

Università degli Studi Roma Tre
Dipartimento di Architettura
A.A. 2024-25

SENTIMENTAL TOPOGRAPHY

Project and Place in the *Other Modernity*

Carlotta Torricelli

practical details

4 CFU

2nd Semester

Tuesday, 2-6 pm

Labò Classroom

For any other info:

carlotta.torricelli@unirioma3.it



Fernando Távora,
Parque Municipal Quinta da Conceição,
Matosinhos, 1956-60

First necessary premise concerning the title: **SENTIMENTAL TOPOGRAPHY**

The first part of the Course title is a quotation from a text written by the Greek architect Dimitris Pikionis and published in 1935.

***Sentimental Topography* is a poetic statement, where the author gives an eloquent expression of what he called “the spirit of the place”, its innermost essence.**

This text represents the lens through which the Course will reflect on some of architecture's constants:

- the relationship between construction and site;
- the role of movement in the organization of space;
- the importance of the narrative structure that defines the relationships between design and circumstance, in the form of a dialogue;
- the possibility of achieving a self-conscious synthesis between universal civilization and local identities;
- the achievement of a conjunction between the rationality of normative technique and the a-rationality of idiosyncratic form;
-



Dimitris Pikionis, the path to the Acropolis of Athens

**«Each of Pikionis's buildings is an experiment
in what constitutes a place»**

Freddie Phillipson, 2022



One of the walls of St. Dimitrios Loumbardiaris Church by D.Pikionis,
Philopappou Hill, Athens

*«We meditate upon the **spirit** which emanates
from each particular **land or place**...»*

*Through the agency of this particular hour
the **mystery of time becomes one with the
mystery of space**. What irreconcilable
elements have merged together here?
Wherever one turns, one
may see the double-headed hermae of
antithesis....»*

*It is in moments like this,
O Doric column, that your mystery is
revealed to me...»*

*More than any of these things, this hour
reveals that this longed-for union would
project and condense the culmination of
**nature's dramatic mystery within an art
form corresponding to nature itself**...»*

***Nothing exists by its own, everything is part
of a total harmony»***

Dimitris Pikionis,
A Sentimental Topography,
Tó 3° Máti (Third Eye) magazine, 1935

Second necessary premise concerning the title: PROJECT and PLACE

The concept of **place** introduces a relationship between a **particular** situation (the site and the architecture that stands in that place) and a more **general** situation (the archetypes to which the architecture refers). **Locus** combines the general idea of the city, of *forma urbis*, with the idea of the specificity of situations.

In antiquity, the choice of place was accompanied by rituals. **The idea of finding the *genius loci*, the local deity.**

The general idea of architecture also includes the **place seen as a single, concrete space.**

The building, the monument, the city are profoundly linked to the **original event**, to the first sign, to its constitution, to its **permanence** but also to its **transformation**.



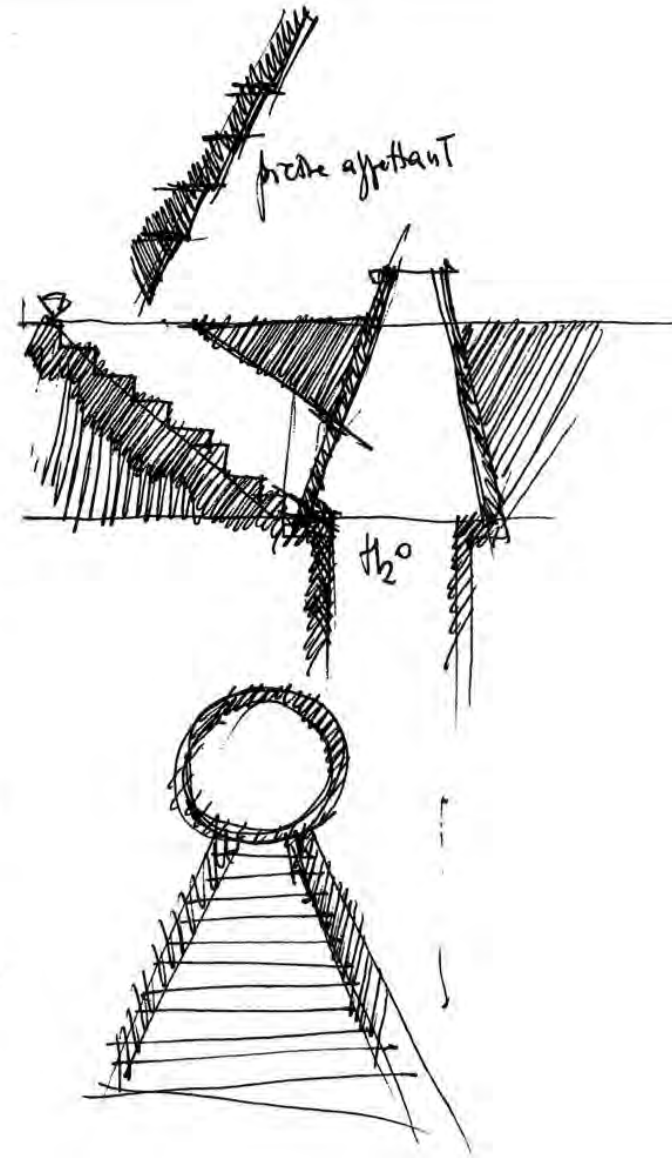
Circle of the Sangallo Family, Verso, Illustration to Vitruvius Book III, Chapter 2, c.1530–1545.
Pen and dark brown ink on laid paper, 150 × 250 mm. DMC 2939 r.

