



UN PRESENTE PERFETTO: CITTÀ, MEMORIA E REINVENZIONE. IL BANCO DE PORTUGAL DI LISBONA

ANA TOSTÕES

L'intervento di restauro e riqualificazione della sede del Banco de Portugal conferma la convinzione di chi ritiene che il confronto con il patrimonio storico costituisca una sfida per l'architettura contemporanea. Fondato su analisi rigorose, il progetto di Gonçalo Byrne e João Pedro Falcão de Campos si è sviluppato con una logica irreprensibile nell'utilizzare la preesistenza come strumento di una nuova creazione architettonica; lavorando sui frammenti e restituendo loro un nuovo significato, l'operazione di riscatto del passato ha rivelato il sedimento di una cultura che, resistendo all'industrializzazione e alla modernizzazione, ha permesso la conservazione di maestranze e arti votate a un sapere antico.

La sede del Banco occupa per intero il *quarteirão* de São Julião, un isolato che costituisce parte integrante dell'insieme urbano della Baixa di Lisbona e che include, all'estremità ovest, l'omonima chiesa. Comunemente designato come Piano Pombalino (in rife-

rimento al Marquês de Pombal, il ministro che lo attuò dopo il terremoto del 1755) il "piano pilota" della Baixa-Chiado del 1758 è stato il primo strumento di pianificazione che ha dettato la conformazione di un'area cruciale per la città e per l'immagine del Paese. Oltre a tale contributo operativo, il piano è stato un tassello innovatore nel grande mosaico della storia dell'urbanistica mondiale, nonché il più notevole esempio di "città illuminista", la cui importanza non è mai stata debitamente considerata. La Baixa che conosciamo oggi è il risultato dello sviluppo di diverse tipologie -edifici per la rendita e religiosi- integrate nell'insieme unitario di isolati fortemente caratterizzati dall'uniformità delle facciate. È questo l'aspetto più avanguardistico di un piano che esprime una razionalità senza precedenti, secca dura e sistematica, e in cui la scala urbana domina su quella architettonica. Ma è questa stessa uniformità -che ha determinato il carattere della Baixa, la sua

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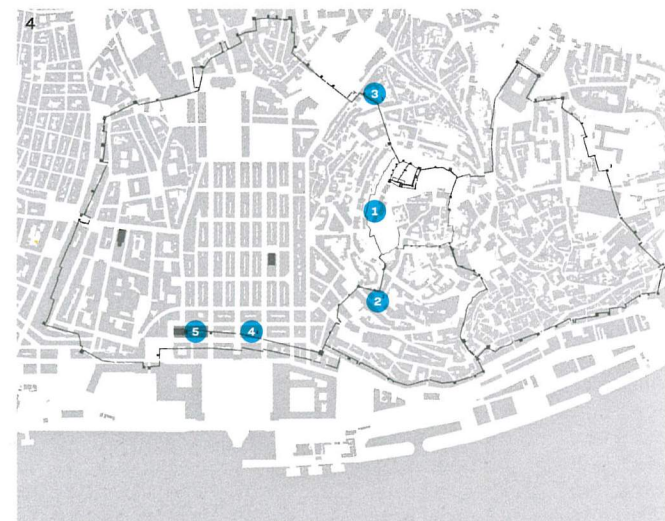
Gonçalo Byrne,
João Pedro
Falcão de Campos

**Restauro
dell'edificio
del Banco
de Portugal,
Lisbona,
Portogallo**

fotografie
José Manuel
Rodrigues,
Duarte Belo

Gonçalo Byrne (Alcobaça, 1941) si è laureato presso la ESBA di Lisbona. Nel 1975 apre un proprio studio e nel 1991 fonda lo studio associato GB Arquitectos. Ha insegnato in numerose università, in Portogallo e all'estero (Porto, Losanna, Coimbra, Lovanio, Nancy, Venezia, Graz, Harvard, Lisbona, Pamplona, Mendrisio). Sin dagli esordi ha contribuito, con il suo lavoro, al rinnovamento e all'affermazione internazionale dell'architettura portoghese. «Casabella» ha presentato opere di Byrne nei nn. 643, 695/696, 700 (2001 / 2002), 775 (2009), 785 (2010), 798, 803 (2011), 821, 826, 830 (2013); Elected ha pubblicato due monografie: *Gonçalo Byrne. Opere e progetti* (1998 e 2007). **João Pedro Falcão de Campos** (Lisbona 1961) si è laureato presso la FA-UTL di Lisbona nel 1984. Ha lavorato in Italia e in Svizzera (1985-86) e nel 1987 apre il proprio studio a Lisbona. Dal 2004 è professore alla UTL di Lisbona, dal 2010 alla ETS di Pamplona. Nel 2003 è nominato per il premio Mies Van der Rohe; nel 2006 e nel 2013 ha partecipato alla Biennale di Venezia. Tra i lavori si segnalano la casa Saraiva Lima II ad Alcácer do Sal e il Bar à Margem, Lisbona; tra le numerose pubblicazioni nazionali e internazionali: *Portugal 1990-2004* (Triennale di Milano), «A+U», n. 439, 2007 e la monografia *Habitar* (Caleidoscopio, 2005).

