

## Events

# OLIVETTI@TOSCANA.IT

## Territory, Community, Architecture

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The exhibition entitled *OLIVETTI@TOSCANA.IT Territory, Community, Architecture in Olivetti's Tuscany* took place from 20 December 2019 to 13 April 2020 (with a subsequent extension) in the headquarters of the *Museo della Grafica*, located in the historic palazzo Lanfranchi in Pisa. The exhibition was curated by Marco Giorgio Bevilacqua, Mauro Ciampa, Lucia Giorgetti, Stefania Landi and Denise Ulivieri. The promoters of the initiative were the Departments of 'Civiltà e Forme del Sapere' and 'Ingegneria dell'Energia, dei Sistemi, del Territorio e delle Costruzioni' of the University of Pisa as well as the Museums of 'Grafica' and 'Strumenti per il Calcolo', both of the University of Pisa and, the first, also of the Municipality of Pisa.

The exhibition, introduced on the inauguration day by Chiara Bodei (president of the Pisan University *Sistema Museale*), Alessandro Tosi (director of the *Museo della Grafica*), Fabio Gadducci (director of the *Museo degli Strumenti per il Calcolo*), Massimo Dringoli (councilor to the Town Planning of the Municipality of Pisa) as well as by the curators, it was set up on two floors of the Palace and through the exhibition of the materials (distributed in fifteen rooms of the same) it documented Olivetti's 'presence' in Tuscany through the definition of three main focus: territory, community, architecture.

As is known, in recent years the Olivetti Industry has been the subject of many studies and research that have deepened the themes of innovation, design, social sensitivity, the 'enlightened' figure of Adriano, son of the founder Camillo Olivetti. Little, however, is known of the role that the Olivetti Industry had in Tuscany, the region in which the *Pisan Electronic Calculator* was designed, the first computer in Italy resulting from the synergy between Olivetti and the University of Pisa, and where within the *Laboratorio di Ricerche Elettroniche* of Pisa *Elea 9003* was developed, the first fully transistor electronic calculator and awarded in 1959 by ADI, *Associazione per il Disegno Industriale*, with the 'Compasso d'Oro' for the innovative design curated by Ettore Sottsass. On this basis and from the curators' will, the idea was born to deepen this theme, first through research, then with the dissemination of the results through an exhibition that, from the beginning, was conceived by them as an itinerant. The result, therefore, of several years of research, the exhibition tells an Olivetti story "in the round", which spreads an idea of social community and is based on respect for people, culture and art in an epochal context that sees transposition in Tuscany and, in particular, in Massa, Viareggio, Pisa, Florence, Dono-

ratico (fraction of Castagneto Carducci in the province of Livorno) and, more specifically, in the Valdera and Pontedera districts, the Olivetti ideas of the *Movimento Comunità* that will lead the then so-called 'urban planners led' (among which the person of Francesco Bagatti stands out) to experience his interest in community experiences of territorial planning open to social and human needs. On an architectural scale, however, the Olivetti branch in Florence (of which the architecture with a modern and innovative formal and structural conception is highlighted) and, above all, the Olivetti Synthesis plant (built in the Apuan Industrial Zone in Massa) represent the mass in the work of a social ideal, a factory conceived on a measure of 'person', women and men. The project of the Olivetti Synthesis factory, where metal sheet filing cabinets are first produced, then modular and modular open space office furniture and systems (including the *Spazio* series, *Compasso d'Oro* in 1962), is conceived as an island happy surrounded by greenery where architecture and nature are integrated into an idea of beauty as a comfort and redemption tool for workers and their families. Equally attentive to the quality of life of the families of Olivettian workers are the architectural projects for

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**TERRITORIO, COMUNITÀ, ARCHITETTURA nella Toscana di Olivetti**

**PISA Museo della Grafica Palazzo Lanfranchi**

**20 DICEMBRE 2019 13 APRILE 2020**

**Lettera 22**

Con il patrocinio le il contributo di: **REGIONE TOSCANA**

Con il contributo di: **FONDAZIONE PISA** **ACQUE**

Con il patrocinio di: **unione italiana disegno** **EXPOWALL**

Seggini promotori: **COMUNE DI PISA** **MUSEO DELLA GRAFICA** **UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA**

In collaborazione con: **FONDAZIONE CENTRO STUDI DI PISA CARLO LUDOVICO RAGGHIANI** **Associazione ARCHIVIO STORICO OLIVETTI**

Museo **Strumenti per il Calcolo**

the complex of thirty-six apartments for the employees of the Synthesis plant and the building complex for the *Olivetti Colonia* in Marina di Massa, documented here on display through the recent photos of Eva Mulas in which the structure appears in a total state of abandonment and degradation.

