading Zevi's books, the vital book by Giedion, *Spazio, Tempo e Architettura*², published by Hoepli editor, lead me to the quest of modernity. As Secretary of Culture of the Architecture Students Center, I translated chapters on Mies and Le Corbusier, in order to make them available for the students. I would anxiously wait for the set of small volumes of *Storia Sociale dell'arte*³ by Arnold Hauser, edited by Einaudi, which allowed me both to radically overcome the western artistic production narrow descriptive analyses, and also to establish a relationship of society, culture and economy.

2. *Space, time and architecture*

3. *Social history of art*

The most important books received from Italy then were *Walter Gropius and Bauhaus* by Argan; *Elementi dell'architettura funzionale*⁴, by Alberto Sartoris; *Barocco nell'architettura moderna*, by Gillo Dorfles; and the set of volumes published by Milan's editor Tamburini, with articles by Giulia Veronesi and Zevi: *Poetica dell'architettura neoplasticista*⁵; and *Architettura e storiografia*⁶, among others.

With the peronist government decline, the school of architecture recovered its old splendor, and prestigious architects went back to the classrooms. I was lucky to attend classes given by renowned Wladimiro Acosta – friend and colleague of Gregori Warchavchik – who introduced us to themes on affordable housing and social architecture. In those years, it was important to share ideas with Marco Zanuso when in different occasions he was in Argentina, supervising the Olivetti factory construction, in Merlo, a suburb of Buenos Aires. As a designer and architect, he was part of the Italian rationalist heritage, distant from the historicist reminiscences of neo-realist examples. His form, matter and construction experiments were very attractive to young students and architects, looking for a path distinct of the formal aestheticism that started to emerge, resulting from the plastic freedom of brutalism. In 1957, the graduate level course started and I was invited to teach History of Civilization, when for the first time in my university career I lectured on Leonardo da Vinci, inspired by Ernst Cassirer's philosophical interpretation. Gillo Dorfles arrived in Argentina in the end of the 1950s to give conferences in several universities and I was made his cicerone. I accompanied him through his stay in the country. Hence, the friendship established is still alive now; following Oscar Niemeyer's steps, in 2011 he reached 101 years old, and just published his memories 99+1. His insights opened me up to multiple theoretical approaches: from the necessary links between history, art, architecture and design, to the philosophical and semiotic foundations of the work of art, and to the necessary search for the symbolic meanings of material elements – cult and popular – produced by humans. While Dorfles was not an architect, but had degrees in philosophy and aesthetic, his vision was much more comprehensible and instigating – he used to apply Gropius thesis on the importance of design from the spoon to the city – than that of traditional architecture critics; he had also a sensitivity to find and valorize paths opened by the international vanguard. He was the one who lead me out of the limits of architecture, seeking history and cultural anthropology to understand the historic relationship between society, thoughts and the material world, contained in texts by Linton, Weber, Herkowitz, Kahler, and Cassirer. On the other side, the relationship with some of my father's friends was also important, such as, philosophers Rodolfo Mondolfo and Gino Germani, one of the founders of Argentinean sociology.