¹
-la navata della
chiesa di São Julião
dopo il restauro
-the nave of the
church of São Julião
after restoration



2
 -il fronte della chiesa e l'isolato del Banco de Portugal all'inizio degli anni '60 del Novecento
 -the front of the church and the block of the Banco de Portugal at the start of the 1960s
 3
 -l'interno della chiesa prima dell'intervento
 -interior of the church prior to

the project
 4
 -planimetria del centro storico di Lisbona con il tracciato delle mura e le chiese attribuite a Reinaldo Manuel dos Santos. Legenda -1- mura della città antica -2- cerchia Moura -3- cerchia Fernandina -4- cerchia di Dom Dinis -5- isolato del Banco de Portugal

-plan of the historical center of Lisbon with the walls and churches attributed to Reinaldo Manuel dos Santos. Legend -1- the walls of the historical city -2- Cerca Moura -3- Cerca Fernandina -4- Cerca Dom Dinis -5- block of the Banco de Portugal
 5
 -fotomontaggio del progetto
 -rendering

duttile capacità di trasformazione e resistenza - a essere contestata durante il XIX secolo perché considerata come «insipida uniformità e noiosa austerità» (Cyrillo Volmark), al punto di tentare di trasformare progressivamente questo sistema, a partire dall'ultimo decennio dell'Ottocento, attraverso una serie di interventi episodici. Successivamente, con il piano regolatore di Lisbona del 1968, il mancato trasferimento in quest'area centrale del *business district* ha sancito la decadenza del cuore economico della città accentuandone la perdita di carattere.

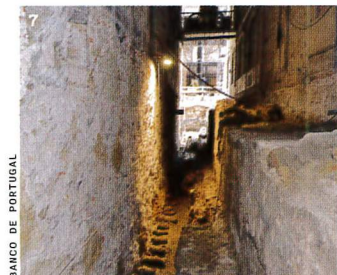
L'intervento di riqualificazione della sede del Banco de Portugal ripropone la centralità istituzionale, rappresentativa e culturale della Baixa, reinventando la *fábrica* pombalina attraverso la riconsiderazione di tre elementi-chiave del piano. In primo luogo ne rifonda la matrice planimetrica dell'isolato, articolando la chiesa e gli edifici adiacenti secondo i principi gerarchici dettati dal programma pombalino. È dal 1868, infatti, che il Banco de Portugal ha ampliato i confini del lotto originario - girato verso la rua do Ouro - occupando le vicine parcelle sino a inglobare la chiesa, la cui difficile integrazione venne allora risolta adattandola a *garage* e luogo di carico-scarrico, con un inopportuno impilamento delle casseforti nell'antico spazio del presbiterio. Mentre i due precedenti tentativi di restituire al complesso del Banco un'immagine unitaria, com'era accaduto per tutta la

Baixa all'inizio del Novecento, avrebbero distrutto l'isolato e la chiesa cancellando irrimediabilmente la logica pombalina, la proposta attuale di realizzare uno spazio culturale nella chiesa bene si adatta alla tipologia ad aula dell'edificio religioso. In secondo luogo, il progetto riprende la scenografia gerarchizzata delle facciate, reinventandone la conformazione rispetto allo spazio pubblico. La stessa strategia del piano pombalino del 1758 dava enorme importanza ai prospetti, stabilendone la distinzione in tre tipi e disegnando le strade in tutta la loro estensione per controllare l'intero orizzonte visibile dello spazio pubblico, primo protagonista della "nuova" città dove si rifletteva la rappresentazione di un potere illuminato. L'architettura seriale della riforma del Marquês de Pombal è ripensata ed espressa in chiave contemporanea nella rigorosa metrica delle aperture e nel disegno degli infissi delle finestre.

Il terzo aspetto deriva dalla comprensione dell'importanza tipologica del *saguão* longitudinale -il lungo e stretto patio interno scoperto tipico degli edifici della Baixa pombalina- e del suo ruolo nel funzionamento e nell'articolazione dell'isolato. Liberato dalle superfetazioni, il *saguão* è reinventato per risolvere la profondità dell'edificio-quartiere, permettendo due affacci degli ambienti verso la luce naturale, la ventilazione trasversale e la realizzazione di collegamenti interni in quota tra i due corpi di fabbrica



BANCO DE PORTUGAL



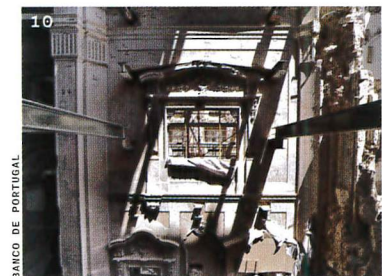
BANCO DE PORTUGAL



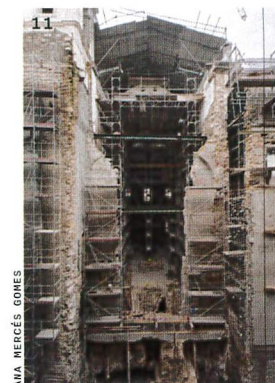
ARTUR ROCHA



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ANA MERCÉS GOMES



BANCO DE PORTUGAL

6

-gli scavi archeologici nella necropoli della chiesa
-archaeological digs in the necropolis of the church

7, 8

-le fondazioni della Baixa Pombalina di Lisbona sopra i sedimenti romani e islamici
-foundations of the Baixa Pombalina of Lisbon, above the Roman and Islamic remains

9-12

-i lavori di demolizione nell'area contigua al presbiterio della chiesa
-demolition work in the area bordering the church presbytery

che compongono il quartiere.

Il progetto concilia così in un'architettura colta i più esigenti requisiti normativi e costruttivi: inteso come un processo continuo di conoscenza e di chiarificazione, esso interpreta il portato storico del luogo e risponde alle necessità di infrastrutture tecniche e di prestazioni energetiche, ai problemi dell'accessibilità e della sicurezza, contemperando i tempi dell'indagine archeologica e dell'accurato restauro dei materiali lapidei con la discussione del programma funzionale e delle soluzioni tecniche. Parimenti fondamentali sono stati gli studi sul comportamento strutturale dell'isolato per realizzare un modello atto a verificarne la resistenza sismica, così come di cruciale importanza è stata la precisione del rilievo architettonico per la definizione delle strategie di progetto. La consapevolezza di operare in un insieme architettonico eccezionale ha motivato l'articolazione delle consulenze specialistiche, ricomprendendole in un processo volto a definire la strategia di un progetto che ha comportato complicate demolizioni, la posa di nuove reti infrastrutturali, l'integrazione dei ritrovamenti archeologici nel percorso museale e, infine, un attento lavoro di restauro. Un intervento decisivo dell'operazione di riqualificazione è stato lo "svuotamento" interno dei due edifici contigui al presbiterio della chiesa per collocare i nuclei di cemento armato necessari alla rigidità strutturale dell'intero

blocco e per concentrare scale, ascensori e canalizzazioni degli impianti. Rivolti verso le vie laterali (rua do Comércio e rua de São Julião) e separati dal *saguão* centrale, questi "edifici-sacrificio" rinascono come nuovi spazi serventi, definendo una sorta di *saguão* trasversale che funge da cerniera tra la chiesa e il resto del complesso.

