

# Understanding Place: A Reassessment of the Built Work of Giancarlo De Carlo in Urbino, Italy

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## ABSTRACT

While regionalism and placed-based strategies have returned to the forefront of the design discourse in the United States—gaining acceptance as a part of sustainable practice and shaping academic curricula—the work of Giancarlo De Carlo has remained curiously in the margins. Although much has been written about the Milanese architect over the years, little is available in English. In history books, his accomplishments are limited to a few references: along with Alison and Peter Smithson, De Carlo was an important member of Team X following the general disillusionment with the CIAM and its Athens Charter. De Carlo's initial study of Urbino (1964) is held up as a model for its consideration of place, social discourse and the role of the architect. Later, he emerged as an advocate of participatory design. Although both a writer and an educator, he left no singular treatise and was seemingly uninterested in theoretical pursuit as an end in itself. His built work, however, remains vital today—not just as a historical milestone, but for the lessons and insight that it offers. It is the purpose of this paper to gather and propose a codification of De Carlo's understanding of *place* and its import to shaping architectural design. For De Carlo, design was a complex practice of back and forth negotiations between landscape (city–region–culture) and provisional design responses, each tested through the analytical process of “reading the territory”. Using a modern architectural language, he sought continuity of cultural forms through a placed-based design response that structured continued change while reinforcing the identity of its place. In support, this paper draws from the few writings that analyze his approach to design, his sources and influences, as well as from the author's direct analysis of De Carlo's built work in Urbino, Italy. Discussions with architects Antonio Troisi and Monica Mazzolani—both of whom collaborated with De Carlo and continue his practice—provide additional insight and clarity.

KEYWORDS: Architecture, Social Space, Reading the Territory, Giancarlo De Carlo, Design Practice

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

*Spontaneous Architecture*, an exhibition of rural Italian building curated by Giancarlo De Carlo, Enzo Cerutti, and Giuseppe Samona at the 1951 Milan Triennale, was a condensation of a number of ideas that De Carlo was considering at that time including approaches to design that emerged from a direct confrontation with post-war economic and social realities. On one hand like the more well-known exhibition *Architecture Without Architects* (Rudofsky 1965) it was a celebration of vernacular traditions and the unknown craftsman. However, beyond its surface of photographic images and written descriptions it posed “a viable model for contemporary urbanism” that stood as an alternative to the CIAM's Athens Charter (Sabatino 2010, 172).

*Spontaneous Architecture* served as a starting point. It outlined the ideas, elements and forms that were to occupy De Carlo throughout his career. Perhaps equally formative of his architectural practice, was the analytical study and discourse that centered around Matera in Basilicata, Italy, at the same time. Matera also marked a point of departure in Italian architecture, prompting a broad reassessment of the tenants of European Modernism. In the wake of Carlo Levi's seminal book, *Christ Stopped at Eboli* (1945), Matera became a contested terrain and the central figure in a morality play—a controversial reassessment of the balance between tradition and modernization.<sup>1</sup> A thorough analysis of the social, economic and physical structures was conducted by a team of sociologists, urban planners, and architects. The results of the study then informed the design of a number of new neighborhoods where the population of Matera was relocated. By most measures La Martella and the other planned communities that formed a web surrounding the traditional city, were failures. Throughout the process, however, De Carlo and the other designers made a close examination of the traditional city, its fundamental elements, and its spaces for social interaction. What emerged was a sense that spontaneous architectural expression was closely calibrated to its environment and inextricable from its dense cultural fabric. It was in Matera that De Carlo began his systematic “search for an architectural expression matching the local environment, and at the same time, tuned with the spirit and ideas of contemporary civilization” (Toxey 2011, 137). This concept evolved over his career through the

iterative nature of his built work and design proposals into an analytical methodology that he termed, *reading the territory*.