4. Elements of functional architecture

5. Poetics of neoplastic architecture

6. Architecture and historiography

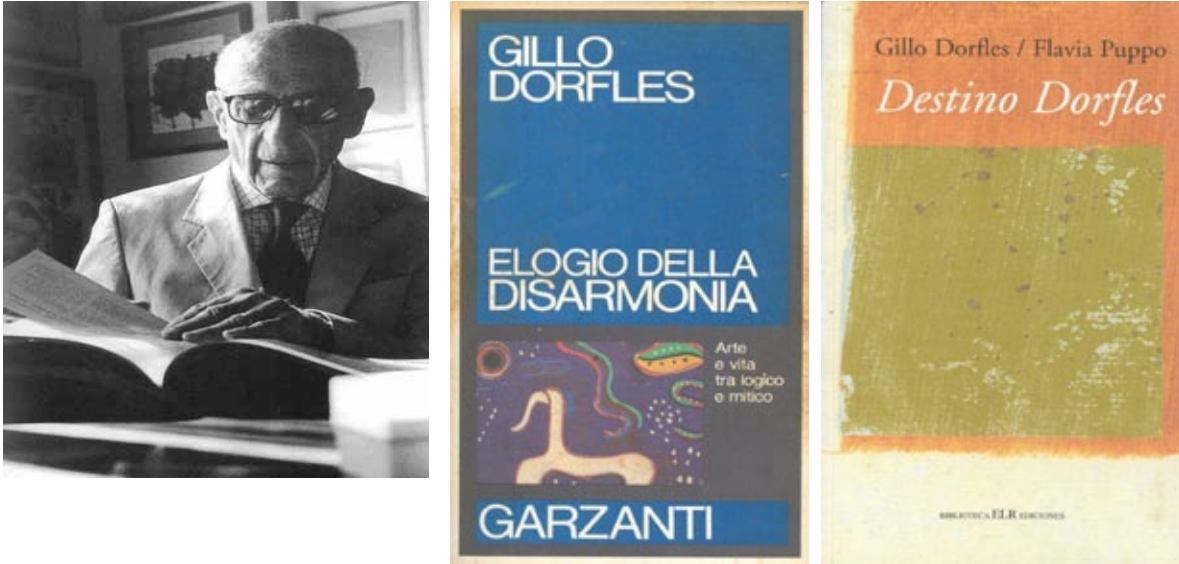


Figure 5

Gillo Dorfles and his theoretical interdisciplinary writings.

Source: Author's collection

In the second half of the 1950s, the friendship with Enrico Tedeschi was significantly important. He arrived in Argentina in the end of the II World War and, after participating in the design of University City of Tucumán, with Cino Calcaprina and Ernert N. Rogers, in collaboration with Argentinean architects Horacio Caminos and Eduardo Catalano, Tedeschi settled in the city of Córdoba, where he taught in the School of Architecture. Colleague of Bruno Zevi, he shared with him ideas on organic architecture and the importance of the relation between the work and the region, local materials and ecological restraints. He conducted a research team that studied the northern Argentinian colonial architecture; and opposing Buschiazzo hegemony in Buenos Aires – whose vision was much more conservative – he created the Inter-university Institute of History of Architecture and organized international annual seminars, to which Pevsner, Banham, Argan, among others, were invited. Each time he arrived in Buenos Aires, we would have a personal meeting and he would suggest me readings and cultural guidance, particularly on the most recent Italian production. He published in 1947 *Una introducción a la historia de la arquitectura*⁷, and *Teoría de la arquitectura*⁸, in 1962 – which I reproduced in the 1980s to students of *Facultad de Havana* in Cuba. Based on this theoretical background, I was able to organize a collection of books and published at a small editor of Buenos Aires, in 1962, a chapter of the book *L'architettura di San Marco*, by Sergio Bettini: *El espacio arquitectónico de Roma a Bizancio*, Ediciones 39.

7. An introduction to the History of Architecture

8. Theory of Architecture

9. The architectural space from Rome to Byzantium, Editions 3

Figure 6

1962/63. Publishing activities in Buenos Aires in the direction of a collection of texts on architecture.

Book by Sergio Bettini. The selected writings *Antecedentes de la arquitectura actual*.

Source: Author's collection



My first chapter in a book appeared in 1959, in the selected writings organized by assistants of the History Department at the School of Architecture and Urbanism, *Antecedentes de la arquitectura actual*¹⁰, with an essay by Louis Sullivan. Graduated in 1960, this stage of my life finished in 1961, when I attended, in Tucumán, the course “Architectonic Space from Baroque to now”, given by Giulio Carlo Argan, to whom I asked permission to attend the classes he lectured in the School of Letters at University of Rome. In 1962, I spent almost one year in Europe; first, attending Ernesto Rogers’ conferences in Milan and Argan’s in Rome, and soon visiting the architectonic masterpieces of different countries in the Old Continent.

10. Precedents of present architecture

Figure 7

Two inspiring books by Giulio Carlo Argan. The course he gave in Tucumán (Argentina, 1961) resulted in the book *El concepto del espacio arquitectónico del barroco hasta nuestros días*, later reproduced in Cuba in 1980s.

