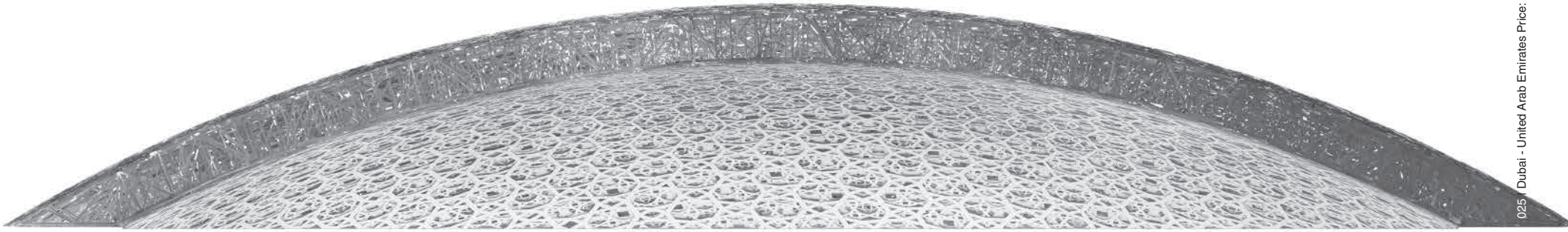


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BACK TO THE FUTURE



Focus: museums awakening, from UAE to the world Saadiyat Island, Nantes, São Paulo

Ateliers Jean Nouvel
Stanton Williams Architects
Garcés-de Seta-Bonet
Metro Arquitetos

MUSEUMS

OMA/Rem Koolhaas
Collotti & Pirazzoli
Mileto & Vegas Arquitectos
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Decree of the Court of Naples
n. 58 / 20-12-2016

Cover Image

Courtesy of © TDIC, Architect:
Ateliers Jean Nouvel

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[compasses] is a supporting member of



Compasses n.25 - 2017
Printed in Italy
by Rossi Srl
Nola (Napoli)

July 2017
ISSN NUMBER: 2409-3823

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Museums awakening, from UAE to the world

Even though the word *mouseion* (temple of the Muses) was born in Ancient Greece, the museum as we mean it today, is doubtlessly an 18th century creation, directly descending from the Enlightenment cultural climate. Actually in Europe – and in Italy in particular – already since the 14th century, several ancestral forms of modern museums may be found (from the famous princes' *Wunderkammern*, to the Capitoline Museums in Rome, up to Paolo Giovio's "museum" in Como), but certainly only the scientific culture of the Enlightenment gave birth for the first time to the concept of the public museum meant as a representation of a nation's and population's culture. In the mid-18th century several museums opened to the public: the British Museum in London (1753), the Louvre's collection set up in the *Palais de Luxembourg* (1750) and that of Frederick II of Prussia in Potsdam (1755). From this moment on museums start increasing in number in Europe, also thanks to the diffusion of the interest for the antiquities and the beginning of the archeological excavations in Herculaneum and Pompei (1738 and 1748). Hence, museums become one of the central institutions of the contemporary civilization, which grow together with the gradual democratisation of knowledge and beauty, reaching and extraordinary significance during the 20th century, even thanks to the architectural design.

With this 25th issue of *Compasses* – which marks an important milestone in its nine-years long history since 2009 – we wanted to delve into the museums world, starting from an undeniable consideration: everywhere in the world there is a significant increase in interest for these types of buildings. Among the numerous crises in architecture, museums seem to have never encountered a moment of inflection. On the contrary, especially in those cultural contexts less traditionally bounded to this building typology, museums are constantly growing. Even though this could suggest a positive

increase in the cultural demand as well as an elevation of the society, it is important to clarify that today museums assume very different values, which go beyond those with which they initially appeared at the dawn of their history. In fact, as Giovanni Menna writes in his article on *Berlage and the democratisation of Beauty*, in the Essays section, «as powerful attractors of a collective life, museums, much more than other objects of the contemporary city, are reference centres and meeting points and, inevitably, they are more and more entertainment places where even that ludic dimension – so far away from the traditional idea of a museum, but so intrinsic of consumer society – has its place». Therefore merchandising and consumption play today a preeminent role even in the spatial distribution of museums, to the detriment of much of their «aura», as to put it in Walter Benjamin's words.