Under the direction of Alison and Peter Smithson, Team X's agenda and position was informed by a critical discourse among many voices in a fluid and loose affiliation including Aldo Van Eyck, Jaap Bakema, Shadrack Woods, George Candilis, and Giancarlo De Carlo. In debt to Le Corbusier and CIAM and no doubt influenced by the Matera studies, Team X forged a new humanist approach that incorporated many of the ideas prevalent in the post-war Italian polemic (Tafuri 1976). Their approach, echoing De Carlo's position, was founded on a growing awareness of the importance of social space in combination with a reevaluation of the traditional city as a relevant social and spatial construct. De Carlo advocated that the traditional city continued to be germane in the face of technological change and the economic, social and political realities that constituted post-war Europe. For De Carlo, the city—specifically Matera—would serve as a model. The Italian hill town of Urbino in the Marche region, became a laboratory to explore his findings at Matera. De Carlo was not advocating a return to a traditional architecture or merely rebuilding the city—depopulated by war and its aftermath—but rather a critical discourse with history and place (Pedret 2013, 204). This discourse would center around an examination of the structure, terrain, land-form, scale, physical condition, and identity of the city-region. The city itself, rooted in its particular relationship to place and region, provided the critical framework for the integration of new programs and construction. The city would be adapted, as it always had, to the ongoing changes in human needs while providing the fundamental structure and identity for human inhabitation of the environment.

At this juncture the reconsideration of De Carlo's built work will provide insight that is not apparent or fully formed within his writings—especially those that have appeared in English. This will enable us to better grasp his architectural language and continued value of his contributions. It is the purpose of this paper to draw from De Carlo's built works in Urbino in order to further understand his search for a place-based architecture. For De Carlo, design was a complex practice of back and forth negotiations between the situation (city-region) and provisional design responses, each tested through a continued analytical process. Using a modern architectural language he sought continuity between *place* and built form—form that was adaptable and yet provided a clear structure for continued change while maintaining and reinforcing the identity of a place. Architecture for De Carlo needed to be both logically rooted in its place and thoroughly modern—committed to addressing current social conditions and needs (McKean 2004, 10).

## 2.0 MODEL

In addition to the Matera “experiment,”<sup>2</sup> BBPR's Torre Velasca in Milan<sup>3</sup>, Florentine “restitution” along the Arno (Mayernik 2009, 278), and Ignazio Gardella's Casa Cicogna alle Zattere in Venice (Gregotti 1968), stand out for their contribution to the post-war debate. De Carlo's text, *Urbino: The History of a City and Plans for its Development* (1964), was his measured contribution to the polemic.<sup>4</sup> The prolonged focus on Matera—from the initial Study Group to the final construction of new settlements and the social, economic, political and ethical questions that accompanied each step—attracted international attention and provided an important focus to the debate. For De Carlo, the intangible outcomes were perhaps more critical than the physical construction.<sup>5</sup> Matera's complex spatial and social organization rested on a limited number of architectural elements whose patterns of organization suggested an underlying place-based logic. These elements—cell, cluster, *vicinato* (neighborhood courtyard), path, piazza, and public buildings—and their underlying order as well as their connectivity to the land, had continued ramifications throughout De Carlo's career. The lessons from Matera were developed further in the *Urbino Report* and the subsequent projects in Urbino. The report outlined a practical approach for maintaining the city form and its buildings while addressing the changing economy and social conditions. The report's analytical investigation of a particular place drew from many of the principles and elemental discoveries that were first uncovered in Matera. Later these were shaped further through his involvement in the Team X circle. Unlike the aforementioned projects, De Carlo's approach to Urbino directly addressed the deterioration and depopulation of the traditional city. The study concluded that the *centro storico* and the city–region itself possessed a viable structure and authentic sources or lessons that were “regional and specifically functional rather than universal and canonical” and that could guide its continued development (McKean 2004, 11).<sup>6</sup> The historical city was considered neither a collection of artifacts nor a museum. Instead, the history and fabric of the traditional city was understood as an important aspect of the present condition that had to be considered and incorporated into the continued evolution of its physical form. De Carlo proposed that the city of Urbino be reanimated with new programs that addressed contemporary needs.

The importance of the *Urbino Report* was multifold. It cast design as a discursive process that proceeded from a thorough analysis that simultaneously considered the physical, economic, and social structures of a place. This approach incrementally evolved into *reading the territory* and became the foundation for his continued

practice. As with Lorenzetti's emblematic painting of the effects of good and bad government, urban fabric and its surrounding landscape were tied together and needed to be approached in unison.<sup>7</sup> A city could not be understood without taking its surroundings into account. For De Carlo, it was obvious that to sustain the city-region, new programs needed to be introduced into what was already a persistent and viable structure of streets, piazzas, neighborhoods and significant buildings. De Carlo's fifty-year relationship with Urbino provided a critical laboratory where he could refine his practice and continue his search for an appropriate language for architectural and urban spaces (Troisi 2017).<sup>8</sup>

### 3.0 WRITTEN WORKS

In all of his writing—as editor of *Space and Society*, and the ILA&UD publications are especially worth noting—De Carlo never codified his design process nor provided more than an outline of its principles.<sup>9</sup> However, the publications that document the practices of the ILA&UD most clearly articulate his discursive structure and approach. These intensive and targeted teaching–research–design laboratories brought students, practitioners, teachers, and other collaborators together to “deduce the rhythms, cadences, recurrent features, coincidences, divergences, correspondences, connections, fractures” of a particular place and to put forward design proposals (De Carlo 1996, 8). *Reading the territory* was the premise and structure for both the practice and products of the laboratory.

