

Inhabiting the prison. The spaces of everyday life in detention

*Original*

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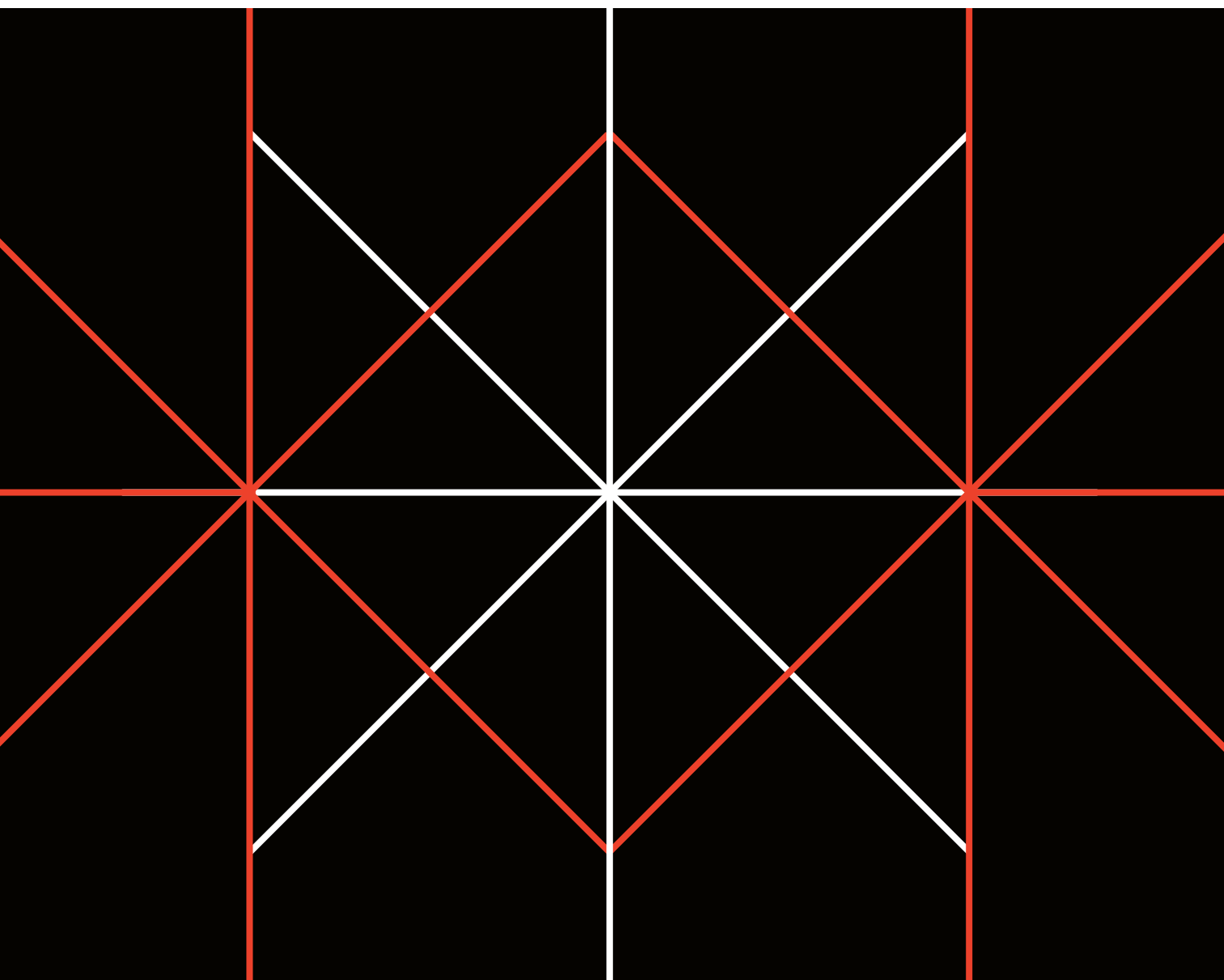
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# SPACE

