

A Project of the Synopia of the Future Integrated City.

MODEL I: Harbor-Center with Water-Sea-Earth Communication Routes

Synopia, Integrated City, Macrostructure, Open Form, Formativity

/Abstract

This paper wants to introduce Leonardo Ricci's project for the integrated town identifiable on two kinds of archival series: the pictures of a three-dimensional model titled MODEL I: Harbor-center with water-sea-earth communication routes kept in Casa Studio Ricci in Florence and the bidimensional drawings kept in CSAC (Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione) Archive, by framing it in his architectural work and research of the Sixties, which saw an intense exchange with the United States. It will be outlined in its fundamental aspects by explaining firstly the theoretical then the applied research Ricci dedicated to the elaboration of the model, as he maybe would have presented it according to its strong belief in the intertwining between these two layers. The final part will deal with a comparison of the analyzed project to the coeval model for the "Casa Abitata" exhibition, presented one year before in Florence. Both models show the same purposes and final similar morphological results, the first elaborated in the United States, the second one in Italy, as a consequence of Ricci's research for a synthesis between architecture and sculpture and as a necessary melting between the physical and the social structures, thus the search for the most livable and useful spaces for the best development of modern life.

/Author

Ilaria Cattabriga
Università di Bologna
ilaria.cattabriga3@unibo.it

Ilaria Cattabriga is a PhD in Architecture and Design Cultures. She studied at the School of Architecture and Engineering of the University of Bologna, where she graduated with a thesis work in History of Architecture in 2016.

Her interests are in post-war architecture and her PhD research project concerned the figure of the Italian architect Leonardo Ricci focusing on his American transfer during the period 1952-1972, which is going to be published shortly with the title *Leonardo Ricci in the United States (1952-1972). A Twenty-year American Transfer as a Turning Experience in Teaching and Design* by LetteraVentidue.

She has collaborated on architecture exhibitions in 2019 and 2020 about Leonardo Ricci as well as on national and international research projects: she was free researcher at UBA for the interdepartmental project SPEME (Questioning Traumatic Heritage: Spaces of Memory in Europe, Argentina, Colombia) in 2018, helping in collecting research materials on the traumatic memory of the dictatorship in Argentina and in national and international conferences, then free researcher at MIT in 2019.

She is adjunct professor of Construction History (Architecture-Building Engineering in Bologna), History and Theory of Architecture and Landscape (Creative Practices in Cities and Landscape) tutor and assistant professor of History of Architecture both at Architecture and Design degree courses (Bologna and Cesena campuses).

Introduction

This paper wants to introduce Leonardo Ricci's project for the integrated town identifiable on two kinds of archival series: the pictures of a three-dimensional model titled MODEL I: *Harbor-center with water-sea-earth communication routes* kept in Casa Studio Ricci in Florence and the bidimensional drawings kept in CSAC (Centro Studi e Archivio della Comunicazione) Archive, by framing it in his architectural work and research of the Sixties, which saw an intense exchange with the United States. It will be outlined in its fundamental aspects, recalling the wider coeval research conducted on the international scene concerning the new urban utopias, which used the artistic devices, "creativity" and "fantasy" as methodological premises of the project, to face the design of models on anthro-sociological studies and on the topographical morphology. This article suggests the comparison of the the MODEL I to the coeval model for the "Casa Abitata" exhibition, presented one year before in Florence as both models show the same purposes and final similar morphological results, the first elaborated in the United States, the second one in Italy, as a consequence of Ricci's research for a synthesis between architecture and sculpture and necessary melting between the physical and the social structures, thus the search for the most livable and useful spaces for the best development of modern life.

In the Sixties Leonardo Ricci was a relevant scholar in Florence¹ and a well-known architect²: in Italy he realized some of his founding projects such as the the last houses in Monterinaldi (Florence, 1949-1963), the district of Sorgane in Florence (1957-1966), the residential settlements of Montepiano (Florence, 1961-1968), and the Community Village "Monte degli Ulivi" in Riesi (Caltanissetta, Sicily, 1962-1968). In addition to those important works Ricci designed the staging of the "Espressionismo: pittura scultura architettura" (Florence, 1964) and the "Casa Abitata" exhibitions (Florence, 1965), while abroad the costume section of the Italian pavilion for Montréal Exposition (Montréal, 1967). What is more, while trying to actualize, with these projects, his revolutionary ideal of a community space, fighting against the Italian urban legislation and municipal administrations referring to zoning policies and urban standards, Ricci decided to find a new way in the United States: after the first experience at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as visiting professor (1959-1960), he moved to the Pennsylvania State University (1965-1968), then to the University of Florida (1968-1972). He had therefore established a constant exchange with the United States that continued after his resignation as Director of the

¹ Since 1964 he was Full Professor of "Elementi di Composizione Architettonica" and "Urban Design" at the Faculty of Architecture in Florence.

² To deepen the figure of the Italian architect Leonardo Ricci: Antonio Nardi, ed., *Leonardo Ricci: testi, opere, sette progetti recenti di Leonardo Ricci* (Pistoia: Edizioni del Comune di Pistoia, Italia Grafiche, 1984); Giovanni Bartolozzi, *Leonardo Ricci: lo spazio inseguito* (Torino: Testo & immagine, 2004); Corinna Vasić Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci: architetto 'esistenzialista'* (Firenze: Edifir, 2005); Michele Costanzo, *Leonardo Ricci e l'idea di spazio comunitario* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2009); Giovanni Bartolozzi, *Leonardo Ricci: nuovi modelli urbani* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2013); Maria Clara Ghia, Clementina Ricci, and Ugo Dattilo, eds., *Leonardo Ricci 100. Scrittura, Pittura e Architettura. 100 Note a Margine Dell'Anonimo Del XX Secolo* (Firenze: Didapress. Dipartimento di Architettura, Università degli Studi di Firenze, 2019); Maria Clara Ghia, *La nostra città è tutta la Terra. Leonardo Ricci architetto (1918-1994)* (Wuppertal: Steinhauser Verlag, 2021).

University of Florence in 1971 that coincided with his resignation from the University of Florida. After 1972 Ricci continued his teaching activity only at the Kentucky University until 1980s³.

In the United States of the consumer society a defined distinction between wealth and poor people existed, the suburbs growth was a result of the postwar prosperity and the individual estate industry increased. Suburbs were the symbol of the mass society that caused differences and discrimination between the white and Afro-American population who was not allowed to live in the suburbs. That was why urban renewals were needed, to build a new society and avoid segregation, based on new interdisciplinary and participated urban planning processes⁴. This was the focus of Ricci's studies firstly at the Pennsylvania State University and then at the University of Florida. The political, cultural, and social background on which he grafted his research resulted in the models for urban macrostructures elaborated, both at Penn State University and in Florence, between 1964 and 1968.

Ricci's studies for urban macrostructures produced, among other projects, a wide range of untitled polymateric models, which reflected the idea of the "forma-atto"⁵ design method, which implied life as act developing in the project and constantly changing it⁶. The models' design was conceived in respect of the principles of clarity, formativity, infinite growth of the city, integrability of acts, activities and functions, and identification between landscape and structure, all Urban Design cornerstones embodied by Ricci's design method concerning "architecture at urban scale". On them Ricci grounded his refusal of predetermined forms and his applied research to elaborate the synopia of the "City of the Earth", as he named the model of a macrostructure applicable to reality which gave the title of his second unpublished book *Città della Terra. Disegno per una urbanistica non alienata* ["City of the Earth. Design for a non-alienated urban design"]⁷.

3 About Leonardo Ricci's experience in the United States: Ilaria Cattabriga, *Leonardo Ricci in the United States (1952-1972). A Twenty-year American Transfer ad a Turnig Experience in Teaching and Design* (Siracusa: LetteraVentidue, 2023).

4 In this purpose very interesting were the studies conducted at the Harvard-M.I.T. Joint Center where Ricci approached the discipline of Urban Design in its fundative period. Those have resulted in some interesting studies as Sam Bass Warner Jr., *Streetcar Suburbs* (Cambridge-Ma: Harvard University Press, 1962) and the following *Planning a Pluralist City. Conflicting Realities in Ciudad Guayana* by Donald Appleyard (Cambridge-Ma: Harvard University Press, 1976), which concerned the Guayana Project conceived according to the Urban Design theories and participated methods firstly formulated by Kevin Lynch in *The Image of the City*, the first book of the Harvard-M.I.T. Joint Center Studies Series (see Harvard-MIT Joint Center for Urban Studies Series | The MIT Press, last accessed March 2022).

5 The name Ricci gave to his design method can be translated into "form-act": the name suggests the conception of form from the analysis of human acts, since it concerned the study of the human acts and activities before any predetermined morphological conception.

6 The pictures of the models are kept in Casa Studio Ricci.

7 Leonardo Ricci, *Città della Terra. Disegno per una Urbanistica non Alienata*, unpublished manuscript, introduction, Casa Studio Ricci. The content of the book and the description of the synopia for the city of the future was explained by Ricci in the texts of the conferences titled "Ricerche per una urbanistica non alienata" and "The Future of Cities" the present work also deals with. The precise description of the synopia is contained in the unpublished book, in line with the already published contributions' contents. Ricci also declared that «This new book [was] born from the previous one *Anonymus (XX century)*, it [was] a continuation of it, better a filiation. But the condition [was] different».

City of the Earth: a synopia of the future city as an "open form"

City of the Earth, constitutes the second fundamental manifesto of the architect's theoretical research to the architectural and town planning design after his book *Anonymus (XX century)*⁸, in which he had already mentioned the theory of the *Earth-City*: in his words it was still a sort of ambition about a future city bound to an existential dimension due to the value crisis of the second postwar period.

The city of the future, the city of *Anonymus (XX century)*, Earth-City, will belong only to that man who has teetered on the brink of suicide for want of values, and, finally, one morning, has aroused himself from this state and is ready for anything, and that's that⁹.

In the synopia of the Earth-City Ricci exemplified a theory that would have influenced his following years of applied research to solve the problem of the urban crisis, mostly developed in the U.S.A.