Printed in one of the earliest ILA&UD publications, *Participation and Reuse* (1978) Marc Angéhl stated that the discursive nature of *reading* is centered around a participatory process that brings together separate inquiry and insight from a wide range of perspectives in order “to have the possibility of identification and the possibility of interaction into a given culture in a given place. This implies a pattern of interaction between daily life and physical form” (Angéhl 1978, 108).<sup>10</sup> In the same issue, Thomas Chastain wrote about the link between urban rules and architectural variations. In his description of his team's examination of the “alphabet and language of the territory” as well as its coherences and dissonance, he continues, “for us this code consists of the patterns, orders, and uses which generated—and continues to generate—the form of the territory” (Chastain 1978, 98). Perhaps in the clearest description of his approach, De Carlo states that inquiry begins by

*“looking for clues to the genetic codes and their effects directly in the features of the spatial patterns. These clues and effects are: the ways the buildings are arranged on the terrain in relation to its contours, to the sun, to light, to prevailing winds, to waterways, to roads and footpaths, to cultivated fields, to areas planted with trees, to woods, and to other buildings; the kinds of relationships that exist between built-up spaces and open spaces, spaces for activities and spaces for quiet, between homes and public facilities, between places of work and places of leisure; the ways built-up systems, component parts of buildings, techniques used and choice of building materials are reciprocally in harmony or dissonance; etc... (De Carlo 1996, 8).”*

Even taken together, his writings offer only a fragmented outline of his inquiry into place and practice.

### 4.0 ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES: TOWARDS A CODIFICATION

His built works are certainly not equivalent to a written discourse. Nonetheless, they offer definite insights into his evolving architectural language, its fundamental elements and guiding principles. His built work in Urbino presents a more extensive and consistent outline of his practice that his works elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> While a more detailed examination of each work and their sequential development is necessary, it is beyond the scope of this paper. Likewise, a more focused connection between my examination of De Carlo's built works and these design principles warrants much greater detail than this paper permits.

De Carlo wanted his buildings to meld into the environment and appear “as if they were always there”.<sup>12</sup> He sought an architecture that would fit into the existing texture and patterns of its place.<sup>13</sup> Whether enmeshed within the historic center or located outside of its walls, the city informs his work. Urbino became a laboratory for considering the nature of “city”, also as an “authentic source” from which to draw lessons and imagery.<sup>14</sup> The duration of his study as well as the range and scale of his architectural commissions—from street lamps to an entirely new university campus—provided him with a wide variety of opportunities. From his built works in Urbino, we can extrapolate a partial taxonomy of recurring elements and the principles that have evolved:

#### *Elements / Vocabulary*

Cell + Cluster; Social Condensers; Streets + Paths; Stairs + Ramps; Frames; Walls + Openings; Roof Garden or Terrace

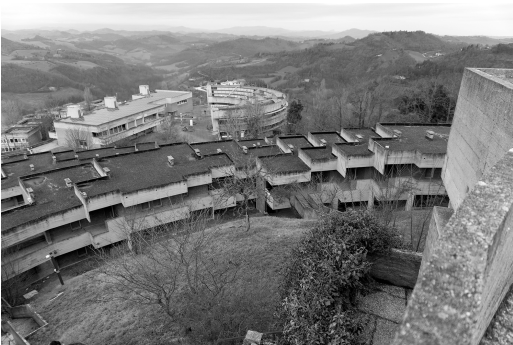
#### *Principles / Grammar*

Dialog Between Building + Site; Reading the Territory; Dialog Between Past + Present; Persistence of Typical Forms and Gestures; Fundamental Spatial Types: Cell, Condenser, Path, Vicinato; Mobility as a Conceptual Framework