Source: Author's collection



Figura 9

Left: Giulio Carlo Argan. Right: I'm in the center of the photo, between teachers of the course directed by Enrico Tedeschi surrounding Argan (Tucumán, 1961).

Source: Author's collection



The European Experience

For an architect, and who else want to get deeply involved with the history of architecture, travelling is a vital need. It is not possible to explain an architectural work without an individual experience of its forms and spaces. Focusing on this affirmative, I have always been an heir of the basic principles defined by Bruno Zevi, in which architecture required a sensorial and visual experience of the work. In my classes I refused to describe buildings I had not seen personally. Therefore, South American universities' students saved along their careers to realize their biggest youth dream: to visit the main existing historic and modern monuments of in different latitudes of the planet. The School of Montevideo was famous for its lotteries and paid activities that stu-

dents used to organize in order to collect the money that would allow them to travel in vans through the Old Continent during months. Thus, in the year of 1961, with an Architect degree, I decided to travel to Europe and live this unique personal experience.

In the first stage of the trip, I spent some weeks in Milan and almost three months in Rome. First, I attended conferences on the theory of modern architecture given by Ernesto N. Rogers (1909-1969) in the Polytechnic of Milan. Once there, I approached the master that still remembered his visit to Argentina in the 1940s, and got interested in what was happening in the country. I visited the publishing house of Casabella magazine and he made the offer of dedicating a monographic issue to Argentinean architecture and urbanism. Upon my return to Buenos Aires, I created a partnership with the Italian architect Gian Lodovico Peani (1931-1988), and we prepared *Saggi sull'Argentina*, with texts and works presented in number 285, published in March 1964. In the dialog established for the issue's preparation, I contacted architects Gae Aulenti, Aldo Rossi (1931-1997), Vittorio Gregotti and Francesco Tentori. With the latter, I had a long-lasting friendship until his death in Venice in 2009. Primarily, because of our common interest in Le Corbusier, since he had written a book on the Master, and I had prepared a text for a book that was never published and for which he made significant contributions. Secondly, because Tentori was sent to Cuba in the 1970s, as the architect of an Italian company in charge of the new roads built for the infrastructure modernization process in the island. Finally, we met again in mid 1980s in Venice, when he was lecturing at the University. In that occasion, I also had a relationship with Aldo Rossi – whose book *L'architettura della città*¹¹, published by Marsilio, I was the first one to disseminate in Cuba in 1966 – while I was collaborating to the Architecture Section at the Biennial of Venice, under the direction of Paolo Portoghesi. He had asked Rossi, in 1979, for the project for Teatro del Mondo, anticipating the biennial of 1980, when *Strada Novissima* was first presented, and it was considered one of the milestones of Post-modernism. Astonished for not finding Rossi's project in the city, he explained that it was dismantled in a warehouse, because they could not pay for the rent to keep the float in motion through Venice's canals. Rossi got excited with the utopic proposal that I made: assembling it in Havana bay. During the period spend in Milan, I was able to visit some of the affordable housing projects by Gregotti and Rossi, such as the residential complex Gallarate; I was accompanied by Marco Zanuso (1916-2001) in the visit to Necchi factory; by Vittorio Viganó (1919-1996), to the renowned "brutalist" work Istituto Marchiondi; and I visited Ángel Mangiarotti's office, one of the main representatives of the "purist" constructivism in Italy.

The period in Rome was marked by the relationship with Giulio Carlo Argan (1909-1992) and Paolo Portoghesi. I attended the course on Roman Baroque architects in the School of Letters at University of Rome. The lectures were pas-