La volontà di restituire a un uso pubblico l'antica chiesa e aprirla verso la città ha preso forma in un percorso che parte da Largo de São Julião, attraversa il portale della chiesa e accede alla navata. La solennità e la dignità di questo spazio, associate alle sue caratteristiche scenografiche, ne esaltano le diverse valenze funzionali: atrio monumentale del Banco, atrio del museo, auditorio o sala per concerti. Dall'abside è possibile accedere al nuovo nucleo della distribuzione verticale e godere della vista del patio longitudinale che rivela, alla quota inferiore, i vestigi delle antiche mura di Dom Dinis portate alla luce durante il cantiere. Un magnifico velario di seta, opera di Fernanda Fragateiro, segna giustamente questo passaggio tra pubblico e privato, tra sacro e profano, alludendo a una soglia sino ad ora "murata".

L'intervento sul complesso del Banco valorizza la razionalità del sistema pombalino ripristinandone la memoria e rifondandone l'identità; e lo riporta alla contemporaneità reinventando ciò che non esisteva. Tale è, ad esempio, il

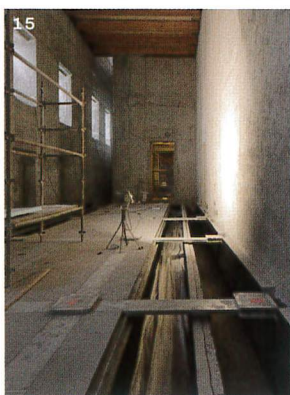
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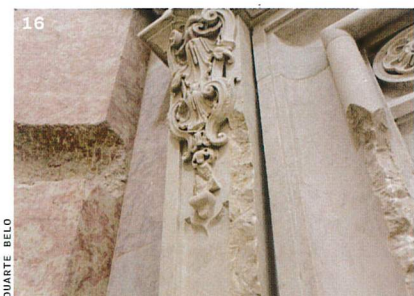
BANCO DE PORTUGAL



ANA MERCÉS GOMES



ANA MERCÉS GOMES



QUARTE BELO



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QUARTE BELO

ruolo della finestra d'angolo ritagliata nella cantonata dell'isolato verso Praça do Município: una superficie vetrata lievemente incurvata che associa idealmente lo spazio urbano della piazza al percorso pubblico che attraversa internamente l'isolato, narrando la storia del luogo, del tempo e della gente.

Byrne e Falcão de Campos hanno rifondato il *quarteirão* pombalino quasi operando un'analogia con ciò che Aldo Rossi designa come *macchina della memoria* quando scrive che «i luoghi sono più forti delle persone, la scena fissa è più forte delle vicende umane». Al contrario di quanto sarebbe normale aspettarsi, la trasformazione dell'esistente non implica una restrizione, ma diviene uno stimolo: scoprendo e associando, prolungando e rivelando gli spazi interni ed esterni, gli architetti hanno interpretato la vocazione al tempo stesso pubblica e privata del progetto pombalino. In quest'opera, infine, il restauro ci rivela il trascorrere del tempo e il rinnovamento assume la contemporaneità dell'intervento, dimostrando così l'importanza culturale del riuso del patrimonio storico.

Il ruolo strategico della Baixa nella Lisbona del XXI secolo passa inequivocabilmente attraverso una riqualificazione urbana basata su un attento disegno dello spazio pubblico e il riutilizzo dei complessi edificati esistenti -interventi che trovano nel Banco de Portugal un fondamentale riferimento.

Ana Tostões

- 13, 14
 -la ricostruzione delle strutture di copertura
 -reconstruction of the roof structures
 15
 -vista del cantiere
 -worksite view
 16, 17, 18
 -viste di dettaglio delle pareti, del pulpito e delle decorazioni della chiesa
 -detail views of the walls, the pulpit and the decorations of the church
 19, 20
 -sezione trasversale della chiesa e sezione longitudinale lungo l'asse dell'isolato
 -cross-section of the church, longitudinal section along the block axis
 21
 -pianta delle coperture e dell'ultimo livello, del piano terreno e dell'interterro
 -plans of the roof and the upper level, the ground floor, and the basement

traduzione dal portoghese di Elisa Pegorin

DATI DEL PROGETTO

-PROGETTO ARCHITETTONICO GENERALE

Gonçalo Byrne, João Pedro Falcão de Campos

-PROJECT MANAGEMENT E CONTROLLO QUALITÀ DEL PROGETTO

Consulbarra, Lda, José Pedro Duarte Tavares

-CONSULENTI

A2P. Estudos e Projectos Lda, João Appleton, Vasco Appleton (progetto fondazioni e strutture); Joule, Projectos, Estudos e Coordenação Lda, João Fernando Caetano Gonçalves, Luís Miguel da Fonseca Caetano Gonçalves (progetto impianti elettrici, di sicurezza e ascensori); Raúl Serafim (illuminotecnica); José Galvão Teles, Engenheiros Lda, José Galvão Teles, Miguel Galvão Teles (progetto impianti meccanici e HVAC); G.R. Estudos, Projectos e Consultadoria Lda, Grade Ribeiro, Gorete Santos (progetto impianti idraulici e sanitari); A2P. Estudos e Projectos Lda, Nuno Manuel Appleton, António Portugal (progetto sicurezza); João Barrento da Costa (progetto acustica)