NATURE and ARTIFACT

«And the contrast with **nature** because the cutting of the stone seems to be from another civilisation.

I am always fascinated by this system of descending stairs to enter a space that is illuminated by zenithal light. Here the relationship is between the sky and the water, so there must be a day of the year when the light enters perpendicularly into the cone and the water»

perchè non si sa dettata
da quale perfezione di
mente, di macchina o di
sapienza.
E il contrasto con la natura
perchè il taglio della pietra
sembra di un'altra civiltà.
Sono sempre affascinato
da questo sistema di
discesa mediante scale
per entrare in uno spazio
che è illuminato dalla
luce zenitale. E qui il
rapporto è tra il cielo
e l'acqua, così vi deve
esser un giorno nell'anno
in cui la luce entra
perpendicolarmente
nel cono e nell'acqua.



ARCHITECTURE and SITE

«Lewerentz places **pillar-columns** supporting a roof between **free-standing tree-columns** in the open air... **The columns** are firmly rooted to their base like the trunks of pine trees to the earth, and **become trunks built between the trunks of living trees**...

*In this almost natural way, the base with **the columns** loses the dominating connotations of the classical portico; it is the protected clearing needed before the entrance, the Scandinavian pause before the door»*

Alison Smithson, *L'albero e la colonna. The landscape that can survive and the Lewerentz connection*, 1984



Sigurd Lewerentz, Chapel of the Resurrection, Woodland Cemetery, Stockholm, 1921-25
Photo and Drawing CT,
May 2009

CIRCUMSTANCE and SPACE ORGANIZATION (against the 'contextual misunderstanding')

*«To this set of natural and human factors...we name 'circumstance'. Therefore, 'circumstance'... is that **set of factors that involve man**, are around him and, since he is the creator of many of them, to these must be added those that result from his own existence, from his own being...*

*And this **responsibility** arises precisely because man knows that **space organization**, having to satisfy and meet the circumstance, is not '**fatally determined**' by it – and hence **the possible active intervention of the organizer** – and knows that once space is organized, the organizer's activity must be the basis of it»*

Fernando Távora, *On Space Organization*, Porto 1962



Fernando Távora, Parque Municipal Quinta da Conceição, Matosinhos, 1956-60

*Third necessary premise concerning the title: **OTHER MODERNITY***

The course proposes a series of study itineraries through **heterodox experiences of Modernity**, in tension between the **Baltic** and the **Mediterranean**.

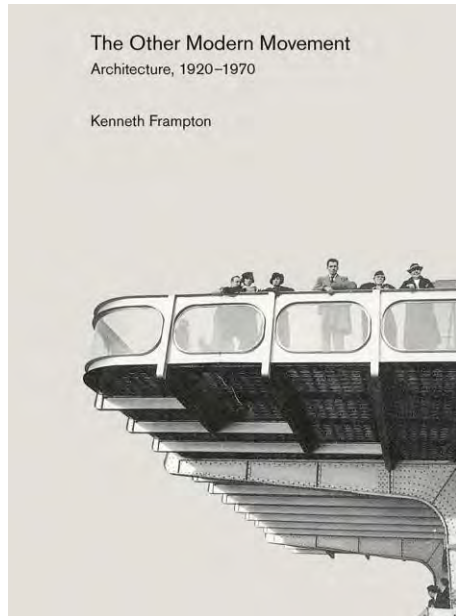
Paths transversal to the canons crystallized by internationalism, which outline differentiated design approaches, supported by a **common intention**.

These are investigated not so much - or not only - in terms of their relations with local building traditions and site characteristics, but rather in terms of the compositional procedures that root the **design of the new** to the **specificity of the site**, through a hand-to-hand encounter between **artefact** and **nature**.

