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Women · Architecture & Design
Itineraries across Europe

Barcelona
Lisbon
Paris
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The Netherlands
Slovenia

Co-funded by the
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MoMoWo

Women · Architecture & Design

Itineraries across Europe

WOMEN'S CREATIVITY SINCE
THE MODERN MOVEMENT

Co-funded by the
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of the European Union

MoMoWo

Women · Architecture & Design Itineraries across Europe

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Summary

The Momowo Project - Women's Creativity since the Modern Movement (1918–2018) by Emilia Garda and Caterina Franchini 6

Architectural Tourism by Sara Levi Sacerdotti 8

Discovering Tangible Cultural Heritage Created by Women across Europe by Emilia Garda and Caterina Franchini 10

Itineraries 13

List of Authors 14

BARCELONA, SPAIN

A Modern City with Local Identity by Ana María Fernández García 16
From Ancient to Modern District 17
From the Beach to the Hills of Barcelona 27
The Western Path 36
Architectural Studies in Spain by Ana María Fernández García 44

LISBON, PORTUGAL

Portuguese Modern Movement by Maria Helena Souto 46
From Downtown Lisbon to the Hills 47
From Santos to Belém 57
Modern Lisbon 67
Maria Keil (1914–2012) by Maria Helena Souto 75

PARIS, FRANCE

Women Architects in Paris by Alain Bonnet 78
The City Centre 80
The Rive Gauche and the Eastern Neighbourhoods 90
Western Districts and Champs-Élysées 98
Charlotte Perriand (1903–99) by Alain Bonnet 105

TURIN, ITALY

From Industry to Culture by Caterina Franchini 108
The City Centre beyond the Roman Grid 109
From the City Borders to the Starry Hill 120
A New Urban Identity through the Industrial Landscape 128
Ada Bursi (1906–96) by Caterina Franchini 139

THE NETHERLANDS

Introduction to the Three Itineraries of the Netherlands by Marjan Groot 142
A Journey of Architecture in and near the Capital of Amsterdam 144
From Rotterdam to The Hague, Two Very Different Cities 155
Highlights in Utrecht, Leiden and Delft 165
Margaret Kropholler (1891–1966) by Marjan Groot 175

SLOVENIA

Slovene Women Architects by Helena Seražin 178
Ljubljana - The City of Women 179
From Ski to Spa 189
The East: From Shopping Malls to the Stadium 201
Gizela Šuklje (1909–94) by Helena Seražin 210

Bibliography 213
Index of Women Architects and Designers 219
Acknowledgements 222
Photo & Maps Credits 225
Symbols 231

TURIN

MOMOW

WOMEN'S CREATIVITY SINCE
THE MODERN MOVEMENT

From Industry to Culture

Caterina Franchini

This chapter presents three itineraries which comprise twenty-one works situated in the city of Turin and two works in its metropolitan area. The first itinerary focuses on the city centre, while the other two stretch north and south, outside Turin to Pino Torinese and Moncalieri where two significant buildings are accessible to visitors. The chapter includes an article about 'pioneer' Ada Bursi (1906–96) who was the first female professional architect to work in the city and it suggests other works to be visited beyond the ones included in the itineraries.
A brief introduction to each itinerary guides visitors along the routes which are rich in urban and architectural history. They can also experience the transformations which have significantly changed Turin's vocation and identity since 1980s as it has developed alternatives to its industrial image. It used to be the epitome of a company town, but over the last few decades it has become one of those medium sized European cities to have significantly changed its urban landscape. The city centre is the first urban area to have progressively consolidated its cultural attractiveness over time. The works in Itinerary 2 and Itinerary 3 are closely connected to the crucial steps of Turin's transformations including the reuse of the FIAT (*Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino*) factory Lingotto (1982), the approval of the Land Use Plan (*Piano Regolatore Generale* - PRG) in 1995, and the works for the Winter Olympic Games in 2006. This is the why, women architects' contribution is mainly seen in restorations, renovations, reuses, extensions, interior and museum set design.
Ten architectural works from the three itineraries received the Architetture Rivelate Prize. This local annual prize was established in 2004 by the Order of Architects - OAT (*Ordine degli Architetti Pianificatori, Paesaggisti e Conservatori della Provincia di Torino*). The prize aims to raise awareness and give visibility to those works that provide a better quality of built environment thanks to their careful architectural design and coherent realisation. It also aims to encourage observers to appreciate and enjoy architecture, even though they are just visitors or passers-by. A plaque on the wall of the prize winning building shows the 'extraordinary quality of ordinary architecture' to both local people as well as MoMoWo visitors.
Among the women architects in Turin itineraries, Laura Petrazzini Levi (1931–86), author of Residence Du Parc (Itinerary 3), is included in the "Albo d'Onore del Novecento. Architetti a Torino" (Honour Roll of the 20th century. Architects in Turin). Her work has been recognised for its originality and her ability to give consistency to her architectural designs without losing sight of the numerous and varied distinctive traits. The Honour Roll was established in 1980 by OAT to celebrate and preserve the memory of professionals who have brought honour to the category with the quality of their work, commitment to culture and education, dedication to work, and participation in civic life.
Out of thirty-eight architects included in the Honour Roll, besides Petrazzini Levi, just two other women are mentioned. They are Vera Comoli Mandracci (1935–2006) and Mariella de Cristofaro Rovera (1931–2001). Both women distinguished themselves with their exceptionally ethical, human and professional rigour which also greatly highlighted their intensive scientific and academic achievements at the Politecnico di Torino. As they were both professors, Comoli in the fields of Urban History and de Cristofaro in Construction and Structural Engineering, transferred their passion and knowledge to generations of students, that are now architects.