-IMPRESA

HCI-Construções, SA, Furtado Marques, Nuno Guerra, Rui Silva

-ARCHEOLOGIA

Arqueohoje Lda, Artur Rocha

-RESTAURO

CaCo3, Conservação do Património Artístico Lda, Teresa Silveira, Carlos Monteiro

-INTERVENTI ARTISTICI VELARI

Fernanda Fragateiro

-COMMITTENTE

Banco de Portugal

-DATI DIMENSIONALI

14.300 mq superficie dell'intervento

-CRONOLOGIA

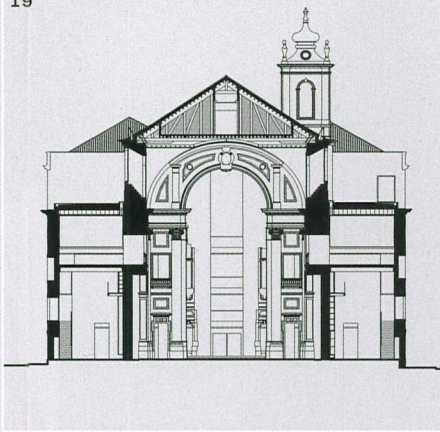
2007-12: progetto e realizzazione

-LOCALIZZAZIONE

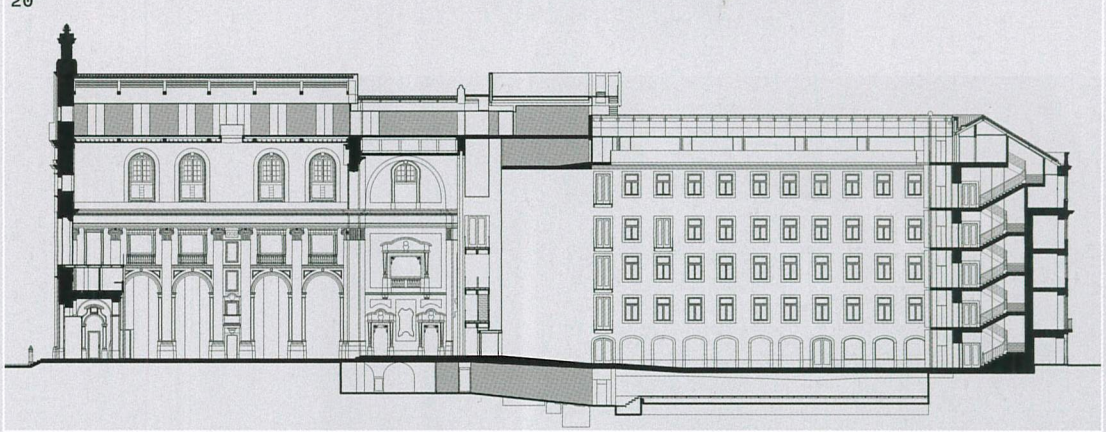
Rua do Comércio, 148, Lisboa, Portogallo



