

Image as a Heritage Value: Understanding its role in Twentieth-Century Architectural Conservation

Original

Image as a Heritage Value: Understanding its role in Twentieth-Century Architectural Conservation / Ruiz Bazan, I.. - In: RESTAURO ARCHEOLOGICO. - ISSN 2465-2377. - STAMPA. - 33:1, Special Issue, vol. I(2025), pp. 52-57.

Availability:

This version is available at: 11583/3006488 since: 2026-01-13T06:59:51Z

Publisher:

Firenze University Press

Published

DOI:

Terms of use:

This article is made available under terms and conditions as specified in the corresponding bibliographic description in the repository

Publisher copyright

(Article begins on next page)

RA

restauro archeologico

Conoscenza, conservazione e valorizzazione
del patrimonio architettonico
Rivista del Dipartimento di Architettura
dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze

Knowledge, preservation and enhancement
of architectural heritage
Journal of the Department of Architecture
University of Florence

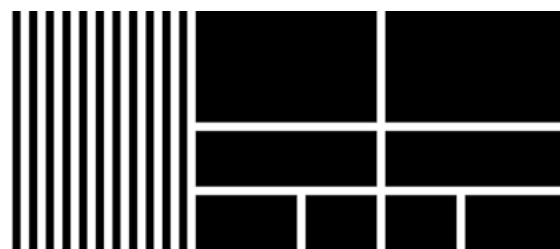
1 | 2025

special issue

volume I

Oltre il Novecento
Teoria e prassi per il
"Restauro del Moderno"

FIRENZE
UNIVERSITY
PRESS



OLTRE IL NOVECENTO

TEORIA E PRASSI PER IL "RESTAURO DEL MODERNO"

a cura di

Susanna Caccia Gherardini

Sara Di Resta

Emanuela Ferretti

Mariacristina Giambruno

Marco Pretelli



RA | restauro archeologico

Conoscenza, conservazione e valorizzazione
del patrimonio architettonico
**Rivista del Dipartimento di Architettura
dell'Università degli Studi di Firenze**

Knowledge, preservation and enhancement
of architectural heritage
**Journal of the Department of Architecture
University of Florence**

Anno XXXIII special issue numero 1/2025
(I-II voll.), vol. I
Registrazione Tribunale di Firenze
n. 5313 del 15.12.2003

ISSN 1724-9686 (print)
ISSN 2465-2377 (online)

Director
Susanna Caccia Gherardini
Università degli Studi di Firenze

Editors in Chief
Susanna Caccia Gherardini,
Maurizio De Vita
Università degli Studi di Firenze

COMITATO SCIENTIFICO INTERNAZIONALE International Scientific Committee

Francesca Albani
Politecnico di Milano

Frida Bazzocchi
Università degli Studi di Firenze

Susanna Caccia Gherardini
Università degli Studi di Firenze

Roberta Grignolo
*Accademia di architettura - Università della
Svizzera italiana*

Francesca Castanò
*Università degli Studi della Campania
Luigi Vanvitelli*

Fabienne Chevallier
Musée d'Orsay

Lorenzo Ciccarelli
Università degli Studi di Firenze

Alessandro De Magistris
Politecnico di Milano

Maurizio De Vita
Università degli Studi di Firenze

Maria Grazia D'Amelio
Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata

Sara Di Resta
Università Iuav di Venezia

Paolo Faccio
Università Iuav di Venezia

Rita Fabbri
Università degli Studi di Ferrara

Emanuela Ferretti
Università degli Studi di Firenze

Mariacristina Giambruno
Politecnico di Milano

Tullia Iori
Università degli Studi di Roma Tor Vergata

Giacinta Jean
*Scuola universitaria professionale della
Svizzera italiana*

Susan Macdonald
Getty Conservation Institute

Marzia Marandola
Università Iuav di Venezia

Monica Naretto
Politecnico di Torino

Federica Ottoni
Università degli Studi di Parma

Luis Palmero Iglesias
Universidad Politécnica de Valencia

Guest Editors
Susanna Caccia Gherardini
Università degli Studi di Firenze

Sara Di Resta
Università Iuav di Venezia

Emanuela Ferretti
Università degli Studi di Firenze

Mariacristina Giambruno
Politecnico di Milano

Marco Pretelli
*Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di
Bologna*

Renata Picone
Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II

Uta Pottgiesser
*Delft University of Technology, Chair of
Docomomo International*

Marco Pretelli
*Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di
Bologna*

Wido Quist
*Delft University of Technology, Secretary
General of Docomomo International*

Michelangelo Sabatino
University of Texas at San Antonio

Ana Tostões
Chair of Docomomo Portugal

Ines Tolic
*Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di
Bologna*

Ruggero Tropeano
*Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule
Zürich*

