Bulletin # **20**

rights & fights

NETWORKING URBAN COMMUNITIES AND ACTION

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CHANGE

INURA

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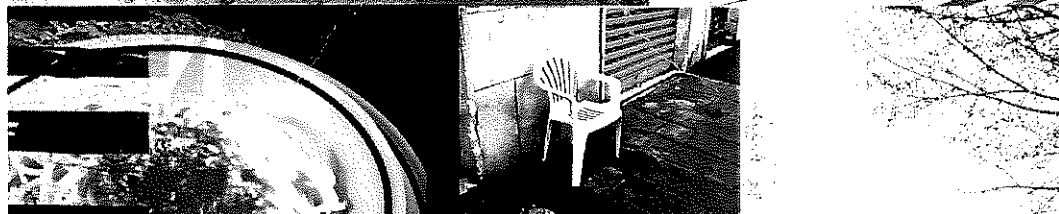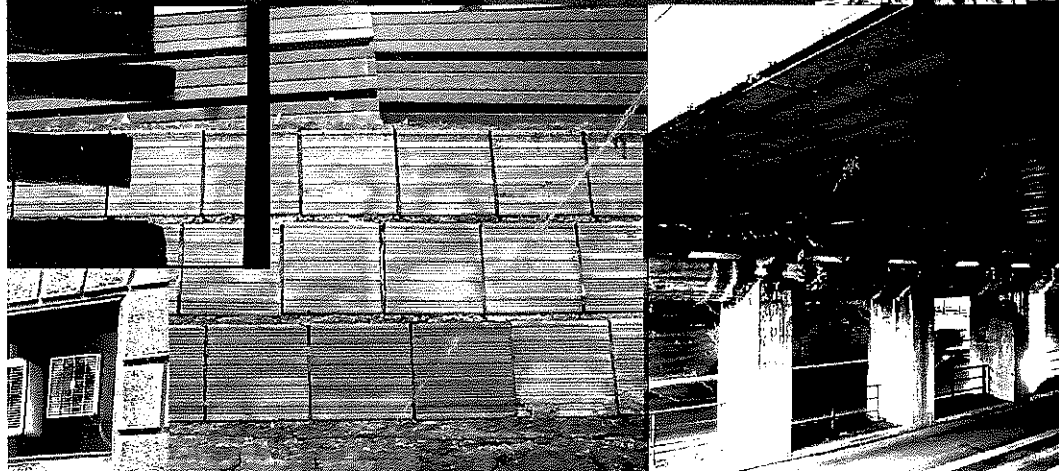
INTERNATIONALNETWORKFORURBANRESEARCHANDACTION

contents

welcome!

Dear friends,
Tuscany is waiting for you to start together the second decade of INURA story.
Our 11th conference will be divided, as ever, into two parts: the first will be a deep immersion into urban issues, looked at by sessions of work on the spot, that will have the Florence area as a case study; the second one, the usual retreat in the countryside, where we'll present and discuss experiences from everywhere in the world and, at the same time, plan the future of our network. The retreat will be at La Chiara di Prumiano, in the municipality of Barberino Val d'Elsa; a 17th Century Villa in the rural "Chiantishire", totally immersed into the landscape that makes so renowned this region between Florence and Siena. As you can easily imagine..... wine won't lack!
We will easily move, by bodies and minds, from the very urban topics we have scheduled as key subjects of the conference to some hints into environmental and socio-economic issues very much related to the rich agricultural areas of central Italy.
We look forward seeing you, not necessary that many, but really keen of working, discussing and enjoying together.

INURA Florence
Annalisa, Camilla, Giancarlo, Giovanni, Iacopo, Lorenzo, Marvi, Raffaele.

florence 2001

A few words to introduce you the XXI Century Florence, as it appears to us.

Usually we look at Florence as at a quiet Italian city, renowned because of its important historical past - sometimes a cumbersome one - and of its mostly tourist and cultural present.

This is a very partial and wrong image. Florence is actually a very complex city, which is changing dramatically; a city full of conflicts and new chances, where common rights can be denied and achieved; a city soaked in its ancient beauty and contemporaneous suffering. It's a domain contested by commercial and tourist globalisation on one side and rights to live in a proper way on the other one.