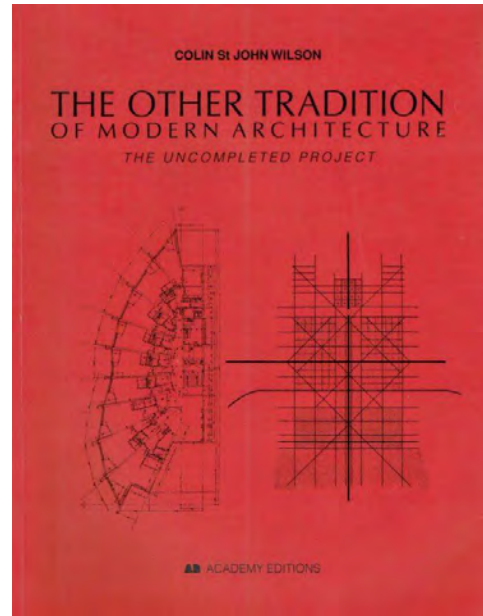


Fernando Távora, Casa em Ofir, Pinhal de Ofir, Fão, 1957-58
© FIMS, FT

different definitions of OTHER MODERNITY



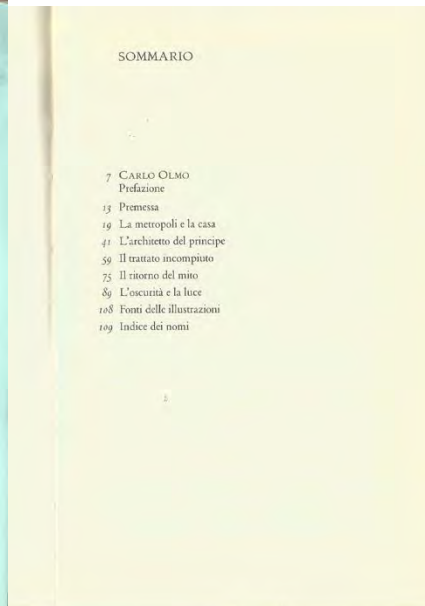
2015



1995



2012



2000



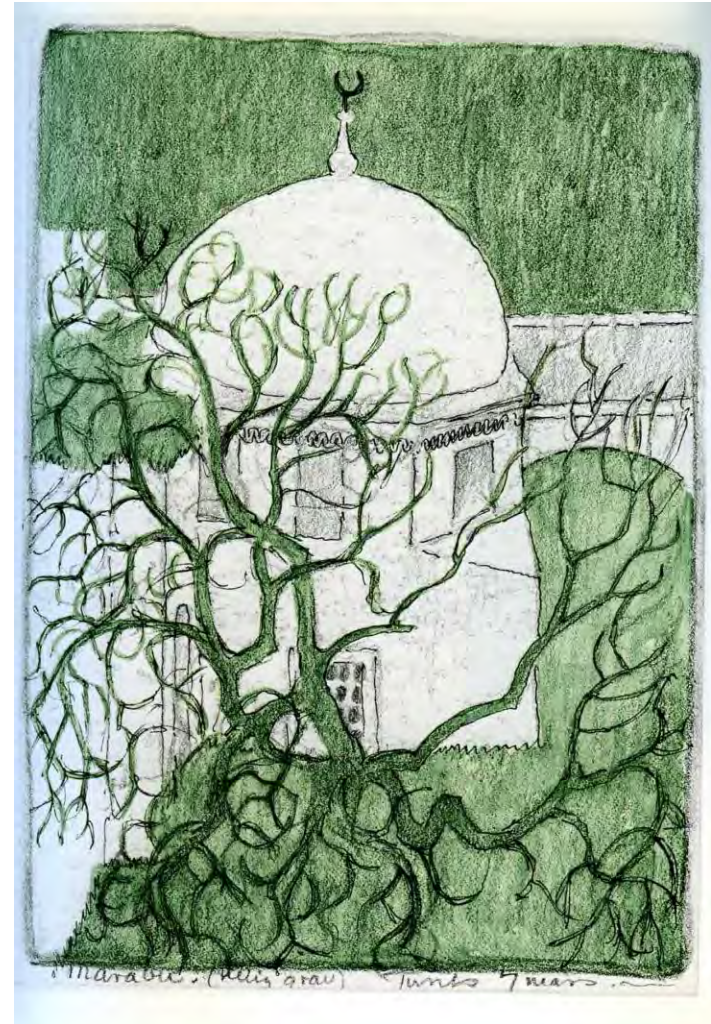
2021

A BALTIC MEDITERRANEAN ITINERARY THROUGH SPIRITUAL FAMILIES

The aim of the course is to broaden the students' frame of reference in the field of design culture, through the in-depth investigation of the experience of important figures and works of 20th century architecture.

To promote the internationalization of didactics, through the construction of a **geography of correspondences** between figures of architects who are distant in space and time, linked by what Henri Focillon called “**affinity of spirit in relation to forms**”.

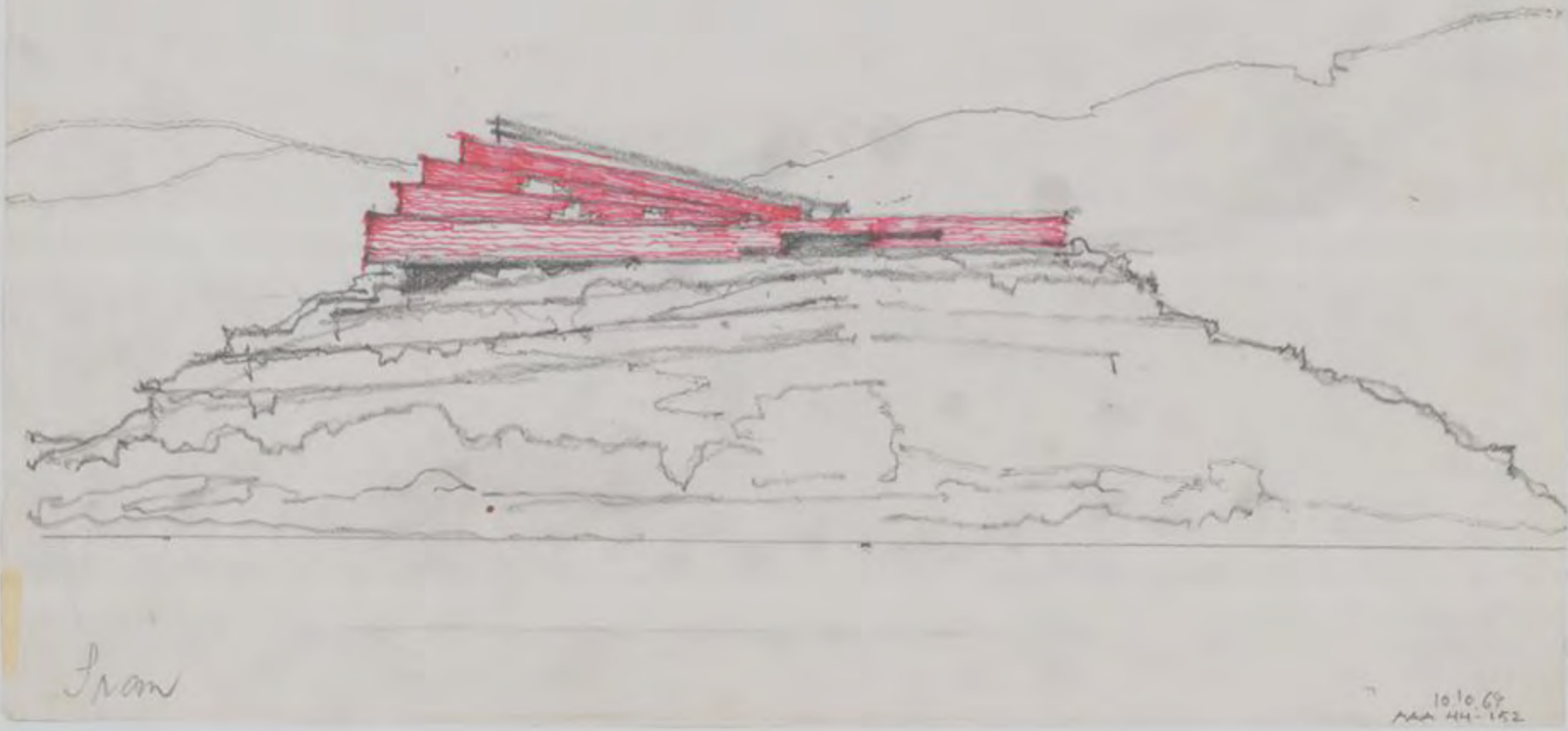
With these assumptions, the course will bring **Scandinavian** and from **Iberian** peninsula architects to the stage, passing from the **Mediterranean** as an obligatory reference for that search for origins that leads to **another Modernity**, the path of which is still open today, in the topicality of its lesson.