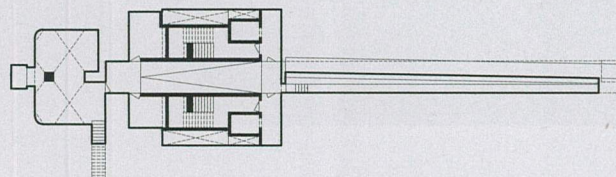
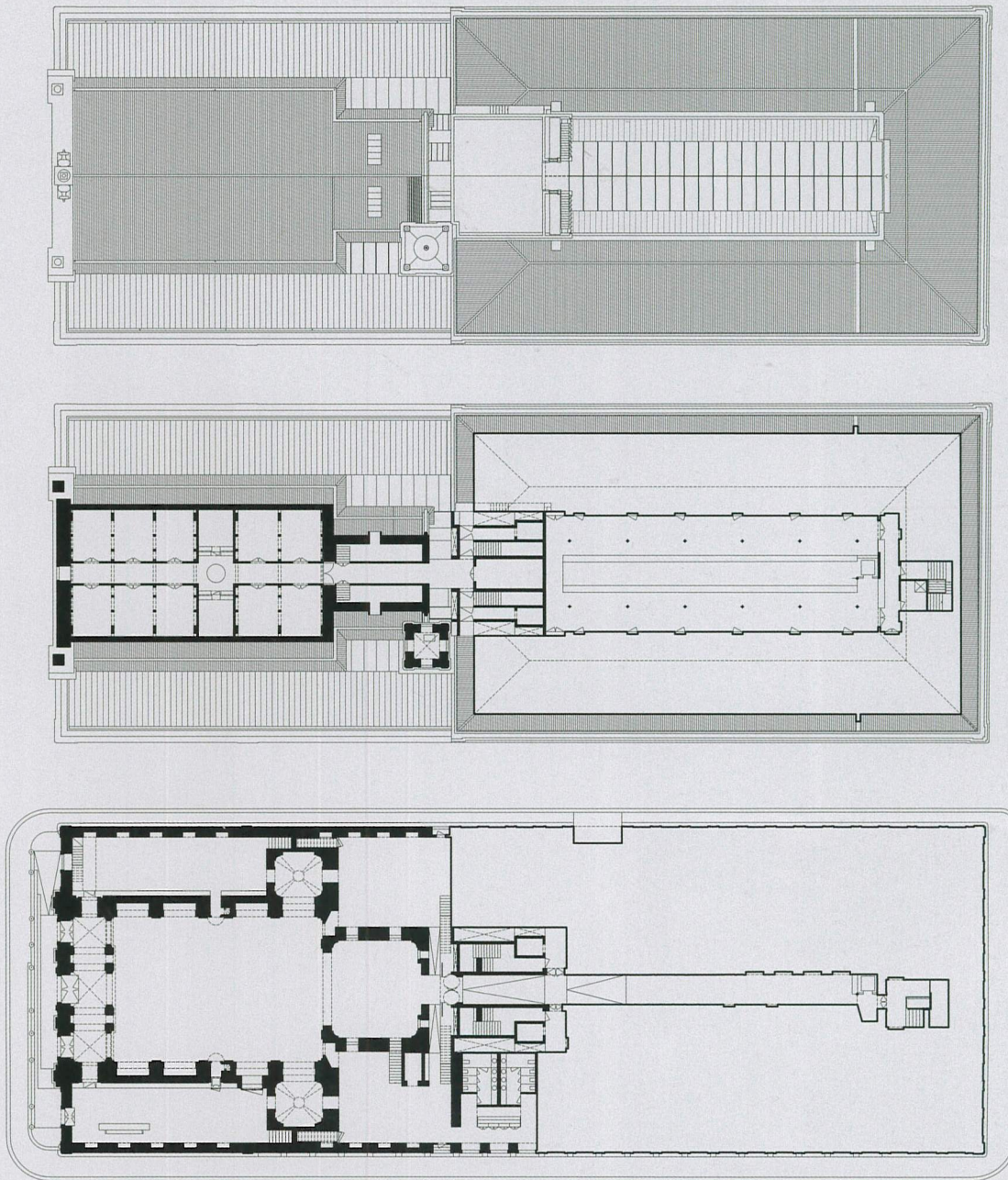
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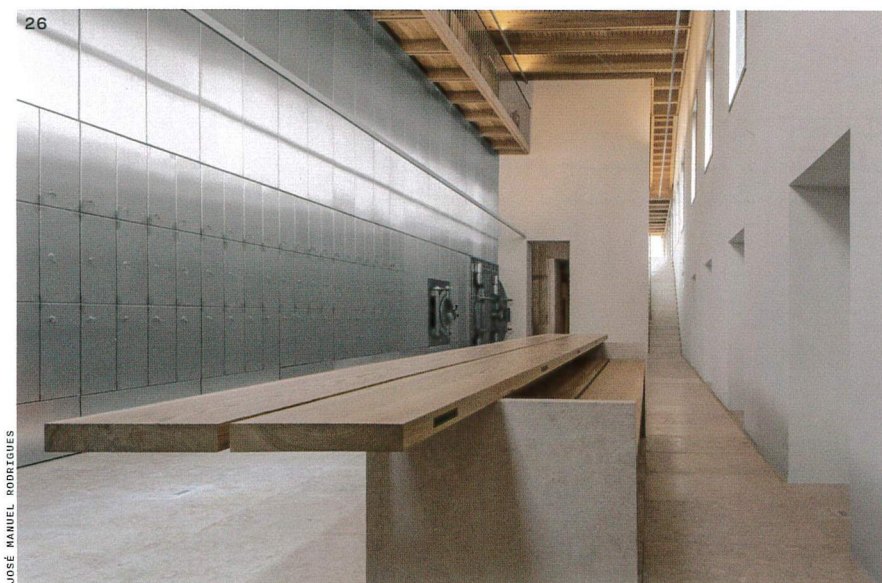
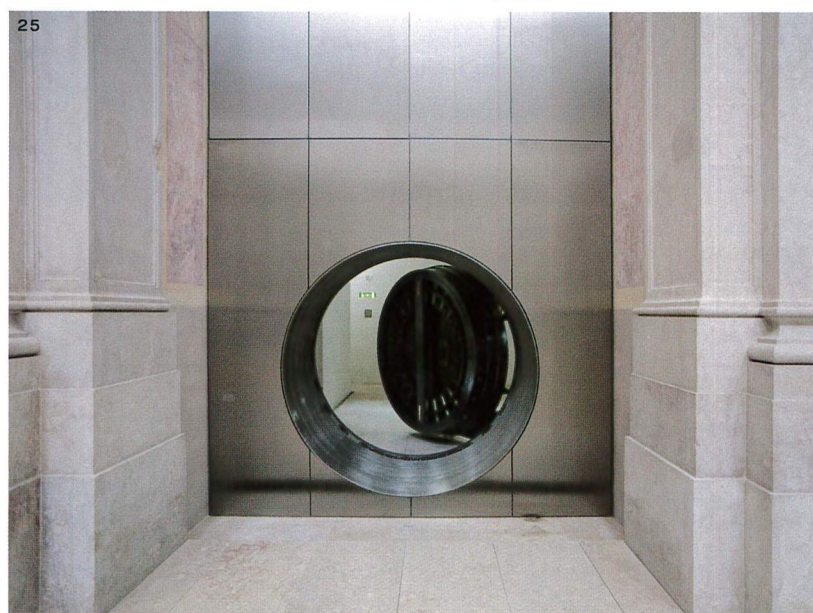
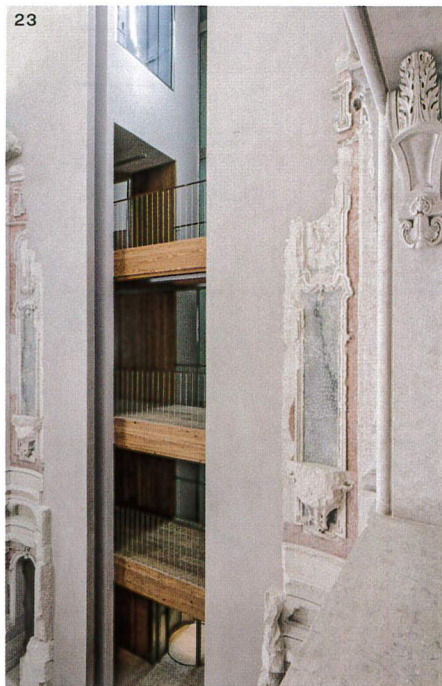
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21