On a theoretical layer, to carry on his research, Ricci focused on three main keywords: reality, existence, and history. Real social conditions and tangible architectural problems were the necessary starting point to improve human life focusing on the real concept of existence, which consisted in living with other people. Yet the investigation field was the boundary between theory and the surrounding reality, between the private and the collective living¹⁰, and the relations between them¹¹.

As Ricci wrote in the *Anonymus* and in "Ricerche per una urbanistica non alienata"¹² - an introduction to his work done during one-year-work in 1964 for the Architecture School in Florence - the need of a new existence due to the human crisis of the postwar period invaded humans, architecture, and all human manifestations. In the urban-architectural field the new words of directional centers, town-region, territorial town, connection routes, referred to what Ricci called new utopias, urban designs, new entities, systems and organisms, new shapes that had to be designed by the architects who necessarily needed to think of new design methods. To Ricci they could be found neither in the

8 Leonardo Ricci, *Anonymus (XX century)* (New York: George Braziller, 1962).

9 Ricci, *Anonymus*, 186.

10 These contents were also widely explained by Ricci in his *Anonymus* which represented the real opportunity for Ricci barely to express his opinion on the matter not using the classical expressive methods and instruments of the architect, but with writing. Ricci, *Anonymus*, 168-169.

11 With the sentence «it is enough to exist. It is enough to find the relationships among the things that exist. It is enough to create new relationships among things» (Ricci, *Anonymus*, 19) Ricci explained the core of his thought, the relational value of architecture moving from the existential instance, referring to Enzo Paci's studies on the matter that the architect quoted in the introduction to the Urban Planning II and Elements of Composition courses" kept in Casa Studio Ricci. Paci's interest in contemporary architecture has given rise, since the mid-1950s, to original reflections contained in numerous essays such as, in chronological order: "Il cuore della città", *Casabella-continuità*, no. 202 (August-September 1954), vii-x, "Problematica dell'architettura contemporanea", *Casabella-continuità*, no. 209 (January-February 1956), 4146 (republished with the title "Sull'architettura contemporanea, L'architettura e il mondo della vita", *Casabella-continuità*, no. 217 (1957), "Continuità e coerenza della BBPR", *Zodiaco*, no. 4 (April 1959), 82-115, "Wright e lo 'spazio vissuto", *Casabella-continuità*, no. 227 (May 1959), 9-10, "La crisi della cultura e la fenomenologia dell'architettura contemporanea", *La Casa*, no. 6 (1960) (then republished with the title "Fenomenologia e architettura contemporanea"). Moreover, there are some essays collected in Enzo Paci, *Relazioni e significati*, Vol. III (Milano: Lampugnani Nigri, 1966).

12 Leonardo Ricci, "Ricerche per una urbanistica non alienata", typescript, Casa Studio Ricci.

bases of a supposed functional objectivity of rationalists, which had demonstrated its ineffectiveness, nor in reality, as the contemporary society showed models belonging to an exhausted civilization of the machine where the human being was reduced to the equation producer-consumer. It had to be traced by observing the alienated society, it was utopia, a dangerous path, and a way of thinking where imagination and invention could trace citizenship at the same time¹³.

Some years later, in his lecture titled "The Future of Cities"¹⁴ to the Accent Symposium at the University of Florida in Gainesville¹⁵, Ricci reported the results of his research in Urban Design and, more in detail, suggested a new architectural model for the new democratic society analyzing its own structure and avoiding an aesthetical perspective. He focused only on morphological and psychological viewpoints and stated that, as human beings were influenced by the environment, no one could ignore the existing interaction between space made of cities, towns, villages, and mankind. This conditioning could be "vitalizing, neutral or repressive"¹⁶, because city models, also in history, were the reflection of a precise culture, and justified a precise way of living, an economic situation, or a social organization. In his speech, Ricci reflected on the historical evolution of human living in upgrading scale unit as groups, tribes, communities, and neighborhoods, he would have suggested in the analyzed project. Those settlements became towns, later organized in megalopolis until they reached the territorial scale and, finally, the dimension of the Earth thanks to the new means of communication. Therefore, Ricci stressed the idea of designing the earth as an «only one large community in which each phenomenon produced in one part of the earth caused an interaction with the others¹⁷».

Leonardo Ricci's purpose for a new town model was based on the assumption that, despite the human instinct of living in communities, the contemporary society bad living structure insisted on an obsolete rationalist culture, which was already outdated¹⁸. The rules of city planning were forgetting further key factors because human beings were alienated and segregated in three main zones –city, periphery, and country- connected by systems of infrastructure, each holding a symbol of the activities run in them: tertiary activities in the city, secondary activity of the industries in the periphery and agriculture

13 Ricci, "Ricerche per una urbanistica non alienata", 4.

14 When Ricci typed this simple by fundamental reflection he is in the United States, on February 10, 1970. It was just before deciding to leave that country, where he had been teaching as visiting professor since the early Sixties, the following year, because of his disappointment against the immobility and stagnation of American University. Despite the students' support, he could not handle the situation and decided to leave the University of Florida. Leonardo Ricci, "The Future of Cities", typescript, Casa Studio Ricci, lecture presented to the Accent Symposium on February 11, 1970 at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

15 Leonardo Ricci spoke to an audience of politicians and students aiming at triggering a new dialogue among politicians and intellectuals about the possibility to develop innovative models for the cities of the future. Ricci wanted them and all the university members to go out of their academic positions, out of their offices to become active forces for the society. Leonardo Ricci's purpose came from his involvement in the 1968 revolt with his colleague and friend Leonardo Savioli, and with Umberto Eco. Their ideas gave the progress key to the Radicals in Florence.

16 Ricci, "The Future of Cities", 3.

17 Ricci, "The Future of Cities", 12.

18 Ricci, "Ricerche per una urbanistica non alienata".

in the country. Ricci's purpose was to study what the three zones signified, who lived in each of them and what kind of life each zone allowed. This kind of study had to be economically sustained by private or public drive, but it could help in finding new morphologies of a territorial area intended as the whole city. Thus, urbanism was a global problem based on real phenomena such as the population growth and the environmental equilibrium to be solved by the action of intellectuals in preparing new types of analyses and methodologies, a comprehensive and exhaustive interdisciplinary analysis of the environment including both metropolitan areas and smaller cities, done by scholars, students, mayors, and inhabitants. The inhabitants' interactions were the only possible path to be followed to design the right town for people and build an environment reflecting the society. The tool proposed by Ricci was scale grouping using new technologies.

Potentially, a territory would be like a continuous town, sometimes denser, sometimes less dense, but continually interacting and allowing each person to enjoy and utilize all the possible choices of a whole territory¹⁹.

During the conference titled *Modern Movement, International Style, Postmodern*, which took place in the Architecture Faculty in Milan (academic year 1983/1984), Leonardo Ricci and Anthony Eardley drew a debate on Postmodern architecture in the United States²⁰. Leonardo Ricci remembered his teaching experience in the United States and recognized that the great force of the architectural production there was due to that high technological aspiration which drove the "matrix" elaboration for each vocation²¹. As opposed to the existing chaotic aggregation, Ricci imagined the new structure for the Earth City as a single organism made of different parts connected and belonging to the whole, where each component, either cities or county, planned its own development in the same way providing infrastructures and facilities at different scales.

Ricci defined the *City of the Earth* "synopia" because it referred to a prefiguration of a city, a real model that could be applied to reality. His integrated city derived from two basic careful studies: the survey of the existing city structure and an interdisciplinary investigation on human acts and activities, and developed by means of communications, transport, infrastructures, and facilities systems. Communications and transport had to rebuild the relationships among alienated people, recalling the ancient streets and squares able to link residence, work, and public spaces²². Therefore, architects and planners should have modified their planning method and moved from drawing a street

19 Ricci, "The Future of Cities", 14.

20 Giampietro Giuseppe, "Thony Eardley e Leo Ricci: tra Stile Internazionale e Post Modern", *Parametro*, no. 123-124 (1984).

21 «In the territory, a new system of infrastructure is necessary to tie together all the public facilities and services at the territorial scale – the harbors, airports, specialized agriculture and industries. From the territorial scale we should pass to the scale of the megalopolis and then to the town, neighborhood, and group scales, always using the same methodology». Ricci, "The Future of Cities", 14.

22 Here Ricci is precisely referring to the Middle Age town structure.

on paper, a separation line connecting two points, to designing it as integrating element of the urban landscape. The solution was to examine all the means of communication in an interrelated way and not separately. All the past studies on the city were not unuseful but had led to the awareness that a new "maitrise" of the Earth was needed.

The Model of the integrated town

After his experience as visiting professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in 1962 Ricci undertook a new cycle of conferences at Yale and M.I.T. and in 1965 he was mentioned distinguished visiting professor at the Pennsylvania State University, where he taught Urban Design from 1965 to 1969. That qualification allowed him to apply the teaching and new research issues acquired at M.I.T. experimented in the Harvard-M.I.T. Joint Center for Urban Studies, also founded in 1959²³, and continue his studies on the "integrated town" both in America and in Italy, which resulted in the project of a macrostructure at a territorial scale designed with the students and assistants.

From 1965 to 1967, Ricci coordinated Maria Grazia Dallerba's research project titled "Aspetti antro-sociologici degli atti umani" ["Anthro-sociological aspects of human acts"], conducted both at the faculty of Florence and in Pennsylvania, aimed at studying all the possible spatial configurations based on human acts²⁴. The seminars with the students, his academic research, and the applied research of Dallerba's project resulted in a series of models intertwining the social and physical structures. The possible spatial configurations of the urban macrostructure derived both from Ricci and Maria Grazia Dallerba's research on the anthro-sociological aspects of human acts and the interdisciplinary joint research on Visual Design by Ricci and Dušan Vasić²⁵ established in Florence on the base of the Visual Design course evolved under the supervision of György Kepes, who had developed a vigorous program in the field of representational drawing, firstly in his course at M.I.T., then at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies in Cambridge: materials and space were manipulated in pursuit of aesthetic meanings free of the functional and technological pressures that could

pre-empt the designer's thinking²⁶. The students worked in a studio equipped with special tools and devices for light control and photography to develop the artistic skills of the students. The "studio work" taught by Kepes and the influences among all the arts he had experienced in the exhibition "La Cava" ten years before²⁷ constituted the core of Ricci's approach to architecture defined in the refusal of predetermined forms.

