

[PAREDES PEDROSA ARQUITECTOS \(/AUTHORS/2144709189-PAREDES-PEDROSA-ARQUITECTOS\)](#), [FABIO FABBRIZZI \(/AUTHORS/2144697781-FABIO-FABBRIZZI\)](#)

Project for via dei Fori Imperiali

Special Mention at the Piranesi Prix de Rome 2016 XIV Edition, competition for via dei Fori Imperiali in Rome.



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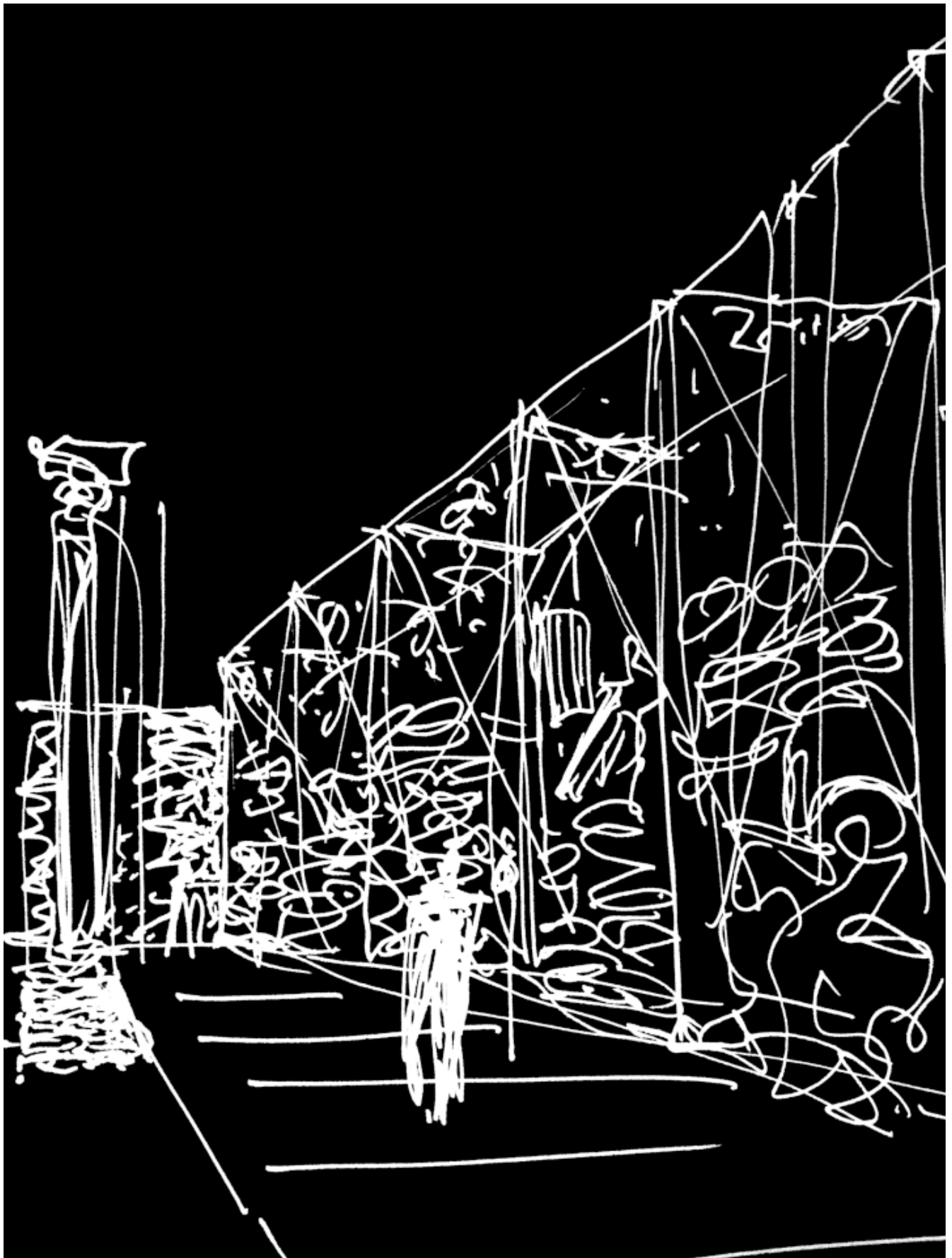
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General considerations and urban setting

Each consideration on architectural ruins brings to a reflection on time; and any reflection on time leads to memory value. So, ruins and memory are strongly related. Each memory refers to an unconscious based on the intersection of events, ideas, values and culture; once this unconscious is related to architecture, each result of the sedimentation due to human operations on cities and landscape is translated into memory value. For every architecture period, another one precedes and another one follows; a long lasting period characterized by a figurative heritage in which the new architecture necessarily has a confrontation with the old one.