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC BOARD
Hélène Dessales, Benjamin Mouton, Carlo Olmo,
Zhang Peng, Andrea Pessina, Guido Vannini

EDITORIAL BOARD
Andrea Arrighetti, Sara Di Resta, Junmei Du,
Annamaria Ducci, Maria Grazia Ercolino, Rita
Fabbri, Bianca Gioia Marino, Pietro Matracchi,
Emanuele Morezzi, Federica Ottoni, Andrea Pane,
Rosario Scaduto, Raffaella Simonelli, Andrea
Ugolini, Maria Vitiello

EDITORIAL STAFF
Paola Bordoni, Ester Colarossi, Giorgio Ghelfi,
Francesca Giusti, Pierpaolo Lagani, Francesco
Pisani, Anna Laura Petracci, Alice Rossano,
Adele Rossi

SEGRETERIA ORGANIZZATIVA Organising Secretary *Università degli Studi di Firenze*

Paola Bordoni

Ester Colarossi

Giorgio Ghelfi

Francesca Giusti

Pierpaolo Lagani

Francesco Pisani

Anna Laura Petracci

Alice Rossano

Adele Rossi

Gli autori sono a disposizione di quanti, non rintracciati, avessero legalmente diritto
alla corresponsione di eventuali diritti di pubblicazione, facendo salvo il carattere
unicamente scientifico di questo studio e la sua destinazione non a fine di lucro.

*The authors are available to anyone who, although not identified, may be legally entitled to the
payment of any publishing rights, without prejudice to the purely scientific nature of this study
and its non-profit purpose.*

Copyright: © The Author(s) 2025

This is an open access journal distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License
(CC BY-SA 4.0: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>).

cover design

●●● dida communicationlab

DIDA Dipartimento di Architettura
Università degli Studi di Firenze
via della Mattonaia, 8
50121 Firenze, Italy

published by

Firenze University Press
Università degli Studi di Firenze
Firenze University Press
Via Cittadella, 7 - 50144 Firenze, Italy
www.fupress.com

Cover photo

Pier Luigi Nervi, *Palazzo per esposizioni, Salone C*, Torino, 1950.
Università degli Studi di Firenze, Biblioteca di Scienze Tecnologiche, Archivi di
Architettura, Fondo Pier Luigi Nervi, 024-2082.

Con il patrocinio di | Sponsored by

DOCOMOMO International | DOCOMOMO Italia
SIRA - Società Italiana per il Restauro dell'Architettura

do.co.mo.mo_ do.co.mo.mo_
international italia



Indice | Index

vol. I

Storie e teorie | Histories and theories

Le ambiguità del Moderno. Riflessioni sul restauro e la patrimonializzazione del Novecento The Ambiguities of the Modern. Reflections on the Restoration and Patrimonialization of Twentieth-Century Heritage <i>Susanna Caccia Gherardini</i>	10
Aloïs Riegl e il valore dell'antico (o dell'alterazione) nel 'Restauro del Moderno' Aloïs Riegl and the 'Age Value' (or alteration) in the 'Restoration of Modern Architecture' <i>Marco Pretelli</i>	16
Teoria e pratica del calcestruzzo armato nell'architettura del Novecento Theory and practice of reinforced concrete in twentieth-century architecture <i>Paolo Faccio</i>	22
Attualità e tradizione delle Carte del Restauro del patrimonio del XX secolo. Visioni di processo oltre i neo-filologismi Modernity and tradition of 20th century heritage conservation documents. Process-oriented approaches beyond neo-philology <i>Sara Di Resta</i>	28
From Utopia to Decay: Rethinking Periodization and Restoration in Socialist Modern Architecture <i>Sandra Uskokovic</i>	34
The Critical Nature of the Reconstruction of Modern Icons <i>Santiago Pastor Vila</i>	40
L'eterno Moderno: teorie, prassi e conflitti nella tutela dell'architettura del XX secolo The eternal Modern: theoretical tensions and critical issues in the conservation of twentieth-century architecture <i>Clara Verazzo</i>	46
Image as a Heritage Value: Understanding its role in Twentieth-Century Architectural Conservation <i>Irene Ruiz Bazán</i>	52
Autorialità contro autenticità: la contesa internazionale per la leadership metodologica sul 'restauro del moderno' Design Intent versus Historic Fabric: The International Dispute over Methodological Leadership in the Conservation of Modern Architecture <i>Davide Galleri</i>	58
The Challenge of Systems and Series: New Paths in Preserving and Developing 'Late Modernist' Buildings (?) <i>Birgit Knauer</i>	64
Margins and Limits of Local Protection in Budapest. Salient Examples and the Case of the Körszálló Hotel <i>Franz Bittenbinder, Ráhel Gyöngyvér Gyórfy</i>	70
Conservare il Novecento. Ambiguità e contraddizioni nella stagione della sostenibilità Preserving the Twentieth-Century Heritage. Ambiguities and contradictions in the era of sustainability <i>Paola Bordoni</i>	76
Il de-restauro: conflittualità tra principi operativi nell'intervento sul restauro archeologico novecentesco De-restoration: conflicts between operative principles in interventions on 20th-century archaeological restorations <i>Carmine Chiumarulo, Astro Ferrante</i>	82
Conservation and Loss in British Postwar Housing: Insights from Sheffield and London <i>Rita Gagliardi</i>	88
The Panoramic Cinema in Tashkent: From Type to Experiment <i>Karolina Pieniżek</i>	94
Heritage in Transit: Contemporary Architecture and the Historical Axis of Via Pia in Rome <i>Nicoleta Truşcă</i>	100