As Ricci specified in "Prolusione al corso di Urbanistica II ed Elementi di Composizione"²⁸ some of the produced polymateric models had been already published²⁹ and were to be published in his second book. Among the models elaborated between Italy and U.S.A., Ricci recognized the MODEL I: *Harbor-center with water-sea-earth communication routes* as the physical representation of the synopia³⁰ of the future integrated town. In the elaboration of the model Ricci realized the idea of urban design as the invention of temporalized space for the human individual and collective life in respect of the Mumfordian equation "city=sign of the integrated social activities" to design desirable spaces for human acts³¹.

The model for a urban macrostructure of the integrated town is made of wood and is six meters long, it was realized in 1965 by Ricci with forty students of the Pennsylvania State University at the end of a three-months course. It was presented and displayed on the third floor of Sackett building to the whole audience of students and teachers by Ricci and three students: James H. Pappas,

26 In the design process, the synthesis of the arts combined with the study of the History of Art and Architecture had given birth at M.I.T. to a new methodological approach to urban design, while the course in *Form of the City* prompted by Kevin Lynch had introduced aesthetic problems: spatial relations and perceptual elements were analyzed through group discussions, observation in the field and special project work. A short time before leaving Italy to teach at M.I.T. for the Spring term 1960, Leonardo Ricci and Giovanni Klaus Koenig wrote a report concerning the teaching of plastic formativity to architects following Kepes' example and formulated a purpose addressed to the Dean of the Faculty of Architecture in Florence for the renewal of the teaching program in that field titled "Sull'insegnamento della plastica nelle facoltà di architettura" ["On the teaching of plastic formativity in the courses of architecture"] dated October 16, 1959, typescript, Casa Studio Ricci.

27 The exhibition "La Cava. Mostra internazionale d'arti plastiche" held in Monterinaldi in 1955 set off the collaboration between Ricci and André Bloc, one of the most important initiators of the synthesis of the arts and founder of the Group Espace, which had arranged an open air exhibition in Boit in Provence the year before. That exhibition, as "La Cava", gave strength to the belief in restoring the role of the artist in modern life, as he could realize works of art and object that, to Ricci, could accompany human life becoming parts of their houses. "La Cava" represented a meaningful moment of reflection for contemporary art about the relationship between art and the habitat, about that close interaction between architecture and figurative art, which were melting and working as complementary fundamental expressive elements of a whole. Ricci, Leonardo. "Scritto-manifesto per la mostra 'La Cava'", *Architettura: Cronache e Storia*, no. 57 (July, 1960): 188; Fiamma Vigo. "Numero. La Cava. Mostra internazionale all'aperto di arti plastiche organizzata da 'Numero' con la partecipazione dell'architetto Leonardo Ricci, catalogo della mostra (Firenze Monterinaldi, 24 September-30 November 1955)". Firenze, 1955. Therefore, as the Group Espace was founded by Bloc during Ricci's stay in Paris between 1948 and 1950, we can infer that Bloc's archi-sculptural work, and its forms as well, influenced Ricci's ones of the following years. See: Corine Gireud, "La Revue Art d'aujourd'hui (1949-1954): Une vision sociale de l'art" (PhD diss., Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2011); *L'été 1954 à Biot Architecture Formes Couleur*, catalogue d'exposition, 25 juin - 26 septembre 2016, édition de la Réunion des musées nationaux-Grand Palais et Musée national Fernand Léger, Paris 2016.

28 Leonardo Ricci, "Prolusione al corso di Urbanistica II ed Elementi di Composizione", 5.

29 In detail, the model titled "Centro-porto con vie di comunicazione acqua-mare-terra" (1965) was published in *Marcatré*, no. 19-22 (April, 1966) and in *Lineastruttura*, no. 2 (1968), while the model "Macrostruttura situata in zona pianeggiante" (1966) in György Kepes, Vision+Value series *The Man-Made Object* (1966), *Aujourd'hui* and *Lineastruttura*, no. 2 (1968).

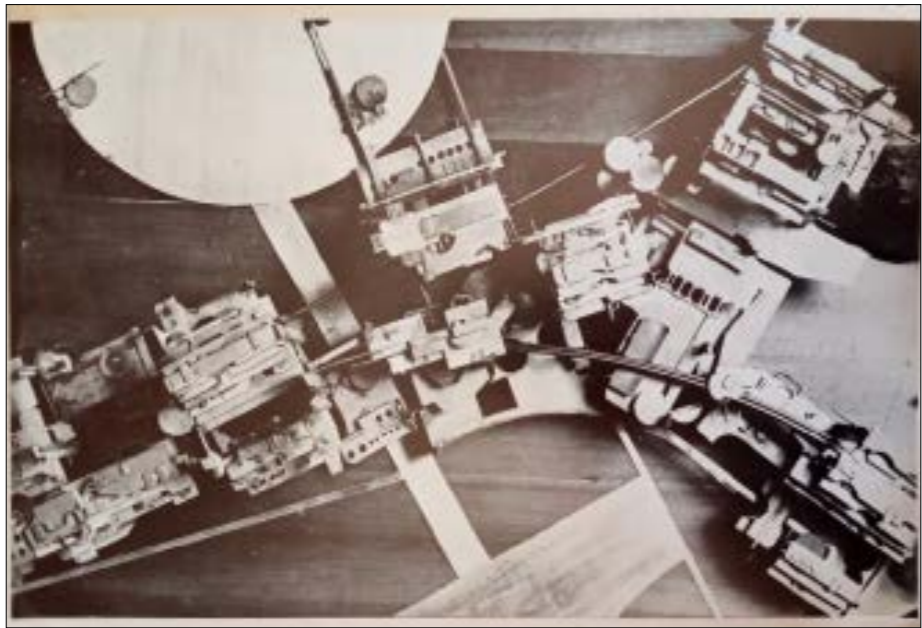
30 In his *Città della Terra*. Disegno per una urbanistica non alienata Ricci specified that "synopia" meant to him a model that could be applied to reality.

31 Leonardo Ricci, "Space in Architecture: the visual image of environment", 244 - *Journal of University of Manchester Architectural and Planning Society*, no. 7 (Winter -1957 1956): 7-11; Giovanni Klaus Koenig, "Leonardo Ricci e la 'casa teorica' (alla ricerca di un nuovo spazio architettonico)." *Bollettino Tecnico - Rassegna bimestrale fondata nell'anno 1936*, no.7-8 (August 1958): 3-12.

23 As already outlined above, there he got in contact with the founding principles of Urban Design experienced in Kevin Lynch and György Kepes applied research projects of the Fifties and Sixties which affected his methodological approach to teaching and design irreversibly.

24 Report of the project kept in Casa Studio Ricci. See also Maria Grazia Dallerba, "Città della terra: recherches d'urbanisme, Faculté de Florence," *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* 36, no.128 (November 1966): 54-56.

25 Dušan Vasić was an architect, artist, friend, and collaborator of Leonardo Ricci, who took over him in the Florentine course of Visual Design in 1967. Dušan Vasić, "Sul rapporto delle configurazioni plastiche artificiali con lo spazio-ambiente-paesaggio", in Lara Vinca Masini, *Leonardo Ricci. Progetti di una Architettura per l'uomo del futuro. Un libro perduto e ritrovato 1967-2019* (Pistoia: Gli Ori, 2019), 139-148.



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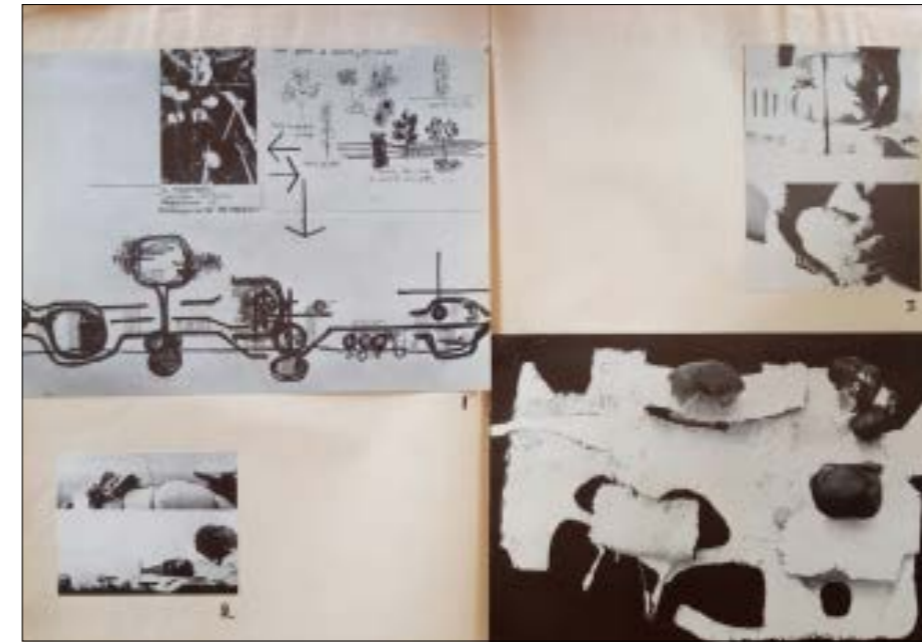
Anthony S. Pierce and Anthony C. Platt³², before being exposed at the Universal Exposition in Montréal in 1967. The model represents a flexible settlement for a population varying from 20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants and provided with all the integrated city functions and activities, which are homogeneously distributed in the whole territorial generative matrix. All the primary, secondary, and tertiary activities are rethought in function of a general equal handing out avoiding the separation among ancient city, periphery, and countryside. The model is based on an infrastructure connecting all the facilities and habitat units in a unique system with the landscape: it is the model of an open and continuous city, the expression of a new spatial and formal urban conception³³ in respect of the new temporal-spatial dimension affecting the concepts of duration and continuity. Its continuity is related to the evolution of human acts and building techniques. The territory is the base global structure, on which secondary structures with different scales and technologies are grafted according to different permanence and persistency degrees³⁴. In Ricci's work, as in the work of many designers in the Sixties, the importance of the ground as morphological and topographic generator³⁵ must be also understood in the results of his applied research in Urban and Visual Design as a translation of his ideal of anonymous

32 The Pennsylvania State University News. Department of Public Information, document number 813760.

33 To deepen the infrastructural dimension of Ricci's future city model: Ricci, "Space in Architecture", 7-11; Leonardo Ricci, *Aspetti degli squilibri del territorio toscano in relazione alle tendenze di sviluppo del paese: problema della casa, dei poli terziari e dei fasci infrastrutturali* (Firenze: Rotografica Fiorentina, 1974); Leonardo Ricci (et alii), *Area del cuoio. Ipotesi di piano comprensoriale* (Firenze: Tipografia Giuntina, 1977); Leonardo Ricci, "Parlando nel 1978", in Carlo Doglio, Paola Venturi, *La pianificazione organica come piano della vita?* (Padova: Cedam, 1979).