DASP Yearbook 2023



# SPACE

DASP Yearbook 2023

PhD in Architecture.  
History and Project

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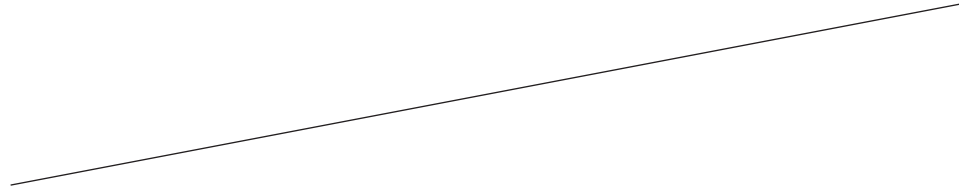
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### COLOPHON

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# INTRO- DUCTION

# TORINO 10125. OUT OF THE DASP-HOME.\* AN INTRODUCTION

Marco Trisciuglio

*"But the designer does not usually construct a history with the rigor expected of a historian, and we expect the design to display other qualities of subjectivity as well.*

*A design is also equivalent to a novel, convincing the user to suspend disbelief. Part-novelist, part-historian, the architect is 'the history man'. We expect a history or a novel to be written in words, but they can also be cast in concrete. An architectural book can be history and a novel, and so can a building"*\*\*.

Jonathan Hill (Director of the PhD Architectural Design at UCL), 2014

The PhD Program in Architecture. History and Project (DASP) was born out of two long lasting traditions of doctoral level studies and research in the area of Architecture at Politecnico di Torino. The PhD Program programatically investigates the complexity of architectural cultures starting from the multi-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary interweaving between the history and the design of buildings, cities, territories. On the one hand, in fact, urban and architectural composition and technology of architecture favor an interpretation of the project as a tool for measuring the stratifications of theoretical elaborations, technical innovations and modifications of built environment. On the other hand, the historical disciplines for architecture and the city, far from a local vision and thanks to the cooperation with other histories (the economic, social, anthropological and aesthetic ones), trace paths that can be traveled by architects and urban planners, but also by other humanities scholars, such as philosophers and linguists. The intertwining of the two research traditions on which it was founded has thus made the DASP in recent years, precisely starting from these premises, the most advanced doctoral space in which to cultivate humanistic studies within the context of a technical European university as Politecnico di Torino is.

The activities of the DASP are characterized by a push towards internationalization, built starting from the vast network of scientific projects established by the members of its Council (named Collegio), which becomes fundamental both in the definition of new strategies in the architectural and urban fields (in the two areas of design and historiography) and to face the professional and working challenges that derive from it.

The PhD Program shares the study objectives of numerous laboratories, centers and research groups based in the University (such as the China Room, the Future Urban Legacy Lab interdepartmental center, the Institute of Mountain Architecture and, more recently, the Construction History Group and the Transitional Morphologies Joint Research Unit): often the thesis proposals are built in agreement with these subjects or are open to the world of entrepreneurship and innovation, involving public administrations, companies, trade associations, non-profit organizations. Equipped with a teaching staff made up of over a third of teachers from other Italian universities and from foreign universities, alongside the Italian language the DASP has equally chosen (both in internal communication and in the didactic offer) the English language, considered as the lingua franca of scientific research.

Recognized by the Department of Architecture and Design DAD, in its Strategic Plan, as the joint instrument of third level learning and research training in the field of Architecture, the DASP is the main place where that fundamental (or "curiosity driven") research is cultivated which is useful for feeding apparatuses of knowledge and skills to be spent on applied (or "mission oriented") research and on participation in competitive challenges in the European research framework (nowadays Horizon Europe).