I protagonisti | Protagonists

- Pier Nicolò Berardi, costruttore di un paesaggio** 108
Pier Nicolò Berardi, landscape constructor
Antonio Guerrieri, Antonello Pagliuca, Chiara Rizzi
- Reinventare Jeanneret.** 114
Interventi di Angelo Mangiarotti, Bruno Morassutti e Chiara Pampo a Villa Schwob, La Chaux-de-Fonds
Reinventing Jeanneret.
Interventions by Angelo Mangiarotti, Bruno Morassutti and Chiara Pampo at Villa Schwob, La Chaux-de-Fonds
Alberto Pireddu
- Per una chiesa di massa. Edifici religiosi tra teorie e progetti nell'opera di Apollonj Ghetti** 120
For a mass church. Religious buildings between theories and projects in Apollonj Ghetti's work
Mariarosaria Villani
- Percorsi nella modernità: opere di Alessandro Minali** 126
Steps into Modernity: works by Alessandro Minali
Michela Marisa Grisoni
- Preserving Our Not-So-Distant Past? Chester Liebs's Contribution to the 'Archaeology' of the Everyday** 132
Verdiana Peron
- Piero Sanpaolesi e il Museo Nazionale dell'Iran antico.** 138
Un atteggiamento critico per un'architettura del Novecento
Piero Sanpaolesi and the National Museum of Ancient Iran:
A Critical Approach to Twentieth-Century Architecture
Francesco Pisani
- Ferrara che cambia: Carlo Savonuzzi ingegnere e architetto** 144
Ferrara in Transformation: Carlo Savonuzzi, Engineer and Architect
Marco Bussoli
- Clemente Busiri Vici tra radicale rifondazione e calibrata revisione:** 150
il duplice intervento sulla chiesa di San Benedetto in via del Gazometro a Ostiense
Clemente Busiri Vici between radical reconstruction and thoughtful:
the dual intervention on San Benedetto Church on Via del Gazometro in Ostiense
Roberto Ragione, Claudia Lattanzi
- La periodizzazione | Periodization**
- Confini labili: periodizzazione e architettura moderna a Kinshasa** 158
Shifting Boundaries: Periodisation and Modern Architecture in Kinshasa
Manlio Michieletto, Victor Mukanya Bay
- Tra Architettura Moderna e Contemporanea: uno studio dall'archivio Denegri** 164
Between modern and contemporary architecture: a study from the archive Denegri
Daniela Pittaluga
- Ambigue continuità.** 170
Note sul progetto di Atelier FCJZ per il Forbidden City Cultural Relics Museum a Chongqing, Cina
Ambiguous continuities.
Notes on Atelier FCJZ's project for the Forbidden City Cultural Relics Museum in Chongqing, China
Simone Barbi
- Svelare la trama di un patrimonio complesso del moderno. Un approccio transcalare per l'Agro Pontino** 176
Revealing the fabric of a complex modern heritage. A transcalar approach for the Agro Pontino
Stefano Guadagno
- La patrimonializzazione | Heritagization**
- L'edilizia residenziale pubblica del Novecento alla prova del tempo.** 184
La sfida della conservazione di un Patrimonio vivo attraverso il caso di Milano
Twentieth-Century Public Housing at the Test of Time:
The Challenge of Preserving a Living Heritage by means of the Milan Case Study
Mariacristina Giambruno, Sonia Pistidda, Laura Salis
- Patrimonio industriale e Mezzogiorno: il caso delle Manifatture Ceramiche Pozzi di Sparanise e Ferrandina** 192
Industrial heritage and Southern Italy: the case of Manifatture Ceramiche Pozzi in Sparanise and Ferrandina
Francesca Castanò, Carmen Cecere, Fabiola Fattore