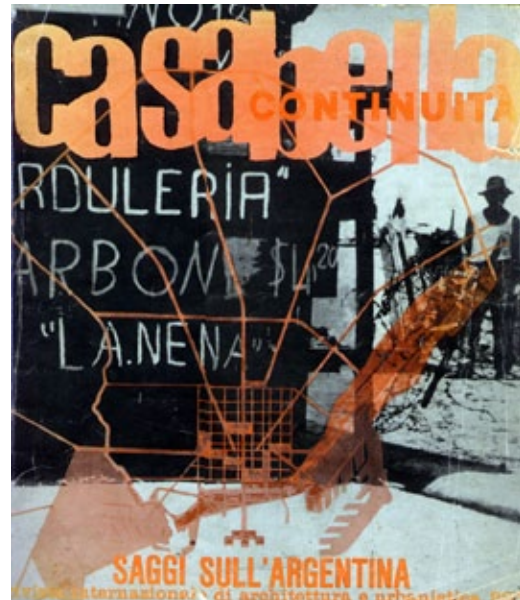
11. The architecture of the city.

Figure 9

Ernesto N. Rogers and issue 285 of *Casabella* dedicated to Argentinean architecture and urbanism and published in March 1964, which I organized with Gian Lodovico Peani.

Source: Author's collection

sionate for the detailed, elaborate, creative and imaginative interpretation of each building, of each church, to which he dedicated a whole session. In that period, we were not obsessed with showing an infinite sequence of colorful slides, as it happens now with PowerPoint presentations: in order to have a comprehensive analysis, two or three black-and-white images were enough. But it was exciting to perceive what could be unveiled through those images; the arguments and intentions of the author in the floor plans, elevations, in each detail, in each symbol, in each allegory. It was never only a description – the obvious that always characterizes university classes on history of archi-



tecture in our schools – instead, it was an interpretative, critical and, in some cases, polemic reading. The two-hours lecture by Francesco Borromini on the *San Carlino alle Quattro Fontane* church was unforgettable. I must confess that this would become an essential course to my formation as a historian and critic – anticipated for what I had seen in Tucumán in the previous year. Hence, the first books I published in Cuba – on Renaissance and Baroque – were totally influenced by the critical methodology developed by Argan.

When I met Portoghesi in Rome, he had not entered yet the *Parnaso* of architecture. In those years, the recognition for his published matters on Roman Baroque architecture was starting and he felt thrilled to know that I had read them, and that they were available in Buenos Aires, through the articles published in *Comunità*, by Olivetti. Accompanied by him, I methodically visited churches and climbed up not easily accessible towers and domes. He took me to the Bardi house (1959) in the suburbs of Rome, that he was finishing with the furniture design. Built with *puzzolana* bricks, it was totally inspired by the curved forms by Borromini, already approaching his thesis in defense of

post-modernism. When I was invited by Bruno Zevi to lecture on Argentinean architecture at the Istituto Nazionale di Architettura – attended by the Master –Portoghesi introduced me and helped me with the slides. He mentioned that I had lived in Italy an experience of “underdevelopment” and doubted that I had experienced it in Latin America. What actually happened was that, in the beginning of April, I had decided to visit Naples and Paestum. Because the trip through Sicily was too long, I opted to go to the other side of the boot, visit Matera – to see the famous *Trulli* – in direction of Lecce and see the popular *barocchetto*. In the middle of the trip, in Apennines near Potenza, a snowstorm happened, and the height of the snow totally covered the car. I had to stay for four days sheltered in a poor peasants’ hut, sleeping in the straw with the cows, since there was no space left in the house. When the snowplow arrived, I returned to Rome and never reached Lecce. Finally, I also ran through Rome with urbanist Italo Insolera, my uncle’s friend, who showed me the city’s structure development and its main neighborhoods. When my appointments in Italy were over, I started the trip through Europe until September 1962. Upon my return to Buenos Aires, I could not imagine that this architectonic experience would represent a radical shift in my life.