#### 4.1 The Dialog Between Building + Site: Reading the Territory

De Carlo understood place as a dynamic field of active forces—natural and cultural. His deep analytical reading of the site was a hermeneutical process through which he attempted to decipher the forces and their traces and marks within the landscape. It involved not only analytical inquiry but also the formulation of tentative propositions. Each proposal was provisional—formed by questions and then challenged by the situation. Each in turn furthered the investigation. *Reading the territory* was a research methodology that was also an engine for forming and testing provisional design solutions. The territory in question was a hybrid—an integration of both natural forms and cultural forms. Perceived as an *active field*, place was non-objective and could not be abstracted from its fabric nor separated into definitive parts. Place was understood as an integrated whole or system. De Carlo proposed that every territory or place had a unique *genetic code* or inherent logic (De Carlo 1996). In a way, the patterns deciphered in the reading were seen as a “fingerprint” that was inextricable from the identity of the place. Beneath the surface was a logic that if followed would enable new buildings and interventions to fit into and reinforce the local identity. Each new work would be organized by a clearly defined spatial structure, that was in *dialog* with the existing city-region. Individual spaces, however, would have to be flexible enough to be re-appropriated by successive users with differing needs. In this way, the built form would stand a greater chance of remaining a vital contribution to a place and its people over time.

As an example the residential cells of the Collegio del Colle (1962–66) are grouped in clusters and linked together (and to the residential nucleus above) with adjoining exterior “streets” and an array of paths that follow the topography (Fig. 1). Also conforming to the topography each cell extends out of the hillside providing a nearly unobstructed view of the landscape beyond. The “street’s” steps and canopy negotiate the changing relationship between built-form and land-form. Walking along this “street,” the adjacent hill is framed by the canopy’s overhang. Likewise, the distant landscape is framed between each grouping of residential cells. The frame for De Carlo is not an abstraction but is understood only in tandem with the movement of the body from one place to another. Another example is the Renaissance wall that surrounds Urbino’s historic center and provides a clear boundary between city and its *contado* or countryside. Its edge becomes a visual datum which defines and joins the spatial extension of the landscape outside with the interiority of city. This sort of datum is repeated throughout the campus.



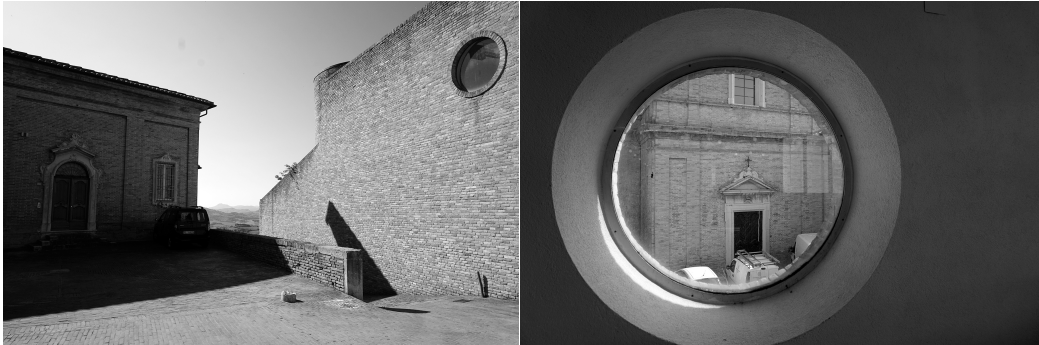
**Figure 1:** The cells of the Collegio del Colle spilling down the hill towards Piazza Tridente. Source: (Author 2017)

#### 4.2 Dialog Between Past + Present

“On the one hand it has to root itself in the soils of its past [...] But in order to take part in modern civilization, it is necessary at the same time to take part in scientific, technical, and political rationality. There is the paradox: how to become modern and return to sources” (Ricoeur 1965, 277). In considering the present a single frame within a temporal continuity, De Carlo “saw the slow and ongoing process of things always changing” (McKean, 2017). There is no definitive line that distinguishes past and present rather there is a single complex fabric. To walk through a traditional city is to encounter a dense, temporal simultaneity. De Carlo argued that the traditional city-region was the greatest source of cultural identity. It was therefore important for contemporary solutions to be found that maintain the vitality and significance of the extant urban fabric.<sup>15</sup> The nuances of his position are embedded in his Urbino works. There is a coherent web that weaves building and place. His architectural language of material, elements and forms is inseparable from its spatial, historical and social context. One example may serve as an illustration: the ocular window in Il Magistero (1986–1999). An otherwise blank wall with this one insertion respectfully faces the adjacent church of San Girolamo. This decision is a rich gesture that acknowledges the presence and importance of the church. The small parvis before San Girolamo draws these disparate buildings, separated by hundreds of years, into a unifying and meaningful dialog (Figs. 2.1 + 2.2).

