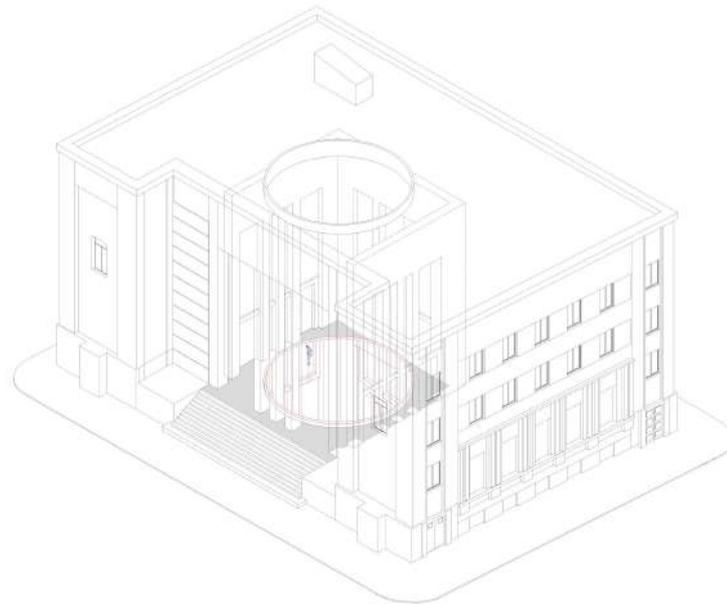


03. Mirrored Perspectives

Victoria Van Kan



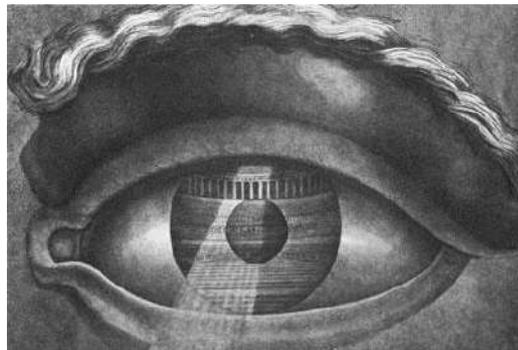
Isometric view
Casa
del
Mutilato with
pool



'Mirrored
Perspectives'
consists of a
pool which
will form an
identical
upside-

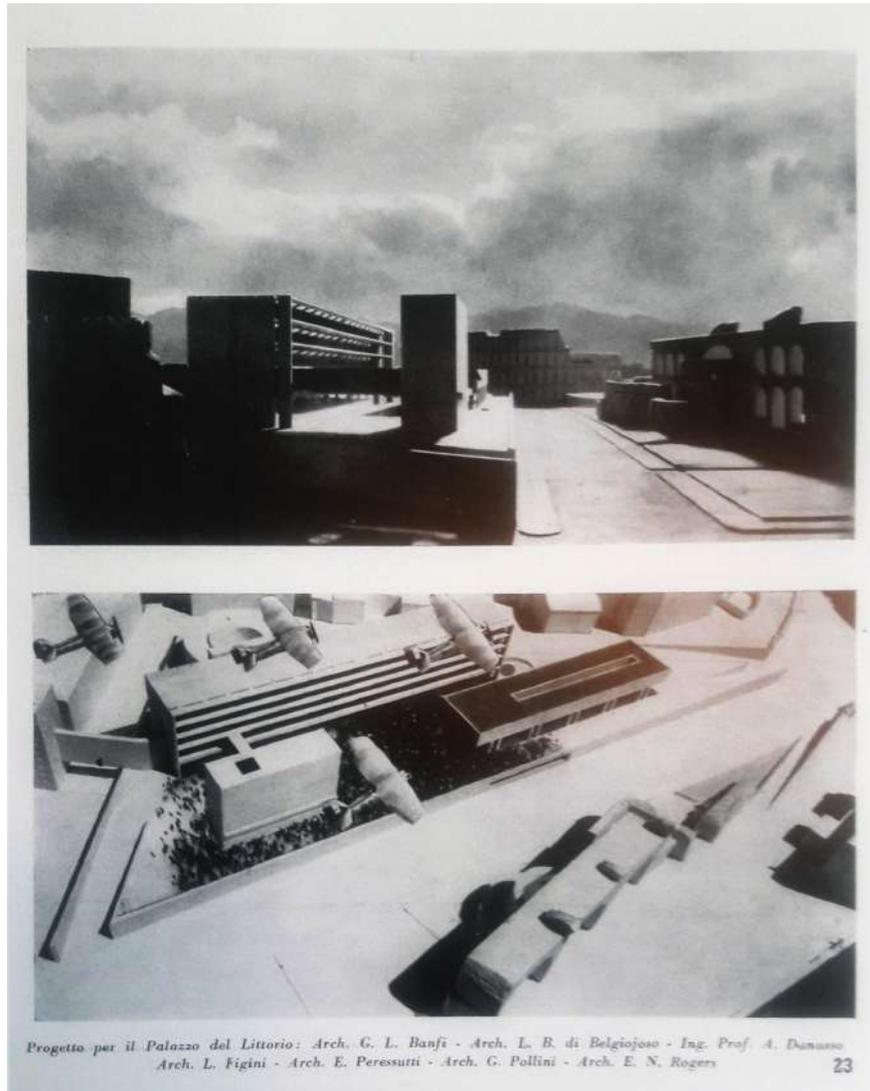
down reflection in the space of the atrium crowned by its 'oculus'. On one hand, it will make a reflection on the vertical power relations inside Fascist architecture. On the other hand, the reflection makes a metaphorical reference to the fascist architecture in Italy's so-called "twin-spaces" or ex-colonies, creating an empty space to give an image to Italy's 'geographical mutilation' and troubled history.