Italians in Cuba

The definitive move from Argentina to Cuba was unexpected and casual. I had returned from almost one-year trip through Europe and was beginning to work in the office and at the School courses, in early 1963. Meanwhile, an architect arrived in Buenos Aires to spend his vacations, a colleague of studies that had his office in the same building. He had gone to Cuba, when in the beginning of the Revolution, Cuban professionals immigrated to Miami for disagreeing with the political regime. Hence, the country leaders requested the help of young professionals from Latin America. He also mentioned that the prestigious Cuban professor of History of Architecture, Joaquin E. Weiss, had retired and they could not find a substitute to teach the subject. He offered to present my – short – curriculum to the school’s directory and encouraged me with the idea of teaching in the island, where I would be able to apply my ideas on the teaching method. In April 1963 the invitation was official, I quit the job I had in the School of Architecture of Buenos Aires and travelled in September, since classes in Havana had been postponed for six months, due to the organization of the famous 7th International Union of Architects Congress. After abandoning the classical world, in Argentina I was only involved with the Modern Architecture teaching, I thought this would be the subject to teach. But as the only Professor of History in the whole School of Havana, I was obliged to offer the whole matter, from ancient Egypt to contemporary architecture. Since I could not radically change the program, I assumed Prof. Weiss’ subjects, however essentially changing their contents.

Each theme – Middle Age, Renaissance, Baroque and Modern Movement – corresponded to a semester and with the only task of teaching classes, I was able to write long textbooks and hand them to the students. One of them was transformed into a book on the *European Baroque Architecture*, with several chapters dedicated to Italy. In these texts, I applied the analysis and interpretations developed by Argan, based on the phenomenological reading of architectural works, originated from his relationship with philosopher Enzo Paci. Assuming the Marxist philosophy as the basis on the context of the Cuban revolution, it was important to materialize Argan's thesis that: theory is theory on praxis, and ideas happen on the concrete experience. In addition, instead of studying the linear history of styles – as it was traditionally taught –, besides unveiling the works' symbolic meanings in relation to the socioeconomic structures that determined them, it also evidenced the typological systems that identified the

Figure 10

Arrival in Cuba (September
1963)

Source: Author's collection



dominant themes in each period. In Cuba, in the 1980s, the small essay on the course given by Argan in Argentina was finally published: *Architectural space from Baroque to our days*.

Cuba has never been in the map of Italian immigration. This explains the scarcity of information on the presence of Italians in the island, besides Christopher Columbus, who was the first European to land in Cuban grounds. In the 1950s, Franco Albini developed a project for the urbanization of *Habana del Este*, which was never built. Writer Alejo Carpentier's anecdote says that when Enrico Caruso was in Havana in the 1930s, a small fire started in the middle of the presentation of Opera *Aida* in old Tacón Theater: the singer was arrested by the police because he ran into the streets in a Radamés costume out of the carnival season. Upon the beginning of the socialist revolution, some idealistic and utopian intellectuals and professionals arrived in Cuba to help building a new society. Not long after I landed in Havana, I met three Italian architects that lived in Cuba: Sergio Baroni (1930-2001), Vittorio Garatti from Milan, a disciple of Rogers, and Roberto Gottardi, Venetian, Carlo Scarpa's disciple. They collaborated,

with Ricardo Porro, in the most well-known and disseminated design work built during the revolution: the National School of Art, in Cubanacán, Havana (1961-1965). I also met Paolo Gasparini, who stayed in Cuba for two years. He was the sibling of the Italian architect and historian that immigrated to Venezuela, Graziano Gasparini. Paolo was one of the most renowned photographers of architecture in Latin America, who created a unique collection of photographs on Cuban architecture, urbanism and its territory. I own him all the high-level graphic material of my essay contained in the book *Città e territorio nell'America Latina*¹², published by Electa Editrice of Milan in 1982.

Under a socialist regime, Italian leftists totally identified themselves with Cuba, starting a strong movement of intellectuals, politicians, and professionals visiting the island. Publications on Cuban themes multiplied in Italy. The new Cuban architecture also became an interesting theme there, which allowed the publication of my first book on that production in the 1960s, supported by architect and urbanist Paolo Ceccarelli – an enthusiast and fan of Cuba, where he participated in academic and restoration projects collaborating with Italian institutions; as well as Guido Canella, Zodiac magazine's editor that published many essays on Cuba – and Venetian publishing company Marsilio that in 1970 published the book *Cuba - Architettura della Rivoluzione*¹³, re-edited in 1977 in paperback. During those years, I established a debate with Napolitan critic and historian Renato de Fusco, when he published *Architettura come mass media*¹⁴, in which he developed a semiologic study on the negative dynamics that existed between architecture and the capitalist society. In response to his text, I wrote the long essay *Presenza di Cuba nella cultura architettonica contemporanea*, which he published in the 15th issue of the magazine *Op.Cit., Selezione della critica d'arte contemporanea*, in May 1969. This text had a wide repercussion and was reproduced by several European and Latin American magazines.