L'edilizia scolastica del secondo Novecento in Italia: memoria, eredità e sfide dell'adeguamento	198
School building heritage in Italy in the second half of the twentieth century: memory, legacy and adaptation challenges <i>Rita Fabbri</i>	
Oltre un solo Novecento. L'architettura modernista di Tashkent	204
More than one 20th-century. Tashkent Modernist Architecture <i>Davide Del Curto</i>	
Architetture del Novecento a L'Aquila tra riconoscimento e uso: il nuovo ospedale di Marcello Vittorini	210
Twentieth-century architecture in L'Aquila between recognition and use: Marcello Vittorini's new hospital <i>Carla Bartolomucci</i>	
Dai valori alle pratiche: le oscillazioni del processo di patrimonializzazione di un'architettura del secondo Novecento. La Fabbrica per spogliatoi e mensa di Marcello D'Olivo a Trieste	216
From values to practices: shifting stances in preservation process of a late 20th-century architecture. Marcello D'Olivo's Fabbrica per spogliatoi e mensa in Trieste <i>Alessandra Biasi</i>	
Il patrimonio moderno di Venezia. Regesto delle architetture tutelate e nuove prospettive	222
The Modern Heritage of Venice. A survey of Protected Architecture and New Perspectives <i>Silvia Degan, Marco Comunian, Irene Giustina</i>	
Il Parco Faunistico di Napoli. Modernità e sfide per il terzo millennio	228
The Parco Faunistico di Napoli. Modernity and challenges for the third millennium <i>Gianluigi de Martino</i>	
L'ex Ristorante Ufficiale di Ettore Rossi all'EUR. Questioni aperte di patrimonializzazione e restauro	234
The former Ristorante Ufficiale by Ettore Rossi at EUR. Open Issues of Heritagization and Restoration <i>Paola Porretta, Elena Colafranceschi, Sara D'Abate, Agostina Incutti</i>	
Riscoperta e valorizzazione del patrimonio insediativo rurale del secondo Novecento. Esempi di valore storico-testimoniale in Italia e Spagna tra conoscenza, tutela e recupero	240
Rediscovery and enhancement of rural settlements from the second half of the twentieth century. Examples of historical and testimonial value in Italy and Spain between knowledge, protection and rehabilitation <i>Raffaele Pontrandolfi, Francesca Romana Stabile</i>	
Verso la patrimonializzazione di un insediamento del secondo Novecento: il Centro Direzionale di Napoli, dal riconoscimento dei valori a nuove prassi operative, nella prospettiva metodologica del Restauro. Prime osservazioni	246
Toward the heritage enhancement of a twentieth-century settlement: the Naples Business District, from the recognition of the values to new operational practices, in the Restoration methodological perspective. First observations <i>Giuseppina Pugliano</i>	
La 'questione' dei cinematografi: tra adeguamenti funzionali ed esigenze di compatibilità	252
The cinemas 'question': between functional adjustments and compatibility requirements <i>Maria Grazia Turco, Alessandro Fasanella</i>	
Tra memoria e uso: il caso del Centro Italo Svizzero a Rimini e il valore relazionale del patrimonio	258
Between Memory and Use: The Case of the Italo-Swiss Centre in Rimini and the Relational Value of Heritage <i>Andrea Ugolini</i>	
La modernità del rurale. Case e villaggi colonici della bonificazione pontina come patrimonio storico da tutelare	264
Modernity in the rural. Farmhouses and peasant villages of the Pontine reclamation as historical heritage to be protected <i>Maria Vitiello</i>	
Tutelare l'architettura contemporanea: tra espedienti e possibili integrazioni normative	270
Protecting contemporary architecture: between temporary expedients and possible regulatory enhancements <i>Keoma Ambrogio</i>	
Il giardino d'artista di Niki de Saint Phalle: caratteri compositivi, valori e forme di conservazione	276
Niki de Saint Phalle's Artist's Garden: Compositional Characteristics, Cultural Values, and Conservation Approaches <i>Andrea Califano</i>	
La tutela del Contemporaneo in Friuli Venezia Giulia. Alcuni casi studio	282
Contemporary architectures protection in Friuli Venezia Giulia. A few studies case <i>Vincenzo Giampaolo</i>	
Eredità di guerra e segni d'arte	288
Heritage of War and Signs of Art <i>Chiara Mariotti, Alessia Zampini</i>	