### 4.3 Persistence of Typical Forms and Gestures

Gestures such as the ocular window are subtle references or mnemonics. They serve as points of connection and communication like a hand-gesture or a vocal inflection that signify a more complex thought and acknowledge a common inheritance. These do not form a pastiche nor are they “quotations” that have been lifted out of some original context. They are understood through inhabiting the buildings rather than as a signifier or purely visual form. A few examples might serve to illuminate: the roof of the Colle (meaning *hill* in Italian) which is essentially an inverse-dome and whose copper cladding references the Duomo that rises above the town of Urbino. Also: at the entry to one of the courtyards in Il Magistero, a bracket extends the surface of a wall above, framing the entry, which otherwise might go unnoticed (Fig. 4). It reads as a fragment of some a portal or gateway. Its reference is in part to the medieval brackets that permitted buildings to extend out over the narrow streets or the remains of an arch embedded in the layered construction of a wall.

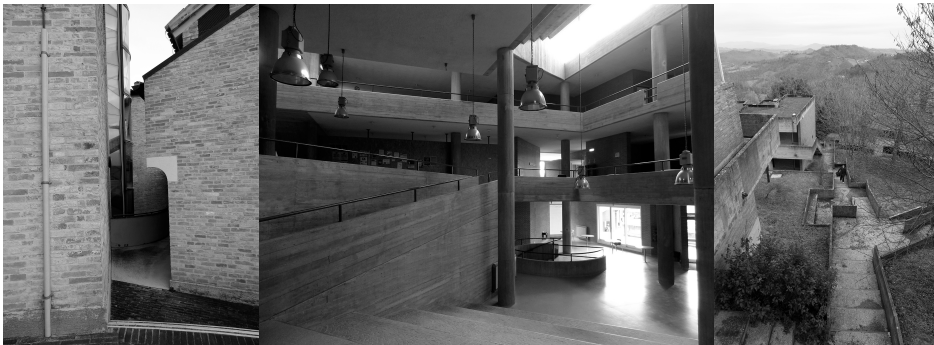


**Figure 2.1:** Exterior view of Il Magistero facing San Girolamo. Source: (Author 2017)

**Figure 2.2:** View towards San Girolamo from ocular window in Il Magistero. Source: (Author 2017)

### 4.4 Fundamental Spatial Types: Cell, Condenser, Path, *Vicinato*

The cell as the fundamental and irreducible unit of architecture was apparent to De Carlo from his study of the Materan Sassi (Toxey 2011). From a single basic unit or cell more complex structures are generated based on their form of connection.<sup>16</sup> “The cell was the source of the overall composition and the collective spaces. Very simple parts are connected systematically, to bring about a complex of experiences and places” (Troisi 2017). De Carlo utilized typical spatial organizations—the linear “street,” the compound and the courtyard for example—that incorporate the grouping of cells into the fabric. The spatial qualities and the ramifications of various groupings are explored throughout the University of Urbino campus. In each housing complex a single cell is repeated and placed in geometric groupings that are joined by the spaces in between.<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 3:** Entry into a courtyard in Il Magistero. Source: (Author 2016)

**Figure 4.1:** social condenser—L'Aquilone. Source: (Author 2016)

**Figure 4.2:** Paths through the landscape Collegio del Colle. Source: (Author 2017)

De Carlo referred to nodes of social activity as *social condensers* that unify and give a collective identity to a city (McKean 2004). His model was the traditional Italian piazza as well as the *vicinati* in Matera. The interior space of L'Aquilone (1973–1983)—one of the residential nuclei for the University of Urbino campus—is designed as a “territorial unifier,” that joins the residential cells to larger social spaces and the campus beyond (Tafari 1989) (Fig. 4.1). The Roman *cardo* and *decumanos* are readily identifiable—organizing the space as it opens vertically and extends horizontally from an interior “piazza.” Residential “streets” join at different levels. A spiral stair burrows down to a library that breaks with the orthogonal geometry of the building and extends

diagonally outward into the landscape. Originally commercial shops were planned for the upper floors where only a laundry and a few offices exist today.<sup>18</sup> A monumental stair is set at the piazza level and transforms the space into a theater. Above: a skylight extends the space vertically and meets a roof garden, also with a theater. The typology is borrowed from the historic Capuchin Monastery that sits above the campus, and is also a reference to the courtyard in Urbino's Palazzo Ducale.