The main purpose of the DASP as a pedagogical institution remains that of research training, whatever the occupational and professional outlet that this specific training will allow for the PhD. The PhD in Architecture. History and Project provides PhD students with tools and methods to address and

resolve specific research questions related to design and historiography of buildings and their contexts (topographical, technical-constructive production, symbolic and socio-economic), of cities and their characteristics (of form, functioning, strategic role), of territories and their narratives (in the game of the processes of representation, interpretation, transformation). The DASP aims to keep this research training at a high level and with broad horizons of attention in order to make the skills acquired usable, also and above all, in fields of competencies that are not strictly and purely academic, in line with the profile of skills that today it is required, both in Italy and in Europe, from those who obtain the title of PhD.

The DASP PhD gets in fact the competencies to become a researcher at universities and at research institutions (either public or private, either Italian or foreign) in the fields of history and documentation of architecture and cities, of buildings' design processes management, of infrastructures and urban spaces design, of control and development of technologies and especially construction techniques, working in the domain of abstract and applied sciences in the main fields of design and technological innovation. The future of the PhDs foresees a career as a researcher and teacher, as a manager in national or international public bodies, in all those sectors responsible for architectural quality, the enhancement of the historical heritage, the address of urban and territorial transformations, because of them having the necessary skills to also deal with the organization and promotion of cultural events and the management of complex design processes at various scales. The PhD training allows access to the liberal professions in architecture, where high quality skills are required, but also the ability to critically analyze phenomena and decision-making processes, and also in other parallel fields, such as urban and territorial planning, the management of capitalization phenomena and specialized publishing.

The objectives of the DASP are clarified in the accreditation document, compiled every year by Coordinator upon request of the Italian Ministry of University and Research and made available to the Academic Board and DASP PhD students. The same objectives are part of the introductory report that Coordinator and Council hold every year on a date located between the first two weeks of November to welcome the new members (Opening Day): it is an occasion that is not only formal, but which serves to better define, by periodically refining it, the scientific and educational agenda of the PhD in Architecture.

The identity of the DASP is also made explicit on the two doctoral websites: the official one on the Politecnico di Torino platform (<https://www.polito.it/didattica/dottorato-di-ricerca-e-scuola-di-specializzazione/active-courses/architecture-history-and-design/research-themes>), and the one external to the university system, traditionally self-managed by PhD students (<https://daspstudents.org>). Today, this DASP Yearbook is added to those communication tools, as the first result of a passionate initiative by DASP PhD students, once more interested in socializing the content of their researches and offering it to the widest possible comparison, cultivating the precise project of building a scientific community ready to face future challenges.

Even out of the comfort zone of their physical headquarters DASP-Home (at Istituto Galileo Ferraris), Torino 10125.

\* The text of this introduction is taken from the document *Proposal for the accreditation of doctorates - a.y. 2023/2024*, presented to the Italian Ministry of University and Research on June 5th, 2023.

\*\* Jonathan Hill, *History by Design*, in Ian Borden, Murray Fraser and Barbara Penner (eds), *Forty Ways To Think About Architecture. Architectural history and theory today*, John Wiley and Sons Ltd, London 2014, p. 166.





# LEGENDA. HOW TO READ THIS PUBLICATION

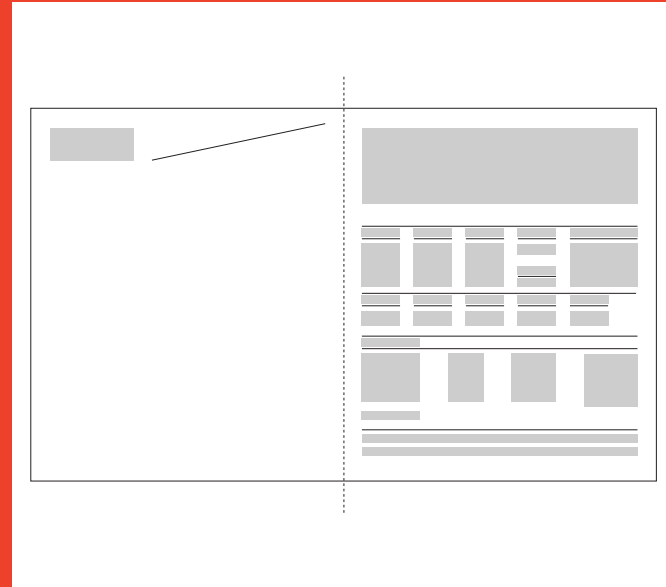
The aim of this publication is to explain the complexity of the DASP's structure and its relationships both inside and outside the organization. The content is presented in a simple and easy-to-read format, resembling a magazine which covers several PhD research topics with varying levels of detail, all presented on equal footing.

