

# ABITARE

SHED GIANCARLO MAZZANTI - ROBBRECHT EN DAEM  
STEPHEN TAYLOR - PIERRE D'AVOINE PAURA MARKUS BADER  
MORPURGO DE CURTIS - UMBERTO RIVA - LINO DAINESE  
ONKAR KULAR+INIGO MINNS - MATHIEU LEHANNEUR  
METAHAVEN VIBRAZIONE THOMAS BAYRLE - DAVID KOHN

READING THE DESIGNED ENVIRONMENT



Monthly magazine € 9,00 (only cover) UK £12 USA \$ 47  
AC 12 BC 14 D 4 15 E 12 FIN 5 F 13 GR 7 I 22 J 15  
K 12 L 10 M 9 N 10 O 16 P 12 Q 12 R 13 S 12 T 13 U 12 V 13 W 13 X 12 Y 13 Z 13



MORPURGO DE CURTIS  
-----  
MEMORIALE  
DELLA SHOAH  
-----  
MILANO







#### Laboratorio della Memoria

La struttura di acciaio e vetro conterrà la biblioteca (oltre 40.000 volumi), che comprende la raccolta del Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea. Il "muro di libri" - testimoni silenziosi - sarà visibile dall'esterno, immagine simbolica del Memoriale, che non è museo di se stesso ma spazio di consapevolezza, elaborazione e trasmissione.

#### Workshop of Memory

The steel-and-glass structure will contain the library (over 40,000 volumes), including the collection of the Contemporary Jewish Documentation Centre. The "wall of books" - silent witnesses - will be visible from the outside, as a symbolic image of the Memorial, which is not a museum of itself but a space of awareness, working-through and passing on.



#### Binario della destinazione ignota

Nella penultima campata, verso l'interno, sono stati inseriti quattro vagoni merci dello stesso tipo di quelli su cui furono costretti a forza i deportati. I carri venivano poi sollevati alla quota dei binari della Stazione Centrale. A terra, una linea del tempo con date e destinazioni; lungo la banchina, un'installazione provvisoria proietta i nomi dei deportati sul muro di fondo.

#### Track of the unknown destination

In the last bay but one, towards the interior, four goods wagons of the same type of the ones onto which the deportees were forcibly loaded. The wagons were then raised to the level of the platforms of the Stazione Centrale. On the ground, a timeline with dates and destinations; along the platform, an installation projects on the rear wall the names of the deportees.



**Luogo di riflessione** È uno spazio di pausa emotiva, di recupero, di rielaborazione, o anche un luogo di preghiera interreligiosa, orientato a est. È un stanza del silenzio, un ambiente raccolto e protetto alla fine del percorso del Memoriale. Una sosta, uno snodo tra il tempo meditato della visita e l'eventuale attività nel Laboratorio della Memoria.

**Place of Reflection** It is a space of emotional respite, of recovery, of reworking, or even a inter-religious place of prayer, oriented to the east, it is a room of silence, a quiet and sheltered environment at the end of the itinerary through the Memorial. A stopping place, a junction between the thoughtful time of the visit and any activity in the Workshop of Memory.



la lunghezza della banchina. Trovo molto efficace e commovente che questi nomi, uno a uno, affiorino e vengano messi in evidenza. È una scelta corretta, perché altrimenti tutto si uniformerebbe e le parole, che portano il ricordo di ognuna di queste persone, si ridurrebbero a una serie indistinta di caratteri ripetuti e in fondo illeggibili, indecifrabili.