Italia '90 World Cup. The Restoration of Oblivion	294
<i>Lorenzo Mingardi</i>	
Modern Heritage under Debate: Civic Centres in Romania, 1959–1989	300
<i>Oana C. Țiganea</i>	
Gli stadi italiani tra conservazione e innovazione: strumenti e strategie per la valorizzazione di un patrimonio culturale	306
Italian stadium between conservation and innovation: tools and strategies for enhancing cultural heritage	
<i>Silvia Battaglia</i>	
La patrimonializzazione del modernismo sovietico in Uzbekistan. Scenari normativi e strumenti operative	312
The Heritagization of Soviet Modernism in Uzbekistan. Regulatory Frameworks and Operational Tools	
<i>Sofia Celli</i>	
Gli ex sanatori antitubercolari tra valori da conservare e prospettive. Il caso dell'Ospedale Cervello a Palermo	318
Historic tuberculosis sanatoriums: values to preserve and prospects for the future. The case of the Cervello Hospital in Palermo	
<i>Fabrizio Giuffrè</i>	
Il prototipo dimenticato. Square Jasmin di Hector Guimard tra sperimentazione costruttiva e mancate strategie di patrimonializzazione	324
The forgotten prototype: Hector Guimard's Square Jasmin between Constructive Experimentation and Failed Heritage Strategies	
<i>Francesca Giusti</i>	
Re-Staging Modernism: Competitions, Memory, and the Making of Heritage in Ankara's Ulus Square	330
<i>Gunce Uzgoren</i>	
Dal censimento alla tutela: le architetture del secondo Novecento. Il caso studio di Bergamo	336
From Survey to Protection: Post-War Architecture. Bergamo as a Case Study	
<i>Graziella Leyla Ciagà</i>	
Thai Modern Architecture as Learning Ground: Case-Based Construction Studies and Reflections on Heritage	342
<i>Suchon Mallikamarl, Pornpas Siricururatana, Kanokwan Trakulyingcharoen</i>	
From Value Recognition and the MoMA Exhibition to Cultural Heritage and Future Sustainability: A Case Study of the Central Zone in New Belgrade	348
<i>Marina Pavlović, Saša Mihajlov, Jasna Cvetić</i>	
Restauro e riuso del Paraboloide di Casale Monferrato	354
Conservation and adaptive reuse of the Paraboloide in Casale Monferrato	
<i>Manuel Fernando Ramello</i>	
L'opera e il suo contesto. Paesaggio e identità nell'architettura moderna della villa von Saurma a Termini di Massa Lubrense	360
The Building and its Context. Landscape and Identity in the Modern Architecture of Villa von Saurma in Termini, Massa Lubrense	
<i>Salvatore Suarato</i>	
Fabbriche d'autore in Campania: pratiche di tutela e valorizzazione	366
Authorial Factories in Campania: Practices of Protection and Enhancement	
<i>Lorenzo Renzullo</i>	

Image as a Heritage Value: Understanding its Role in Twentieth-Century Architectural Conservation

Irene Ruiz Bazán | irene.ruizbazan@polito.it

Dipartimento di Architettura e Design, Politecnico di Torino

Abstract

This research investigates the role of image in the conservation of twentieth-century architecture, questioning whether practice preserves material substance or mediated representation. The image of modern heritage—often canonized through photography—has shaped recognition, guided conservation priorities, and sometimes substituted for authenticity. Recent reflections on conservation criteria, combined with values-based frameworks promoted by the Getty Conservation Institute and UNESCO, suggest that image and reception can be understood as heritage values in their own right. Drawing on case studies and student-led research in the ARURCOHE Master’s programme, including re-readings of the *Madrid–New Delhi Document* (2017), the article reflects on how visual identity competes with material authenticity, and proposes methodological pathways to integrate image within plural conservation frameworks.

Keywords

Twentieth-Century Architecture, Heritage Conservation, Image and Reception, Values-Based Frameworks, Authenticity.

Twentieth-Century Architectural Conservation and its Relationship with the Photographic Image

«Architects live and die by the images of their work, as these images alone are what most people see. For every person who visits a private house, there are maybe 10,000 who only view it as a photo»¹ This statement by Julius Shulman, the renowned twentieth-century architectural photographer especially known for his collaboration with Richard Neutra, raises the fundamental question guiding this contribution: Can architects survive through the images made of their buildings? In other words, as an extreme question, do we truly restore these buildings—or merely the image of these buildings? This question is crucial in contemporary architecture, increasingly mediated by a world immersed in what Joan Fontcuberta² has defined as *The Fury of Images*, and it resonates with Jacques Herzog's reflection: «From a photographer, we expect images, but perhaps it was not foreseen that architecture would begin to think in terms of image»³. The relationship between photography and architecture, evident since the earliest days of the photographic medium, gained particular significance with the rise of modern architecture. Prominent architects of the period often worked closely with skilled photographers and maintained a near-obsessive control over how their buildings were depicted, ensuring that every published image reinforced their design philosophy. During this era, the photograph became a key instrument for shaping both the dissemination and the public perception of twentieth-century architectural ideas⁴.

This interplay inevitably influences the way modern architecture is restored. Simona Salvo, reflecting on restoration of modern architecture⁵, argues that recent practice has not produced a genuine theoretical shift,

despite apparent antinomies. Interventions on twentieth-century buildings, instead of pursuing conservation, often privilege restoration as a return to an alleged «original splendeur»⁶. This consumable attitude resonates with contemporary sensibilities but revives a notion discarded for a century: safeguarding the image rather than the material substance.