The publication's layout and graphical design takes inspiration from two Italian literary series from the 1960s: the *Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi*, a universal pocket series of non-fiction, and *URANIA*, a science fiction series by Arnoldo Mondadori. The DASP Yearbook adopts the small pocket format and the use of three primary colours (white, black, and red), which distinguished the stylistic choices of both publishing houses at the time, thanks to Einaudi's strong identity imprint by Bruno Munari and Mondadori's Art Director Anita Klinz. This publication uses those different colors to define each macro area and identify the content of the pages. The recurring structure is flexible and can adapt to the unique differences between cycles and PhD students. Images and diagrams are presented in black and white to maintain continuity, with images often crossing pages to keep them connected.

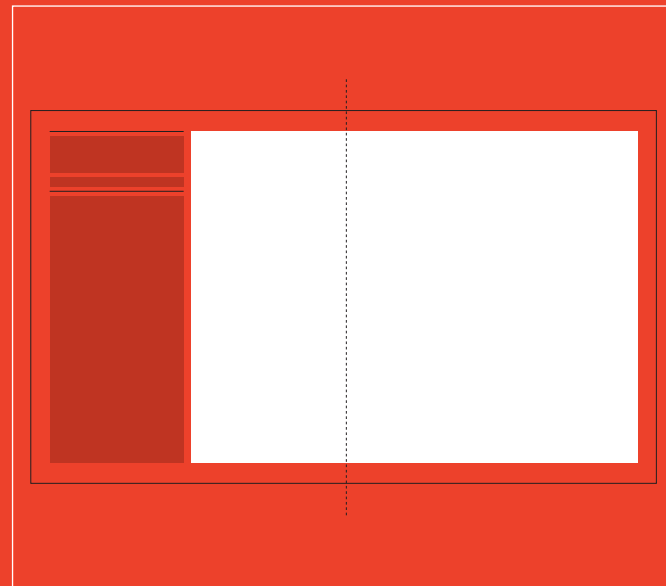
The typography used in this project features the *Akzidenz Grotesk* typeface. It's a simple and clean *sans-serif* font that became popular in the 1950s as part of the *Swiss Modernism* style and it was widely used by public transportation companies, including the New York Subways, because of its neutrality and clarity. To balance out the system's rigidity, we've added *Marlide Display*, which was inspired by classic serif fonts from the late 1970s.

## CHAPTERS A COLOR CODE

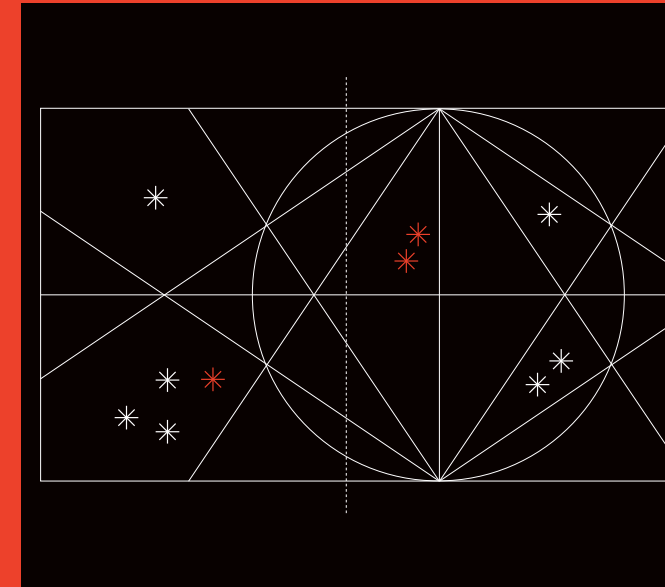
Every chapter is guided through its specific colour and contains various topics, specific materials with different formats of text and/or images.