34 This idea of an open-ended entity was described in *Opera Aperta* by Umberto Eco, with whom Ricci worked in the Sixties at the University of Florence, where Ricci taught Architectural Composition and Eco Visual Communications. From their collaboration the book *La Struttura Assente* by Eco originated. The book is dedicated to Ricci. The notion of openness was based on the interactive relationship between the inputs and the work of art receiver's world, both at the level of intelligence and perception, in a transaction moment between the act of perceiving knowing intellectually that brought to education. Umberto Eco, *Opera Aperta* (Milano, Bompiani, 1962); Umberto Eco, *La Struttura Assente* (Milano: Bompiani, 1968).

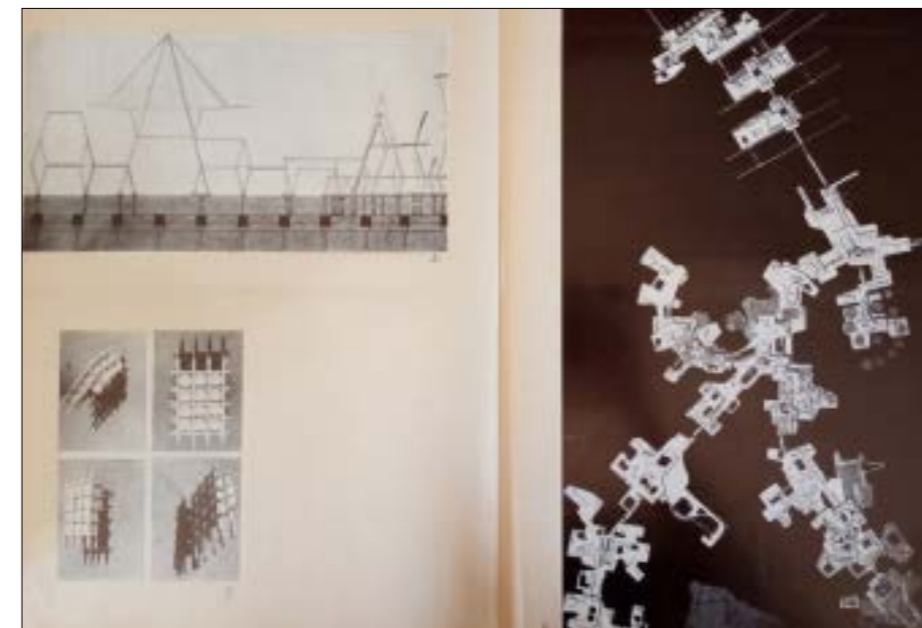
35 Worldwide the interest of planners and architects moved from the habitat to the urban-territorial scale maturing a new will to analyze the geographical situation as the altered balance between "townscape" and "landscape" produced a visual and existential chaos. Christian Norberg Schulz, "Il paesaggio e l'opera dell'uomo", *Edilizia Moderna*, no. 87-88 (1966): 63-76.



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Fig. 1, 2, 3, 4

Leonardo Ricci, with the students of the Faculty of Architecture of Florence and of Pennsylvania State University, polymateric models: "MODEL II - Macrostructure in a flat area" (University of Florence, 1966), "MODEL III - On the relationship nature-form" (University of Florence, 1966-1967), "MODEL V - Floating harbor-city" (University of Florence, 1966), "MODEL VI - Revision of an urban tissue" (University of Florence, 1966-1967), Casa Studio Ricci, folder titled "USA".

architecture: a building art avoiding any hierarchical and authorial evidence or importance. Ricci and Dušan Vasić applied research in Visual Design³⁶, started with the definition of space, the “space-environment-landscape”: the intermediate element resulting from the relationship between itself and the spatial-plastic possible configurations reflecting the general behavior of culture in relation to space. Only the objectification of this relationship should have impressed the architectural-urban configurations instead of predetermined spatial conceptions. All possible objectifications and configurations would have taken shape coherently with the constitutive reasons and, at the same time, in the actualization of the relationships between space-environment-landscape and between it and the plastic-spatial configurations.

According to Ricci and Vasić’s studies, in megastructural projects one could think that space could assume attitudes based on the culture of the future inhabitants. Therefore, space could be active or passive and determine specific configurations with different expressiveness derived from the use of plastic narratives [Fig. 1, 2, 3 4].

Ricci chose the infrastructure to connect the chaotic empty space between the working and the habitat units of the modern cities, where the association as form of existence had to happen. Yet the social exchange was not possible in ancient rhetoric buildings belonging to an obsolete time. All those buildings were readapted to host new association forms and new activities of modern life, so the model clearly shows how new specific buildings are not needed because human acts and activities develop spontaneously in suitable spaces, which can host more than one kind of activity³⁷.

In the contemporary world Ricci noticed a chaos between domestic and workspaces, a sort of “non-city” including architectural buildings and organisms that imitated an obsolete time. Infrastructures and services should be planned by focusing on their existentialist function, they were buildings, but did not need specific typologically determined organism, because some existing functions were born in an alienated society to allow the unification of what was broken and fragmented.

In the City of the Earth the only need for the new society living in the integrated city were qualified spaces. No isolated forms were admitted, but existing forms, as those produced by nature, unified expressions of a society without functional conceptions.

The main advantage of this model was the coincidence of the territorial with the human structure, of the urban and the social structure as it happened in the

36 In Florence, the course of Visual Design replaced the “Ornamental Plastic” course following György Kepes’ Visual Design teaching methods at M.I.T. on Leonardo Ricci and Giovanni Klaus Koenig’s suggestion. Leonardo Ricci, Giovanni K. Koenig, “Sull’insegnamento della plastica nelle facoltà di architettura”, October 16, 1959, typescript, Casa Studio Ricci.

37 Leonardo Ricci, “New Towns’ a scala territoriale,” *Spazio e società*, no. 3 (March, 1976): 73–81.



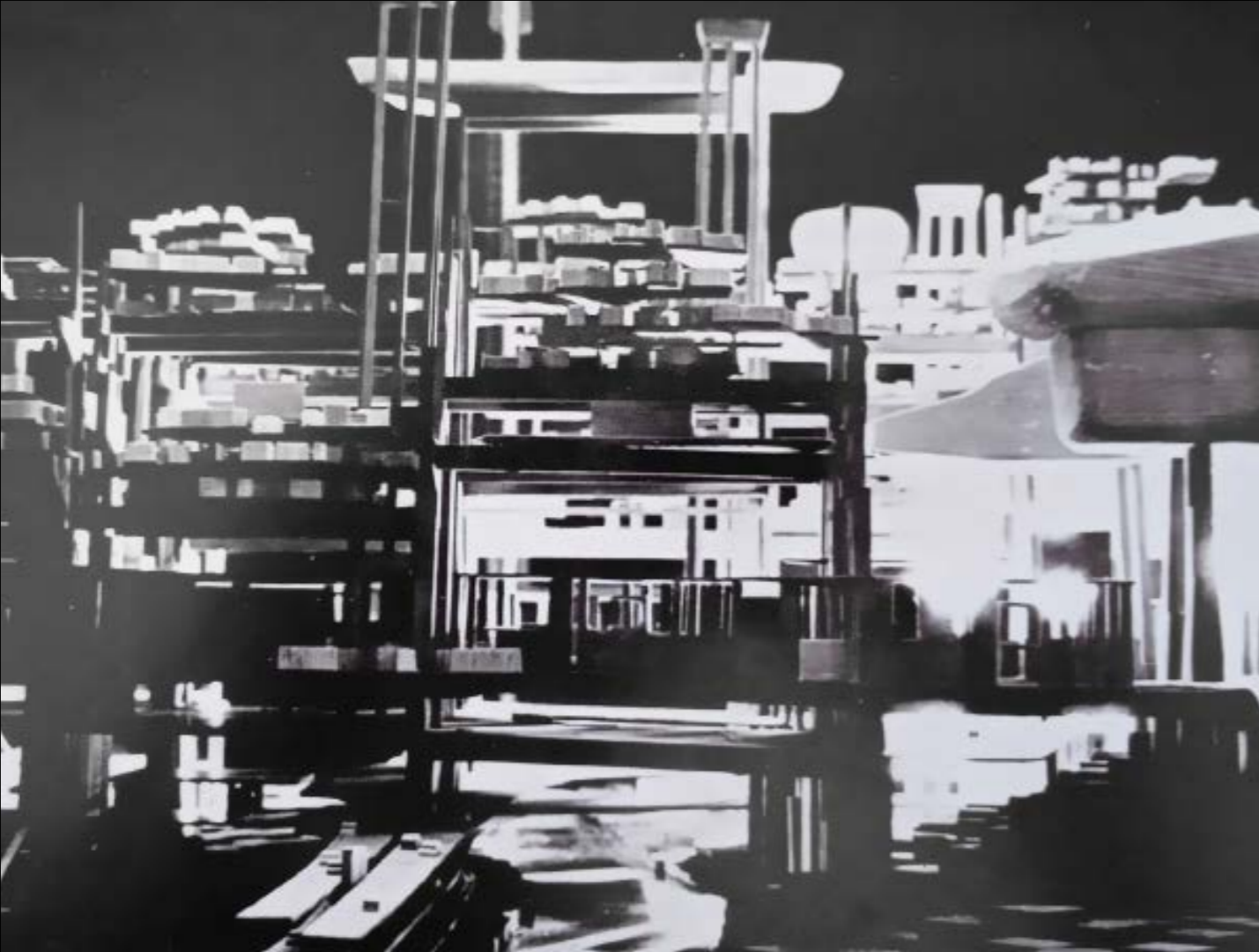
MODEL IV - “The town as a three-dimensional communication node”³⁸ that represented the town as a real exchange tool, a three-dimensional communication node according to the principles of formativity and infinite growth. It allowed Ricci to experiment the overlapping of social and physical structures that intertwined in the subsequent Miami Model Cities plan of 1968 as well. [Fig. 5]