The City Centre beyond the Roman Grid

This itinerary takes Turin's city centre starting from the 17th century district. This area has been characterised by the presence of some important theatres and cultural buildings since the 18th century. Among them is the Gobetti Theatre (1). Walking along Via Gioachino Rossini visitors will reach Via Po. This arcaded street was designed by architect Amedeo di Castellamonte in 1673, who created a theatrical walkway to connect the city centre with the Po river.

At the end of Via Po visitors will arrive in the heart of the Baroque capital city, Piazza Castello. The square was commissioned in 1584 to architect Ascanio Vitozzi, who designed a wide square around the Medieval Acaia castle (1317), now named Palazzo Madama (2, Civic Museum of Ancient Art) Chosen by the Duchess Maria Cristina of France (1606–63) as her favourite residence, the building underwent its first renovation. However, it was the second '*Madama Reale*' (regent), Maria Giovanna Battista di Savoia Nemours (1644–1724), who brought about a decisive transformation and turned the ancient castle into a royal residence, assigning the new façade design to Filippo Juvarra (1718).

On the northern side of Piazza Castello stands the Royal Palace. It was designed in 1584 by Ascanio Vitozzi in order to host the Savoy royal headquarters. Crossing the square, a passage on the left leads directly to Piazza San Giovanni, where the Renaissance San Giovanni Battista cathedral houses the Holy Shroud. Reaching Largo IV Marzo, visitors will arrive in the centre of the Medieval city, where they can admire two renovated historical buildings the "Casa del Senato" - Apartment Building (3) and the University Residence (4).

Walking along Via Porta Palatina visitors will cross two important streets. The first one is Via Giuseppe Garibaldi, designed by the Romans as *decumanus maximus* - the principal axis of the Roman settlement - and then widened in 1736–39 by Benedetto Alfieri. The second is Via Pietro Micca (1885), a diagonal street with arcades which bears witness to the intensive transformations begun at the end of the 19th century. On the corner between Via dell'Arsenale and Via Benedetto Alfieri visitors will see Lascaris Palace (5). Going straight along Via Alfieri they will reach Piazza San Carlo. The square with arcades, originally built as the Royal Square, was designed in 1637–44 by Carlo di Castellamonte as part of the southward expansion plan of the Baroque city (1620). This square was pedestrianised for the Olympic Winter Games (2006) under the direction of architect Elena Bosio. Going straight along Via Giovanni Giolitti, on the right is Valdo Fusi Square (6). This was built in an area which had been heavily damaged during the Second World War. The east side of the square is characterised by the Baroque San Giovanni Vecchio Hospital (7, "Infernotti" - Multifunctional Hall), designed by Amedeo di Castellamonte (1680).

Turning left into Via Camillo Benso di Cavour visitors will enter the city Neoclassical district, called *Borgo Nuovo* which was built between 1825 and 1864. Here they can see the *Aiuola Balbo* and *Giardino Cavour.* The outline of these two gardens shows the presence of the former city fortifications. From the nearby Via della Rocca it is possible to see a view of Piazza Vittorio Veneto. The Neoclassical square, designed by Giuseppe Frizzi (1825), is characterised by uniform arcades and sober architectural lines. On the opposite side of the river is the imposing Gran Madre di Dio church. It was designed by Ferdinando Bonsignore and built in 1931, based on the model of the Pantheon in Rome. Crossing Corso Casale, visitors can go up the *Monte dei Cappuccini* as the last step of the first itinerary, the Mountain National Museum (8), and enjoy a great view of the city and the surrounding Alps. C.S., A.S.

The City Centre beyond the Roman Grid

1. **Gobetti Theatre**
   Via Gioachino Rossini, 8

2. **Palazzo Madama - Civic Museum of Ancient Art**
   Piazza Castello

3. **"Casa del Senato" - Apartment Building**
   Largo IV Marzo, 17

4. **University Residence**
   Via Cappel Verde, 5

5. **Lascaris Palace**
   Via Benedetto Alfieri, 15

6. **Valdo Fusi Square**
   Piazzale Valdo Fusi

7. **"Infernotti" - Multifunctional Hall of San Giovanni Battista Hospital**
   Via San Massimo, 24

8. **Mountain National Museum**
   Piazzale Monte dei Cappuccini, 7

3
4
2
1
5
6
7
8

Valdo Fusi Square

Piazzale Valdo Fusi

Piazzale Valdo Fusi - Torino

Crotti Forsans Architetti Studio Associato - Massimo Crotti, **Marie-Pierre Forsans** - and Francesco Dolza, Maurizio Marcelli
1997, 2001–2006

The urban project covers the area that previously hosted a 17th century convent and then the headquarters of the Royal Industrial Museum (1862). The area was heavily damaged during Second World War, remaining an empty space until 1997. The municipality then launched an international design competition in order to create a two level underground car park, leaving a wide outdoor public space. The centre of the square is below pavement level and can be reached by four surrounding sloping surfaces. The resulting spatial organization creates a direct relationship between the square and the buildings around it: the San Giovanni Battista hospital, the Chamber of Commerce (1965–72) by Carlo Mollino and the former Stock Exchange (1953–56) by Roberto Gabetti and Aimaro Isola. Two slopes link the central space with the surroundings streets, while the other two form 'wings' covering the parking entrances and ramps. Furthermore, three of the slopes contains green areas, whereas the fourth has stone paving. In the middle of the square a glass building has been constructed, originally designed to house an information centre, now hosting a pub. Near the pub another building has been designed to house the Jazz Club. The result is a wide urban public square, where youngsters can meet and skate on the slightly sloping surfaces and people can sit on the wood terraces and stone benches, surrounded by green areas and water fountains.

E.G.

WC | Regional Museum of Natural Science, San Carlo Square | Bus/tram: 18, 61, 68, ST1, ST 2

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