



BUILDING POWER

ARCHITECTURE BETWEEN CAPITAL, VALUE, AND DESIRE

From monumental institutions to infrastructures, from domestic interiors to objects, the built environment has long functioned as a medium through which power materializes in space. In the contemporary condition — shaped by the financialization of architecture and the growing centrality of real estate within global economies — buildings increasingly operate as assets, instruments of capital accumulation, and devices for the production of symbolic value. Architecture and design play a crucial role in making power visible, operational, and desirable. Power manifests itself through a range of spatial environments: exclusive spaces of decision-making, publicly accessible spaces of representation, and the infrastructures that sustain their operation — from institutional spaces such as the Oval Office of the White House and the headquarters of major banks, to private islands, luxury villas, and the infrastructures of global logistics. The symposium will provide an opportunity to present contributions that critically explore how architecture and design shape, represent, and organize power in contemporary societies across multiple scales: from objects and interiors to buildings, infrastructures, and territories.

Curated by:

F. Paoli
F. Santonicola
C. Tassano

Scientific Advisors:

A. Canevari
M. Giberti
V. Pizzigoni
A. Valenti

dAD, UniGe

5 Giugno

h: 8:45-18:30

Aula Benvenuto
Aula 5L

Università di Genova, Scuola Politecnica
Corso di Dottorato in Architettura e Design

Coordinatore/M. Giberti

Collegio Docenti, XLI Ciclo/A. Bertagna, E. Bistagnino, P. Burlando, C. Candito, N.V. Canessa, M. Casamonti, N. Casiddu, G. Franco, G. Galli, A. Gheri, A. Giachetta, M. Giberti, G. Leandri, C. Lepratti, G. Lombardini, A. Magliocco, R. Morbiducci, C. Olivastrì, G. Pellegrini, S. Pericu, K. Perini, M. Pivetta, V. Pizzigoni, C. Porfirione, P. Rosasco, V. Scelsi, D. Servente, A. Valenti, R. Vecchiattini

Collegio (altro personale, imprese, P.A., istituzioni culturali e infrastrutture di ricerca)/ Dott. F. Bonaccorso, Dott. A. Canevari, Dott. G. Moretta, Prof. A. Markoupoulou, Dott. G. Spanu e Dott. E. Capasso

Collegio Docenti, Cicli Attivi Precedenti/C. Andriani, R.A. Bobbio, L. Chimenz, M.L. Falcidieno, F. Mazzino, A.N. Eslami, E. Nourrigat

Segreteria/M. Mazzucchelli

PROGRAM

MORNING

8.45 - 9.15

Reception and registration of participants

9.15 - 9.30

Official greetings

Adriano Magliocco

Head of the Department of Architecture and Design

Massimiliano Giberti

Coordinator of PhD Programme in Architecture and Design

9.30 - 9.45

Introduction to the symposium - Curators

Francesca Paoli

PhD Candidate, Architect

Fabio Santonicola

PhD Candidate, Architect

Chiara Tassano

PhD Candidate, Architect

9.45 - 10.25 Keynote lecture - **Davide Fabio Colaci**

The White House. Domestic Propaganda

10.25 - 11.05 Keynote lecture - **Davide Rapp**

The Oval Office, a ubiquitous stage

11.05 - 11.30

Coffee break

11.30 - 13.00

Parallel sessions

- Panel I, Aula Benvenuto

Representing Power

Architecture, Image, and Symbolic Construction

- Panel II, Aula 5L

Social Order of Power

Identity, Desire, and the Construction of Everyday Power

13.00 - 13.15

Q&A

13.15 - 14.30

Lunch Break

AFTERNOON

14.30 - 15.10 Keynote lecture - **Lina Malfona**

The Image of Silicon Valley. Architecture of Digital Capitalism

15.10 - 15.50 Keynote lecture - **Nicola Russi**

Power, Plural and Paradoxical: Architecture Through Contradiction

15.50 - 16.10

Break

16.10 - 17.55

Parallel sessions

- Panel III, Aula Benvenuto

Economies of Power

Production of Value, Territories of Capital, and Spatial Transformation

- Panel IV, Aula 5L

Operating Power

Governance, Infrastructures, and Invisible Systems

17.55 - 18.10

Q&A

18.10 - 18.30

Aula Benvenuto

Final discussion



Davide Fabio Colaci is an architect and independent curator. He investigates phenomena of change related to design culture, with specific expertise in exhibition design and the creation of ephemeral spaces: from the home to the party. He teaches Interior Architecture and Exhibition Design at Politecnico di Milano and is the Scientific Leader of the Master of Art in Interior Design at IED Milano. Among his recent publications are “Sussidiario di Interni: Per una cultura del progetto militante” for Thymos and “The White House. Domestic propaganda” for Drop City.



Davide Rapp (Verbania, 1980) is a video artist and filmmaker. An architect by training, he works across Art, Architecture, Design and Cinema producing mixed-media installations, documentaries, movie montages and video-essays. In 2014 he participated in the 14th International Architecture Exhibition - Biennale di Venezia with “Elements”, a 32-minute montage film depicting the basic elements of architecture through a sequence of more than 500 movie clips. In 2021 he participated in competition at the 78th Mostra Internazionale di Arte Cinematografica - Biennale di Venezia with the VR experience “Montegelato”. His documentaries and video essays have been screened in national and international museums, institutions and festivals. He is founder of the Milan-based creative agency -orama.



Lina Malfona, associate professor of architecture and director of polit(t)ico research lab at the University of Pisa, studied in Rome, earned a Ph.D. in Architecture, and has been awarded competitive scholarships. She has taught at many Schools of Architecture, including Cornell University AAP. Her publications focus on the history, theory and criticism of architecture, and the relationship between architectural form and urban/exurban space. “La fine della Silicon Valley: Architettura del capitalismo digitale” (Treccani, 2026) is her latest book.



Nicola Russi is an architect with a PhD and an associate professor at the Politecnico di Milano. In 2008, he founded the architectural firm Laboratorio Permanente in Milan with Angelica Sylos Labini. The firm has participated in numerous international design competitions; it won the competition for the master plan of the Farini and San Cristoforo railway yards in Milan, participated in the 16th and 14th Venice International Architecture Biennale, and received an Honorable Mention for the Gold Medal for Italian Architecture in 2012. Since 2018, he has served as the director of the ANCSA Gubbio Prize. His teaching and research work has been published in numerous books and journals, and he is the author of “Background” (Quodlibet, 2019).