Therefore, archaeology is a knowledge expression discipline; in other words, classifications, orders, catalogues and inventories utilized to study philologically the past that emerges from ruins. A past, which the architectural ruins represent the only visual aspect of a condition that we can just imagine. Because of their innate nature, they don't give back the entirety of the built environment, but only a fragment of a no longer existing unity, offering just a part of a complete tale of which no one will ever have certainty. But offering us this partial vision, however ruins can demonstrate something really deeper instead of their immanence: they can give back both the formal suggestion and the essential composition and spatial aspect of the architecture they testify.



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In fact, ruins in their essence can offer the vision of different space concepts, simultaneously showing the tectonic strength of masses together with the impulse of tensions otherwise hidden by geometry, the strength of material along with the accuracy of rhythms and proportions, the vitality of appendices against the whole idea of building. They can also show flesh and bones of the building, slices of skin and segments of innards, revealing in unison the plan and the section, in a simultaneity that recounts the space like no other complete shape can do.

But, if we go deeper in our analysis, in this recapping process caused principally by time, ruins could paradoxically be all similar, bringing each remnant to a complete and general loss of sense.

Ruins can represent an assets of vitality or just debris, and the discerning criteria is always the contemporary project dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of them; a process able to give back a sense to architecture whose original reason is lost. So, thanks to the project, it's possible to clarify incomprehensible reasons, as long as it's possible to restore relationships between architecture and its context, between ruins and their multiple periods, held evidently or simply suggested.

More than selecting a period among the multiple overlapped ones, the attention to time should be dedicated to the complexity of simultaneity between the different temporal layers that today form and position the ruin; in this way, ruin is returned again to a possible interpretation and comprehension, no more read from a unique point of view but understood thanks to the residual fragments.



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For this reason, a project that proposes the only philological restitution of ruins, its formal clarification, without specifying the other various implication, is something to avoid. A right architectural approach aimed to the preservation of archaeological ruin, should first clarify no more evident roles, reasons and intentions, underlining the relations that in past time created the singularity of architecture that we are paying attention to.

Through analysis and then allusion, analogy and recollection - useful design instruments that help creating an interpretation itinerary more than a quoting one -, in relation to archaeological context, contemporary architecture should reactivate those dialogues suspended by time.

A project for an in situ museum is not just a complex of operation aimed to serve archaeology; it's a system in which reciprocity between archaeology, new architecture and the context creates an original architectural entity that shows the relations among

old and new fragments. But to do this, it's not sufficient that the project outlines the characteristics of ruins; in other words, it should not become a further fragment in assonance to the others but a system that connects data, experiences and sensations which usually accompanies and "develops" archaeological theme.

The contemporary project is the means that gives new life to the archaeological ruins; while working on the spatial essence of sites, it can reach the original design matrices to propose them again in an interpretative register, understanding their relation within the past and the present in prevision of a "future conveyance".

To such considerations, that forms the basis of our design approach, we must add the verification of how, in preserving the past, contemporary projects privilege the two extremes of matter: what is still capable of communicate something and what instead is silent and voiceless.



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For this reason, although the area reveals a great number of periods stratification, we chose to enhance one layer over the others. Being aware of the same value we must give to each epoch on a documentary point of view, this assumption is weaker once we talk about communicative level.

In fact, there are periods in history that better relates to the present than others, exactly because of their generative capacity. For example, the Roman world, which is so prolific in conceiving spatial principles, in type creation, in identifying building techniques and prefiguring visions that had become so common during the following epochs. Therefore, we clarified the Roman layer removing the other few historical fragments, already partially removed during the interventions of 1930s.