The Florence metropolitan area, including Fiesole and Scandicci, Pontassieve and Prato, is one of the most important Italian industrial area, mainly because of its light manufacturing production spread over the region, rich of deeply exploited human and environmental resources. These thriving industries are very much connected with the fashion and design business: leather, textile, furniture, clothing, etc. Medium size plants, small factories and home production sprawl out everywhere: in the urban suburbs, in the industrial zones lining up the motorway, in the "campagna urbanizzata" (urbanised countryside). Florence is still today a place where work is very much exploited in the factories and you can easily find, in some corner of the close plain, unexpected sweatshops: uninterrupted work-cycle, children at work, self-exploitation by piece-work production, etc.

The commercial and finance headquarters of the light industry, mostly fashion related, have their seats into the very hearth of the city and in some of the new external business centres. The fame of the city itself works as a gigantic logo into the fashion world. Prada, Gucci and other worldwide renowned fashion "griffes" have been opening recently retail outlets into their main production plants in the area.

Tourism itself has been changing all over the last decades turning into a mass industry of art holidays: a huge machinery which absorbs energy and flows of people and money. Florence historical centre is more and more loosing its inhabitants, old local shops, traditional ancient handicraft skills while hotels, tourist shops and restaurants, branches, showrooms, buying offices of multinational fashion companies are filling all its ancient palaces.

The Florentine social structure is becoming more and more complicated because of the new commercial and economic role of the city. Immigration has grown up and differentiate at the same time: a large amount of Chinese population works into the textile and leather sectors, mainly East Europe immigrants work in the building industry as North Africans do into marginal trades; Arabs and other Africans work as temporary employees into the tourist and retailing sectors; maids, hospital and home nurses are mainly Asian and Philippines. Gypsies, Roms, Albanians and marginal workers of all over the world try to survive in a legal or illegal way, hit by thousands of troubles, picking up the city mass consumption crumbs.

The university, with its 60,000 students, represents a key sector of the Florentine economy and, at the same time, another cause of distortion and exploitation of the building market.

In short the actual structure of the city is a difficult one to describe and to understand, but it is sure very faraway form the Florence stereotype image you find in the travel journals and guides.

Florence is a contested city. Streets, squares, public spaces are the domain of a daily battle: tourism, consumers, city users on one side, residents, new inhabitants, immigrates and dropouts on the other one. Florence is the place too where proactive insurgent people try to organise their everyday life: alternative students organisations, small squatters communities, "centri sociali", grassroots groups working to regenerate the suburbs life, volunteers who works to help and care poor people, immigrants associations, people promoting participatory projects in areas at risk, school workshops where the children are deeply involved to improve their own neighbourhood and so on. This is the part of the city we want to relate to during our meeting in Florence.

call for papers & videos

RIGHTS and FIGHTS
Networking Urban Communities and Actions

11th INURA Conference
Florence, Italy
September 24-28th, 2001

A new decade is starting for INURA. It's time to evaluate our outcomes and think about our future common projects....
Connecting research and action and networking people and groups fighting for social, cultural, economic and environmental rights, have always been the aims of Inurians. The next INURA meeting in Florence will focus on key urban issues to be enlightened through community alternatives and insurgent creativity
According to 'INURA style', everyone can/must contribute to discussions and round tables open to the whole city.
To build an attractive and detailed program we need NOW your suggestions and proposals for PAPERS and VIDEOS to be presented in the different sections of the Florence meeting.

The main topics of the conference are:
1) Urban movements, space and new social relationships
2) Re-appropriation, renewal and self/community rehabilitation of living
3) Public/community partnerships, participation and creative projects
4) Community projects for a multiethnic and plural city