The relationship with Italy continued for more than three decades, while I stayed in the island. The assimilation of the masters' theoretical contributions lasted long, and was materialized in two books written for the architecture courses given in Cuba: *Crítica Arquitectónica*¹⁵ (1980) and *Historia de La Arquitectura y del Urbanismo Modernos: Capitalismo y Socialismo*¹⁶ (1985). They condensed and integrated the main concepts and ideas by Bruno Zevi, Giulio Carlo Angan, Gillo Dorfles, Leonardo Benévolo and Manfredo Tafuri. From Zevi, the reading method on architecture was applied, with the different categories that identify modern architecture – asymmetries and dissonances; anti-perspective tridimensionality; tridimensional decomposition; temporal spaces; among oth-

¹². *City and territory in Latin American.*

¹³. *Architecture of the revolution.*

¹⁴. *Architecture as mass media.*

¹⁵. *Architectural Critique*

¹⁶. *History of Modern Architecture and Urbanism: capitalism and socialism.*

Figure 11

Participation on the international debate since 1969. Interlocution with Renato de Fusco in the essay published in *Op. cit.*, n.15, *Presenza di Cuba nella cultura architettonica contemporanea*.

Source: Author's collection



Figure 12

First books published in Italy: *Cuba. Architettura della Rivoluzione* in 1970, followed by a pocketbook version in 1977.

Source: Author's collection



ers -; as well as the original interpretative methods of a specific work, which he developed for his students on Michelangelo's production, condensed in his book *Michelangelo architetto*, organized with Paolo Portoghesi. From Argan, the relationship of typology and ideology, ethical and moral contents of the Modern Movement, as well as the unveiling of architecture's symbolic contents in the contemporary culture. From Dorfles, the integration of the different design scales – urbanism, architecture and industrial design –; the relationship between “high” and popular culture and its kitsch manifestations; and the semiologic reading of architecture as a “system”, highly related with Umberto Eco's rationale.

Benevolo had a significant presence in Cuba; primarily because his *Storia dell'architettura moderna* was reproduced and disseminated among students of different architecture schools in the island; secondly, because it served as a guide for the elaboration of my interpretation of architecture in this period, in the book *Historia de la arquitectura y el urbanismo modernos. Capitalismo y socialismo* (1985) – edited



Figure 13

The book *Crítica Arquitectónica* (1980) was written with Eliana Cárdenas under the influence of Marxism and the semiotics in the course of Theory of Architecture in the School of Havana.

Source: Author's collection

in Spain and Cuba – in which I refuted some of the Italian Master's analyses, which made the essay be identified among students as *O Malévolo* (The Malignant). Tafuri was essential for the application of his operative critique and in the reading of the book *Progetto e utopia. Architettura e sviluppo capitalistico*, for the comprehension of the modernity crisis – history as the crisis project – and the existing contradictions in the architecture of the capitalist system from a Marxist approach, which he called *tumulte dans l'ensemble*. Materializing the formulation of Nietzsche, that “only will be able to comprehend history, who is a builder of the future and a connoisseur of the present”.

The participation in events, congresses, and articles, and invitations by several universities interested in the Cuban experience, complemented the influences mentioned above. In addition to the already mentioned book *Città e territorio nell'America Latina*, edited in Milan (1982), it was a significant fact that a Sicilian university also cared about disseminating a small booklet published in Cuba, with the collaboration of architect Fernando Salinas. The *Istituto di Composizione della Facoltà di Architettura dell'Università di Palermo* edited, in 1979, *La progettazione ambientale nell'era della industrializzazione* by Libreria Dante of Palermo. Finally, in the brief period when Tomás Maldonado assumed as editor of *Casabella* magazine, I collaborated with him in the organization on the monographic issue: *Cuba vent'anni dopo*, 466, of February 1981, and presented the recent accomplishments in the essay *Continuità e rinnovamento nell'architettura cubana del XX secolo*. In 1983 I participated in the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) Congress in Milan dedicated to industrial design,

Figura 15

Influence of Benévolo and Tafuri in the course of History of Modern Architecture and interlocution with those authors in publications on architecture and urbanism.