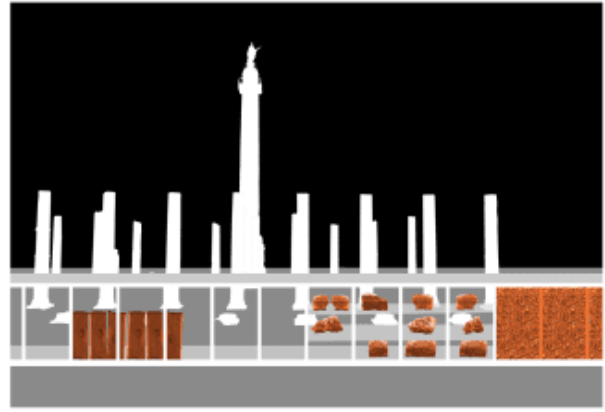
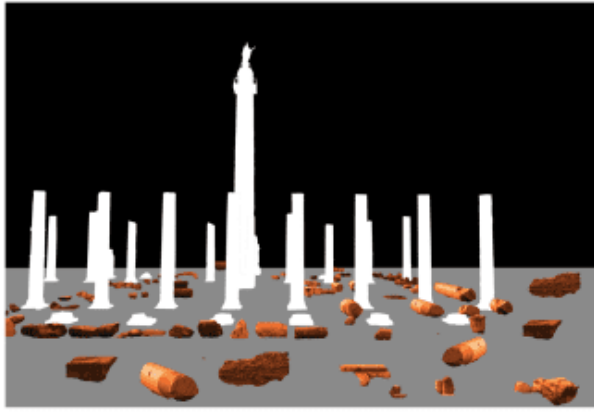
This approach arises from the simple remark of the current situation, in which the few medieval traces assume an extraneousness value toward the clarity of Roman structure; this vision aims to reaffirm the communicative importance and the preponderance of this layer over the contemporary, not only from a documentary point of view but also in an emotive experience. In the project proposal, this choice is actualized in some design macro-actions that lead to further design steps.