At the same time, in the cultural field the Tuscan Olivetti story sees the intertwining of the ideas of different personalities such as Adriano Olivetti and Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti on different projects: from the editorial idea for the worldwide distribution of the famous bimonthly magazine of public culture in the field of arts visual, *seleARTE*, to its transformation into the cinematographic theme that will produce the *'critofilm'*, works in which on the indication of Ragghianti the art criticism will be realized with cinematographic means. The research shown in the exhibition highlights how the center of interest of Adriano Olivetti was the well-being of a 'concrete' community capable of interacting intimately with the territory in which he lived to produce products (from typewriters to calculators, to furniture for office) recognized all over the world as works of design, expression of a culture not only technological but artistic, full of a social value supported by the welcome of the architecture of the workplace and of the social services supporting the community, and the At the same time, it is spread throughout the world through new forms of visual communication such as graphics, another fundamental protagonist in the creation of the image of the 'Olivetti style'.

Organized in cognitive paths in compliance with the different intervention scales, the exhibition *OLIVETTI@TOSCANA.IT* was set up in several rooms on the basis of the archival documents found by the curators at the *Archivio Storico Olivetti*.

Fig. 1. Flyer of the event.

ti of Ivrea, the *Archivio della Fondazione Centro Studi sull'Arte Licia e Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti*, that of the University of Pisa as well as Frediani and private individuals. In this sense, the history of an Olivetti Tuscany built as a cultural, social and productive system inspired by an idea of community as a set of human, territorial and architectural values was manifested and returned to the community. Distributed in the suggestive rooms of palazzo Lanfranchi, with frescoed vaults and whose recent philological restoration of the internal spaces allows you to admire the different construction phases that characterize the history of the building, the exhibition narrated the Olivetti presence in Tuscany through the integrated exhibition of photos, films and drawings (historical and recent), advertising posters, models and vintage industrial products, from the first calculators to the now iconic typewriters, from furniture to office furnishings. Among the films presented and projected on screens, often set up as hanging and / or interspersed with the display panels, we mention the aforementioned 'critofilm' *Comunità millenarie* (1954), *Lucca città comunale* (1955), *Storia di una Piazza (la Piazza del Duomo di Pisa)* (1955), *Terre alte di Toscana* (1961), as well as the approximately twenty interviews conducted by curators with Olivetti workers. These documents and objects exhibited in the exhibition have been commented by the curators with comprehensive captions and / or descriptive panels which, from time to time, have introduced visitors to the various Olivetti fields of interest and action, as well as collected in a catalog of the exhibition at limited edition published by Pisa University Press (2019). In conclusion, the exhibition *OLIVETTI@TOSCANA.IT Territory, Community, Architecture in Olivetti's Tuscany* curated



Fig. 2. Exhibition set up in the halls of palazzo Lanfranchi (photo by Gianluca Giordano).

by the interdisciplinary team of Marco Giorgio Bevilacqua, Mauro Ciampa, Lucia Giorgetti, Stefania Landi and Denise Ulivieri gives the social and scientific community a cross-section full of history but above all of ethical value: an Olivetti and productive Tuscany, which bases its work both on the dignity of workers (women and men) and their families, and on the added value, social and cultural, of the work itself. As in Ivrea, also in Tuscany the engineer Adriano Olivetti but, above all, the enlightened entrepreneur surrounds himself with architects, urban planners and men of culture interested in experimenting in the field of socio-community experience, as well as designers attracted by innovation industrial product and visual communication as an opportunity to build social identity values rather than

a mere commercial vehicle. Finally, in drawing attention to the state of degradation in which this building heritage is facing today, the exhibition launches a further theme, just as little studied, that of *Olivetti in the world*, whose architectural significance in Northern Europe, South America and the Far East and the names of the designers involved (Zanuso, Aulenti, Albini, Kahn, Tange, Stirling, to name a few) suggest new and unprecedented lines of research.

The exhibition *OLIVETTI@TOSCANA.IT Territory, Community, Architecture in Tuscany by Olivetti* was created in collaboration with the *Fondazione Centro Studi sull'Arte Licia e Carlo Ludovico Ragghianti* of Lucca and the *Associazione Archivio Storico Olivetti* of Ivrea, with the contribution of the *Regione Toscana, Fondazione Pisa and Acque S.p.A.*, and with the

patronage of the *Regione Toscana*, the Expo Gallery of Milan and the UID, *Unione Italiana del Disegno*. The photographic campaigns were curated by Gianluca Giordano and Eva Mulas (with the collaboration of Mario Mulas, Olivetti photographer for years in charge

of realizing numerous photographic campaigns of the locations between Europe and the United States) while the exhibition set-up project was performed by Dedalo Building Lab. The next stages and developments of the exhibition, as well as in the inten-

tions of the curators and Covid-19 permitting, are planned at the institutional offices of the Department of Architecture and Industrial Design of the University of Campania 'Luigi Vanvitelli' and of the Department of Architecture and Design of the Polytechnic of Turin.

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