Deadline for abstracts of papers and/or videos (max 300 words)
August 30th 2001

Send to: raffaele@unifi.it or G.Allegretti@agora.it

The papers will be presented and discussed in the different sessions in Florence or during the retreat in the Chianti countryside, where we'll have enough time to rethink collectively our future common projects and networked actions.
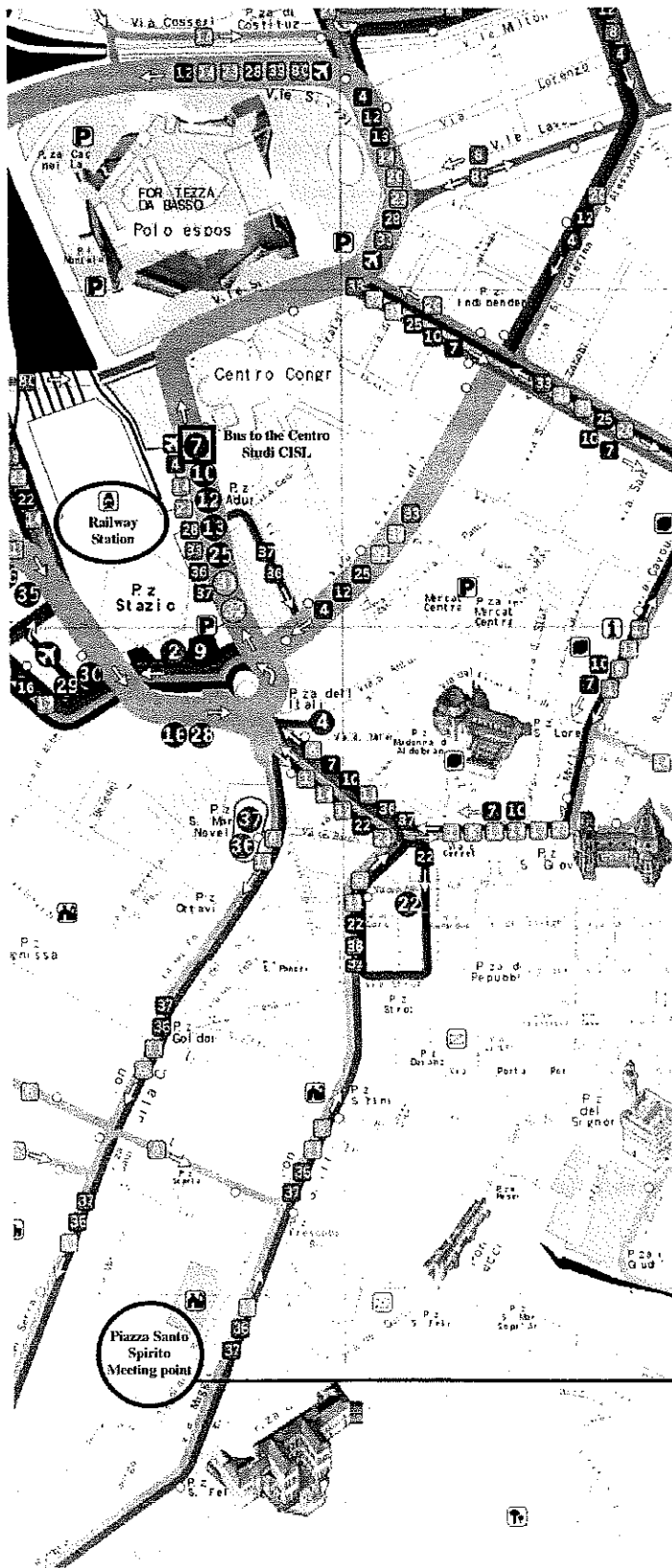
programme

Sunday, September 23

6.00-10.00 pm

location: Piazza Santo Spirito
arrival of participants / dinner
transfer to the Centro studi CISL lodging

From the railway station bus N. 36 or 37.
From piazza Santa Maria Novella or piazza del Duomo bus. N. 11

Monday, September 24

9.00 am

location: Centro studi CISL breakfast room :
welcome and Introduction
Florence: the historical city, the contemporary
city, the insurgent city.

10.30 am

Historical city safari (2-3 groups)

1.00 pm

Lunch on your choice

3.00 - 9.00 pm

Location: "Centro sociale" ex-Emerson:
Urban movements, "Centri sociali", housing
Introduction
Experiences: Housing fight movement,
Exodus, Kraftwerk.
Urban actions, video screening
Dinner

Tuesday, September 25

9.30 - 2.00pm

Location: Fondazione Michelucci - Fiesole:
Multiethnic and plural city; the Fondazione
Michelucci activities
Experiences: Porto Franco/Regione Toscana,
other cases
Lunch

3.30 - 7.00pm

Location: Aula Magna Rettorato, University of
Florence
CHANGING THE CITY, PRACTICING THE
UTOPIA
welcome:
Augusto Marinelli, Dean of University of
Florence
Mariella Zoppi, Councillor for Culture, Regione
Toscana
Speakers:
Leonie Sandercock (Canada),
John Friedman (USA) ,
Alberto Magnaghi (Italy - Florence),
Marco Revelli (Italy - Turin, to be confirmed)