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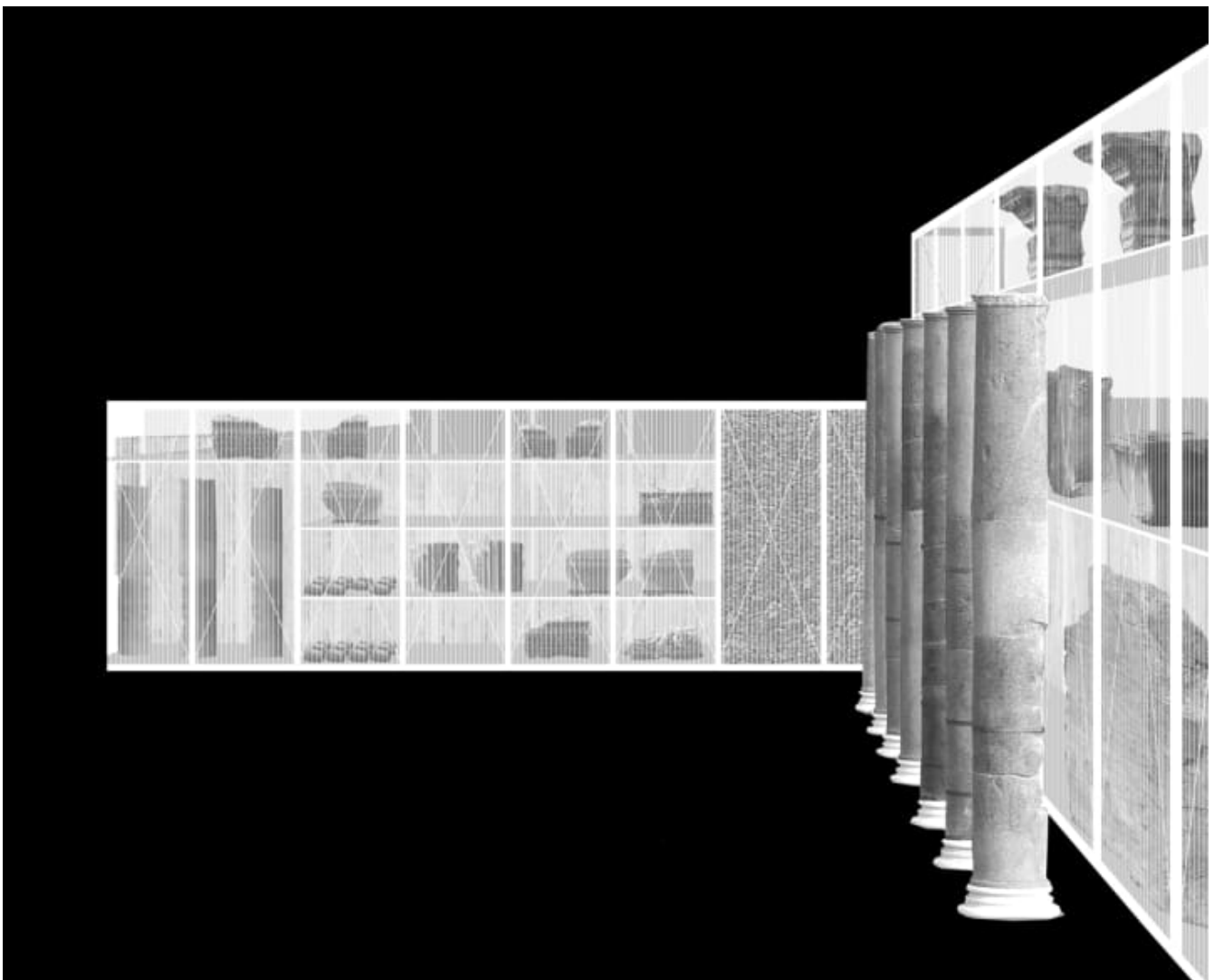
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