0 20m



22
-vista verso l'abside della chiesa prima della messa in opera del velario
-view towards the apse of the church before the installation of the velarium

23
-dettaglio dei nuovi ponti che collegano i livelli superiori della chiesa e le due porzioni dell'isolato del Banco de Portugal
-detail of the new bridges connecting the upper levels of the church and the two portions of the block of the Banco de Portugal

24, 25
-vista e dettaglio del fronte sud della navata della chiesa con la sistemazione della cassaforte
-view and detail of the southern facade of the nave of the church, with the position of the safe

26
-la sala del museo al piano terreno lato sud della chiesa
-the space of the museum on the ground floor, on the southern side of the church



27
-vista del presbitero della chiesa con il velario di Fernanda Fragateiro
-view of the presbytery of the church with the velarium of Fernanda Fragateiro

and marking the true entrance to the property; the other two twin walls that stand at the sides of the entrance screen off the gusts of wind arriving from the bay. They constitute the gate to cross to enter the void, to ascend to the stage where the search for beauty in the imaginary of Campo Baeza is enacted, managing to astonish us once again with his customary logical coherence.

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Desai/Chia – A pavilion in the trees

Matteo Vercelloni

In the history of the American single-family house the typology of the glass pavilion with linear geometry inserted in a green setting has a number of illustrious examples: from the Farnsworth House of Mies van der Rohe in 1946–51, at Plano near Chicago (cfr. «Casabella» n. 767, June 2008), to the homage of his student Philip Johnson, who in that same period began the design of his Glass House at New Canaan, completed in 1949, the first building of the autobiographical collection in constructed form, the series of installations distributed across fifty years on his estate in Connecticut (see D. Whitney and J. Kipnis, *Philip Johnson. The Glass House*). The solution of the glazed parallelepiped with an open plan, suspended over the ground, has continued to influence research on the single-family house, not only in the USA, finding different interpretations over time, including certain digressions into the world of art (including the installation of the butterfly house by the duo Bik Van der Pol for Enel Contemporanea 2011). The project shown here is part of this research, and places an essential glass volume on a rocky outcropping facing a lake for trout fishing, protected by tall trees that interrupt the series of cultivated zones. The project stands out for the concentration of its partition elements on the inside, leaving the glass facades completely free, in order to achieve a direct, continuous relationship with the landscape, perceptible at 360° during every hour of the day. Back in 1959 Mies van der Rohe, during an interview at the Architectural Association of London, speaking of the Farnsworth House, stated: «This house has granted me a great experience. You never know how colorful nature is until you're in a glass house. It changes every day.» Desai/

Chia Architecture seem to pursue and move forward with this idea of offering a contemplative domestic space projected towards the host landscape on all sides, immersed in the colors of the seasons. As for the Farnsworth House, the inhabited volume, resting here on a concrete base set back from the façade and adapting to the levels of the ground, corresponds to an outdoor space paved in local bluestone, conceived as an open-air room connected to the inside by means of two large step-slabs of the same material, overlapped and off axis. From a structural viewpoint, the house stands on the four metal pillars of the service nucleus, which separates the living-dining area from the master bedroom zone. From the internal structure, the flat roof is cantilevered outward, finding other support points in the metal segments that pace the glass facade (with three layers), marked by continuous bands of bronze at the two extremities to frame the posts of the same material. A custom facade system, prefabricated off the site, transported there and assembled in just two days.

Inside, wood covers the floor and ceiling, the vertical walls and sliding panels of boards, offering comfort and the idea of being in an enveloping wooden box with transparent sides. Great attention has gone into the choice of sustainable physical plant systems, including geothermal heating and cooling with radiant floor units. Water is gathered by the roof and conveyed to an underground cistern to use for irrigation, while motorized blinds that vanish into the ceiling offer protection from strong sunlight during the warmest hours of the day.

A project that fits into the research on ways of living conducted by the culture of modernity, which as a place and refuge of contemplation makes it possible to establish a silent dialogue with the objective order of nature. To get back to the words of Mies, a home in which to feel protected, inside the great law of creation: «Nature, too, shall live its own life. We must beware not to disrupt it with the color of our houses and interior fittings. Yet we should attempt to bring nature, houses, and human beings together into a higher unity. If you view nature through the glass walls of the Farnsworth House, it gains a more profound significance than if viewed from the outside. That way more is said about nature—it becomes part of a larger whole.»

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Gonçalo Byrne, João Pedro Falcão de Campos – Present perfect: city, memory and reinvention. The Banco de Portugal of Lisbon

Ana Tostões

The restoration and renewal of the headquarters of the Banco de Portugal confirms the convictions of those who believe that coming to grips with the historical legacy represents a challenge for contemporary architecture. Based on rigorous analysis, the project by Gonçalo Byrne and João Pedro Falcão de Campos has been developed with an irreprehensible logic in its utilization of existing things as a tool for new architectural creation; working on fragments and giving them a new meaning, and the operation of redemption from the past has revealed the traces of a culture that by resisting industrialization and modernization has made it possible to conserve the skills and arts of an ancient knowledge.