Wednesday, September 26

9.30 am

Quartiere Le Piagge tour

10.30 -1.00 pm

Location: "Laboratorio di quartiere" Le Piagge:
"Contratti di quartiere", community projects
and participation
Le Piagge: the making of a community
Experiences: Four Cities Project, Le Piagge
project, other

1.00 - 5.30 pm

Location: centro sociale "Il pozzo":
Ethnic lunch
Insurgent planning practices: the LAPEI
research on Florence

6.00 - 7.00 pm

Transfer by coach to the retreat

7.00- 9.00 pm

Location: La Chiara di Prumiano
The Villa and the gardens
Rooms and room mates organisation
Dinner

9.30 pm

INURA issues and planning of the retreat pro
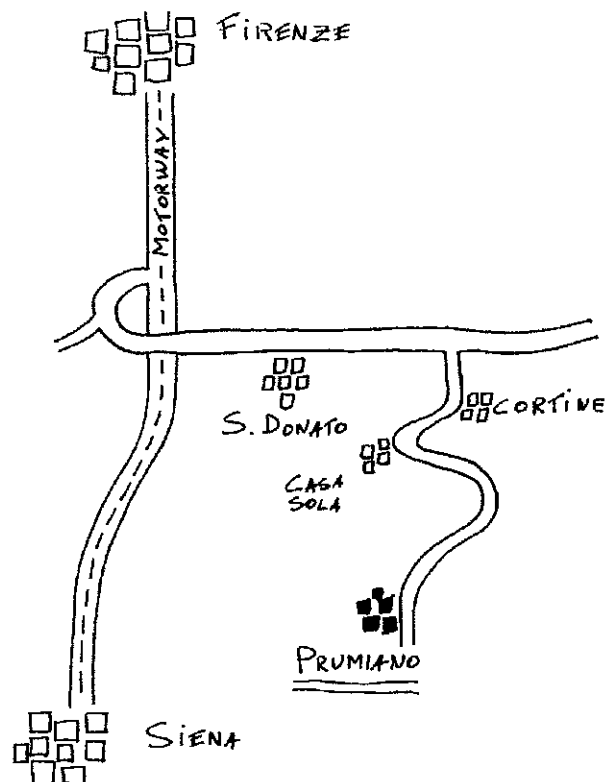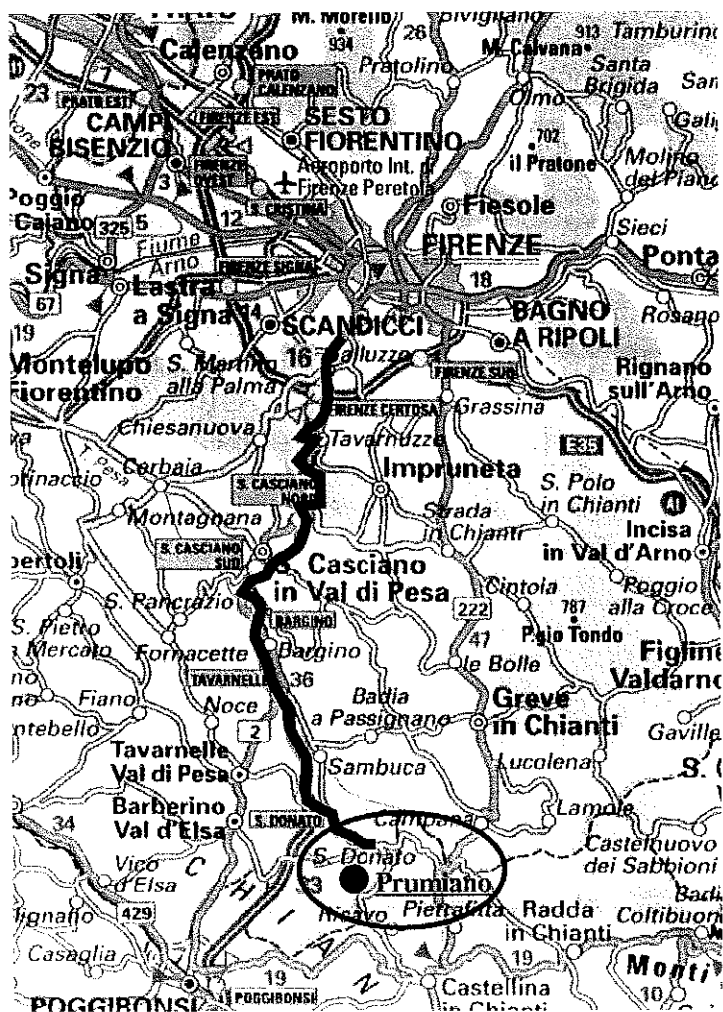gramme