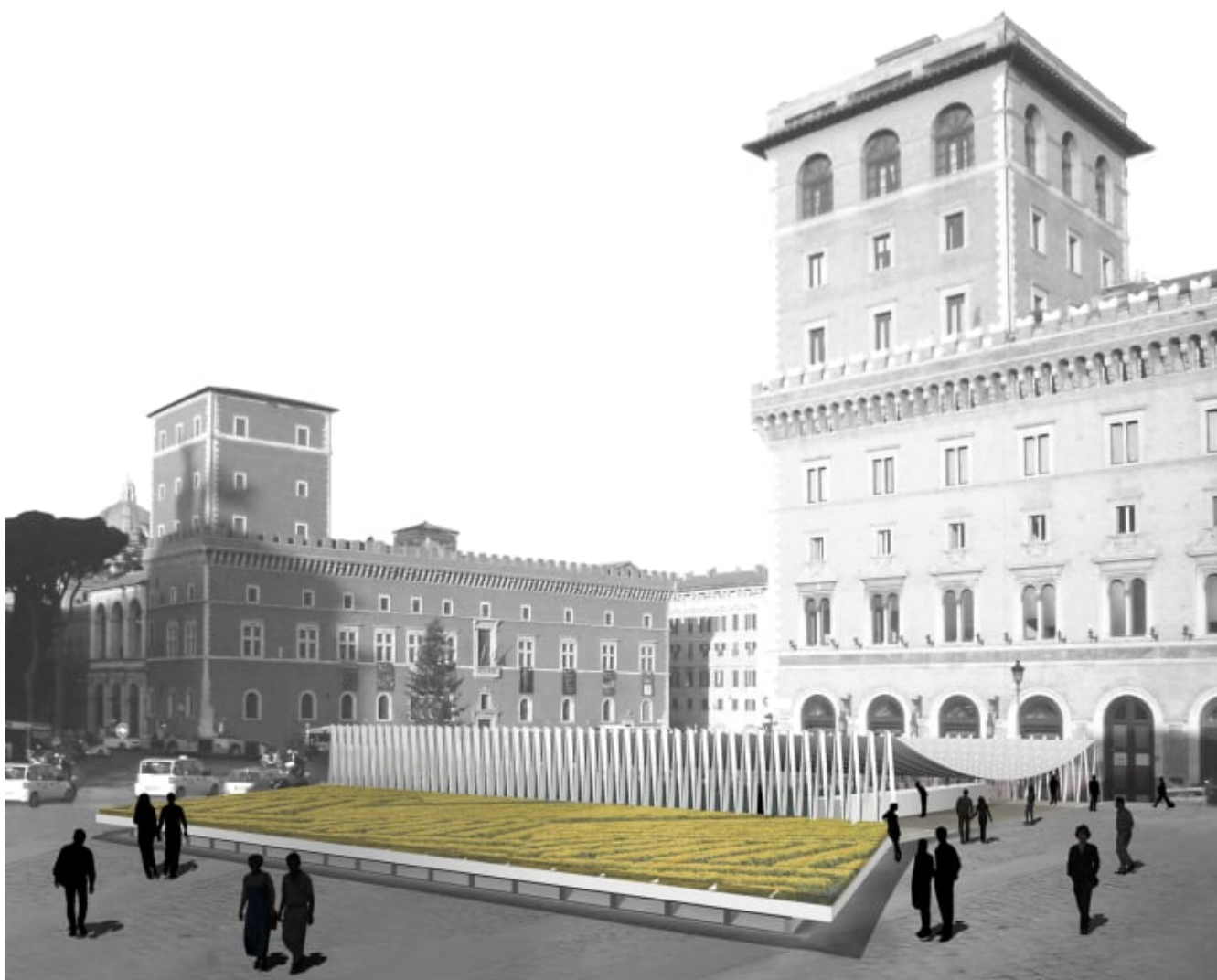
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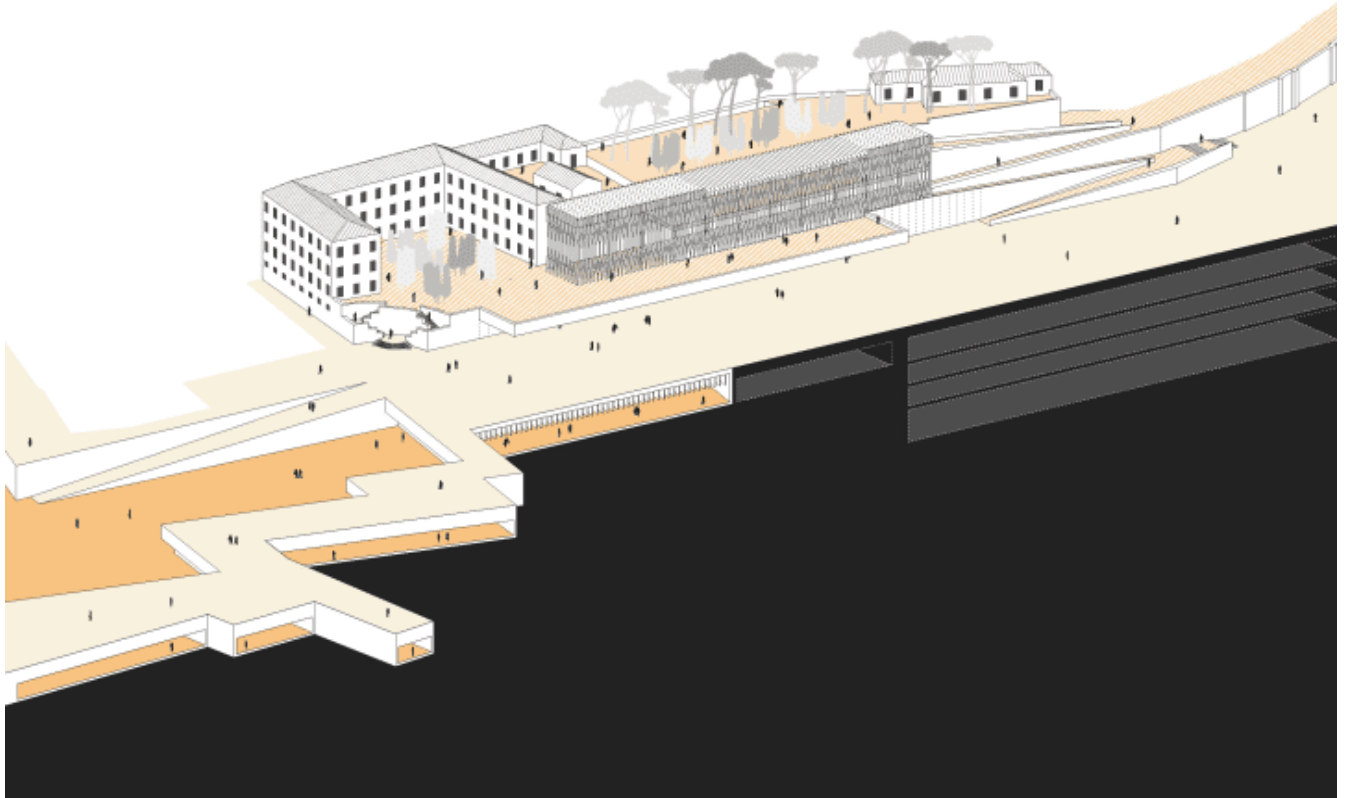
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