The activities were positioned in the city on the base of an analysis of the territorial vocations of the parts: types of cultivation, manufacture, and production systems. That analysis was followed by the identification of the productive units at the different scales to integrate them correctly in the human life. The transportation and communication systems served that decentralization of activities and in the model are distributed to bring anyone to both walk out in an unspoiled landscape and reach the working units from the habitat units in a calculated time of ten-fifteen minutes. The communication routes have no hierarchies and are displayed to reach each point of the macrostructure. They do not connect attractive poles, thus dividing separate areas, but minimal units of the primary, secondary, and tertiary activities as well as free landscape, facilities, and habitat units. The harbor-center is the core of all the communication routes for the primary, secondary, and tertiary activities and for all types of means of transportation: water, sea, or earth (see image 1 of the archival sheet). From the core, communications were calculated and critically revised on the base of an

38 This is a model of a city realized in 1966 by a group of students of the University of Florence and exchange students of the Penn State University guided by Leonardo Ricci with the help of the assistant professors Mary Colli, Armando Donnataria, Fabrizio Milanese and Stefano Naef. Masini, Leonardo Ricci. *Progetti di un’architettura per l’uomo del futuro*, 76-86.

Fig. 5

Leonardo Ricci, assistant professors Mary Colli, Armando Donnataria, Fabrizio Milanese and Stefano Naef, students of the University of Florence and exchange students of the Penn State University, “MODEL IV: The Town as a Three-Dimensional Communication Node” (University of Florence, 1966), the model represents the town as a real exchange tool, a three-dimensional communication node according to the principles of formativity and infinite growth. Pictures of the model kept in Casa Studio Ricci, folder titled “USA”.



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evaluation of the necessary integration and possible existing alienation quantum each means provided.

After the infrastructure, the structure is the second unifying device of the urban system: the main structural system consists in vertical machine drawn elements in reinforced pre-stressed concrete (see image 3 and 8 of the archival sheet). Thanks to metallic boxes this primary structure hosts simple and composed beams studied to be shifted at will and hold different weights. These beams harbor all services and canalizations and are composed to be able to plug in the different self-sustaining secondary structures as services and facilities for culture, education, health, spare time and all the modular elements suitable to house all the needed functions. For instance, in the model a civic center, government offices, an auditorium, museums, a site for general religious observances, a stadium, areas for large public shows, and theatres are recognizable as those sculptural white shells positioned in the upper part of the macrostructure (see image 1 of the archival sheet). Therefore, the structure welcomes human beings of all genres and ages in their different acts: they become human structures opposed to mechanic ones and suggest the latent human dimension. To Ricci those were structures intrinsically belonging to the human condition objectifying

Fig. 6

"MODEL I - Harbor-center with water-sea-earth communication routes" (Pennsylvania State University, 1965), habitat units in prefabricated self-sustaining cells and cultural facilities at the upper level, Casa Studio Ricci, folder titled "USA".

outwards³⁹. More in detail, for what concerns education, Ricci positioned in the model nursery, primary, secondary, and high schools at different scales, as they reflected different associative models of human life: nursery schools are part of the habitat because babies need limited social experiences within the family to live the personal recognition phase and not to suffer the aggressive forces of the society. Primary and secondary schools are inserted at the neighborhood and group scales, as they imply an active participation to the neighborhood social life but within spaces integrated to the structure. High schools appear at the town scale since human life can face the metropolis experience. Universities instead are considered by Ricci - as factories and all working places, cultural and religious facilities, civic centers, commercial units, sanitary and entertaining services - areas in contact with the global life of the megalopolis instead of aristocratic separate urban equipments. [Fig. 6]

Vertical units could be added as needed. These equipments are in sprayed concrete⁴⁰ on an iron mesh. Tertiary structures for habitats consist in prefabricated self-sustaining cells, which can be realized with light prefabricated materials to foresee a customized architectonic intervention as well. The habitat units are the result of possible varied combinations of the standard units to satisfy the needs of all kinds of family, which was considered by Ricci the minimal group unit expressing the civilization conditions of a changing society.

At the soil level all kinds of industries are inserted: transformation and automatic industries, respectively thought as anti-pollution factories (for instance agricultural industries) to allow the contemporary presence of secondary and tertiary structures are distributed at a precise distance from nodal centers and controlled by study centers and laboratories⁴¹ (see images 9 and 10 of the archival sheet).

Thanks to the vertical and horizontal systems free communications and a flexible growing are possible. The city has a communications spine running throughout its length while no traffic is allowed inside its boundaries. Transportation is by monorail, elevators and moving sidewalks; in the harbor there are sides for cars, trucks, railroads and shipping, and also a heliport.

Ricci focused on one last important point: materials and structure. The first ones were integrated materials with no distinction between the natural and the artificial, while the structure could use existing frameworks and build new ones in prestressed concrete. What was important about the City of the Earth structure was the possibility it gave to life to insert in a flexible way: each inhabitant would have been able to change its habitat unit according to the single or family

³⁹ On this point, Ricci will evolve his own theory in the project for the Miami Model Cities Plan (1968-1970), in which he applied the synopia to the real case study of the Dade County in Miami and studied with Riccardo Morandi applicable structural solutions supported by precise structural evaluations in prestressed concrete. Ricci, "Architecture at an urban scale: Ricci and Morandi at the University of Florida", Casa Studio Ricci.

⁴⁰ In the same years, Ricci was realizing the buildings of the Village "Monte degli Ulivi" (1962-1968) where the same curvilinear structure profiles can be noticed, and the same refining in sprayed concrete was realized.

⁴¹ Masini, Leonardo Ricci. *Progetti di un'architettura per l'uomo del futuro*, 40-50. The pictures of this model and of all the models described below are kept in Casa Studio Ricci.



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needs. The model is not conceived to represent the final appearance of the harbor-center, the whole space has no specific function, it is arranged on different levels, where morphology suggests the possible uses of a space but avoiding either a univocal correspondence between one space and one function or the general multifunction of the whole system. [Fig. 7]

Leonardo Ricci donated to CSAC most of his archive in 1983, where the drawings of a macrostructure very similar to the pictures of the "Model I" are kept in a folder titled "Habitation Study"⁴². By the observation and comparison of the pictures of the model for an integrated city ("Model I") kept in Casa Studio Ricci in Florence with the drawings of project titled "Habitation Study" in CSAC, we can argue that the two projects coincide, with the only observation that the second seems to be the two-dimensional representation - from the largest to the smallest scale - of the first one. Besides, "Habitation Study" is the archival title of the folder, since it appears in one of the transparencies donated by the architect, but no evidence exists about that as the title of the project, which is quite unknown and only a few drawings with writings in English remain. Yet, the writing "Habitation Study" probably describes the detailed study of the habitat and group scale of Model I⁴³. The pictures of the model are kept in Casa Studio Ricci because the reproductions were asked by the Centre Pompidou in 1992⁴⁴, whereas the drawings kept in CSAC archive were part of Ricci's donation. The mailing between the Centre Georges Pompidou and Leonardo Ricci gives evidence of the fact that

42 CSAC keeps ten drawings with the project code B018640 P, Coll. 145/6.

43 See images in the archival sheet.

44 The Centre Georges Pompidou indeed asked Ricci a model of the project named "La Città Integrata 1960-1965" to be presented in the exhibition titled "Visions Urbaines 1870-1990" organized in the Grande Galerie from February 9 to May 9, 1994 and at the Centre of Contemporary Art in Barcellona from June 21 to October 9, 1994. The exhibition focused on the invention and representation of the City of the XX century in Europe through architecture, painting, and photography and included further events like films, installations, parallel exhibitions to incite the debate about the urban changes at the beginning of the XX century. Paintings represented the transformation of Europe in urban civilization. Ricci's work would have been showed next to Sitte, Wagner, Garnier, Berlage, Loos, Sant'Elia, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Doré, Monet, Munch, Boccioni Sironi, Grosz, Dix, Kandinsky, Dubuffet, and Mondrian, but at the end the photographic blow-up of his model was not included in the exhibition because of lack of space.

Fig. 7

MODEL I, pictures kept in Casa Studio Ricci.

the project at urban scale for an integrated city was done at the University of Florence between 1960-1965 and that it was composed of five panels: one only representing the final model and four panels with 18 photos of the constructive details of the model⁴⁵.