The bank headquarters occupies the entire *quarteirão de São Julião*, a block that is an integral part of the urban complex of the Baixa of Lisbon and includes, at the western end, the church of the same name. Usually indicated as the Pombalino Plan (for the Marquês de Pombal, the minister who implemented it after the earthquake of 1755), the “pilot plan” of Baixa-Chiado of 1758 was the first planning tool to dictate the shape of a crucial area for the city and for the image of the country. Besides this operative contribution, the plan was an innovative segment in the larger mosaic of the worldwide history of urban planning, as well as a fine example of the “illuminist city” whose importance has never been adequately considered. The Baixa we know today is the result of the development of different types –buildings for income and religious structures– integrated in a unified whole forcefully characterized by the uniformity of the facades. This was the most avant-garde aspect of a plan that expresses an unprecedented, terse and systematic rationality, and in which the urban scale dominates the architectural scale. But it is this same uniformity –that determined the character of the Baixa, its ductile capacity of transformation and resistance– that was challenged during the 19th century, because it was seen as «insipid uniformity and boring austerity» (Cyrillo Volmark), to the point of attempting to progressively transform this system, starting in the last decade of the 1800s, through a series of different episodes. Later, with the Master Plan

of Lisbon of 1968, the failure to transfer the business district into this central area led to the decay of the economic heart of the city, accentuating the loss of character. The project of renewal of the headquarters of the Banco de Portugal returns the focus to the institutional, representative and cultural centrality of the Baixa, reinventing the “*fábrica pombalina*” through reconsideration of three key elements of the plan. First, it re-establishes the planimetric matrix of the block, articulating the church and the adjacent buildings according to the hierarchical principles dictated by the Pombalino program. It was in 1868 that the Banco de Portugal expanded the boundaries of its original lot –turned towards Rua do Ouro– occupying nearby parcels and incorporating the church, whose difficult absorption was resolved by making it into a garage and a place for shipping and receiving, with the thoughtless piling up of safes in the historic space of the presbytery. While the two previous attempts to restore the Banco complex to a unified image, as had happened for the whole Baixa at the start of the 1900s, would have destroyed the block and the church, irreversibly erasing the logic of the Pombalino Plan, the present proposal of making a cultural space in the church is apt for the hall typology of the religious building. Second, the project returns to the ranked scenography of the facades, reinventing its application with respect to public space. The strategy of the Pombalino Plan of 1758 assigned great importance to the elevations, establishing a distinction in three types and designing the full length of streets to control the whole visible horizon of public space, the first protagonist of the “new” city, reflecting the representation of an enlightened power. The serial architecture of the reform of Marquês de Pombal is rethought and expressed in a contemporary key in the rigorous pacing of the openings and in the design of the window casements. The third aspect comes from understanding of the typological importance of the longitudinal *saguão* –the long, narrow internal patio, without roofing, typical of the buildings of the Baixa– and its role in the functioning and arrangement of the block. Freed of subsequent added parts, the *saguão* is reinvented to resolve the depth of the building-quarter, permitting two directions of openness to natural light, cross-ventilation and the making of internal elevated connections between the two volumes of the complex. The project thus reconciles, in an erudite work of architecture, the

most demanding regulatory and constructive requirements: seen as an ongoing process of knowledge and clarification, it interprets the historic scope of the place and responds to the needs of technical infrastructures and energy performance, to problems of access and security, uniting the time spans of archaeological investigation and accurate restoration of stone materials with discussion of the functional program and technical solutions. Of equal importance were the studies on the structural performance of the block to make a model for the testing of seismic resistance. The precision of the architectural survey was crucial for the definition of design strategies. Awareness of operating in an exceptional architectural context prompted the use of specialized consultants, in a process aimed at defining the strategy of a project that involved complicated demolitions, installation of new infrastructural networks, integration of archaeological finds in the museum itinerary and, finally, careful restoration work. One decisive part of the renewal operation was the “gutting” of the two buildings contiguous to the church to insert the reinforced concrete nuclei required for the structural stiffening of the entire block and to position staircases, elevators and physical plant conduits. Facing towards the side streets (Rua do Comércio and Rua de São Julião) and separated by the central *saguão*, these “sacrificial buildings” are reborn as new service spaces, determining a sort of transversal *saguão* that functions as a hinge between the church and the rest of the complex.

The desire to restore the church to public use and to open it to the city took the form of a path that starts at Largo de São Julião, crosses the church portal and leads to the nave. The solemn dignity of this space, associated with its theatrical characteristics, enhance its different functional values: a monumental lobby for the Banco, the atrium of a museum, an auditorium or concert hall. From the apse one can reach the new vertical access nucleus and enjoy the view of the longitudinal patio that reveals, on the lower level, the vestiges of the ancient walls of Dom Dinis brought to light during the construction. A magnificent velarium of silk, a work by Fernanda Fragaiteiro, correctly marks this passage between public and private, sacred and profane, alluding to a threshold that had previously been “walled up.” The intervention on the Banco complex makes good use of the rationality of the Pombalino system, reviving its memory and re-establishing its identity; and it brings it into the

contemporary world, reinventing what did not exist before. Such, for example, is the role of the window cut into the corner of the block towards Praça do Município: a slightly curved glass surface that ideally associates the urban space of the plaza with the public route that crosses the inside of the block, narrating the history of the place, the time and the people.

Byrne and Falcão de Campos have revived the Pombalino *quarteirão* almost by means of an analogy with what Aldo Rossi designates as a machine of memory, when he writes that «places are stronger than persons, the fixed scene stronger than human events.» Contrary to what one might normally expect, the transformation of what exists does not imply a restriction, but becomes a stimulus: discovering and associating, prolonging and revealing internal and external spaces, the architects have interpreted the simultaneously public and private vocation of the Pombalino project. In this work, finally, restoration reveals the passage of time, and renewal assumes the contemporary condition of the work, demonstrating the cultural importance of reuse of the historical heritage.

The strategic role of the Baixa in 21st-century Lisbon undoubtedly passes through an urban renewal based on careful design of public space and reutilization of existing edified complexes, where the Banco de Portugal becomes a fundamental reference point.

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Roberto Rosset – Ancient traces for new developments

Francesca Chiorino

What has been done in Aosta in the area of the Torre del Balivo (Tour du Bailliage) to make use of the archaeological heritage demonstrates, in part, the contribution architecture can make to the redefinition of certain spaces, the updating of the functions they contain and, in general, the renewal of entire segments of the city.