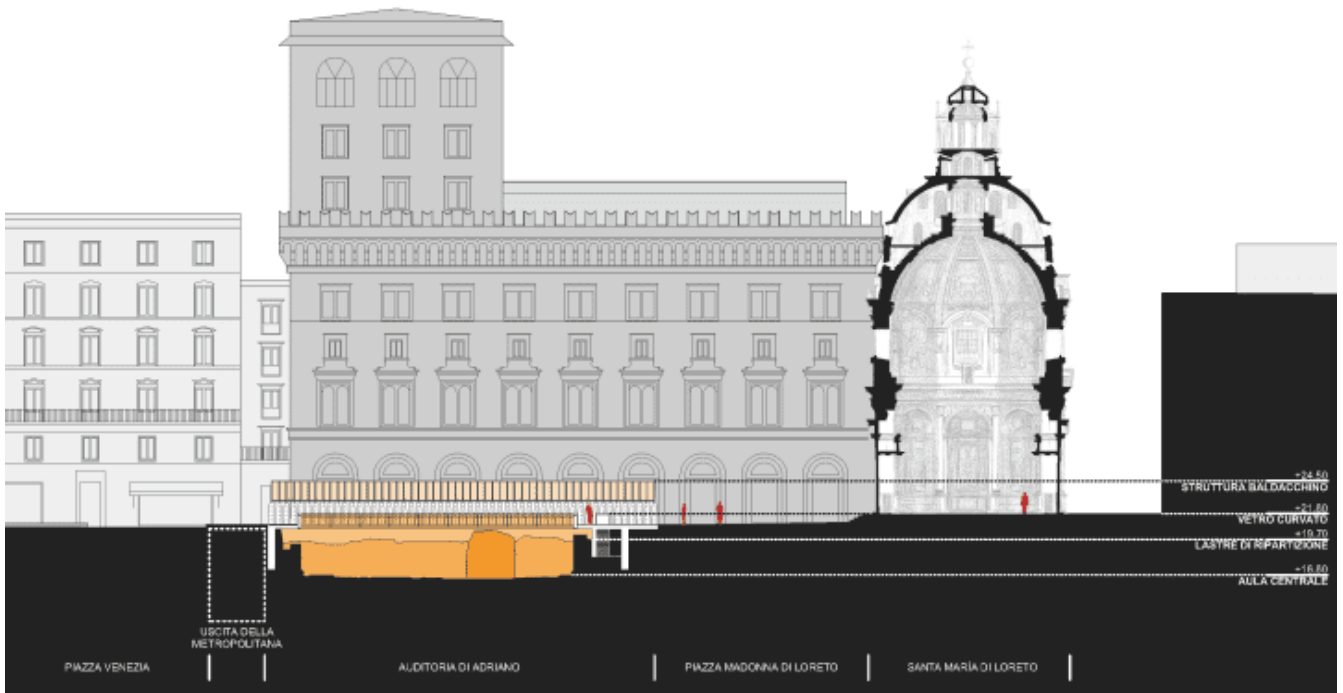
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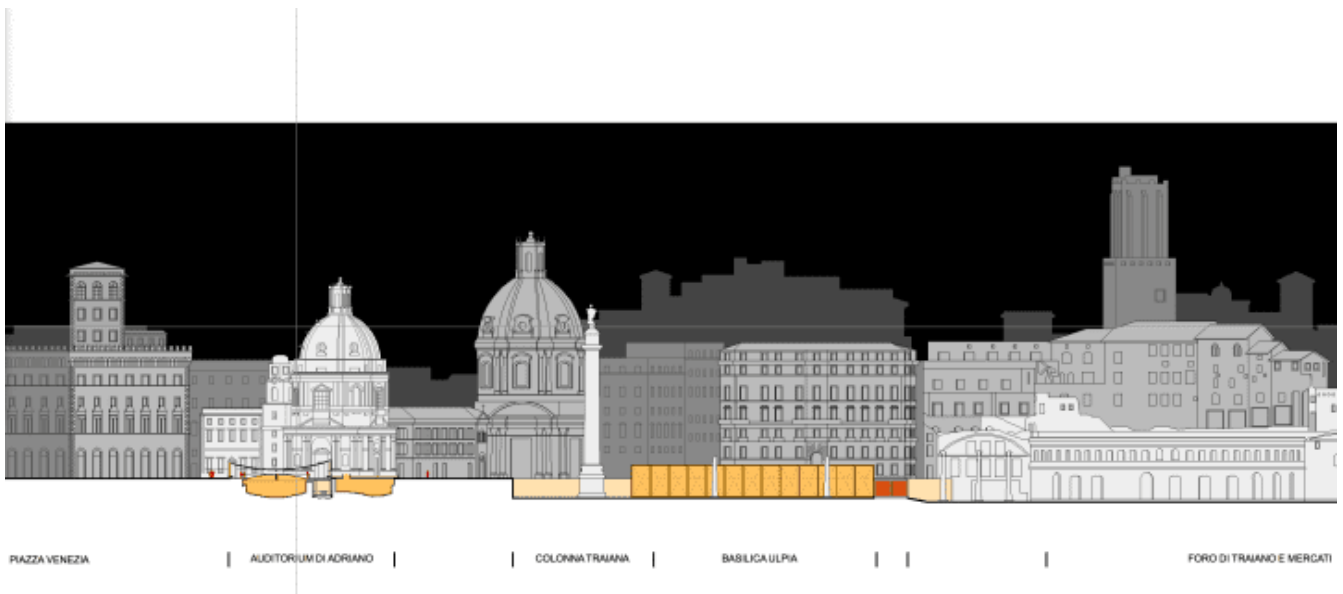