Source: Author's collection



where I met Dorfles and Mangiarotti; and in 1984 I was included as member of the Cuban delegation invited by the City of Venice, for the Cuban Culture Journey. There, Salinas and I gave lectures in the Institute of Architecture of Venice and interviewed Manfredo Tafuri, which was not very successful. While we were still developing the operative critique, he was already dedicated to the philological and archaeological studies, and concentrated in the research on 16th century Venice's Cemetery. The relationship with Italy, since Cuba, ended with my last trip in 1993, when I gave lectures in the Polytechnic of Milan; the School of Architecture of Naples; and in the graduate program in urbanism of the Architecture University Institute of Venice, invited by the Dean, Marcello Balbo, always on the Cuban architecture and urbanism themes.

Figure 15

The first image shows the cover of the booklet written with collaboration with Fernando Salinas

La progettazione ambientale nell'era della industrializzazione published by Istituto di Composizione della Facoltà di Architettura dell'Università di Palermo in 1979. The second, the cover of a textbook for the subject *Historia de La arquitectura y del arte del barroco europeo* taught in Cuba; published in 1995.

Source: Author's collection

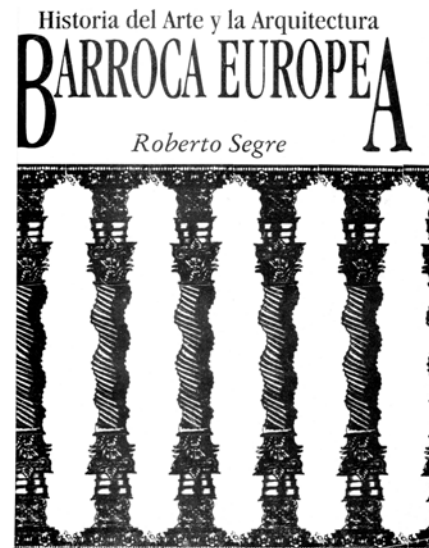


Figure 16

América Latina en su arquitectura: I was its reporter by invitation of UNESCO (1969-1975). *Las*

estructuras ambientales en América Latina was published in 1977 and discusses Latin American urban phenomena.

Source: Author's collection

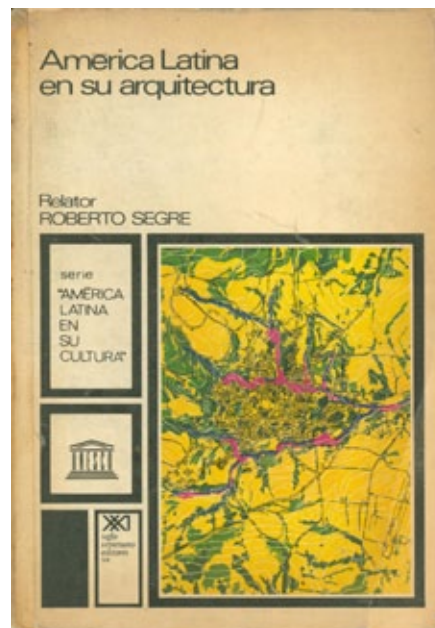


Figure 17

Collaboration in the organization of the monographic issue on *Cuba vent'anni dopo*, n. 466 of February 1981 that contains my essay: *Continuità e rinnovamento nell'architettura cubana del XX secolo*.

The book *Architettura e territorio nell'America Latina* was published in Italian by Electa.