#### **Meditazione / silenzio**

Rivedo oggi questo spazio, chiamato Luogo di Riflessione, di cui ancora non sono riuscito ad apprezzare chiaramente il peso. Visitandolo tempo fa, in una fase più arretrata della sua costruzione, ricordo di avere pensato che all'interno del Memoriale l'unico strumento semplice e veramente necessario per la meditazione fosse una sedia. Questa sensazione nasce forse dalla mia allergia ai luoghi di culto. E ancora adesso, sinceramente, non riesco ad afferrare del tutto la necessità di isolare nel Memoriale uno spazio specifico per la riflessione. Perché, ripeto, lungo tutto il percorso, dal momento in cui si entra, si è continuamente costretti a prendere coscienza di questa tragedia, di questa orrenda cosa. E mi sembra in qualche modo che ricondurre obbligatoriamente questa consapevolezza, questo turbamento, a un luogo preciso e tanto disegnato sia volere fare troppo. Questo Luogo di Riflessione è stata caricato di molto significato, e non so quanto verrà captato. Potrebbe essere addirittura rifiutato, penso ai ragazzi, per esempio. Tutti gli altri interventi nel Memoriale sono funzionali a una rappresentazione, e soprattutto si misurano sempre con il vuoto che hanno intorno. Mentre qui c'è una precisa volontà di forma, una forma molto architettonica. Si sente la voglia, l'intenzione di forzare un raccoglimento. C'è una regia dietro, mentre mi sembra che nel resto del Memoriale ci sia solo un racconto. Il resto è silenzio, questo è forse l'unico spazio che ha bisogno di essere riempito: è teatro, oltre che cappella. Trovo molto efficace questa lente bianca, questa luce focalizzata in un solo punto, che lascia tutti in penombra. All'inizio, entrando, non si percepisce niente in modo chiaro, è necessario ambientarsi, solo abitandosi si riesce a leggere lo spazio e il modo in cui è costruito. E rivisto da qua, adesso che siamo usciti e ci siamo voltati, è veramente molto bello.

#### **Edificio pubblico**

Non sono io a poterlo dire, ma questo Memoriale mi sembra uno dei pochi interventi di livello europeo realizzati in questi ultimi anni a Milano. Trovo che abbia una sua qualità nell'asciuttezza, nei materiali, nella dimensione, nell'essere un servizio pubblico vero. Non ha il difetto della maggior parte della nuova architettura, che si autoespone invece che essere realizzata in funzione di qualcosa. E sono sicuro che la presenza delle persone, anche in grande numero, non riuscirà a mortificare questa architettura, gli spazi. In un edificio pubblico è uno dei risultati più importanti.

## **NEITHER AN ABANDONMENT, NOR A COMMENT**

#### **Impact / spatiality**

I've always thought of this Memorial as a place for a possible experience. I had already visited the site, and I have to say that I found it harrowing. At the time I had not even been able to appreciate its spatiality, whereas I am now able to perceive clearly the presence of the architecture, a construction in which the original, very beautiful structure that Guido Morpurgo and Annalisa de Curtis have decided to lay bare plays a forceful part. The area of the Stazione Centrale is one of the parts of the city that have greatest room to breathe: the urban space onto which the Shoah Memorial faces is worthy of a European capital and the size of the buildings and breadth of the streets are unusual for Milan. In this sense, now that the project has taken shape, there is no longer such a great gap between the outside and the inside. But it is still a space that surprises and stirs.

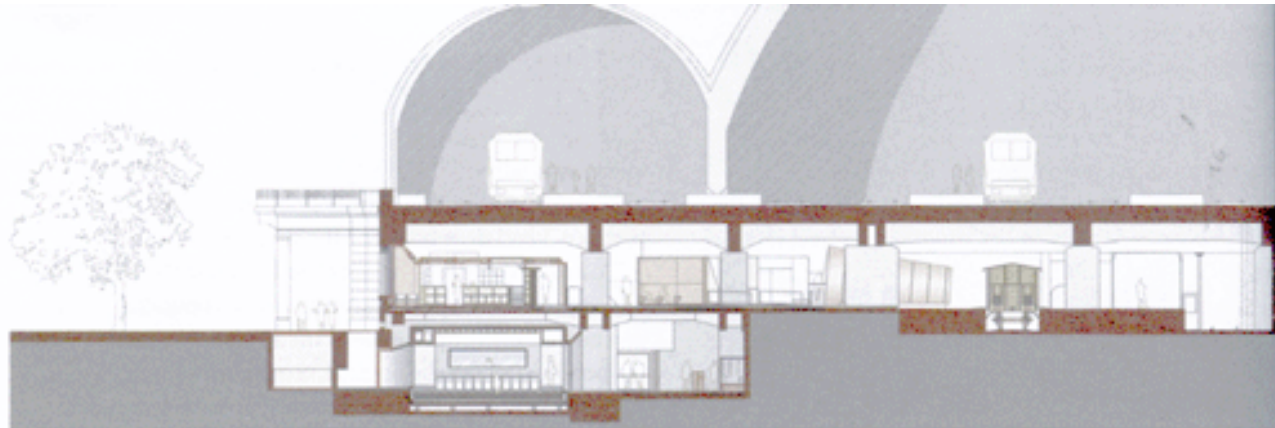
#### **Severity / fragility / awareness**