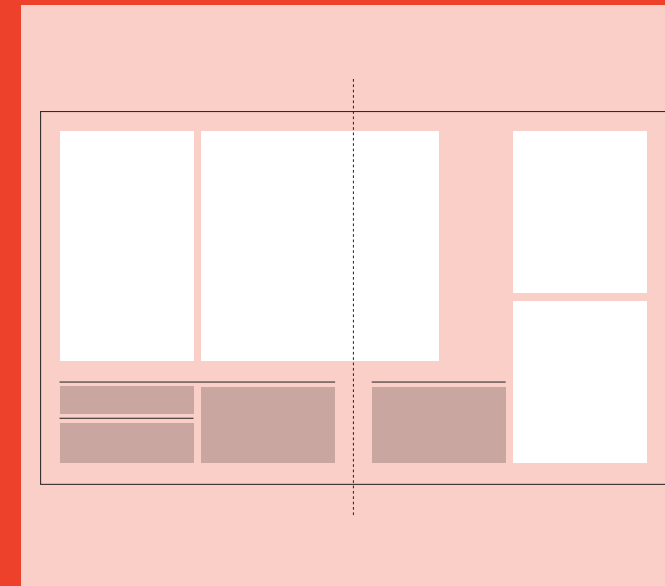
White - Title page of the chapters and colophon