Erik Gunnar Asplund, sketch from the trip to Italy, Taormina

«There exists a kind of spiritual ethnography that cuts across the best defined “races”. It is composed of **families of the mind** - families whose unity is effected by secret ties and **who are faithfully in communication with one another, beyond all restrictions of time or place.** Perhaps each style, each state of a style, even each technique seeks out by preference a certain state of man’s nature, a certain **spiritual family**. In any case, it is the relationship between these three values that clarifies a work of art not only as something that is unique, but also as **something that is a living word in a universal language**»

Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art* (1934), Eng. Trans. by George Kubler, Zone Books, New York 1992.



Alvar Aalto, Iran Museum of Modern Art, Shiraz, 1969

CLASSICISM/BARBARISM

«Academicism says no to the oneiric dimension of **classicism** and to the prophetic dimension of **modernity**...

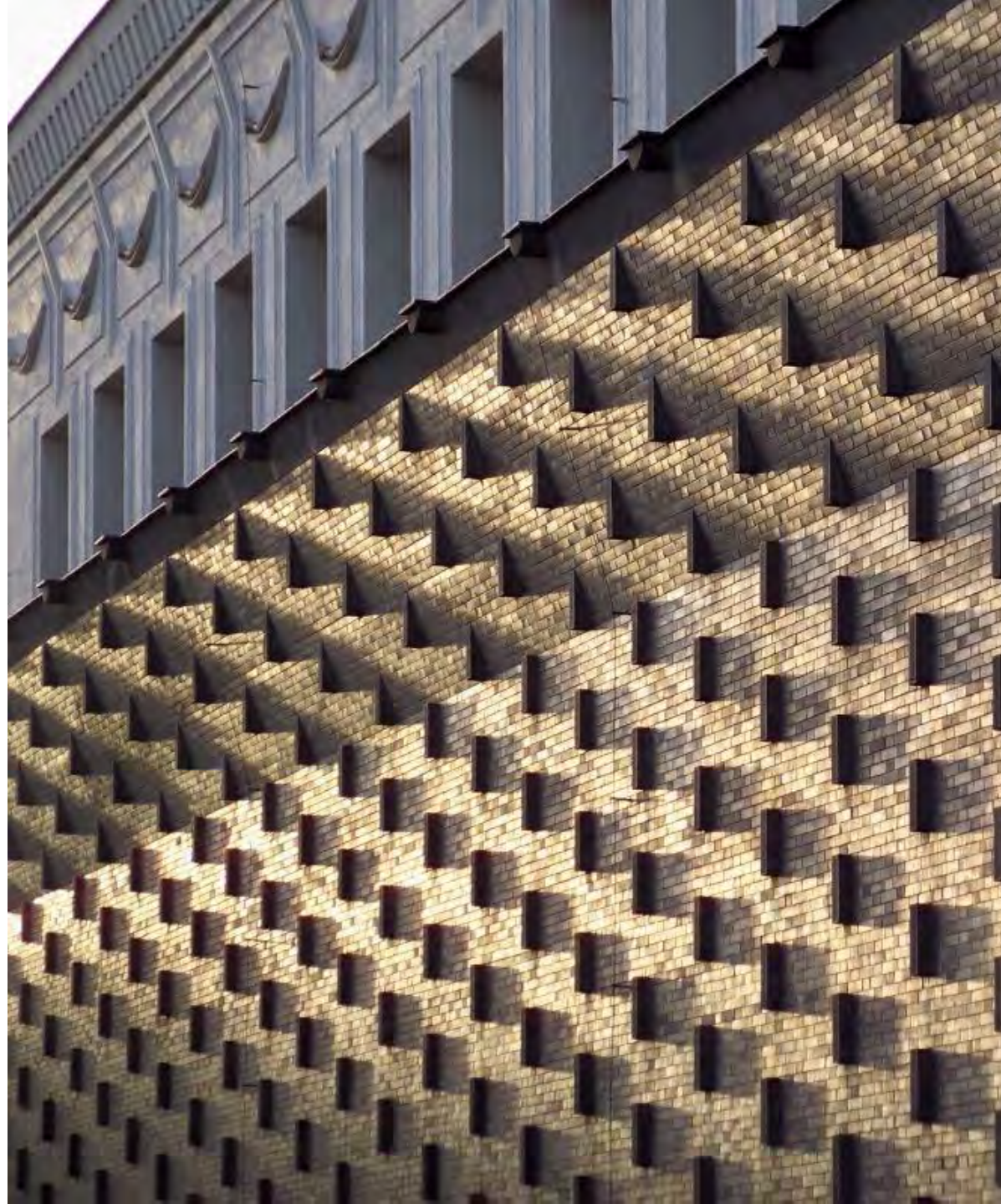
Academicism fears **contamination**, although this was a vital factor for the birth of Renaissance architecture and all Mediterranean architecture...