The central gathering space for the entire college is Piazza Tridente: set on the roof of the campus dining hall and adjacent to a small indoor theater and bounded by a curved bank of lecture rooms. At other scales, the condenser is used within the interior of buildings in much the same way that the *vicinato* (semi-public courtyard) worked in Matera—as a necessary spatial nucleus joining a cluster of cells into a larger unit (Toxey 2011). At any scale, much like their precedents, these spaces are adaptable for many forms of social improvisation (Fig. 4.3). It must be remembered that one of the important findings from Matera was the significance and role of the *vicinato*.<sup>19</sup> The Sassi—literally carved out of the soft limestone—were joined by a system of voids: streets, paths, stairways, courtyards and piazzas. These formed a dense tissue of “rooms” whose spatial structure was coincident with the social organization and the terrain. The organic complexity of Matera was the result of the organization and configuration of these spaces between elements, wedding them to the site (Toxey 2011). This key principle shaped De Carlo's understanding of design as the negotiation between a family of elements in an active field.



**Figure 4.3:** Social condenser—Colle. Source: (Author 2017)



**Figure 5:** The hearth as spatial hinge, Ca'Romanino. Source: (Author 2017)

Along with the *vicinati streets* or paths connect residential cell groupings, social condensers and places of work and leisure. On the Urbino campus De Carlo did not organize them using a modernist or rationalist grid. Instead he was consistent with the Materan model: cells groupings are orchestrated by the land-form (Fig. 4.2). They form a body of redundancies that provide multiple possible connections. Movement is never restricted to a single path, even within buildings. Where paths cross the steep topography, they are composed of steps. Between one path and another, there is always a place to pause. Occasionally they take the form of a ramp or *scala* (a stepped ramp or ladder). In each case they mirror Urbino.

#### 4.5 Mobility as a Conceptual Framework for Design

“In order to fully appreciate the construction, one's reading of the architecture must be linked to this notion of procession, of physical apprehension of the building” (Pauly 2008, 29). Although describing Le Corbusier's *promenade architecturale*, these words apply to De Carlo's design process as well. Apprehension of the city cannot be separated from the direct experience of movement through its streets. This conceptual framework for design was initially embraced by Team X (McKean, 2004) and adopted by Gordon Cullen—as evident in the Townscape movement.<sup>20</sup> Our movement across the Urbino campus is a series of open processions that weaves building and landscape together. Like the turns of a medieval street there is always something unexpected. “The mystery is important. There is always something to discover and our curiosity to go deeper into the life of the building increases (Mazzolani 2017).” The voids and frames of an urban fabric are integral to the city's identity. They form a unique pattern much like a “fingerprint” that reflects the social and spatial encounters within a particular place. The identity of a place is largely understood not from a list of monumental features but in how those artifacts and places are spatially organized and perceived.

Nowhere is the importance of mobility as a framework as evident as in Ca' Romanino (1966–1967).<sup>21</sup> This small house is deeply rooted in the land. Entering: passing through a cut in the earth then emerging into an enclosed garden that follows the original topography of the hillside, we find a narrow blue entry door. We step inside. Scanning the open space we perceive three distinct elements—a deep two-story window-wall, a monumental cylindrical hearth, and an enclosed study which is also a cylinder (Fig. 5). The central anchor to the open space is the massive red cylinder of the hearth around which the interior space seems to hinge—

connecting study, dining table and fire to the vineyard in the landscape beyond the window-wall. On the other side of the dining area is the brick cylindrical study set one step into the earth. A curved blue sliding door opens the study to the interior space or to the landscape or both simultaneously. The sequence of entering, moving through and inhabiting the house reveals its connection to the surrounding countryside.<sup>22</sup>

## IN SUMMATION

While his practice of design can be readily understood as a process of negotiation—a back-and-forth dialog with the territory—the principles that guide this dialogic process are less clear. By examining his built-work we can discern definite elements and patterns. I believe that these are indicative of design principles—which, taken together, establish a dialog between building and place, the present and the past, inside and outside. *Reading the territory* is not only a strategic practice, in generating the proposed solutions it also embodies them. This dialog is an on-going discourse that draws together the roots of the past, the particulars of each situation and city-region, the universal typologies of spatial patterns, form and materials, while it proposes new solutions framed in a modern language. His is an architecture of *in-between*, an approach that evolved continually throughout his practice.<sup>23</sup> Essentially, De Carlo's discursive non-objective practice enabled the complexities of the city-region to enter the design process and become concretized within the built work. This process, tainted by the particular situation and the evolving body of knowledge that grew with each discovery, was both analytical and productive. It was pragmatic and idealist and formed an elemental poetics of realism.