Red - Introduction and info on the DASP and the yearbook



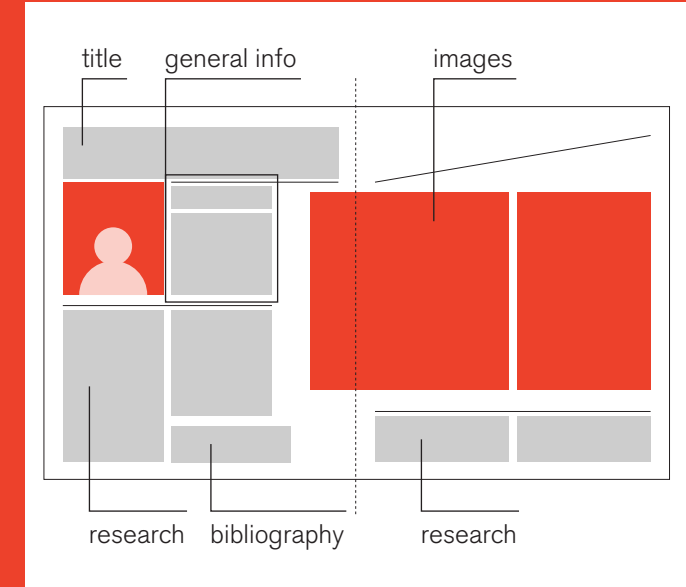
Black - Graphical index of the cycles



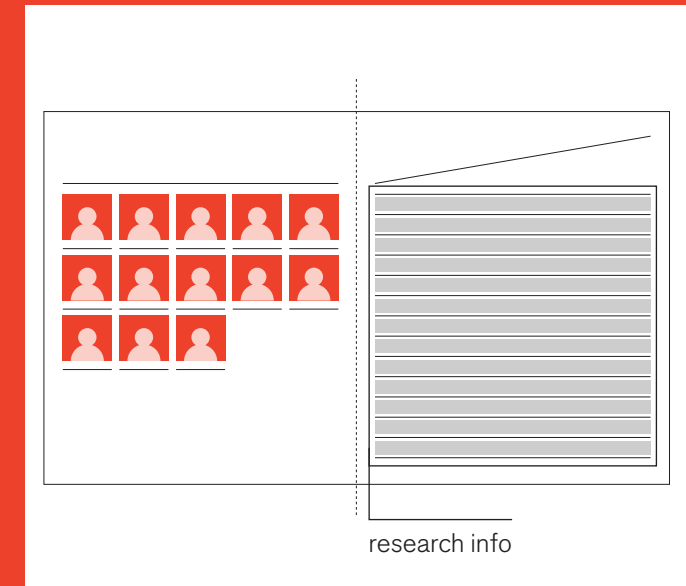
Pink - DASP activities such as workshop and congresses

## A SIMPLE STRUCTURE TO SHOW COMPLEX RESEARCH

The PhD Candidates pages have a simple and repetitive structure that can be adapted to any research

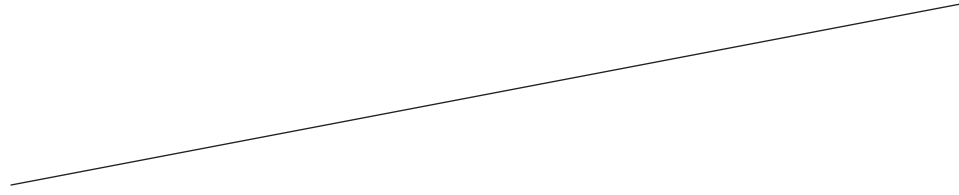


Page structure for 38-37-36 cycle PhD students



Page structure for 35 cycle PhD students

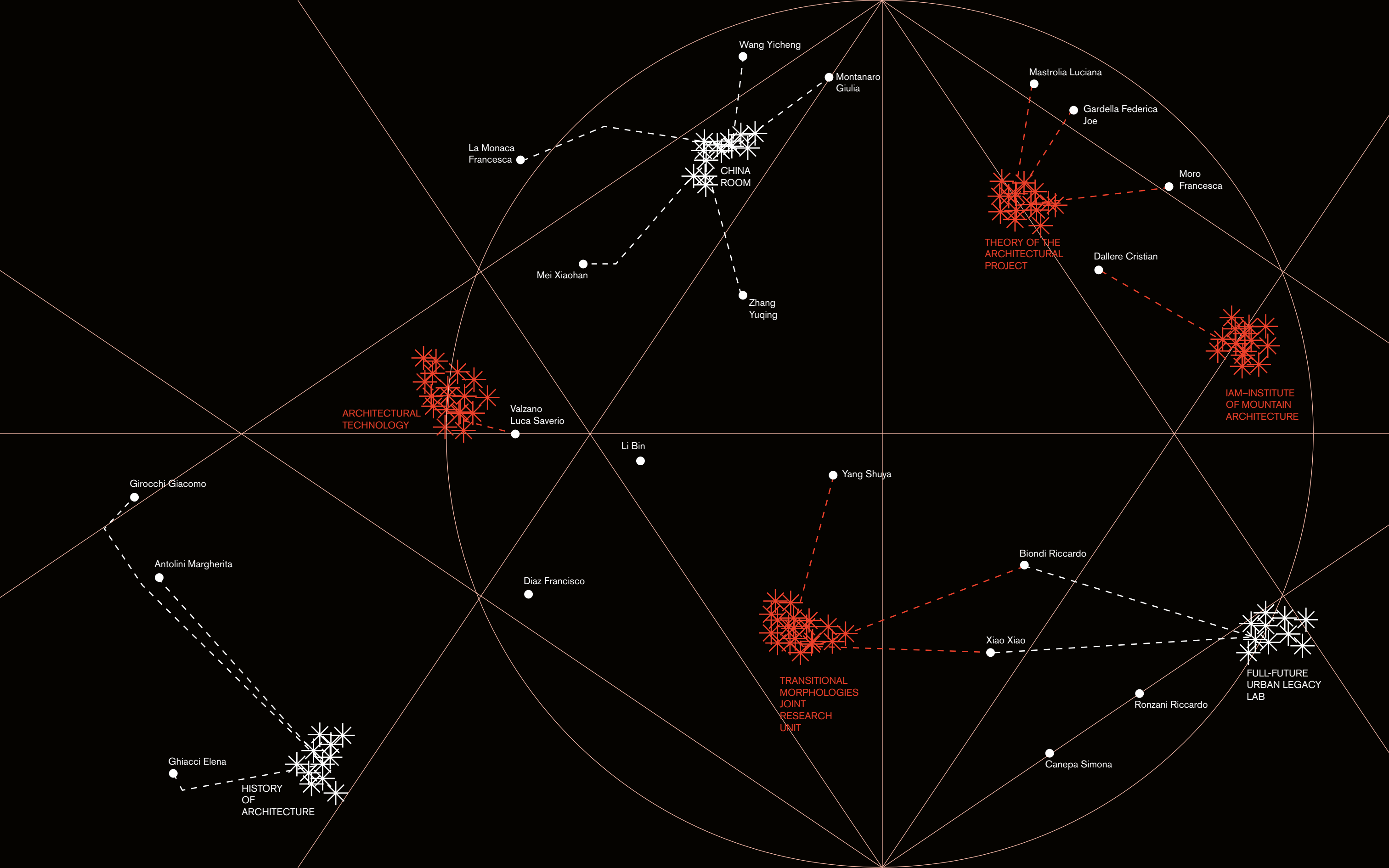
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XXXVII