Here classicism communicates with its opposite, barbarism...

This is the proof that, in spite of his intentions, the great architect has gone with his work beyond light, penetrating the earth and its obscurities, «**seeing**» with his eyes closed»

Luciano Semerani, *Obscurity and light* from Id. *L'altro moderno*, Allemandi, Turin, 2000

Jože Plečnik,
Part of the exterior of the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Prague
1928-32

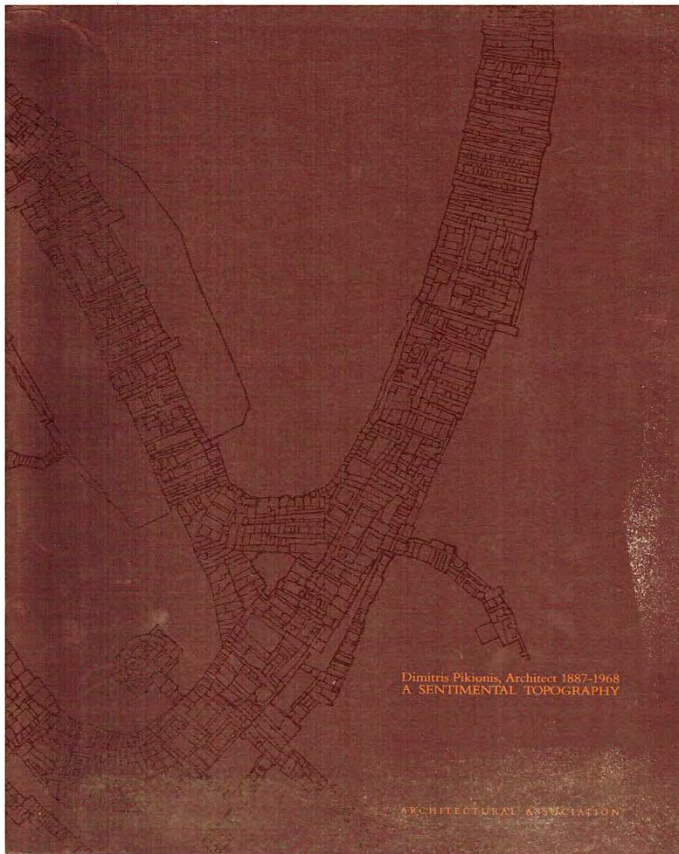


SILENT ARCHITECTS - a definition by Alison and Peter Smithson

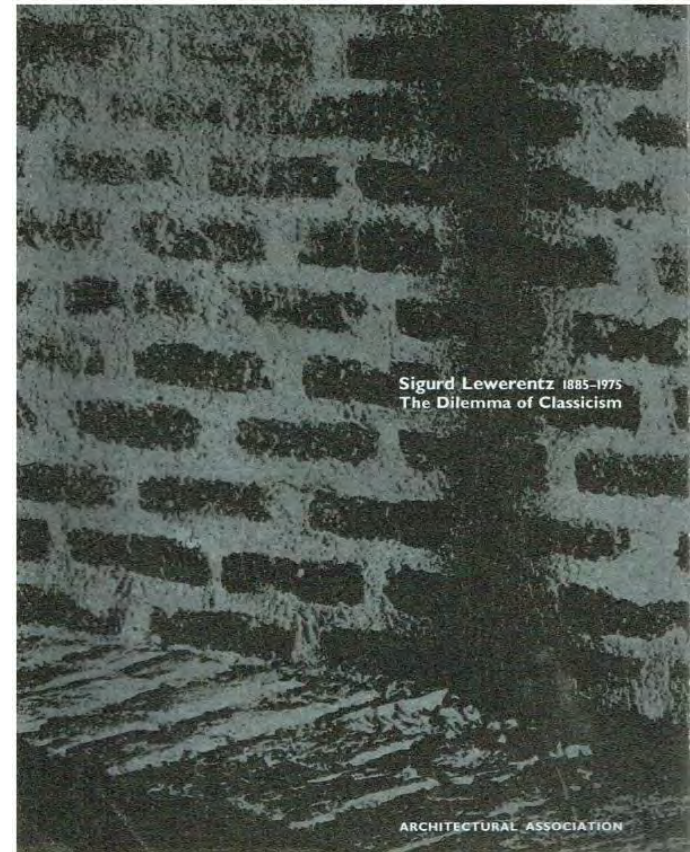
The course is aimed at understanding, through interpretative analyses, the works of certain authors that we could define as ‘Silent Architects’.