The restoration of the Tour du Bailliage and the functional conversion of the complex as the facility of the Istituto Musicale Pareggiato of Valle d'Aosta has been a long, complex operation, given the dense historical stratification in the area, which is also rich in archaeological finds that in some cases are significant for the study of that “Augusta Praetoria” founded two decades prior to the birth of Christ. Precisely in

the foundations of the corner tower of the complex, known as the Torre del Balivo, what most probably was the ancient founding cornerstone of the city has been discovered, with reliefs whose orientation helps to establish the date of foundation of Aosta as the month of December of the year identified by historians as 25 BC. The Roman defensive *castrum* that was the origin of the tower became, in the Middle Ages, the estate of the De Palatio family, and following further additions the headquarters of the Balivo, or Bailiff, a sort of prefect of the Counts of Savoy who governed the valley. In the Baroque era, among other things, the circular tower was added, and successive reworkings have altered its floor slabs, stairs and decorations, until the establishing of the fixed purpose of the structure, as a penitentiary, until 1984. In 1999 the regional administration called on Roberto Rosset, who proceeding in phases and in constant collaboration with the local heritage authorities, completed the restoration of the complex and designed a recessed slab under the central courtyard for the music institute, containing the auditorium, lecture halls and services. The restoration and functional conversion of the architectural complex of the Torre del Balivo have involved the development of a rigorous design method, because to manage to make functional needs and compositional consistency of the project coexist with the needs of study, restoration and classification, it was necessary to qualitatively and quantitatively determine all the categories of works to be done. The alterations of materials and structures over time, due to intrinsic and extrinsic causes, were investigated, along with evaluation of the materic consistency of different structures, through identification of the causes of defects, in order to eliminate them or to limit their consequences. Other particularly delicate issues facing the project included the insertion of the physical plant system in the historic spaces, and the excavation of the recessed addition in close contact with existing archaeological finds. The complex is located, in fact, close to the remains of the Roman amphitheater and the adjacent Convent of Santa Caterina, and along a short route one can reach the heart of Roman Aosta, where the theater stands. To approach the entrance to the Istituto Musicale one takes a narrow street that winds between the boundary wall of the Convent and the walls grafted onto the circular tower; from here one reaches a gate leading to the large central courtyard, and from which it is pos-

sible to take in, at a single glance, the two towers, the various interconnected annexes, the plain towards the imposing facade of the Roman theater and the Alpine setting with Monte Emilius overlooking the city. The central courtyard, organized with a Cartesian layout that dialogues with the *cardo* and *decumanus* of the *urbs*, is paved in pale stone and also functions as a roof for the underground volumes. The courtyard contains an off-center glass cube that houses the vertical connections offering access to the auditorium and classrooms. Another access is found by following the street that circles the complex, crossing the threshold of the 19th-century building on the southeast front. On the ground level one reaches a sequence of rooms leading to the quadrangular tower and the north wing, under whose marvelous vaults the reading and reference spaces are arranged. Both the east and north wings that converge on the Torre del Balivo contain music practice rooms on all levels, each with its own originality thanks above all to the thickness of the walls and the irregular layout, as well as the presence of old graffiti on the walls that have been revealed, or the pudding-stone flooring, or the landscape portion framed by the window. The view and above all the light that has to be brought to the new rooms, though they are on the basement level, are the factors that have suggested raising the courtyard level, creating a series of windows that run along the base and guarantee adequate lighting and particular mountain views. On the second basement level, below the courtyard and the classrooms, the auditorium is totally clad in wood and carefully designed for good acoustics, to welcome the performances of the students of the Conservatoire de la Vallée d'Aoste. Advanced training, serious effort and free expression are the aspects that come to the fore in a visit to the Institute, concepts that during the ascent of the metal circular staircase inside the tower seem to resonate with the inscriptions –some sharp, others heartbreaking– etched over the centuries by the prisoners on the walls of the tower, and revealed during the restoration work. The landing at the upper level of the tower offers a wide panorama of the city and its characteristic features, in this close, fascinating situation of coexistence between the force of Alpine nature and the ancient Roman attempt to tame it with the rigor of geometric axes.

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Sòria/Càceres – A door to the past of Barcelona

Massimo Ferrari

The birth of many markets in the cities of the old continent had a great influence on urban architectural reality, following their typological and technical-constructive evolution, shaping the very structure of the city; in this sense, the history of the markets of Barcelona is closely connected to the physical and demographic growth of the city. In particular, in the 19th century the economic growth of the Catalan center made it necessary to concentrate commercial activities in large enclosed spaces, spacious buildings, covered areas for merchandise that from that moment on made Barcelona the European capital of public trade, with a network of 46 food markets, and an overall area of 180,000 m². Fairs and markets, places of trade and commerce became, from the end of the 1700s –and even more after 1851– the typological matrices capable of generating the very nature of the great Universal Expositions, as Henri Perenne reminds us.

It is this coincidence that after years of debate on the correct choices for the refunctionalizing of the market of Born in Barcelona reinforces the decision of a displaying, cultural character, leading the building back to its true nature. An ideal counterstep aligned with the most classical of typological mutations, after the controversies –following the commitment of the Col·legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya to prevent demolition– involved in the proposals of the site as the home of the Museu Nacional de Catalunya of contemporary art (1971); then as the Mercat de les Flors (1973); later as an urban plaza (1974), Ateneu Popular (1979); or a botanical garden, a bus station, a sports complex, an indoor swimming pool, a neighborhood clinic, a museum of the fire brigade and a museum of transport. The exhibition space, a fine example of the industrial architecture of the 1800s in Spain, designed by Antoni Rovira i Trias in 1873 and constructed by Josep Fontseré i Mestre, is a large metal structure with cast iron pillars and steel trusses, which since 1878, just 25 years from the pioneering structure of the Universal Exposition by Joseph Paxton, had covered the central food market and, without knowing it, a segment of the historical city, the memory of the flourishing Catalan Barcelona of the 1700s, built on the medieval walls.

The recent transformation of the Born market into a Cultural Center,