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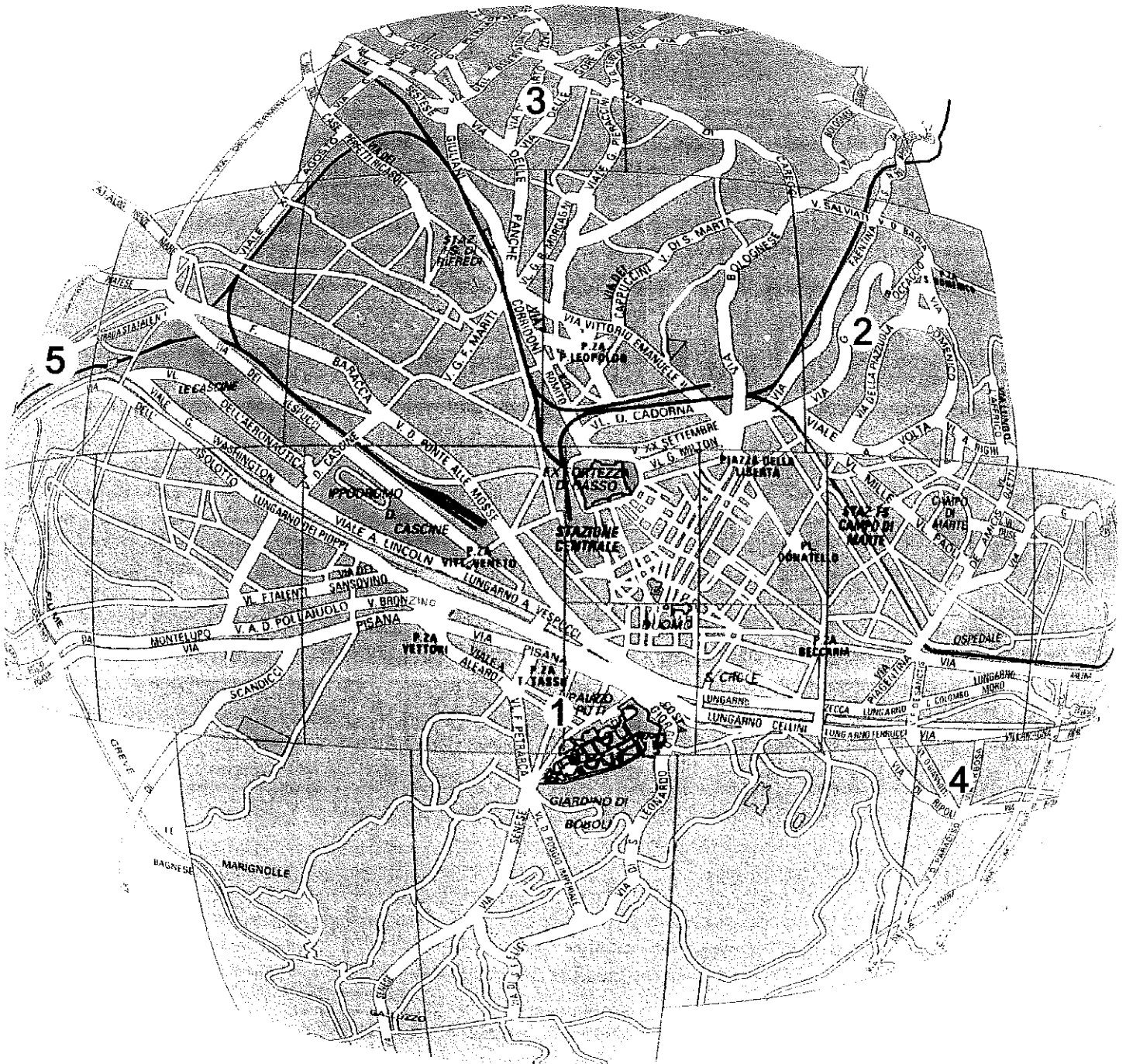
1 piazza Santo Spirito / **2** centro studi CISL via della Piazzola 71 / **3** Ex Emerson via Niccolò da Tolentino
4 C.P.A. fi-sud viale Giannotti 79 / **5** Le Piagge - centro sociale 'Il pozzo' via Lombardia 1P

retreat

La Chara di Prumiano
Strada di Cortine, 12
Barberino Val d'Elsa (FI)
Tel. +39 055 8075583