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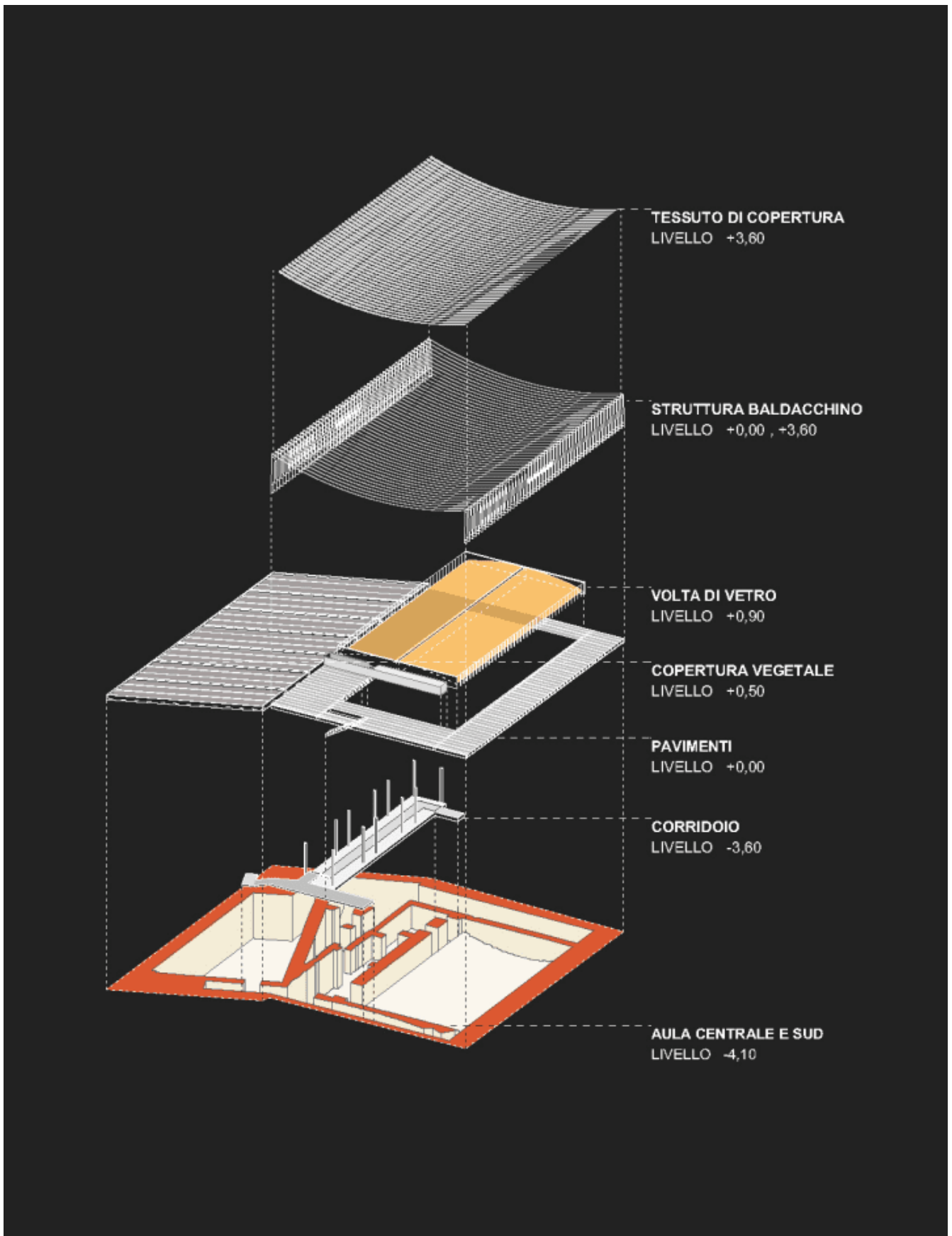
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LOCATION