Moreover, in 1963 Frances E. Coughlin, the Director of the United States Information Service in Florence, wrote to Leonardo Ricci to invite him to take part in the Italian session of the itinerant exhibition "Visionary Architecture", curated by Arthur Drexler, firstly held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1960, arranged for December 1963, after its session in Belgrad⁴⁶. The exhibition was to be held in La Strozzi Gallery and then continued in Rome, Genoa, and Israel⁴⁷. The United States Information Service asked Ricci to prepare an introductory lecture at the inauguration of the exhibition on December 19 relating to the theme of visionary architecture to be part of the event promoted by an American Institute. The contact between the United States Information Service in Florence and Ricci happened thanks to Elizabeth Mann Borgese⁴⁸. Leonardo Ricci accepted Mrs Coughlin invitation, because the invitation card of the inauguration is kept in Casa Studio Ricci, but there is no trace of Ricci's speech type-script for the event in the archival documents, even if Ricci actually introduced the exhibition with a conference in Florence three years later, which was published in *L'Avanti* by Lara Vinca Masini⁴⁹. In the Sixties, visionary architecture and megastructures were the translation of that change of scale mirroring

45 A lot of photos and the quoted correspondence are kept in Casa-Studio Ricci.

46 Letter from Frances E. Coughlin to Leonardo Ricci dated November 8, 1963, kept in Casa-Studio Ricci.

47 The exhibition was adapted for a travelling show and a major book by Arthur Drexler was published by the Museum of Modern Art. The MOMA press release of the exhibition quoted also as follows: «Le Corbusier's plan for a road which is itself a building; Kiyonori Kikutake's city built over water which could be cultivated for food; BuclonInster Puller's dome to shelter Manhattan Island; and Paolo Soleri's tubular concrete bridge which eliminates ascending and descending roads. Other projects such as William Katavolos' proposal for chemical architecture suggests new forms for new material, while Louis Kahn's Philadelphia line center suggests a new solution for street and parking problems. Frederick Kiesler's Endless House, shown in an 8 feet model and in life-size photo murals of the interior develops the surface of the building as a twisting, continuously curved ribbon wrapped around itself. Paul Nelson's "suspended house," designed in 1938, is also shown in a scale model as is Reginald Malcolmson's Metro-Linear city I project, which organizes a community along the axes of a heed. Among the forms created by these architects are great cone-shaped structures, glass pyramids, concrete bowls, mushroom-shaped bouses, spirals and a building shaped like a flight of steps. They range in date from the 20s to the present. In addition, an historical Introduction includes work by Leonardo de Vinci, Piranesi and other arch.4 tects of the past some of whose visions have proved prophetic». Press release of the Museum of Modern Art, September 29, 1960, 1, source: https://assets.moma.org/documents/moma_pressrelease_326200.pdf?_ga=2.221829400.1093098411.1603957859-1289831711.1603834957 (last accessed October 28, 2020).

48 Frances E. Coughlin specifies it in the same letter of November 8, 1963.

49 Lara Vinca Masini, "L'architettura dell'impossibile," in *L'Avanti*, February 1, 1964. See also Matteo Cassani Simonetti's article published in this issue: "Staging of the Costume Sector in the Italian Pavilion of Expo 67 in Montréal, Canada (1966-1967). From "Urschrei" to "Correalism". Considerations on Some Motifs in Leonardo Ricci (1962-1967)", pages 171-175.

the needs of the mass society⁵⁰ and, taking a step behind, when Dean Pietro Belluschi convened Leonardo Ricci with Lewis Mumford, Kenzo Tange and Paul Nelson at MIT in 1959, Kenzo Tange's project for the Boston Harbor was also published: designed with his students at M.I.T., it is considered the first authentic megastructure, one year before the megastructural masterpiece project for the Tokyo Bay (1960)⁵¹. Those projects arose from the theoretical field and became the megastructural founding project for Metabolism as well as for French and Italian schools, disconnected teams at a first glance, but melted in a single school of Megastructure after 1964. Therefore, Ricci got in contact with megastructural issues on the occasion of his transfer to the United States, and his projects, worked in the Sixties with his American and Italian students mirror the definitions of "megastructure" given in the following years⁵², which permeated Ricci's projects of the Seventies and Eighties⁵³.

Megastructures were born when the historical awareness spread out among modern architects' knowledge: all the innovations were justified by architects with a historical preceding example, and, therefore, as Reyner Banham noticed, they were historically positioned either in a changing period (post-Mies van der Rohe) or in a non-changing period (since Ponte Vecchio)⁵⁴. According to Banham's vision, the most important reference for megastructures could be traced in Florence, Leonardo Ricci's town, where Ponte Vecchio was the symbol of a not intentionally built megastructure before 1966, and in his master Giovanni Michelucci's theories about "La Nuova Città" ["The New Town"].

50 In Italy 1963 is the date of the birth of Urban Design when a group of scholars was formed around the figure of Ludovico Quaroni who did not teach urban planning, but "urban design" until the early Seventies. After what is considered, even by Quaroni himself, the first text of urban planning by Giuseppe Samonà: *L'Urbanistica e l'avvenire delle città* (1959), the first Italian texts that dealt with the urban design project were published: *Origini e sviluppo della città moderna* by Carlo Aymonino (1965), *L'Architettura della città* by Aldo Rossi (1966), *La Torre di Babele* by Ludovico Quaroni (1967). Unlike the already cited American texts, the urban project was still understood - and still is - as a design of the city through architecture. (Giuseppe Samonà, *L'urbanistica e l'avvenire delle città* (Bari: Laterza, 1959); Carlo Aymonino, *Origini e sviluppo della città moderna* (Padova: Marsilio, 1965); Aldo Rossi, *L'Architettura della Città* (Padova: Marsilio, 1966); Ludovico Quaroni, *La Torre di Babele* (Padova: Marsilio, 1967)). In Italy, for a long time, the business centers opened the discussion about the definition of an urban form that could hold the development of the city-region. The related analysis were centered on the growth of the city and its control through design: it could have implied a growth by parts, where each part could have worked as a development and growth node.

There will be no urban design courses in Italian universities until 1985, although the discipline had already recognition by the academy although *Casabella*, *Lotus* and *Controspazio* began to play a fundamental role in the treatment of urban design as well by publishing the US theories.

51 Even before the megastructuralist current was set in motion, Tange had produced what was to become the movement's masterpiece in the Tokyo Bay: an urban structure that extended the center of Tokyo by eighteen kilometers across the bay, distributing housing structures on the water, connected to the main connecting axis thanks to highway systems. In this way, Japan became the main reference for visionary architects and urban planners of the 1960s. Reiner Banham, *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past Le Tentazioni Dell'architettura. Megastrutture* (Londra: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 51.

52 Fumihiko Maki defined the "Mega-structure" as «a man-made feature of the landscape. It [was] like the great hill on which Italian towns were built», an artificial element realized thanks to contemporary technology, but he also quoted his master Kenzo Tange when he stated that it was a shape at mass humanity scale which could have included a "Mega-shape" and discrete functional units. These could have changed rapidly and in them a wider structure could have been inserted. Fumihiko Maki, *Investigations in Collective Forms* (Washington University: St. Louis, 1964), 8-10.

Four years later Ralph Wilcoxon introduced his *Megastructure Bibliography* with a useful definition of megastructures: it was described not only as a big structure but also as a structure frequently realized with modular units, able of an unlimited increase, a structural framework in which minor prefabricated units could be built, provided with a longer life than the minor units it supports. Ralph Wilcoxon, *Council of Planning Librarians Exchange Bibliography* (Monticello, 1968).

53 On megastructures see: "Megastructures", HPA no. 3 vol. I (2018), edited by Dominique Rouillard, Anna Rosellini, Lorenzo Ciccarelli and Beatrice Lampariello.

54 Banham, *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past*, 10, 11.

The megastructure, as a three-dimensional matrix-system for the containment of man's activities like working, playing, governing, worshipping, and living with the others, seemed to be the best new physical form for urban life, the most appropriate route to deal with the future environment. The concept of creating these new structures to be used as energizing transformers of older urban areas implied the problem of conceiving neutral containers allowing the hosting of mutual feedbacks of individuals and of the entire community living in them. Megastructures were in line with Ricci's ideal of the future city as they were a sustain to life both intended as structural supports and services equipments for utilities, transit, and communications for the city. They had to allow additive inputs and total flexibility for human life evolution.

Architects and planners from every country elaborated their proposals for housing community: Kenzo Tange, Fumihiko Maki, Manfredo Nicoletti, Archigram, Moshde Safdie, Paolo Soleri⁵⁵ and the Japanese Metabolists designed some of the endless supply of purposes for these vast matrix-systems dealing with the several features of megastructures. These projects were refused and feared on one side, because of the possibility of being flung into a mass of control and anonymity, but this was exactly the dimension Leonardo Ricci was interested in.

Megastructures, as new urban utopias, had the potential of making greater change and variety possible in human life, they could make the liberation and ecological recreation of more open land happen, and the more immediate response of community to citizen and vice-versa in a newly revealed interface of the individual with his cultural, social, political, and physical environment. These structures had effects on their inhabitants concerning the social and psychological fields which had to be considered in the design process with the needs, activities, feelings, and resources of the future dwellers. On the base of these issues architecture had to manage creative solutions on the design process and, the intention to add a new dimension to old cities, handled as new increased communities, the project of megastructures could be intended as an evolution of Leonardo Ricci's view on the project for the community space: the involvement of people, different professionals belonging to different disciplines and the future residents, helped in establishing a dialogue that led to a more

55 Straits of Messina was Manfredo Nicoletti's project dealing with problems of transportation and movement, while Let Zetlin suggested integrated systems which could become communities housed in perimetral or interstitial spaces of structures forming part of a floating airport in offshore waters, serving different purposes, as Soleri also suggested the use of dams, bridges, and airports for multi-use community purposes.

With regard to the habitat, Moshe Safdie's design for Montreal's Habitat (1967) showed a hilltop habitat project for Puerto Rico, a seaside complex for S. Thomas in Virgin Islands and a New Community in Israel, all dealing with habitat units studies through a comparatively diminutive size.

Paolo Soleri, after having moved to Arizona in 1956, where he founded the first Cosanti Foundation, exhibited to the United States his ideas about the megastructural future in what he called "arcologies", expressing the need for seeking utopian concepts in theoretical investigations «where the ifs are accepted as the best potential, the hows must produce as much as they can, and the whys embody the real motivations» (Paolo Soleri, *Arcology: The City in The Image of Man* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, England: The MIT Press, 1969). Soleri's "Arcologies" emerged as closed systems, aesthetically designed physical objects appropriate for museum display, but they were born as a new manifestation of intents and "Arcosanti" (1970), one of his "arcologies" destined to be the headquarters of his Cosanti Foundation, seemed to be more likely to be constructed than his more visionary projects. See James T. Burns Jr., "Social and psychological implications of megastructures", in *Arts of the Environment*, ed. György Kepes (New York: George Braziller, 1972), 136-137.

fruitful interchange between user and planner, and, therefore, to Ricci's idea of new equal relationship between architect and customer as well⁵⁶.