CYCLE



# INHABITING THE PRISON. THE SPACES OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN DETENTION



## Simona Canepa

Cycle  
**37° - PoliTo Grant**

Year  
**2021 - 2024**

Supervisors  
**Paolo Mellano, Pier Federico Calari**

Research Group  
-

Starting from the statement that prison represents the most significant social removal of our times because it tends to be considered as something belonging to a sphere separate from everyday reality, the research, structured in five chapters, investigates prison spaces as places of shared living. The first chapter analyses the two words that give the research its title, inhabiting and prison. It's possible to define inhabiting in different ways: it is the essence of the home (Bachelard, 1975), it is the purpose of building and the principle of existence (Heidegger, 1991), it is to establish a relationship between man and the environment (Norberg-Schulz, 1984), it is to choose a place to live based on an affinity (Nouvel, 2022), it is an experience (Legnante, 2016); definitions with a positive connotation, but the prisoner does not choose the place where to live, nor the people with whom to share spaces because he is not a free person. The prison is, in fact, the place where people are imprisoned because they are condemned or awaiting trial: Goffman (1968) defined it as a total institution, Foucault (2001) as a heterotopia, Sommer (1974) as a hard architecture, Leder (1992) as a home in reversed caricature. Prison is also the only inhabited public building in which the state is in charge of people (Santangelo, 2018), which the law defines more specifically as a house of imprisonment, a custody house, or a workhouse: behind the word 'house' are connoted places and spaces that refer to the theme of living. The second chapter outlines the relationship between punishment and prison in history. Knowing the evolution of the prison building allows us to analyse the

relationship between the social institution, the model of detention, the architectural form, and the place where it is located. The history of detention and prison architecture as a deprivation of personal freedom is a recent one: with the Renaissance treatise writers, the prison took on the value of a building typology, but it was not until the mid-18th century that it began to have physical autonomy when reflection on the purposes of detention by jurists, philanthropists, philosophers and economists and the abandonment of corporal punishment led to the need to build structures expressly intended for the treatment of prisoners separate from the palaces of justice. Based on the differentiation of inmates into classes, control, and work, the new prison buildings used three main typologies that remained constant throughout the 19th century: rectangular, radial, and circular/polygonal, within which the ideal model of the Panopticon was placed. Subsequently, there was a progressive breakdown of archi-