Silent Architects are defined by what they do rather than what they say, and they are «**by the complexity of invention, unaware of doing**».

To the Smithsons’ minds, it was what architects of Lewerentz’s ilk are unable to talk about that shifts the tide of architecture.



Dimitris Pikionis, Architect 1887-1968. A Sentimental Topography,
Architectural Association, London 1989



Sigurd Lewerentz 1885-1975. The Dilemma of Classicism,
Architectural Association, London 1989

OTHER WAYS - for the Present Time



Pikionis



Lewerentz



Van Der Laan



*«In these days, when decay's symptoms and an anaesthetic shallow culture are manifested in different forms, **Pikionis' Architecture** establishes a very useful paradigm.*

First, it reminds us to Greece, cradle of our culture, and for that, of the Architectural Classicism, always a good reference in uncertainty's ages.

Pikionis' Architecture talks us about a continuity with the past, that is based in the meeting with roots which depth exceeds the hypothetic 'national spirits' and reaches the human community atavistic bottom in an East's frame, half real, half figurative...

Pikionis shows us, on the contrary, a symbiosis between Architecture and landscape, starting from an ancestral culture that joins the Mediterranean and Far East and that has never refused artificial things as a human presence's inevitable condition, artificial things that are manifested as a Nature's forms alternative in Architecture...

Pikionis recovers and actualizes the past, making stones talk»

METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES

The study is aimed at the understanding of the **generative process of the work**, at the identification of operative categories achievable in the **present time**.

During the Course we will investigate design experience in which the **place is understood as heritage**, a stratified palimpsest of material and immaterial testimonies, where collective memory takes shape through design action.

The project operates as **the plot for a new narrative** that is necessarily discontinuous, but rooted in space: a work of interpretation and synthesis between the generality of construction archetypes and the singularity of each site.

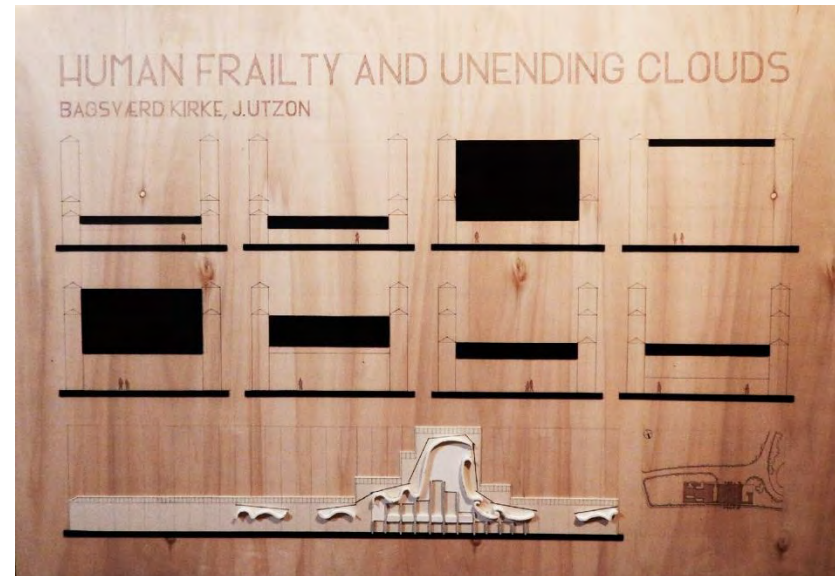
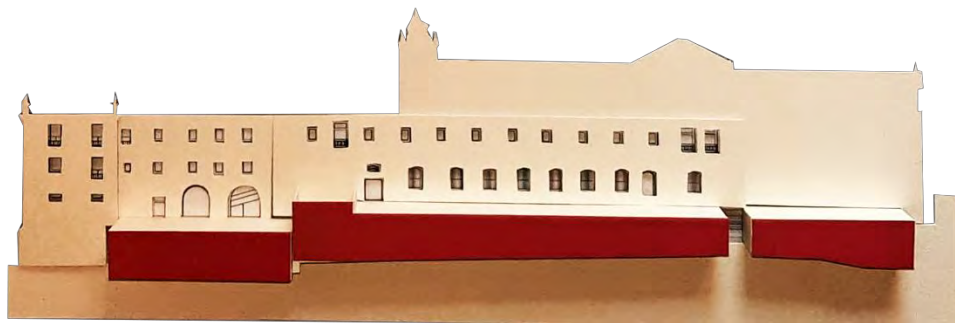
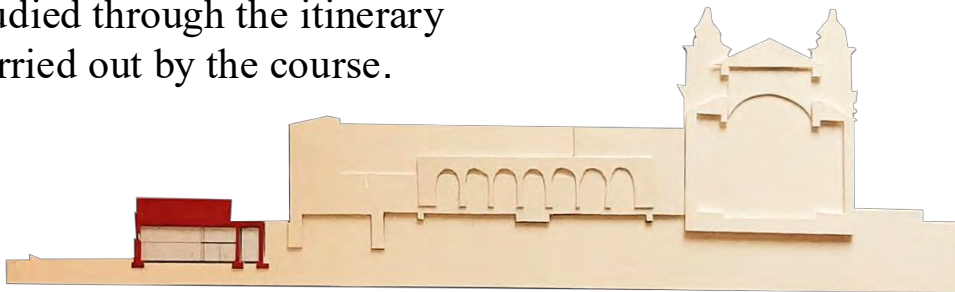
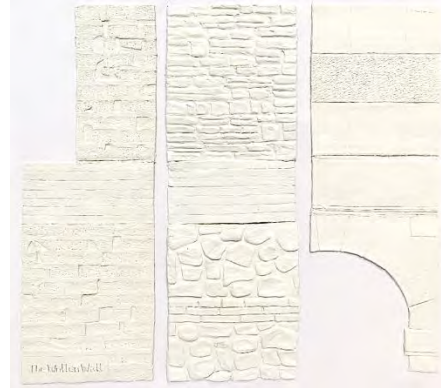
The course consists of a cycle of lectures supported by thematic study seminars.