Starting with the UAE, where important programs for new museums have been launched (although only partially running), this issue offers a 360 degree look at the current awakening that museums are experiencing in the world. As always, the theme is firstly discussed with a historical and critical approach in the Essays section. Here the reflection is opened by a stimulating essay by Karl-Heinz Schmitz, professor of Design and Theory of Building Types at the Bauhaus-Universität in Weimar, on the role of typology in the architectural conception of museums. Following is the aforementioned essay by Giovanni Menna, a professor of History of Architecture at the University of Naples Federico II, focused on the theme of the *Gemeentemuseum* of Den Haag, built by Hendrik Petrus Berlage between 1919 and 1935 as a paradigm of the modern museum. The following essay by Maria Vittoria Capitanucci deals with a topic of great relevance: that of private foundations for contemporary art on the European scale. These institutions are highlighted both as promoters of art and as

elements of connection between art and architecture. Then another critical essay follows, outlining the current state of the museums in Brazil. Written by Nivaldo Vieira de Andrade – professor at the Faculdade de Arquitetura of the Universidade Federal da Bahia (Salvador) – the essay starts from the tradition of Brazilian modernist museums to develop interesting reflections on the latest achievements in different cities of the country. Lastly, the section closes with an in-depth study of a large and relevant Italian historical museum, located in the royal palace of Capodimonte in Naples, whose building celebrates its 280th anniversary this year.

Afterwards the theme of the awakening of contemporary museums is addressed in the Focus through a first general overview, illustrated by Michele Nastasi's photographs, on Abu Dhabi City, and the role of "Starchitecture" – according to the definition by Davide Ponzini, professor of Urban Planning at the Politecnico di Milan – in the construction of its urban environment. Then follows an exclusive preview on the most important UAE museum: the Louvre Abu Dhabi, conceived in 2007 and now finally one step away from its inauguration. Written by Ingrid Paoletti, professor of Building Technology at the Politecnico di Milan, this article investigates not only the extraordinary formal aspects of the Ateliers Jean Nouvel's project but, above all, the technological ones, which are a very important part of it. Then the focus moves back to Europe, deepening the recent case of the enlargement of the Musée d'Art in Nantes, which was inaugurated at the end of June 2017, designed by the British studio Stanton Williams Architects as the winner of an international competition. Thanks to an exclusive interview that Pietro Belli (an Italian architect with an almost twenty years experience in the largest London studios) could address to one of the directors of the office, Patrick Richard, this case is clearly illustrated as in interesting counterpoint to the brand new Louvre Abu Dhabi. In fact it highlights the theme – very recurring in Europe – of the need to intervene on historic buildings, built as museums in the 19th century, which reveal today inadequate performances to comply the complex functions that this type of buildings require, without losing their identity and values. Finally, the Focus ends with another case of intervention on an existing museum, this time dating back to the mid-20th century: the famous MASP of São Paulo, designed by Lina Bo Bardi since 1957. Here the Metro Arquitetos Associados' project has brought the design of the exhibitions to its original configuration that had been altered

in subsequent decades and which was based on the revolutionary architect's idea of exposing the paintings without any screen or background, placing them in free relation with the unique space of the large open rectangular hall.