Thursday, September 27 - Friday, September 28

Two days to be organised including:
Presentations on the four topics:
- Urban movements, space and new social relationships
- Re-appropriation, renewal and self/community rehabilitation of living
- Public/community partnerships, participation and creative projects
- Community projects for a multiethnic and plural city

Half a day tour around the Tuscanian country

Friday night INURA 2001 Party

Saturday, September 29

9.30 - Back to Florence and departures

The **Tuscan Antagonist Movement** comprehend the Selfmanaged Social Centre Ex Emerson, the Housing Fight Movement and many other collectives of social and political initiative in Tuscany. Its roots lies at the beginning of the eighties, when persons and groups from the extreme left come together after the tough repression of the end of the seventies. It believes that "the alternative is the organization of the denied rights". In its point of view the answer to social needs have to be found through self management, reclaim of spaces, self organisation in the territory against the social and environmental harmfulness and in working places against exploitation. The Housing Fight movement have the aim to guarantee the right to housing through direct action, self organisation and self management.
http://utenti.tripod.it/csaexemerson/emerson.html

The **Fondazione Giovanni Michelucci** was set up in 1982 by Giovanni Michelucci, the Regione Toscana and the Town Councils of Fiesole and Pistoia. As planned by the great architect, the Fondazione Michelucci promotes studies and research, organizes seminars and conventions, publishes magazines and books in the fields of town planning and contemporary architecture, with special reference to social structures for health, deviance, emargination, immigration. A rich documentation of Michelucci's work, a computerized catalogue of his drawings, books, articles and theses about his work, and a library specialized on modern architecture and social subjects is available at the Fondazione.
http://www.fondazione.michelucci.it

The Regional project **Porto Franco**: Tuscany, Land of Peoples and of Cultures" aims to be an instrument for a meaningful phase of transition: from the "extraordinary" to the "ordinary," from the occasional to the organized, from volunteerism to programming, with the objective of a cultural growth which is both ample and profound, strongly rooted across the Region through facilities, structures and services. The active encounter with the reality of multiculturalism cannot fail to affect the entire system of culture in Tuscany: from the theaters to the libraries, from the squares to the museums, from the schools to the cities. Policies must be developed which are effective in promoting intercultural encounter and contamination, along itineraries of experimentation and programming capable of producing models and outlines for action.
http://www.cultura.regione.toscana.it/progetti/porto_franco

Le Piagge is a neighborough in the outskirts of Florence where are active two different experiences: one is the effort of building a "community of inhabitants" leaded by an unconventional young priest; the other is the "Contratto di quartiere Le Piagge", an institutional project for the rehabilitation of two blocks of social housing through a partecipatory process.

CONFERENCE COSTS

The total cost of the conference is

* senior	L. 900.000 / EU 465
* students, unemployed, low income	L. 600.000 / EU 310

It includes

- Florence	bed & breakfast 23, 24, 25 September
- Florence	dinner 24, lunch 25, 26
- Chiara di Prumiano (retreat)	full board 26 (dinner),27, 28, 29 (breakfast)

- Transport: transfer Florence-Retreat-Florence and Chianti area tour
- Conference fee - INURA membership

Please note that
- evening meals on 23 and 25, and lunch on 24 are not included
- L.75.000 / EU 39 (sen.) L.50.000 / EU 26 (stud.) less for each day less of your staying
- there are a few beds without breakfast in Florence at the Convento di San Domenico
  (in this case the total cost is L. 500.000 / EU 259.)

APPLICATION FORM INURA 2001 CONFERENCE

Personal data

Name............................. surname ....

Address...
telephone   office............................. home...............................

e-mail...

senior ☐   student, unemployed, low income ☐

Details on arrival and departure

Arrival   September _____ at_____   o'clock

Departure   September _____ at_____   o'clock

Preferences:

Vegetarian meal   ☐

Cheapest accommodation   ☐

Other wishes ....