Source: Author's collection

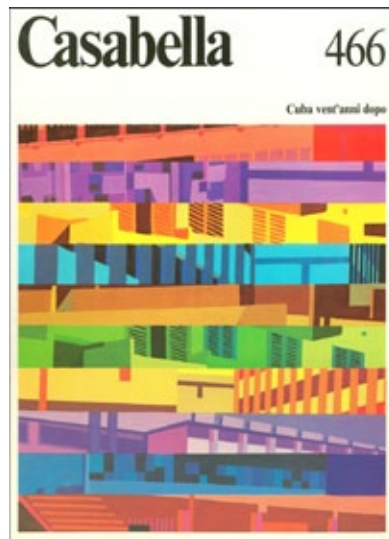


Figure 18

The first image shows the editing team of the book *América Latina en su arquitectura*. From left to right: Iván Espín, Carlos Raúl Villanueva, Roberto Segre and Graziano Gasparini.

The second image, from left to right: Gillo Dorfles, Roberto Segre and Angelo Magiarotti during ICSID in Milan, 1985

Source: Author's collection

Insertion in Brazil

The invitation to collaborate as a Professor of the Graduate Program in Urbanism of the School of Architecture of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (PROURB- FAU/UFRJ) was made by the school's former Dean Luiz Paulo Conde, and by the program's coordinator, Denise Pinheiro Machado. It coincided with the beginning of my researches on Rio de Janeiro's architecture and urbanism – favelas (slums), Niemeyer's work, and the Ministry of Education and Health¹⁷. Some Italian universities were interested in learning about the new Brazilian accomplishments. Hence, I was invited to give lectures in the School of Architecture of Ferrara, in the Polytechnic of Milan and the Schools of *La Sapienza* and Rome 3, of *Università degli Studi* in Rome. But, in fact, the major contribution was sharing the cultural and architectural experience, gathered along many decades and consolidated under the Italian heritage influence, both in the undergraduate courses of the School of Architecture, and the researches developed in PROURB. We applied the concepts of "environmental design", influenced by Dorfles, for the integration between architecture and city, and the definition of architectonic and urbanistic codes, conceived as a structure of relationships that link a complex set of "systems", according to Tafuri, which allowed comparative studies of the cities of Havana and Rio de Janeiro.

However, and undoubtedly, the most ambitious work developed during these years, was the research on the building of the Ministry of Education and Health in Rio de Janeiro. The creation of a team formed by professors and interns allowed me to share with them the austerity and discipline of the research embraced along decades. Thus, we assumed the idea that history is a labyrinth – Argan – full of interrogations that, according to Tafuri, must be unveiled. The materialization of Joseph Quetglas' thesis – that a work can only epitomize social, cultural and architectonic history of a certain period and nation – was made effective in this research. Therefore, the Ministry of Education headquarters served for the understanding of the city of Rio de Janeiro's urban transformations, defined by its political, social, economic and cultural history. And at the same time, it served to relate this work with the Brazilian and international architectural production, with the intention of unveiling their multiple reciprocal influences. In the building's detailed study, it served to apply the categories of analysis that Bruno Zevi kept effective during his life. However we were able to go beyond them, particularly in a representation obtained through the possibilities of digital graphic techniques, which allowed us to deeply look into all the building's formal, spatial, technical, constructive, functional and aesthetic particularities. In addition, materializing Dorfles' and Gropius' theses, we assumed it, not as an isolated and autonomous element, but identifying its relationship with all the design scales: thus, in the research everything was seen in detail: the presence of furniture, its integration with arts, the relationship with

17. This iconic modernist building in Rio de Janeiro is currently named Palácio Gustavo Capanema (N.T).



Figure 19

CD-rom on the Ministry of Education and Health (Palácio Gustavo Capanema) prepared by the team of Laboratory of Urban Analysis and Digital Representation (LAURD-PROURB-FAU-UFRJ) from 2001 to 2005.

The book on the building published by Romano Guerra (2013) is considered the most complete on the Brazilian modern architecture iconic work.

Source: Author's collection

Burle Marx' landscape and its meaning for the urban context, which opened up a critical and polemic path in downtown Rio de Janeiro. Without any doubts, in the end of my life the sedimentation of Italian culture had a continuous rejuvenating effect in my vision of the urban and architectonic universe in Brazil and Latin America.

Roberto Segre

Rio de Janeiro, October 2011.