According to Salvo, appealing to a so-called «conservation imperative»⁷, many projects on modern heritage have pursued reinstatement of an initial integrity and newness. Factors make this acceptable: the youth of modern works suggest traces of time can be erased; faith in technology feeds the illusion that buildings can be recreated as good as—or better than—the originals; and principles of seriality, transience, and fragility legitimize copies and reconstructions.

Debate on modern heritage began from the idea that traditional methods were inapplicable. Materials often resist conservation, and figurative character cannot be conveyed once perfection is lost. Thus, reflection moved beyond heritage protection, shaped by historians, designers, and technologists who saw Modernity as their lineage. They projected values linked to their milieu, focusing on a ‘still productive’ built environment they hesitated to protect, fearing loss of symbolic or economic potential. Interventions often reconnect with the recent past by presenting an idealized image—preferably the original—or by re-establishing formal integrity. Yet ‘redoing’ or ‘restoring’⁸ rarely follows rigorous philology; instead it adopts intuitive, image-oriented approaches. This produces a neo-stylistic restoration, guided by analogy with the original as shown in drawings or photographs, sometimes transcending history to affirm contemporary values.

The image is expected to restore balance between work and present. Yet architecture cannot escape material alteration: to remake is to modify irreversibly. By contrast, critical restoration recognizes in the ‘hic et nunc’ the values of memory while respecting substance.

Susanna Caccia Gherardini’s study of Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye⁹ restorations shows reception inseparable from photography, which frames it since its origin. Images often become the main filter: public and scholars access buildings through a repertoire of canonical shots.

The Villa Savoye exemplifies this. Early images, later reiterated in the 1987 Centenary exhibitions, codified a script: an immaculate white volume over a green field, excluding surroundings, use, or aging. This framed the villa as a manifesto-object of the *Five Points*, privileging abstract geometry over lived space. Such editorial strategies actively construct meaning. In the Centenary, reiteration reaffirmed the villa’s emblematic purity, while obscuring fragility, restorations, or context. Photography thus shapes how architecture is canonized and remembered.

Marco Dezzi Bardeschi¹⁰ criticizes privileging image over material reality. For him, the image is a seductive abstraction that risks distorting heritage. It cannot be self-sufficient: it is the visible tip of a broader cultural and historical network. To reduce architecture to its image—original, idealized, or reconstructed—is to strip it of material testimony.

From this perspective, he rejects «formal restoration»¹¹ that revives or reproduces an image as it once appeared. Such practices, based on subjective judgments, erase authentic traces. Privileging the original appearance over material continuity betrays conservation itself. He criticizes charters like the UNESCO declaration on Art Nouveau (Turin, 1994) for prioritizing appearance over authenticity. For him, these reveal a fetishistic attachment to images, substituting simulacra for authentic history.



Fig. 1 Paris, interior of the Maison La Roche where the original colours have been restored. Photograph by the author.



Fig. 2 Berlin. Restoration works at the Neue Nationalgalerie, involving massive substitutions of original materials, November 2019. Photograph by the author.

Also Ascensión Hernández¹² stresses that the image of contemporary architecture has become central yet problematic. Many interventions, particularly on icons like Villa Savoye or Villa La Roche, pursue a return to pristine appearance, dismantling later layers and recreating lost elements. While aiming to recover emblematic images, Hernández warns they risk privileging formal values over historical authenticity, reducing complex works to simplified symbols. She highlights the tension between preserving traces of time and offering a visually unblemished monument, noting that dominance of image-oriented restorations obscures richer constructive, social, and spatial meanings of modern architecture.

How might the new generation of architects and conservators interpret this situation, and what perspectives can be envisaged?

While many scholars warn of the risks of ‘restoring only the image’, contemporary practice often still adopts this criterion. The restoration of the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin under the premise «As much Mies as possible»¹³ – though centred on maintaining use – nonetheless privileged image over original material.

Within the ARURCOHE Master’s programme¹⁴ (2024–2025), we explored these tensions through collective debate, situating them within international guidelines. In particular, we revisited the Madrid–New Delhi Document on the Conservation of Twentieth-Century Heritage (2017)¹⁵, re-reading it through values-based conservation. By crossing its criteria with methodologies of significance analysis, we tested whether ‘image’ could be formally recognized as a heritage value. Seminar discussions showed that reception of twentieth-century

architecture is inseparable from its mediated presence, and that conservation must increasingly address the tension between authenticity and visual legibility as co-constitutive values.

Contemporary restoration theories converge on a warning: the dominance of image in twentieth-century conservation risks producing neo-stylistic restorations that privilege appearance, erase historical layers, and reduce architecture to a timeless votive icon. In this view, to 'restore the image' is to betray material continuity, turning conservation into an ideological exercise of illusion and simulacrum.