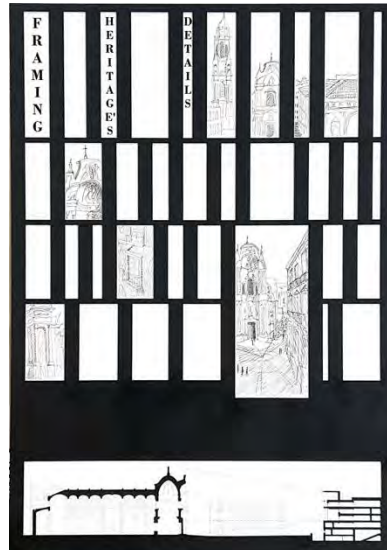
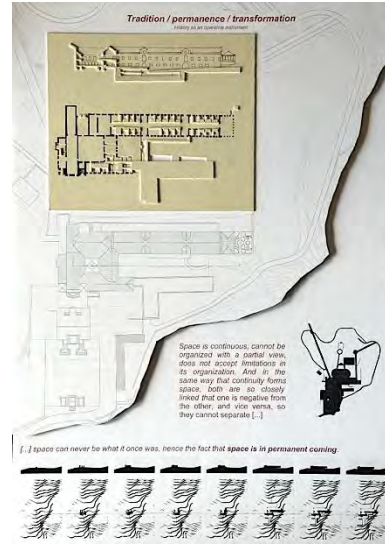
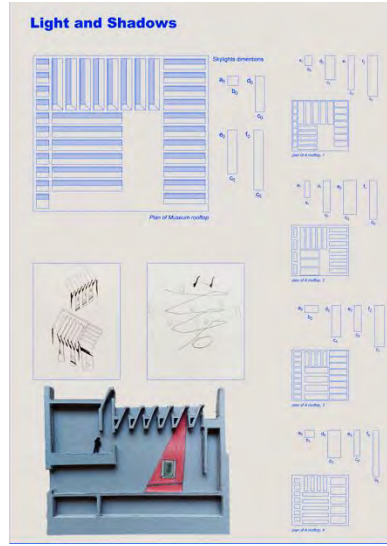
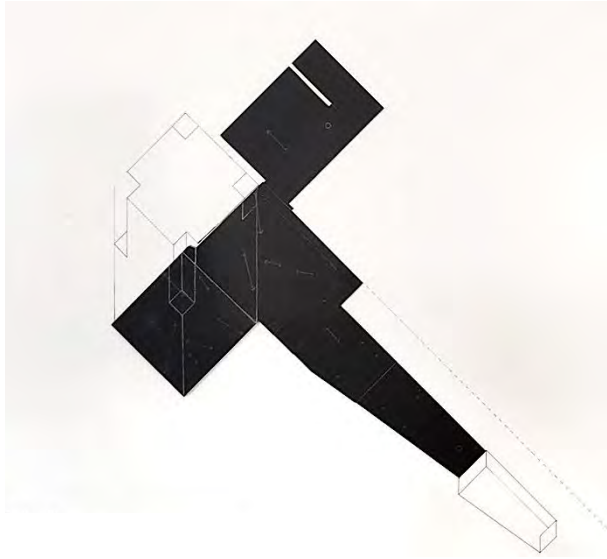
Fernando Távora, Esquisso de estudo do conjunto, do jardim e da piscina da Casa da Covilhã,
© FIMS, Arquivo Fernando Távora

The students will be engaged in the interpretative analysis of the case studies, conducted through a work of decomposition and re-composition of the projects, aimed at investigating the process of formation of the works and accompanied by thematic re-elaborations.

Then students will develop a design action, aiming to bring back to a personal synthesis the compositional strategies identified in the architectures studied through the itinerary carried out by the course.



Academic Year 2023-24, Student Works



Academic Year 2023-24, Student Works

KEYWORDS and CONCEPTS

Architecture and Site

Nature and Artifacts

Old and New

Classicism - Modernism

Orthodoxy - Heterodoxy

Classicism - Barbarism

Baltic - Mediterranean

Affinities - Oppositions

Circumstance

Idea of Reciprocity

Threshold Space

Line of the Ground

.....

ARCHITECTS

DIMITRIS PIKIONIS

SIGURD LEWERENTZ

ERIK GUNNAR ASPLUND

ALVAR AALTO

JØRN UTZON

JOŽE PLEČNIK

EDVARD RAVNIKAR

FERNANDO TÁVORA

ÁLVARO SIZA

EDUARDO SOUTO DE MOURA


JOÃO MENDES RIBEIRO

HANS VAN DER LAAN

LUIGI SNOZZI

AURELIO GALFETTI

.....