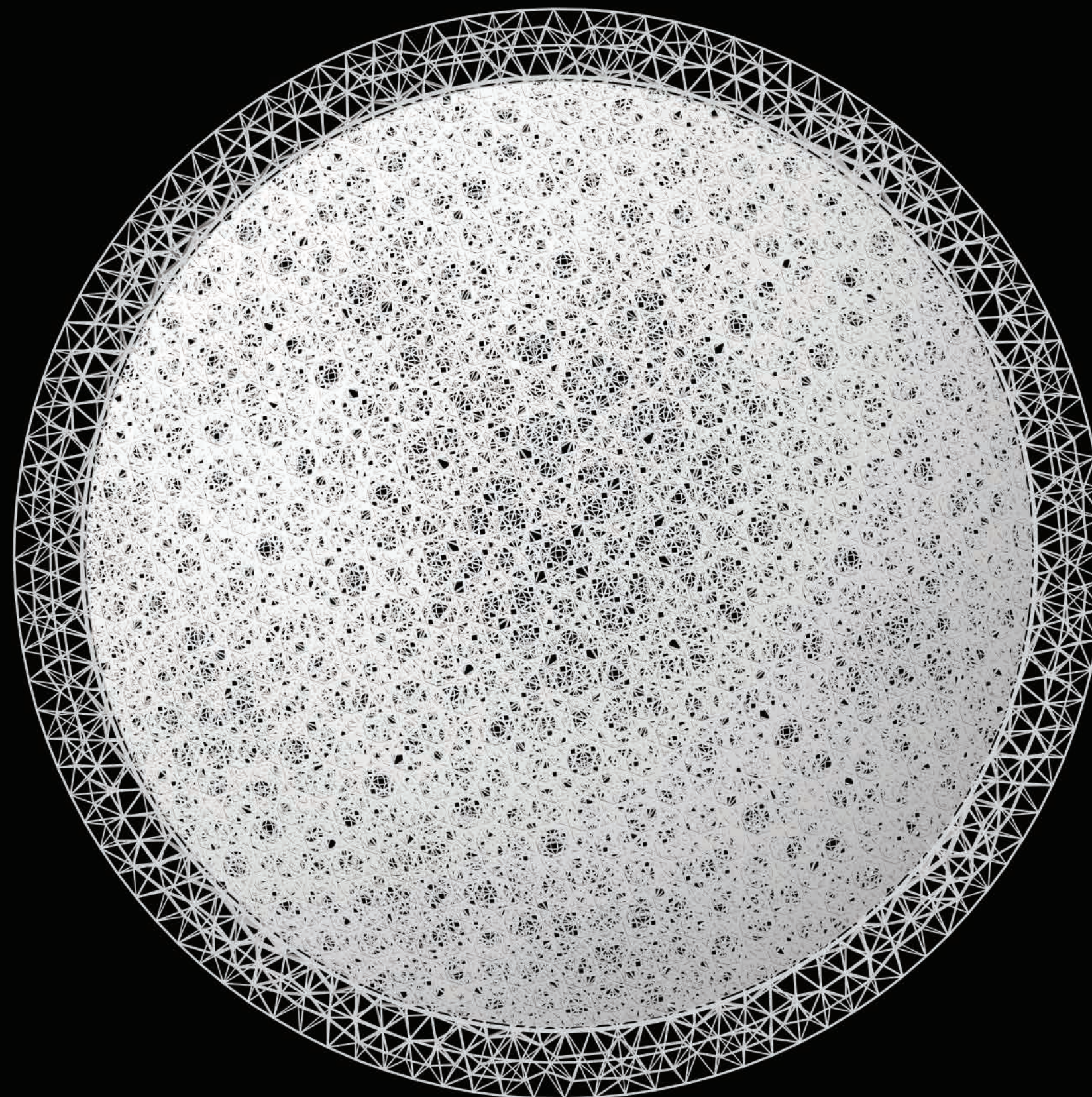
While not having a direct relationship with museums, the Architecture & Plan section collects three projects strongly rooted in historical pre-existences – of different epochs and kinds – and therefore hovering between the themes of conservation and new design. In fact, in this section we find an intervention on a late 19th century building with a clear neoclassical shape, the Palais de Justice of Strasbourg, subject to a recent conservative renovation carried out by a team led by the Catalan studio Garós-de Seta-Bonet. Then follows the conservative enhancement, with a few and well recognizable additions, of Forte Pozzacchio in Trentino, Italy – an element of the vast network of military structures of World War I – carried out by Collotti & Pirazzoli. Finally, the reinterpretation proposed by Mileto & Vegas Arquitectos of an ancient convent in Vinaros, Spain, stands out. Foolishly demolished some decades ago and transformed into a parking lot, the remaining traces of the convent have been retrieved by the architects to the collective memory through the design of a garden that uses part of the ruins and materials escaped from the destruction.