Conference participation

Presentation   yes ☐   no ☐

Title..

Audiovisual equipment required...

Please fax to: +39.055.587087 (Raffaele Paloscia)
        raffaele@unifi.it , g.allegretti@smtp.stm.it

abstracts

Enabling User Participation: the Research and Design of Living Environment for the Deprived Elderly Community in Hong Kong

Jackie Yan-chi KWOK
Michael Kin-wai SIU
School of Design, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

In Hong Kong, the proportion of the population that is elderly (14%) is the fourth highest in Asia, and it is continually increasing. By 2016, this percentage is predicted to rise to 20%, and by 2050 to 40%. This indicates that the needs of the elderly community is already a dominant social issue in Hong Kong, and will become more significant in the coming future.

Since 1998, the Hong Kong government has promised to improve the quality of life of the elderly, ensuring that they will continue "to enjoy a sense of security, a sense of belonging, and a feeling of health and worthiness" (The 1998 Policy Address, 1998). However, there are over 17,000 low-income elderly families (2% of the total elderly population) still living in non-self-contained private flats or temporary structures. With regard to this problem, the government expects to allocate public housing to all of these elderly people in the coming years. Reviewing the current government policy on housing the elderly, it is clear that the government has seldom considered how a living environment should be designed for the needs and expectations of the elderly, as well as respecting their lifestyles and existing community bonding. Moreover, these deprived elderly people do not have any opportunities to become involved in the decision-making process regarding the planning and design of their living environment.

This paper presents three research projects which have been undertaken by the Research Group on Urban Space and Culture at the School of Design of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, in collaboration with a non-government organisation in Hong Kong. The projects aim at a comprehensive understanding of the everyday lives of elderly people and their interaction with the living environment. This will in turn serve as a framework for designing living environments for the elderly community, especially those with lower incomes. Our research looks at our city as a "total milieu" and studies it from a multi-disciplinary approach. Through field studies on elderly people living in units in private housing and those living in public housing, we have been able to make comparative studies of the quality of life of the elderly community in these different living conditions. In the design phase, we endeavour to employ different levels of user participation in order to enable the habitants to be involved in the construction of their own living environment. We maintain that we, professional urban researchers and designers, should respect how inhabitants see their own living environment and how they want their home to be changed.

abstracts

Community projects for a multiethnic and plural city

Musefiu Olatunji Lamidi, Nigeria
<lamidiola@USA.NET>

Community projects generally are conceived, sited and constructed with the ultimate aim of putting them to use. This seemingly innocuous motive could however be misconceived if care is not taken. Such misconceptions and eventual mistrust could lead to the abandonment of a project in which millions of dollars has been committed.

Numerous researches have shown that the human craving for self-recognition is very high. People love to be consulted on issues that have direct bearing on their lives. Since communities are made up of different people, this feeling of importance and craving for self-recognition becomes agglomerated. In a plural and multiethnic city where strong affiliations and chauvinistic tendencies are likely to reign supreme, one can then expect cultural, religious, and social diversity on a large scale. It therefore behooves on whover is planning a project for such a city to take this into consideration by doing the following:
1. Identify the different ethnic tribes that are in the community.
2. Conduct a study into the likes, dislikes, preferences etc of the tribes in the community.
3. Arrange to meet Leaders of thought and opinion moulders of each tribe.
4. Arrange a joint meeting of these leaders and stakeholders to discuss the proposed project.
5. Identify areas of conflict and downplay this by adopting a sort of give and take attitude.
6. Agree with all present and if possible exact a written agreement on resolutions reached at the meeting
7. Conclude the execution and hand over of the project speedily to avoid a change of heart.

In conclusion, and from my personal experience, I have discovered that community projects in plural and multiethnic cities are usually unique, creative and rewarding in terms of the social benefits and satisfaction of community needs.