Bachelard, G. (1975). *La poetica dello spazio*. Bari: Edizioni Dedalo.  
Foucault, M. (2001). *Spazi altri. I luoghi delle eterotopie*. Milano: Mimesis Edizioni.  
Goffmann, E. (1968). *Asylums. Le istituzioni totali: i meccanismi dell'esclusione e della violenza*. Torino: Einaudi.  
Heidegger, M. (1991). *Costruire abitare pensare in Saggi e discorsi*. (a cura di G. Vattimo). Milano: Murcia.  
Leder, D. (1992). *The distressed body*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.  
Legnante, V. (2016) Introduzione. In S. Follesa (a cura di) *Sull'abitare*. Milano: FrancoAngeli.  
Norberg-Schulz, C. (1984). *Abitare: l'insediamento, lo spazio urbano, la casa*. Milano: Electa Editrice.  
Nouvel, J. (2022). *Ampliare la sfera dell'abitare*. Domus n. 1067.  
Santangelo, M. (2018). *L'edificio pubblico abitato in FLanz* (a cura di) *Patrimoni inattesi. Riutare per valorizzare*. Siracusa: LetteraVentidue.  
Sommer, R. (1974). *Tight spaces*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.



C.C. Lorusso e Cutugno di Torino: area colloqui all'aperto



Seconda C.R. di Milano Bollate: corridoio sezione detentiva femminile

tectural models resulting from using several prison systems. This gave rise to the court, telegraph pole, open campus, and differentiated building types, more responsive to the needs of individual nations that were beginning to structure their penal systems. The third chapter focuses on Italy: it covers a period that begins with the Unification and ends with the sentence imposed by the Strasbourg Court for subjecting some prisoners to inhuman and degrading treatment in violation of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. In addition to the time, the thread that runs through the chapter is the body of legislation, laws, decrees, penal codes, prison regulations, and judgments that sometimes highlight progressive thrusts and, other times, a return to the past. The same happened in the field of architecture: the prison buildings designed in the 1965-1975 decade saw an attempt to consider the prison not only from an afflictive point of view but also from a rehabilitative one, as envisaged by the Constitution: Ridolfi and Lenci designed the jail as a place to experience the spaces of punishment and not as a place to share the punishment of spaces; Michelucci wished the prison to be less closed and more open towards the urban area where it was located, arguing that the prison should be built for men and not against them. The advent of terrorism, however, led the authorities to prioritise the concept of security and consequently to design 'container' buildings. Since the 1990s, overcrowding has become the common denominator in most institutions, with severe repercussions for the living conditions of inmates, agents, and

operators, i.e. the entire population 'living' inside prison complexes, as well as family members visiting inmates. The fourth chapter investigates how prison construction has often overlooked and underestimated the role that the dimensions of spaces, ratios, and proportions can have on prisoners' physical and psychic well-being. The designer's task is to work on that fine line that establishes the limit between space and well-being so that sleeping rooms transform cohabitation from a condition of intolerance and discomfort to an opportunity for mutual enrichment, community spaces foster socialisation activities among inmates, and training and workspaces help prepare for future reintegration into society, as already happens in some European countries. It is necessary to rethink the architecture of prison spaces in terms of quality and respect for the dignity of prisoners: the institutional round tables of the States General of Penal Execution and the Commission for Penitentiary Architecture, the workshops organised by some schools of architecture (Turin, Milan, Rome, Naples), have shown how it is possible, even in prison, to place space with its furnishings, materials, colours and lights at the centre of the project, as a space to be lived in that respects constitutional and legal rules that have so far found little application in practice. The fifth chapter is the testimony of the Italian prison reality through the analysis of the writings of some prison directors and that of the doctoral student who had the opportunity to visit some prisons and observe the everyday life of detention in the internal, external and in-between spaces.

# 006

# COLOPHON

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\* until 38th cycle

\*\* from 39th cycle

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