LAUREA IN SCIENZE DELL'ARCHITETTURA - Lauree Magistrali PA/PUR
 Corso Opzionale
SENTIMENTAL TOPOGRAPHY
 Project and Site in the Other Modernity
 Carlotta Torricelli

30 marzo 2024
 aula MUSMECI H 14.30
 aula virtuale teams

A TOPOGRAPHICAL THEATRE

Luise Ferro
Roberto di Milano





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02 aprile 2024
 aula MUSMECI H 14.00
 aula virtuale teams
<https://rcoo.de/bewTgP>

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE
STEEN EILER RASMUSSEN'S THEORETICAL APPROACH
 Guia Baratelli

JORN UTZON PLATFORMS
BETWEEN TRANSCULTURALITY AND TRADITION
 Riccardo Patrino





LAUREA IN SCIENZE DELL'ARCHITETTURA - Lauree Magistrali PA/PUR
 Corso Opzionale
SENTIMENTAL TOPOGRAPHY
 Project and Site in the Other Modernity
 Carlotta Torricelli

10 aprile 2024
 aula MUSMECI H 14.00
 aula virtuale teams
<https://rcoo.de/bewTgP>

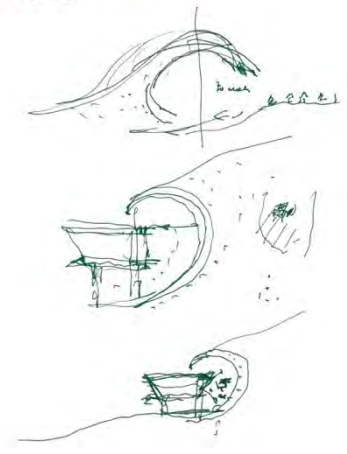
ESTATE ROMANA 1977-1985
MYTH AND POETICS OF THE "MERAVIGLIOSO URBANO"
 Camilla De Boni




LAUREA IN SCIENZE DELL'ARCHITETTURA - Lauree Magistrali PA/PUR
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24 aprile 2024
 aula MUSMECI H 14.15
 aula virtuale teams
<https://bit.ly/4aCU3z2>

BETWEEN THE SPACE OF ARCHITECTURE
AND THE SHAPE OF THE GROUND
 Some architectures by Sverre Fehn
 Giovanni Comi





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 Corso Opzionale
SENTIMENTAL TOPOGRAPHY
 Project and Site in the Other Modernity
 Carlotta Torricelli

08 maggio 2024
 aula MUSMECI H 16.00
 aula virtuale teams
<https://bit.ly/4aCU3z2>

TOGETHER IS BETTER
 Correia/Ragazzi on Rehabilitation
 Gracia Correia
(FAUP - Porto)




LAUREA IN SCIENZE DELL'ARCHITETTURA - Lauree Magistrali PA/PUR
 Corso Opzionale
SENTIMENTAL TOPOGRAPHY
 Project and Site in the Other Modernity
 Prof. Carlotta Torricelli

16 maggio 2024
 aula MUSMECI
 Teams url: https://t.me/aitre2024

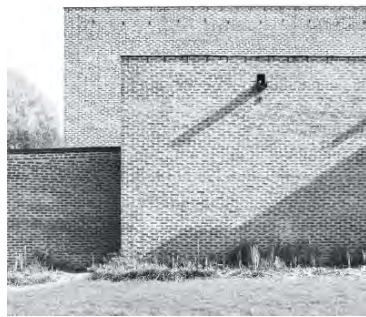
THE REDESCRIPTION OF TOPOGRAPHY
IN THE REINVENTION OF PLACE
 Three works by Álvaro Siza
 Rodrigo Coelho (Faup)




LAUREA IN SCIENZE DELL'ARCHITETTURA - Lauree Magistrali PA/PUR
 Corso Opzionale
SENTIMENTAL TOPOGRAPHY
 Project and Site in the Other Modernity
 Prof. Carlotta Torricelli

16 maggio 2024
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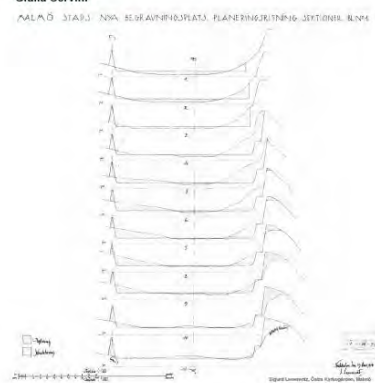
SIGURD LEWERENTZ
architecture as landscape
 Alessio Agresta





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22 maggio 2024
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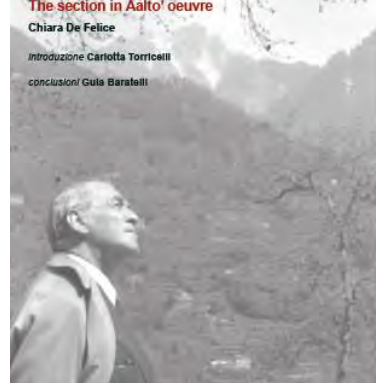
ABOVE AND BELOW THE LINE OF THE GROUND
designing with the soil
 Giulia Cervini




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SENTIMENTAL TOPOGRAPHY
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29 maggio 2024
 aula MUSMECI
 Teams url: https://t.me/aitre2024

BOUND TO THE GROUND
The section in Aalto' oeuvre
 Chiara De Felice




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08 giugno 2024
 aula MUSMECI
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TOPOGRAPHIES OF MEMORY IN THE SLOVENIAN TERRITORY
 Selected works by Edvard Ravnikar
 Susanna Campeotto