Representations of an unsettled city: the Esquiline district in Rome

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The territorial area on which the paper aims to focus is the Esquiline district. Situated on the fringes of Rome's historic city center and for ten years at least the area of maximum visibility of the city's immigrant populations, this district represents today a battlefront in the geography of the city's "contested spaces". Encircled by areas subject to institutional planning (archaeological park, air terminal, jubilee routes, "spheres of valorization" of various type) that deny, or at least ignore, its specific character as the city's place of encounter with the "margins" of the world, the Esquiline resists the logics of "reclamation" and has affirmed itself as the venue of social enterprises, cultural associations, independent radio stations, "alternative" churches, ethnic trading companies, etc. This process is a kind of war fought street by street, shop by shop, apartment by apartment, and even flowerbed by flowerbed. Attempts to "reopen a dialogue" have not been lacking on the part of the town council, in particular through the medium of "local district advice center". Despite that, the district seems ever more divided each day, with continuous and sometimes violent conflicts between a geography of extremely variegated and constantly changing factions that fail to find ways and means to formulate a project for living peacefully together. The extreme complexity of this contemporary urban landscape calls for a serious reflection on the modes of representation, on the inadequacy of sweeping panoptic views aimed at expelling the irrational, the uncertain, the mutable, in other words the human of the city. The idea is that of representation as performative process, that permits dialogue between and listening to many different positions (that of each of us included) without forcing them into the logic of irreducible dualisms. Representations of this kind are structured through versatile and interactive mechanisms, constructed at the point of intersection and hybridization between different languages, destined to take the form of open narrative processes, able to circumscribe, without enclosing or labelling, and leaving space for interpretation, imagination, dialogue and change. They are representations aimed at extending and reinforcing the front line that opposes marginality to centrality in the various dimensions of the urban space, with a view to multiplying the perspectives of reflection and/or action on which to focus our efforts for the (re)construction of the public space.

KraftWerk1 is finished!
INURA is part of it!

The four buildings of KraftWerk1 are nearly all finished. Some people have already moved in. Altogether 300 people will live and another 150 will work in this state-of-the-art project. What began as an utopian idea, born by p.m. the author of bolo'bolo (see also: INURA Possible Urban Worlds, pp. 52ff.) has finally become reality, against all odds. KraftWerk1 in a socially, economically and ecologically integrated project. It also provides a restaurant, children day care, guest rooms, car sharing, meeting rooms, workshops, studios, and much more.

For a virtual VISIT: go to http://**www.kraftwerk1.ch**

For a real VISIT: come to the Grand opening ceremony of KraftWerk1, September 22, 2001.

Perfectly timed for your stop-over in Zurich on the way to the Florence INURA-meeting, starting on the evening of the 23rd! If you like to join the party, let us know. On Sunday 23rd, we will all take the day train to Florence arriving on time for the beginning of the INURA conference.

As of June 1, the **INURA Common Office and the INURA Zurich Office** will be housed in the premises of KraftWerk1 project. An old dream thus becomes reality.

New Address: INURA Common Office and INURA Zurich Office Hardturmstr. 162 CH-8005 Zürich
Tel. ++41 1 683 86 90 email. contact@inura.org

Exodus-Collective

Unlucky/lucky: Visiting Exodus Collective in Luton (UK) on April 30th, 2001, Richard and Philipp made a very special experience. Almost all of the people we know have left HAZ Manor. New people live there now. There has been a split within Exodus. Apparently there were differences on economic and spiritual issues. In the Luton/Dunstable newspaper Glenn said: "As with all movements, broad factions develop and values grow apart" (...) "We just couldn't get a consensus any more. It's been very painful", and he characterised the split as a parting of ways between the idealists and the realists.
Driving around Luton, we found Glenn, his wife Jackie, Bruce and his brother Richard, in a joyful celebration in the Marsh Farm community centre, where they are now working for the broader community. On that day, they had won a £ 43.6 Million (!!!) bid for the regeneration of Marsh Farm Estate. Part of this money will allow the realization of the "Ark" community centre, a long-time project of Exodus.
Hopefully we will have some Exodus people with us in Florence to give us a broader picture of recent developments.

Belfast - INURA City Tour

The first INURA City Tour was held successfully in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Geraint Ellis and his colleagues of Queen's University offered us an excellent and highly interesting programme including visits of local initiatives, discussions with academics and practitioners, and tours or the city and the region. Despite some problems with advertising the tour, we had nine participants from Amsterdam, Bochum, Florence, Ljubljana, and Zurich. We got a broad view of the problems and visions of this fascinating city. Visits in the well-known neighbourhoods of Falls Road and Shankill Road showed us how the attempts of going back to "normal" life are at work. We also got an insight into the difficulties of planning under conditions of rough segregation.

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