It had already been my first impression, when I saw the structure of the parallelepiped that will house the library mounted, that it was very right for it not to touch the ceiling and the walls, for it had to be an element that stood out from its context, that made no attempt to fit in with the rest of the space. I believe that in a place like this new interventions cannot blend in, and that they can make a decisive contribution to the space but they should never, in any way, be mixed up with its qualities. In general, I like this severity, the fact that in the Memorial there is never a sense of abandonment nor a comment on the tragedy of the deportation. Just the fact of being in this place still stirs a great sense of sorrow in me today. I find the sight of those four wagons heart-breaking, the contrast between the imposing mass of the concrete structure and the fragility of those wretched wooden shells, which I frankly did not have the courage to enter. Seeing them I cannot help but ask myself to what extent those people who were brought here by force in lorries and then loaded onto the train, detached, separated from their families, were aware of what was going on. I think of the anguish of their "unknown destination". It would be hard for any cinematic depiction of those terrible events to have the force that spaces like these still contain. I think too of those who will come here, of the need for them in turn to attain a degree of awareness. And I am convinced that nothing should in any way be hidden or masked. And that it is right to leave this empty space as empty as possible. And this should be true in the future as well.

#### **Material / evidence / legibility**

Seen from here, the red of the wall next to the entrance is very beautiful. And in general the raw concrete of the structure and the prefabricated elements are visually powerful and effective. But good choices also seem to have been made in other parts of the project: such as the use of metal, or even just of the sense of the materiality of metal. In particular I find the great "Wall of Indifference", which before was in reinforced concrete, to be much better with

The Shoah Memorial is a place of collective identity and awareness of great importance for Milan. Its design and realisation have engaged the energies and demanded the perseverance of its promoters and architects for over a decade now. This place is a piece of physical evidence still materially impregnated with the absurdity of the greatest tragedy of modern times: from here, between 1943 and 1945, hundreds of Jewish deportees departed for the "unknown destination" of the death camps, as well as political opponents for the concentration camps. It has been removed for decades from the daily life of the city despite being physically ensconced in the bowels of one of its nerve centres, the Stazione Centrale. Ulisse Stacchini's monumental and hyperstatic 20th-century structure, including this mail service space with its long parallel bays on the level beneath the platforms - raw concrete beams and columns that have now been laid bare again - have the crude eloquence of a testimony. An admonition that the project sets out to underline, without contamination, through systems of display and documentation, integrated with a Workshop of Memory. "Abitare" asked Umberto Riva to visit and give his impressions of the evocative and implacable force of this space that, while still at an intermediate stage of its construction today, already has the power of a finished work. GB + AF



SEZIONE TRAVERSALE / CROSS SECTION

**Progetto / Project**

Memoriale della Shoah  
**Progettisti e direttori artistici /**  
**Architects and artistic directors**

Morpurgo de Curtis Architetti  
 Associati: Annalisa de Curtis,  
 Guido Morpurgo

**Collaboratori al progetto**  
**esecutivo / Collaborators**  
**to the construction design**

Olga Chiaramonte, Matteo Guaglia,  
 Valeria Radice

**Consulente scientifico**  
**conservazione / Scientific**  
**advisor on conservation**

Gian Paolo Treccani

**Conservazione / Conservation**

Paolo Casparoli

con / with Maria Cannatelli

**Strutturisti / Structural**  
**engineers**

Lussignoli Associati:

