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27 November 2026

Mapping & Painting Urban form

Morphology in the Making

aAccademia university press

by
Martina Crapolicchio
Rossella Gugliotta
Marco Trisciuoglio

Progetti & Storie.
Ricerche e Materiali dal Dottorato in Architettura
vol. III

The book brings together the theoretical foundations and teaching experiences of two complementary courses, *Morphologies. The Form of Cities* and *From Painting to Understanding: An Overview on European Urban Spaces*, taught by Marco Trisciuoglio and his research unit within the PhD Programme in *Architecture. History and Project* at Politecnico di Torino and in lectures' series at Southeast University in Nanjing. Both courses share a common ambition: to explore how cities take form, change over time, and can be interpreted through different modes of representation.

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Morphology in the Making

aA

Collana
PROGETTI & STORIE. RICERCHE E MATERIALI DAL DOTTORATO IN ARCHITETTURA
a cura del Dottorato di Ricerca in Architettura. Storia e Progetto del Politecnico di Torino

Volume III

La collana ospita studi, ricerche e riflessioni sia sul progetto di architettura, sia di storia di architettura, rispettivamente intesi come la questione e l'oggetto (il problema e la cosa) dell'impegno scientifico contemporaneo intorno all'architettura.
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with contributes by
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with an unpublished writing by
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Operative or Operational?
The terminology of Practice in Muratori and Caniggia

Martina Crapolicchio, Alessandro Lovisolo

The studies by Caniggia for Como in 1963 and those by Muratori for Venice and Rome are admittedly "operanti": this Italian word could be translated in English as "operative" or "operational"[1].

Giancarlo Cataldi emphasises that Muratori was more interested in the general design of historic Rome, whereas Caniggia was more concerned with the transformation of Como's tissues[2]. This subtle variation made a pivotal difference in interpreting the word "operante". Caniggia's merit was to take to the architectural practices ground (in an actual operative way) the theory of his master, for instance, in the projects for Costa degli Ometti and the housing in Trinità dei Pellegrini in Rome[3]. This assertion becomes more comprehensible when reading the texts of the two masters. Muratori's outcomes are inherently philosophical and enigmatic, whereas Caniggia was pragmatic and more explicit[4].

Muratori's methodology is mostly deductive and aims to generate a philosophical system. Caniggia's method is more inductive and points to developing a technique based on typology for design purposes. Caniggia developed a method based on the 'processual typology' that has effectively impacted planning and design. On the other hand, Muratori is more interested in forging a convincing philosophical theory, strongly influenced by Benedetto Croce's idealism, to defend himself against the critiques from contemporaries like Leonardo Benevolo in the journal Casabella or Manfredo Tafuri. In this sense, the work by Muratori could be defined as operational. Overall, while starting their works from a similar philosophical backbone, Muratori and Caniggia interpreted, presumably due to the different generations and contexts, in distinct ways either the word "operante" or its practical potentiality.

Notes

1. M. Maretto, in *Saverio Muratori. Il progetto della città* (2012), translates in English the work by Muratori as operative. Here, we refer to operative as a work directly linked to the practice, while operational refers to operationalism, a form of positivism which defines scientific concepts in terms of the operations used to determine or prove them.

2. G. Cataldi, *From Muratori to Caniggia: The origins and development of the Italian school of design typology*, in "Urban Morphology", 2003, 7(1), pp. 19-34.

3. G.L. Maffei, *Gianfranco Caniggia architetto. Disegni, progetti, opere* (1933-1987), Alinea, Roma 2006).

4. G. Cataldi, *ibidem*.

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