So, what do we take-away from all of this? I am not sure that the discursive process of *reading the territory* and the architectural language of the buildings themselves, can be described or codified easily. While the fundamental elements—including spatial elements that form the in-between as taken from the *vicinati* of Matera—seem clear, the principles are less so. The principles, as put forward in this paper remain provisional and require an even closer examination. De Carlo's practice was after all, evolutionary and to a large extent site-specific. His material palette changed in accordance with each situation. Certainly over the length of career we find his work in continuous evolution. However there are definite consistencies many of which can be traced back to his formative period in Matera or his early work in Urbino. The Materian model became operative—tested and refined through an iterative process—in the laboratory of Urbino.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> See: Anne Parmly Toxey's examination and clarification of the history, architecture and politics surrounding Matera in her book, *Materan Contradictions* (2011).

<sup>2</sup> La Martella, a new model-town for the population of Matera to be relocated, "was one of the first postwar experiments in which vernacular models [...] were employed to create an autonomous village" (Lejeune and Sabatino 2010, 61).

<sup>3</sup> BBPR was Gianluigi Banfi, Lodovico Barbiano di Beliojoso, Enrico Peressutti, and Ernesto Rogers. BBPR's Torre Velasca in Milan (1956–58)—replete with its regional and vernacular references—was a loud reaction against the tenants of the International Style and its insistence on a universal language.) Rogers proclaimed the necessity of a dialog with the preexisting context (l'ambiente) (McKean 2004). De Carlo had already turned towards the vernacular in order to gain a foothold for a post-war architecture place: Spontaneous Architecture exhibit, 1951 (Lejeune and Sabatini 2010).

<sup>4</sup> De Carlo's 1958–64 "Piano Regolatore Generale di Urbino" (echoing the title of the Materan report) was published in book form in English (1964) as *Urbino: The History of a City and Plans for its Development*.

<sup>5</sup> "The truth of the Sassi is distilled in the ideal and perative model that was wondrously discovered here and that continues to function according to spontaneous orientation, which resulted from the life, the human environment, and the history of generations that gradually wove the structure" (Tafari, as quoted in Toxey 2011, 116).

<sup>6</sup> The Gubbio Charter, signed in 1960, was the first official document to use term *centro storico* (Toxey 2011, 124). *Historic center* is a phrase that had just come into use in the late 1950s and was immediately adopted as a political and economic unit. Its boundaries were frequently, but not always, the historic walls that surrounded the Renaissance or medieval walls. (Greco, Elena. 2016. "Preserving and Promoting the Urban Landscape. The French and Italian Debates of the Post-World War II Decades." *plaNext*, anext.2016.5vol.02" <http://dx.medra.org/10.17418/planex.t.2016.5vol.02>, 8.

<sup>7</sup> Ambrogio Lorenzetti's painting, *The Allegory of Good and Bad Government*—on the walls of the Sala di Nove in Siena—presents the city as an economic, social and cultural fabric of city-and-contado (countryside), is evidence that this concept was once widespread. Certainly, it was the critical backbone to the emergence and evolution of the Italian city-state.

<sup>8</sup> Michelangelo Sabatino writes, "Giancarlo De Carlo took the lead in the revival of the hill-town model with his extensive design work for Urbino. [...] The student housing villages simultaneously embrace and facilitate communal student life by using the Italian hill town as urban model" (Lejeune 2009, 62).

<sup>9</sup> Le Corbusier—perhaps the best known modern example of such codification—provided us with his five points, and later, under the guise of poetics, offered us the enigmatic, *Le Poeme del L'Angle Droit* (*The Poem of the Right Angle*).

<sup>10</sup> This position, initially espoused in the Matera projects and, later by Team X, was examined contemporaneously by Pierre Bourdieu, Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau. These social philosophers argued that the body, its movement and its occupation of social space was the means and frame-work for comprehending urban space and architectural form.