The theme of the exhibition spaces returns again in the Experiences section, which hosts the small but interesting project of the Concrete Gallery in Dubai, created by OMA/Rem Koolhaas, along with a focus on the Maraya Art Center in Sharja, which plays an important driving role for emerging art talents.

Lastly, the issue is closed by a rich Materials & Interiors section, where we find three interior designs for apartments in Milan and Naples (respectively by Gambardellarchitetti, Matteo Nunziati and the undersigned), together with the interior design for the Kiton store in Munich, realized by Francesco Della Femina. The design is then devoted to a specific reflection by Titti Rinaldi downstream of the Salone del Mobile in 2017, which illustrates the main trends through Giulia D'Errico's photographs. And just on the topic of design, *Compasses* is pleased to announce its support as the media partner of Dubai's Downtown Design, held from 14 to 17 November 2017, confirming its commitment as a promoter of design in the UAE.

Andrea Pane

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Watch without being seen Reuse of Pozzacchio Fort

Francesco Collotti and Giacomo Pirazzoli

Work

Pozzacchio Fort

Client

First lot: Superintendence for the Architectural and Cultural Heritage of the Autonomous Province of Trento
Second lot: Trambileno Municipality (Autonomous Province of Trento)

Location

Pozzacchio District, Trambileno Municipality
Valmorbia District, Vallarsa Municipality

Project Year

1998-2009: design
2010-2013: execution

Architecture and Design

Francesco Collotti, Giacomo Pirazzoli

Architect

Francesco Collotti, Giacomo Pirazzoli

Project Team

Serena Acciai, Cristiano Balestri, Mauro Boasso, Nicola Cimarosti, Ilaria Corrocher, Valentina Fantin, Georgina Monica Lalli, Eric Medri

Engineering

Claudio Senesi, Studio Aliboni-Tempesta

Coordinator: Giacomo Pirazzoli

Construction Supervision

Sandro Aita, Francesco Collotti, Giacomo Pirazzoli

Additional Functions

Main contractor: Azzolini Costruzioni Generali spa (Arco - TN), B.T.D. Servizi Primiero (Imer - TN)

Image credits

Federico Calabrese

On the border between Austria and Italy there are some remnants of a complex military defence system that includes tracks, trenches, observatories and forts. Such a system was carried out between the mid-nineteenth century and the years preceding World War I for the protection of the Austro-Hungarian territory against possible threats from the Italian Kingdom. After the conflict ended, the area was annexed to Italy.

Among the forts there is one that has peculiar characteristics. It is the Pozzacchio Fort, also called Valmorbia Werk, which is located in the vicinity of the town of Rovereto. While most of the forts were built with stones and reinforced concrete, Pozzacchio's was realised in a distinct way, predominantly from excavations in a huge rock, hiding in its context. The construction of its access road to the mountains was made during 1912, its execution occurred during 1913, but was never completed. Even so, the fort was the scene of disputes during World War I.

In its initial conception, the fort had one main part dug into the rocks of a mountain and an external one with complementary military installations.

In the inner part, an intricate system of spaces in a "U" shape, distributed on two levels was intended to accommodate dormitories for soldiers and officers, offices, ammunition and storage depots, water channels and tanks, latrines, telephone switchboard, artillery rooms, a room with an optical tube that could allow sending luminous signals to the allied troops. All these places were connected by a network of tunnels. The internal and external parts were linked by tunnels and a vertical well. There was an intention to settle in the upper part of the well three reinforced metal domes with cannons and machine guns. These domes would have been connected with the bottom of the rock through stairs and a freight elevator; the connection between the domes would have been made by corridors and stairs.

A narrow winding road with tunnels dug in a mountain allowed access to the rock and to the area outside it, with sparse facilities. Among them there were quarters for officers to use in times of peace.