Giorgio Piccinato, Vieri Quilici and Mafredo Tafuri maintained that in Italy it was at the beginning of the Sixties when the plurality of languages resulting from the various works of "revision of rationalism" was affirming that Italian architecture underwent an involution partly due to the economic crisis and partly to the re-discussion of international issues in a local key⁵⁷. Italian architects, aligned with the international debate, shifted their attention from the scale of the individual building to the neighborhood and territorial scale. In Italy and abroad, therefore, a new dimension was being studied, that of the "city territory", which favored the emergence of a "new utopianism" intended as a possible improvement of reality rather than a tentative escape from it. In some cases, the study of the city territory meant the complete abandonment of the specific languages developed in the previous years and of any constraint in them.

The "Habitation Study" project – synopia of the future city exemplified in MODEL I - represented in the transparencies suggested a structural maze in concrete with tower supports which reminded the Middle Age walls used also for the residential settlement of Monterinaldi. This structure of great height developed in vertical, giving birth to a continuous growth of plate levels anchored to it. These parallel frames suggested the idea of an endless city⁵⁸ where the multiplication of the habitat units conveyed the sense of unlimited expansion.

At the habitat scale Leonardo Ricci studied first open standard units: double bed, single bed, single bed unit with closet, large kitchen, and small kitchen, two types of storage, single and double tub, a water closet, two lavatory units (see image n. 2 of the archival sheet). They were successively combined to study a "typical habitat" which was used to design three possible plate floors. These units and plates could have been repeated infinitely till they would have shaped the Earth City megastructure (see image n. 4, 5, 6 of the archival sheet).

The project showed that the structure could not be characterized by closed modular spatial frames because it had to result from the analysis of the relationship between human beings and the environment. Closed modules would have reflected segregation and produced containers for unknown lives, thus it could not bear all the necessary spaces for human acts and activities neither for the

56 Leonardo Ricci's idea of anonymous architecture lied in the idea that the project could result from a fruitful equal interchange of ideas between the architect, the engineer, the customer and all the artisans involved, if the final result was melted and balanced with the customer, the engineer, the artisan's work and everyone had the same importance in the design process.

57 Giorgio Piccinato, Vincenzo Quilici and Mafredo Tafuri, "La città territorio. Verso una nuova dimensione", *Casabella-continuità*, no. 270 (1962): 16-25.

58 This idea of the endless city as well as the expressionist forms Ricci MODEL I shows let us infer an immediate reference to the *Endless House* by Frederick Kiesler. Bruno Zevi wrote about this idea of finding new suggestions for architecture from the art. The Rationalism crisis brought to the rediscovery of Antoni Gaudi work, of Hermann Finsterlin's vision, the "endless house" and the "universal theatre" by Frederick Kiesler, which became examples to follow. André Bloc's work arose the problem in the reviews *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* and *Aujourd'hui* and the concept of architecture without architects came out. Bernard Rudofsky set up a great exhibition about exotic buildings at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and it was clear that real architecture was not the result of some intellectuals' work, but a spontaneous activity coming from the shared heritage of a people developed under the influence of collective experiences. Bruno Zevi, "Dal centro civico di Cumbernauld all' habitat di Moshe Safdie", *L'Espresso*, then collected in *Cronache di Architettura XII*, (Bari: Laterza, 1970), 275-277, 299-301, 419-438.

habitat nor for facilities and services. On the contrary, in the project the sense of fluidity is conveyed by the organic forms characterizing each compositive unit from the habitat to the territorial scale.

If we focus on the combination of the open standard units and their curvilinear, sculptural, three-dimensional profiles, as well as on the project purpose, we can compare the standard units for MODEL I to the model studied by Ricci in the same year for the first edition of the exhibition "La Casa Abitata: biennale degli interni di oggi" ["The Inhabited House: biennial of today's interiors"] inaugurated in the Spring of 1965, from March 6 to May 2.

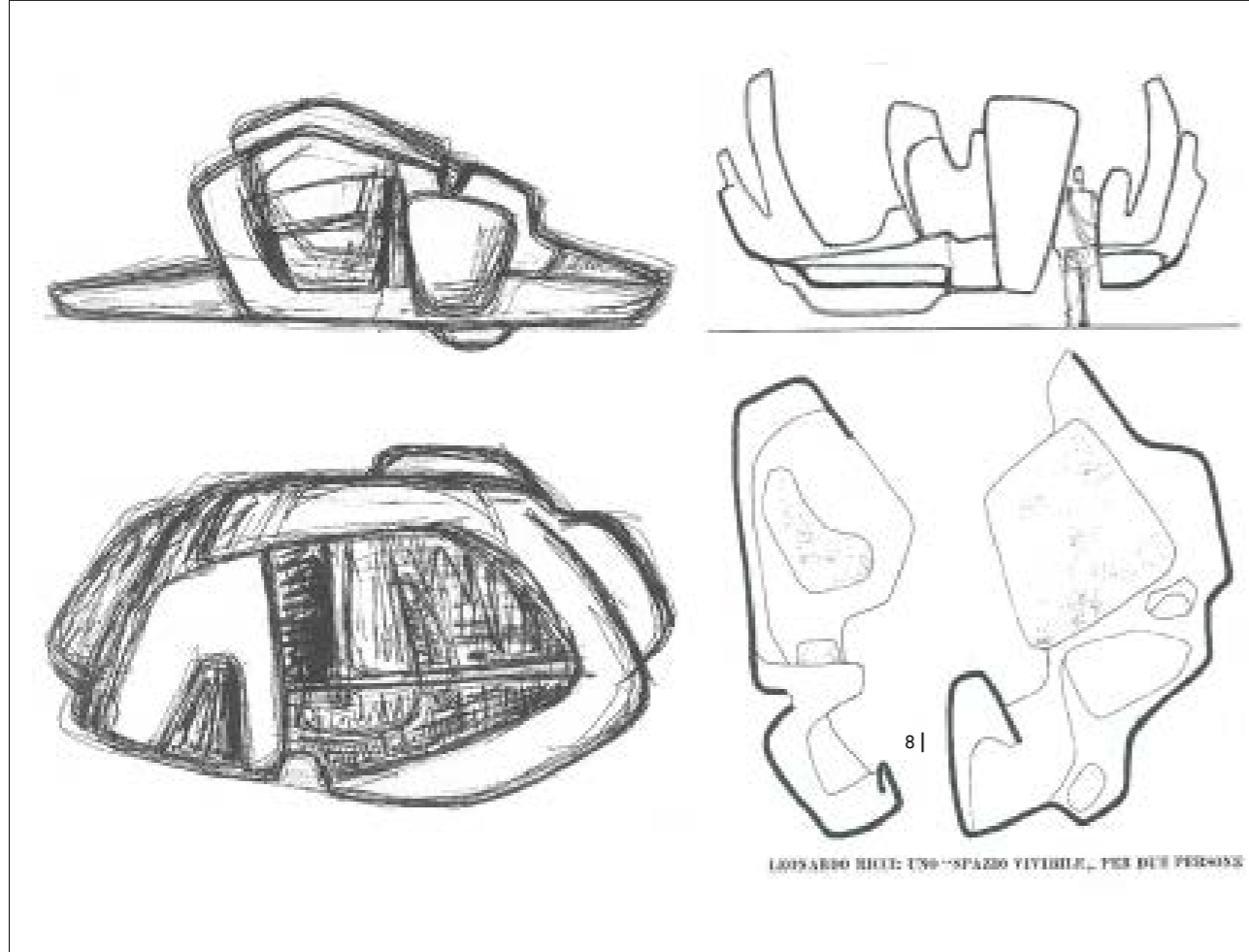
For what concerns the purpose, the organizing committee formed by Giovanni Michelucci, Ricci's master, in the role of president, Domenico Benini, Tommaso Ferraris and Pierluigi Spadolini, proposed as main exhibition theme the interior living of a house, since in those years the subject was increasingly moving away from the interests of architecture and urban planning, more concentrated on the metropolitan dimension rather than on the private life of man and on the human «right to sociality, to ethics, to the need for community factors⁵⁹». The theme of living the inside of a house and its possible configurations had to be reexamined in function of the mass culture, of the industrial and technological society⁶⁰. Some of the most qualified Italian architects, Leonardo Ricci, Leonardo Savioli, Giovanni Bassi, Carlo De Carli⁶¹, Achille e Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Marco Zanuso, Angelo Mangiarotti, Luigi Moretti, Vico Magistretti, Edoardo Gellner, Eduardo Vittoria, Giovanni Bassi, and Gregotti Meneghetti Stoppino, were called to answer. The participants were not asked to provide definite solutions but to think and suggest solutions that would have welcomed the spontaneous flow of family life and its continuous change. The interior architecture proposals had to host the spontaneous and autonomous variability and modification that reflected the trend of psychological, social and economic changes of the inhabitants of an average house. Besides, the house could be defined as "inhabited" when it allowed the "sentimental stratification" of life. The proposals could concern possible interventions on pre-established spaces or new integrated spaces, that was «constituting an 'open formativity', capable of reciprocal, lively and usable relationship between the various elements that [made] up the house⁶²»: the same purposes of the integrated macrostructure, even at a different scale. Giovanni Michelucci, who influenced Ricci to all the possible extents, from his

59 Mario Miccinesi, "Una mostra a Firenze: La Casa Abitata", *Rivista dell'arredamento*, no. 130 (1965): 9-29.

60 «It was a question of seeing how, in the current average living situation, from the assumption of pre-established data (the supply of the market, pre-existing rooms, etc.) it [was] possible to achieve a solution that [allowed] those who [lived] in a house to really live it. They [the architects] were asked for directions, suggestions, interpretations of today's way of life». Miccinesi, "Una mostra a Firenze: La Casa Abitata", 10.

61 Carlo De Carli designed the introductory hall of the exhibition dedicated to the "Liberty" and to the living solutions it suggested for the contemporary living.