The pool is a 15 cm high basin with the circumference of the oculus, installed in the atrium. It is made waterproof with black folio and filled up with water. Upon entering the pool the public will step into a groundless space disrupting the concept of being above or below.¹ The reflection of the 16 metre high atrium space will evidence the vertical perspective as a design tool for evoking the fascist hierarchical structures. The oculus, an architectural element widely used referring to the all-seeing-eye of God above, will be projected from below.



Claude-Nicolas Le Doux, Drawing Interior Theatre At Besancon, 1784

¹ Hito Steyerl, 'In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective', in *The Wretched of the Screen* (e-flux, 2011)

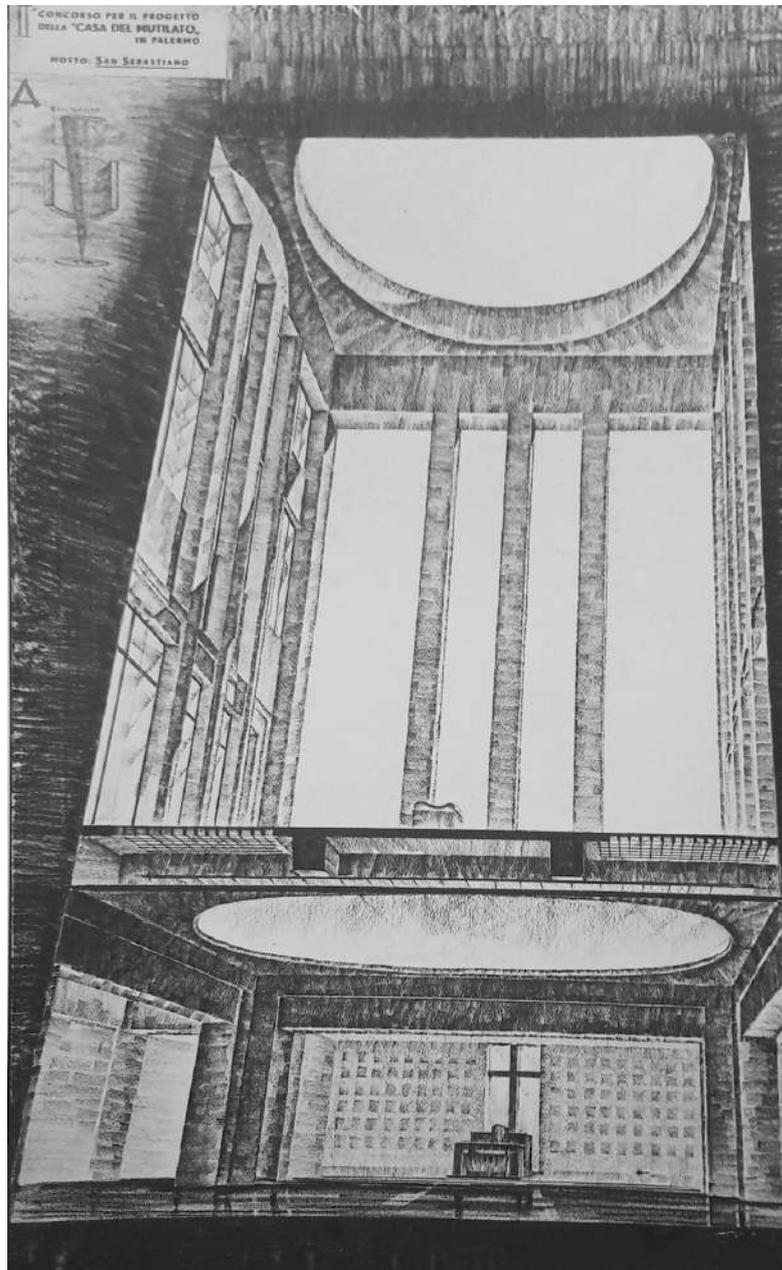


Gruppo Quadrante, Palazzo del Littorio competition entry, 1937. *Quadrante*, 16-17, August-September 1934, p 23.

Source: David Rifkind, *Quadrante and the Politicization of Architectural Discourse in Fascist Italy*, 2007

The aerial perspective has been widely used by architects as a presentation tool for the new modern fascist architecture. Figure 3 is an example of a collage of crowds and airplanes on a photograph of a model from above, made for the *Quadrante* Magazine for a competition for the new palace of Mussolini. The architect was using this powerful perspective emphasizing the idea of control and the capacity of the architecture to host masses.² This privileged perspective has nowadays been undermined by satellites, google, drones...

² David Rifkind, 'Quadrante and the Politicization of Architectural Discourse in Fascist Italy' (Columbia University 2007)



Giuseppe Spatrisano, drawing of Casa del Mutilato for 'San Sebastiano' Competition
Source: Giuseppe Spatrisano Archive at Fondazione per l'Arte e la Cultura Lauro Chiazzese

The duplication of the oculus in the atrium floor is also inspired by an drawing by the architect Spatrisano, as another version of Casa del Mutilato for the architectural competition of 'San Sebastiano'.



Tripoli Trade Fair Pavilion of Rome, from "Architettura e Arti Decorative" 1929
by Alessandro Limongelli

As a programme, the pool will offer a fresh space to discuss the architecture built under Fascist period in the colonies, that remains invisible in Italy. The water is reflecting the similar architecture built in the overseas territories referred to as "twin spaces". This new national style would evoke the unification of the new Roman Empire and empower its greatness. In order to make the colonies similar to Italy the new architecture was often designed with the obsessive idea of sanitizing, purifying and controlling the areas.

On one of Casa del Mutilato's walls there is an explicit reminder of the Roman Empire including the Albania and Ethiopia. The architectural discourse around fascist heritage will include those spaces.



Inscription at the Casa del Mutilato atrium