The architects Francesco Collotti and Giacomo Pirazzoli carried out the intervention in the complex between 1997 and 2015. They made some specific designs, located inside and outside the rock, which affect the spaces and their perception at multiple scales.

As the architects explain, the re-reading of the physical sources and the written ones, has allowed them to focus on a site-specific intervention strategy that excluded both a "pure invention" or a hyperhistorical reconstruction, typical of similar interventions, that most of the times are arbitrary. These kinds of interventions usually forget about contemporaneity. >



Within the rock, the design consists of the provision of some dispersed architectural structures, such as stairs, platforms, walkways, parapets, balconies, benches, footbridges and so on. Despite the first sensation of being lost inside the fort, one is attracted by these contemporary structures that are situated in its interior spaces and in its borders, stimulating the curiosity for this place, where the troops would have performed their daily activities and actions of attack and defence.

There are some spaces that also catch the attention inside the fortified complex. In its central part, iron platforms and parapets illuminated indirectly along their perimeter indicate the contour of the never completed wooden barracks meant for the dormitories of the soldiers and officers. The intricate net of tunnels finally leads to the niches of the light artillery, where balconies of many different shapes were inserted, emerging from the rock, as little explosions from its interior. In one of this boarder spaces there is an unusual installation that contains a stair which allows the visitors to reach the hole in the rock where the above mentioned optical tube would have been installed; and, to complete, at the upper part of the well, a huge footbridge takes the form of the structure upon which the reinforced concrete domes would have been constructed, culminating the contact between the interior and the exterior of the fort, this time as a big explosion.

The use of a single material, iron, has a significant impact in the intervention. Almost all structures were painted entirely with the same red lead colour, which exalts the material and, at the same time, belongs to the mineral dimension of the place. The metal structures also determine a sequence of points, surfaces and planes, more or less dense, more or less transparent, where there is an alternation of emptiness and fullness. «The expansion, at the same time agile and powerful, of a mass in space», and the use of red lead colour, refer to the sculpture Grande Ferro Sestante that Alberto Burri made in 1982 at the Ex Seccatoio Tabacchi, in the Città di Castello. The machine designed by Collotti and Pirazzoli looks like an old sextant, guiding the visitors inside the fort, accompanying them through the reading and appropriation of this “document of memory”.

Outside of the excavated rock, as it was said before, there are also some other dispersed structures that complete the complex. In the first phase of the project, the architects built two delicate structures with metallic pillars and wooden roofs to protect some ruins and to host a model >



of the fort. With this model children may begin to understand the space. They also erected a building to house an information point, a bar and toilets. In this intervention, Collotti and Pirazzoli followed the indications of some documents that specified how the dormitories of the soldiers and officers inside the rock should have been and they constructed outside a model in a 1:1 scale to refer to, though it is made with other materials. The architects also intended to execute security works in the ruins of the barracks, with the insertion of a structure made with metallic pillars and a roof, but failed to carry it out. Just like Burri's sculpture is part of its context, the intervention in Forte Pozzacchio is part of its environment, establishing relations that are not only physical, but also conceptual. It recreates transition spaces between its interior and exterior, admitting that the new insertions positioned at the borders and on the top of the fort interact with the landscape much more than it could have occurred in conflict times, revealing new connections with it. More than telling the one and true history of Forte Pozzacchio, the intervention explores the existing indications in a much more delicate way, letting the visitors deduce what it might had been, what it is, and what it still can be. Histories that relate to the preliminary existence of the place of the fort, when there was only rock and landscape; of the human efforts required to carry out the war; of the personal dramas suffered during the conflicts; of the period after the war, when nature was taking over space again; of recent years, when people newly began to explore the exterior and interior of the fort; of the present and future potentialities made possible by the current "reconquest" of the fort. All clues are exposed for the visitors to collect, retrieve their memories and conform their own narratives of the fort's history.

Ana Carolina Bierrenbach
Federico Calabrese



References:
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www.acriforte.it/public/A%20riveder%20le%20stelle.pdf

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