The Values Paradigm in Heritage Conservation

Over the past four decades, heritage conservation has undergone a paradigmatic shift. No longer limited to monuments and exceptional buildings, it now encompasses vernacular sites, cultural landscapes, places of memory, intangible practices, and even media-mediated heritage. This expansion has brought a conceptual change: from preserving fabric as an end, to asking why heritage matters – and to whom.

Central to this turn is values-based conservation. Rooted in the Burra Charter (1979)¹⁶ and later codified in international standards, it frames significance as the ensemble of values – historical, aesthetic, social, spiritual, scientific, and increasingly symbolic or communicative. Conservation is thus less about technical intervention than about prioritizing which values to safeguard, enhance, or let evolve.

International texts reinforced this. The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994)¹⁷ calls for assessing authenticity through diverse cultural lenses, while UNESCO's Manual for Managing Cultural World Heritage (2013)¹⁸ stresses participatory value assessment in management planning. Together, they mark a move from rigid expert-led models to iterative, negotiated ones.

A key actor has been the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI). Through the Agora initiative and later programmes (1997–2005), it developed theoretical and methodological tools for values-based practice. Reports such as *Economics and Heritage Conservation* (1999)¹⁹, *Values and Heritage Conservation* (2000)²⁰, *Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage* (2002)²¹, and *Heritage Values in Site Management* (2005)²² introduced major innovations: the notion of *bundles* of values; structured methodologies to elicit, document, and compare them; integration of economic with socio-cultural valuation; and participatory approaches framing significance as socially negotiated.

Methodologically, the GCI advanced the field by: (1) structured elicitation protocols (value-mapping, interviews, consensus workshops) to capture plural values; (2) comparative matrices and weighting tools to clarify trade-offs; (3) case-based frameworks monitoring conservation decisions against evolving assessments; and (4) mixed-methods integration, combining qualitative (narratives, semiotic analysis, dialogue) and quantitative (economic valuation, contingent valuation, cost-benefit analysis) approaches.

From these debates emerges a crucial insight: if image and reception are among the attributes that communities and publics recognize as central to the meaning of a site – whether through iconic silhouettes, photographic legibility, mediated presence, or audience response – they can be formally articulated as heritage values within this plural framework. The methodological precedents established by the GCI suggest that such values could be systematically documented, compared, and integrated into conservation planning, rather than treated as ephemeral or secondary. The challenge then becomes not whether to include them, but how to design tools that balance visual and reception values alongside more traditional domains of significance.

Extending Getty's Methodologies to Image and Reception Values

The methodological repertoire developed by the GCI provides a strong basis for integrating image and reception values into conservation. While initially aimed at conventional categories—historical, aesthetic, social, economic—their logic of elicitation, comparative assessment, and participatory negotiation can be adapted to visual and mediated heritage.

First, value-mapping protocols can be expanded to include visual attributes: iconic silhouettes, preferred vantage points, characteristic framings in promotional material, iconographic repertoires, recurrence in publications, artistic representations, documentary photography, and circulating motifs. Stakeholders—residents, visitors, professionals, online communities—can annotate maps, photos, or digital models to mark the image aspects they find meaningful.

Second, weighting and decision matrices can compare image and reception values with other forms of significance. When restoration may alter recognizability in iconic photographs, a structured matrix helps weigh authenticity against visual integrity, making negotiations explicit and transparent.

Third, participatory workshops—central to the GCI—can elicit perceptions of mediated heritage. Focus groups with experts, tourists, residents, and digital audiences reveal how images circulate, which resonate, and what meanings they generate. Such workshops provide both data and legitimacy, aligning strategies with lived and mediated experiences.

Fourth, Getty's mixed-methods approach supports integrating visual semiotics and digital ethnography. Qualitative studies (interviews, surveys, narratives) can be combined with quantitative metrics (social media engagement, circulation, geotagging) to build a composite picture of image and reception values.

Finally, the reflexive, iterative testing in Getty's case studies suits visual and mediated heritage, where values shift quickly. Periodic reassessment—through surveys, monitoring digital circulation, or repeat workshops—keeps conservation responsive.

Together, these adaptations show that Getty's toolkit not only accommodates but also fosters the integration of image and reception values. Extending mapping, weighting, participation, and reviewing visual domains makes explicit what is already tacit: heritage meanings today are inseparable from how they are seen, represented, and receive.

Conclusion

This diagnosis raises a methodological question: is it inevitable that image plays only a distorting role in conservation? Or could the field develop tools to recognize image—and its historical and present reception by publics—not as a surrogate for materiality, but as part of the plural ensemble of values that confer cultural significance on heritage? Here, the values-based paradigm, consolidated by the Getty Conservation Institute and international frameworks, opens a possible reorientation. Instead of reducing architecture to image, or denying the role of image altogether, conservation might seek to operationalize image and reception as explicit values, subject to the same negotiation, prioritization, and justification processes as historic, social, or spiritual values.