<sup>11</sup> De Carlo's major projects in Urbino include: Co-operative housing for university employees, 1955; Collegio del Colle, 1962–66; Ca' Romanino, 1966–67; Faculty of Law at Urbino University, 1968; La Pineta housing ("la Navarone"), 1967–69, 1984–86; Il Magistero, Urbino University, 1968–76; Mercantile projects, starting 1969; Restoration of the ramp by Francesco di Giorgio and the Teatro Sanzio, 1970–77; Art School in Urbino, 1972–88; Collegio del Tridente, Urbino University, 1973–83; Collegio dell'Aquilone, Urbino University, 1973–83; Collegio della Vela, Urbino University, 1973–83; Faculty of Economics at Urbino University, 1986–99; City Interpretative Center in the Ducal Stables, 1990–2004; Renovation of Palazzo Passionei, 1995–2001. In all: fifteen realized, or partially realized, major projects.

<sup>12</sup> Antonio Troisi—from a conversation, April 18, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> One example would be the exterior of Il Magistero where he selected a brick whose tone approximated the historic context. Here, the evidence of a modern architecture language or the presence of a radically new set of interior spaces is minimal. His intervention into the urban fabric, in this case, is unobtrusive. The large skylight above the auditorium is, likewise, invisible except at a great distance.

<sup>14</sup> It must be noted that the word *image* is not understood by De Carlo in the same way as it is by either Kevin Lynch or Aldo Rossi. For De Carlo, image was something that was grasped primarily through experience—that is, through movement and inhabiting place. It is both spatial and visual simultaneously and its continued use to address the collective identity of a place is predicated on it being an appropriate response to its situation and one its following the logic of the *genetic code*.

<sup>15</sup> In speaking of De Carlo's built work in Catania, Sicily: Mazzolani states: "The question of old buildings is what should be done with them. If the historic artifact is still contributing to the cultural narrative, still usable, then he accepted them as they were, otherwise they needed to be adapted, that is, renovated or changed in some manner, to support to the present needs while contributing to the evolution of the narrative. The deepest question for De Carlo, was respect. Respect must be given to history." And again: as in Il Magistero, De Carlo seeks "to intertwine a dialog to with history... to establish a living, open, dialog with history. History is experienced as a presence, not something distant" (Mazzolani 2017).

<sup>16</sup> The cell: a concept and term extrapolated from biology, was explored by Shadrach Woods and Team X.

<sup>17</sup> One remarkable example outside of his Urbino work is De Carlo's 1993–1995 project for the restoration and reconstruction of Colletta di Castelbianco. As part of his analysis of the town, he examined the three-dimensional spatial organization of residential cells and their local adaptations to placement and position. His proposal for restoration and new interventions was founded on maintaining the logic of this traditional spatial organization. See: McKean 2004, 178–183.

<sup>18</sup> From a conversation with Antonio Troisi, March 2017. Many of the members of Team X explored the ramifications of adapting urban spatial types to the scale of the building. Clearly, this idea has its origin with Le Corbusier's fascination with "streets in the sky" as incorporated into his Unité d'Habitation and other projects.

<sup>19</sup> The importance of paths and nodes were well understood by De Carlo—who lauded the publication of Kevin Lynch's book, *The Image of the City* in 1960—but the Materan *vicinato* was immediately recognized as the formative link and organizing principle which activated social dynamics and facilitated communication.

<sup>20</sup> See: Gordon Cullen's *The Concise Townscape* (1961) and Ivor de Wolfe's *The Italian Townscape* (1963).

<sup>21</sup> It may be argued that this diminutive building comes the closest of all of his built works to presenting an architectural manifesto. Following Alberti's analogy, it may be read as a diminutive city and a condensation of De Carlo's design process.

<sup>22</sup> The author was fortunate enough to spend over twenty-four hours in Ca' Romanino in the spring of 2017. Although he visited it on one other occasion, it was not until he experienced the day unfolding—moving through the building, inhabiting its interior, cooking and eating meals, watching the sunset from its roof, overlooking its garden, being awakened to the morning sun seen through a skylight—that he perceived its narrative structure. John McKean also spoke with the author of the sequential spaces that linked the "dark, dampness of the earth to the openness and brightness of the landscape".

<sup>23</sup> The importance of the in-between was evident in Giedion's perception of "the greater reality of the doorstep" (Giedion, 1955, as quoted in Pedret 2013, 148). This condition was presented earlier by Alison and Peter Smithson in their critique of the CIAM grid at CIAM 9 in 1953, and also Aldo van Eyck's use of the term *threshold*.