62 Miccinesi, "Una mostra a Firenze: La Casa Abitata", 11. On the open formativity issue see Luigi Pareyson, *Estetica: Teoria della Formatività* (Torino: Ed. di Filosofia, 1954).



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very early research in the “form act” to the vision of a future city⁶³, exposed the problem of the “inhabited house” in his introductory speech, giving to the problem a high cultural value. To Michelucci the theme reconnected the social, human, architectural and urban dimensions because every proposed solution, if inserted in the city, could lead it towards the definition of a precise form. The theme, according to Michelucci, was stigmatized in the relationships architect-population and habitat-city-metropolis, starting from the small to the large scale⁶⁴.

Leonardo Ricci’s contribution intended to promote the idea of a «continuous architecture, which [took] place outside the usual concept of closed form, but in

63 Ricci makes a constant reference to his master who before him had supported the search for the truth of architecture, the study in plan and section, the strong conviction in the search for space that welcomes the variability of the city and, above all, the idea of anonymous architecture, according to which the architect had to disappear in front of architecture to transform the rationalized function into a natural functionality. It was therefore an existential architecture (as he defines it, non-existentialist), anonymous and phenomenological relational. Michelucci’s vision of organic architecture also inevitably influenced Ricci’s vision, but organic architecture was also elaborated and incorporated into Tuscan architecture in the multidirectional fluidity of interior spaces guided by conduction, expansion, contraction and concatenation as happened in Leonardo Ricci’s project for the Monterinaldi Houses (1949-1963). Organicity, according to Michelucci, resided in the naturalness of the relationships between the parts expressed in nature that had nothing to do with the forced search for the relationship between construction and the environment: beauty lied in the harmony between architecture and nature because “it arises from intuition of vital relations between things”, not in formal relations”. Michelucci’s architectural thought was also rooted in existentialism, understood as the ability to go beyond codes and boundaries to continue human history shaped in the physical structure of space, and as the main generative force to build a variable and livable space by privileging the relationships between the elements. Giovanni Michelucci, “Wright: Un Colloquio Mancato,” *Letteratura e Arte Contemporanea*, no. 11 (1951); Giovanni Michelucci, “La città variabile,” *La Nuova Città*, no. 13 (January 1954); Giovanni Klaus Koenig, *Architettura in Toscana 1931-1968*, (Torino: ERI-Edizioni RAI, 1968); Amedeo Belluzzi and Claudia Conforti, *Architettura Italiana 1944-1994* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1994); Corinna Vasić Vatovec, “Leonardo Ricci e Giovanni Michelucci: confronti preliminari.” *La Nuova Città*, no.2-3 (December 2001): 100-127; Claudia Conforti, Roberto Dulio and Marzia Marandola, *Giovanni Michelucci (1891-1990)* (Milano: Electa, 2006); Fabio Fabbrizzi, *Giovanni Michelucci. Lo spazio che accoglie* (Firenze: Edifir, 2015). 7

64 Miccinesi, “Una mostra a Firenze: La Casa Abitata”, 12.

Fig. 8

“Leonardo Ricci, sketch for the “form-space” model, “Spazio vivibile per due persone”, realized for the “La Casa Abitata” exhibition, Casa Studio Ricci; Leonardo Ricci, sketches and picture of the model for the “form-space” model, “Spazio vivibile per due persone”, realized for the “La Casa Abitata” exhibition, published in Lara Vinca Masini and Agnoldomenico Pica, “Intenti e Aspetti Della Mostra “La Casa Abitata”. Leonardo Ricci Uno “Spazio Vivibile” per Due Persone. La Casa Abitata: Arredamenti Di Quindici Architetti Italiani, La Mostra a Firenze, Palazzo Strozzi, Dal 6 Marzo al 2 Maggio”, *Domus*, no. 426 (May 1965): 55, 56.

that of open form, according to the dynamic needs, of choice, which [allowed] new relationships between living and other human acts such as working, educating, moving around, the integration of a single organism open to all functions that [were] sectorially separated, in an architecture on an urban scale⁶⁵».

The project looked as a detached cell of the described macrostructure for an integrated city. Almost perfectly following the words of the master Michelucci on the exhibition, Ricci described his proposal as a possible model to be inserted in a macrostructure, in which all the housing units and services had to be distributed in such a way as to be easily accessible both in the vertical and horizontal directions. Within Ricci’s “livable space for two people” any user could have been the interior designer of his own house in order to allow life to develop according to elementary needs, once freed from all the unnecessary. Indeed, the exhibition regulations assigned an area from twenty-five to thirty-five square meters to the exhibiting architects, as the minimal existence rational cells, and it wanted to offer an alternative model of “Existenz Minimum”. The habitat model proposed by Ricci was a sculptural envelope without internal partitions, allowing the hypothetical flow of human actions inside, a limited internal space connected to an open space outside. Ricci called his model “form-space”, it was in “centinella” wood, suspended from the floor by means of small and low stone walls as those on which Ricci’s houses were also suspended. The prototype was in real scale and accompanied by the architect’s sketches. It effectively suggested a unique “form-space” derived from the inhabitants’ possible movements and could change thanks to moving elements. The model embraced the fundamental principle of variability both in the way of life and in the use of different materials and colors.

It could be made industrially or by hand, designed for a certain form of industrialization or used independently from structures. The fixed furniture was integrated into the space and shaped with the organic external shell, while the moving elements could be varied and could differentiate the interior⁶⁶. [Fig. 8]

In conclusion, from the philological analysis of the archival sources and from the projects’ observation emerges that Leonardo Ricci’s most important result lied firstly in the application of his design method to different programs across time and typologies, from the community projects to the macrostructures, which allowed him to reach different and high design results and morphological solutions. Secondly, a strong experimentation to find a correct synthesis of the arts arose in Ricci’s work both as a painter and as an architect between 1952 and 1972. That experimentation resulted in a precise branch of his production and found its exalted and clearest expression in the synthesis

65 Ricci’s report about his project, from which this quotation was taken, was published in Italian in Miccinesi, “Una mostra a Firenze: La Casa Abitata”, 13.

66 The complete bibliography on the Exhibition “La Casa Abitata” is: Lara Vinca Masini, “Mostra Della Casa Abitata a Firenze”, *Marcatré*, no. 16-17-18 (1965): 215-17; Lara Vinca Masini and Agnoldomenico Pica, “Intenti e Aspetti Della Mostra “La Casa Abitata”. Leonardo Ricci Uno “Spazio Vivibile” per Due Persone. La Casa Abitata: Arredamenti Di Quindici Architetti Italiani, La Mostra a Firenze, Palazzo Strozzi, Dal 6 Marzo al 2 Maggio”, *Domus*, no. 426 (May 1965): 29-56; Miccinesi, “Una Mostra a Firenze: La Casa Abitata”, 9-29; Vasić Vatovec, *Leonardo Ricci. Architetto “esistenzialista”*, 39.

of architecture and sculpture not only in the models for an integrated town, in the model accomplished for “La Casa Abitata” living unit project, but in a series of projects of the Sixties: the project for the Commerce Chamber of Carrara (1956), the project for the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial (1959-1960), in the buildings of the Village “Monte degli Ulivi” (1962-1968), the set up of the Expressionism Exhibition (1964), the project for the Cemetery of Montecatini (1967), the “Customs” section of the Italian Pavillion if the Montréal Exposition (1967), the project for Dog Island (1968-1970).

The importance of the investigation on Ricci’s theoretical and applied research on the temporalized space for the future community living in the so-called integrated city lies in its focus on the design process instead of the image of architecture. A focus on the result of the architectural project, producing a form, is not enough, especially nowadays, to understand the act of design, which is a political act, inevitably contributing to and modifying the people’s life.

If the first attitude to reason on the human acts and activities derived from Michelucci’s teaching⁶⁷, Ricci’s exchange with the United States enriched his vision on the duties of architecture: among others, the MIT researchers Kevin Lynch and Christopher Alexander’s studies on the process⁶⁸ have been for Ricci and are at present fundamental to interpret human needs in the city, through the study on human movements, now accelerated by quick communication and transport times. In Ricci’s investigation on the city it is possible to trace, as maintained above, the open form design instance, in which time and space melt: the new spatial solutions follow changes in time and translate the need of flexibility, precept of present times cultural debate and material urgency.

⁶⁷ Leonardo Ricci and the Florentine architects’ work stood out from the coeval architectural scene and relevant design approaches towards the reconstruction for its being “relational” and concentrated on the design process, on its main components, rather than on its results. Leonardo Ricci and Leonardo Savioli started from Michelucci’s lesson to apply a continuous research and revision of the compositive processes, which affected the non-definiteness perception of their design solutions undergoing the recovery of history and tradition, the integration of different scales, the continuity between project and city, architecture and memory, form and permanence of the ancient and rooted tradition. See Giovanni Michelucci, “La città variabile,” *La Nuova Città*, no. 13 (January 1954); Vittorio Gregotti, *New Directions in Italian Architecture* (New York: George Braziller, 1968), 86-91; Belluzzi, Conforti, *Architettura Italiana 1944-1994*, 21; Fabio Fabbrizzi, *Opere e progetti di scuola fiorentina, 1968-2008* (Firenze: Alinea, 2008), 51-60.; Fabio Fabbrizzi, *Giovanni Michelucci. Lo spazio che accoglie* (Firenze: Edifir, 2015).

⁶⁸ About Lynch’s studies: Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960); Donald Appleyard, Kevin Lynch, and John R. Myer, *The View From the Road* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965); Kevin Lynch, *Managing the Sense of a Region* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976); Kevin Lynch, *A Theory of Good City Form* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981). About Christopher Alexander’s studies: Christopher Alexander, *Notes on the Synthesis of Form* (Cambridge-MA: Harvard University Press, 1964); Christopher Alexander, “From a set of forces to a form”, in *Man-Made Object*, ed. György Kepes, (New York: Braziller, 1966), 96-107; Christopher Alexander, *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) and Maria Bottero, “Lo strutturalismo funzionale di C. Alexander”, *Comunità* (1967): 148, 149. See also: Brent Ryan, *The Largest Art. A Measured Manifesto for a Plural Urbanism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017).

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