Such a move does not dismiss the dangers we have discussed. On the contrary, by embedding image within a rigorous values framework, conservation can avoid the fetishistic 'short path'²³ of aesthetic reinstatement while

still acknowledging the cultural force of visual legibility, iconic silhouette, and mediated presence in contemporary heritage reception. The Villa Savoye, for instance, can be understood both as a material artifact with fragile plaster and as an enduring photographic icon, without collapsing one dimension into the other.

This approach can be explored with pedagogical experiments like the one carried out in the ARURCOHE Master's programme, where students re-read the Madrid-New Delhi Document (2017) through the lens of image as a heritage value. By bringing academic reflection, international guidance, and methodological innovation into dialogue, conservation can move toward a reflexive practice—capable of addressing the dual imperative of material authenticity and visual recognition.

In an era saturated by images, conservation must learn not only to resist their tyranny but also to integrate their significance within a plural, values-based methodology. By doing so can twentieth-century architecture be preserved both in its material testimony and in its mediated, living presence for future generations.

¹ *Visual Acoustics – The Modernism of Julius Shulman*, documentary film, directed by Eric Bricker, USA, 2008.

² JOAN FONTCUBERTA, *La furia de las imágenes. Notas sobre la postfotografía*, 1st ed., Barcelona, Galaxia Gutenberg 2016.

³ MARIA LETIZIA GAGLIARDI, *La misura dello spazio. Fotografia e architettura: conversazioni con i protagonisti*, Rome, Contrasto 2010.

⁴ JUAN JOSÉ LAHUERTA, *Photography or Life & Popular Mies*. Columns of Smoke, Volume I, Barcelona, Tenov Books 2018.

⁵ SIMONA SALVO, *Restaurare il Novecento. Storie, esperienze e prospettive in architettura*, Macerata, Quodlibet 2016.

⁶ *Ivi*, p. 11.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ SUSANNA CACCIA GHERARDINI, *Le Corbusier e la villa Savoye: un caso di restauro autoriale / Le Corbusier and the villa Savoye: a case of authorial restoration*, Firenze, Florence University Press, 2023.

¹⁰ MARCO DEZZI BARDESCHI, *Adoratori d'immagini*, «Ananke», n. 12, 1995, pp. 2-3.

¹¹ *Ivi*, p. 2.

¹² ASCENSIÓN HERNÁNDEZ MARTÍNEZ, *La conservación y restauración de la arquitectura contemporánea: paradojas y contradicciones*, «Loggia», n. 28, 2015, pp. 18-35.

¹³ SANDRA HOFMEISTER, *As much Mies as possible*, «DETAIL», online edition 26.09.2018.

¹⁴ The Erasmus Mundus Joint Master in Architectural and Urban Contemporary Heritage (ARURCOHE) is a 90 ECTS, 18-month postgraduate programme co-funded by the European Union for the 2022–2028 period (Project code: 101081182-ARURCOHE). It focuses on the safeguarding, conservation, and reuse of 20th-century urban and built heritage. The programme is jointly implemented by three European universities: University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU), Spain; Politecnico di Torino (POLITO), Italy; Kaunas University of Technology (KTU), Lithuania.

¹⁵ ICOMOS ISC20C, *Approaches for the Conservation of Twentieth-Century Cultural Heritage: Madrid-New Delhi Document 2017*, Paris, ICOMOS, 2017, <<https://publ.icomos.org/publicomos/technica/16FC4FD656F9D6C6AADAA8C9697CFD9C>>.

¹⁶ AUSTRALIA ICOMOS, *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*, Burwood, Australia ICOMOS, 2013.

¹⁷ ICOMOS, *The Nara Document on Authenticity*, Nara, ICOMOS, 1994.

¹⁸ UNESCO, *Managing Cultural World Heritage*, Paris, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2013, <<https://whc.unesco.org/en/managing-cultural-world-heritage/>>.

¹⁹ RANDALL MASON, *Economics and Heritage Conservation*, Los Angeles, Getty Conservation Institute, 1999, <https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/pdf/econrpt.pdf>.

²⁰ ERICA AVRAMI, RANDALL MASON, MARTA DE LA TORRE, *Values and Heritage Conservation: Research Report*, Los Angeles, Getty Conservation Institute 2000, <https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/pdf/valuesrpt.pdf>.

²¹ RANDALL MASON, *Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage: Research Report*, Los Angeles, Getty Conservation Institute 2002, <https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/pdf/assessing.pdf>.

²² MARTA DE LA TORRE, *Heritage Values in Site Management: Four Case Studies*, Los Angeles, Getty Conservation Institute 2005, <https://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/pdf_publications/pdf/heritage_values_vl.pdf>.

²³ As referred in MARCO DEZZI BARDESCHI, *Adoratori d'immagini*, op. cit., p. 3.