ITALIA - ROMA

DESIGNERS

[PAREDES PEDROSA ARQUITECTOS \(/AUTHORS/2144709189-PAREDES-PEDROSA-ARQUITECTOS\)](/AUTHORS/2144709189-PAREDES-PEDROSA-ARQUITECTOS), [FABIO FABBRIZZI \(/AUTHORS/2144697781-FABIO-FABBRIZZI\)](/AUTHORS/2144697781-FABIO-FABBRIZZI)

PROJECT YEAR

2016

PROGETTO

DIDA. DIPARTIMENTO DI ARCHITETTURA, UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI FIRENZE

PROF. FABIO FABBRIZZI (UNIVERSITY GROUP COORDINATOR)

RESEARCHERS: GIACOMO TEMPESTA, ANDREA RICCI, CECILIA MARIA ROBERTA LUSCHI, ROBERTO SABELLI, FRANCESCO ALBERTI, MICHELE COPPOLA, LAURA AIELLO, FABIOLA GORGERI, NICO FEDI, PAOLO OLIVERI.

STUDENTS: GIACOMO MARTINIS, ALESSANDRO MENGANA, LUCA PASQUALOTTI, FRANCESCO RAPPELLI, DOMENICO RIVETTI, BEATRICE STEFANINI, ALESSANDRA VENTUROLI, ALESSANDRA VEZZI

PAREDES PEDROSA ARQUITECTOS

ARCHITECTS: ÁNGELA GARCÍA DE PAREDES, IGNACIO G. PEDROSA (PROFESSIONAL STUDIO COORDINATOR)

COLABORATORS: ÁLVARO RÁBANO, CLEMENS EICHNER, ROBERTO LEBRERO, LUIS GALLEGO

ING. ALFONSO GÓMEZ GAITE - CONSULTEnte STRUTTURISTA

INTERNS: VICENTE BELLOSTA, EDOARDO SOLITO

CONSULTANTS

FRANCESCA CREMASCO, LIGHT DESIGNER

RICHARD INGERSOLL, ARCH. PH.D - CRITICO DI STORIA DELL'ARTE E DELL'ARCHITETTURA

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