Luciano Lussignoli, Flavio  
 Buonopane, Claudio Favalli,  
 Pierluigi Maranesi, Francesco  
 Mazzeo, Andrea Moreschi

**Impianti / Plants**

Giovanni Ziletti

con / with Lorenzo Finizio, Nicola

Reccagni, Alessandro Temponi

**Illuminazione / Lighting**

Ferrara Palladino e Associati

**Acustica / Acoustics**

Cesare Trebeschi

**Direzione lavori /**

**Work supervision**

Ace: Livio e / and Antonio Acerbo,

Valerio Arienti, Roberta Colombo,

Manuela Maiorano, Rocco Nino

Sallustio, Gabriele Salvatori

**Project management**

**(primo stralcio) / (first stage)**

Europa Risorse: Antonio

Napoleone con / with Mauro

Bevilacqua, Alessandra Desiderio

**Multimedia**

Kooa: Federico Thieme

**Committente / Client**

Fondazione Memoriale

della Shoah di Milano onlus

**Timing**

2002-2003 Ideazione / Conception

2004-2008 Progetti preliminari /

Preliminary plans

2009-2010 Progetti esecutivi /

Construction plans

2009-in corso / under way

Realizzazione / Construction

**Superficie / Area**

7060 mq / sqm

**Luogo / Location**

Milano, Italia

this coat of metallic paint. The inscription stood out too strongly, whereas now its legibility, toned down, has become more effective. There is no contradiction here. When a message is too explicit it loses any force linked to a sense of apprehension. Still on the subject of the physical presence of things, of their evidence, if I may be permitted to make a comment, I would say that the design of the railings is perhaps too elegant in this context. They will probably function better when they are painted grey and their lines become less sharp and, in this case too, less legible.

**Solidity / disquiet / emptiness**

The general impression is that everything is solid, stable, affirmative. Then, at some points, unexpectedly, you suddenly find yourself in front of the precipice, with these parapets of plate glass that are almost invisible thresholds onto empty space. I find this a very effective way of emphasising the sharp cut with which the floor slab has been interrupted at the point where the volume of the library stands. They are peremptory breaks, generating a sensation almost of panic, of danger. Or even of fainting, a similar emotional effect to the one induced by a powerful theatrical stage set. This sense of disquiet might, in a different way, also be produced inside the library, which has a dense, rigid structure that seems to convey the spatial oppression of places of detention, of prisons. It appears to me that overall its volume has the right dimension and that the choice to cut through the floor slab to create the break and height needed to insert it in this space has been a crucial one, just as it was courageous to decide that its ceiling should be made of glass.

**Names / memory**

In this temporary hypothesis of display, is a pity that the interminable, terrible list of the names of deportees does not run along the wall for the entire length of the platform. I find it very effective and moving that these names appear and are highlighted one by one. It is a correct choice, as otherwise everything would be made uniform and these words, which bear the memory of each of these people, would be reduced to an indistinct series of repeated and at times illegible, indecipherable characters.

**Meditation / silence**

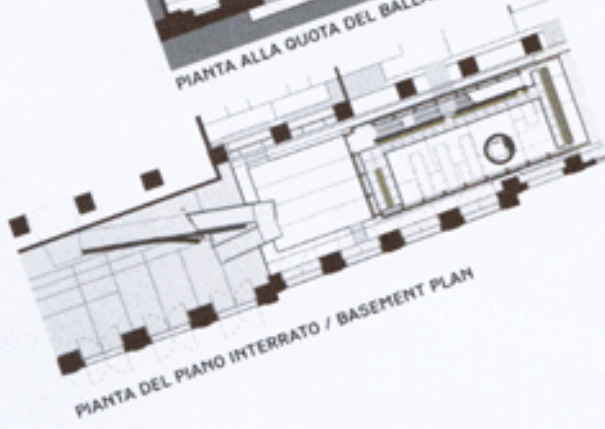
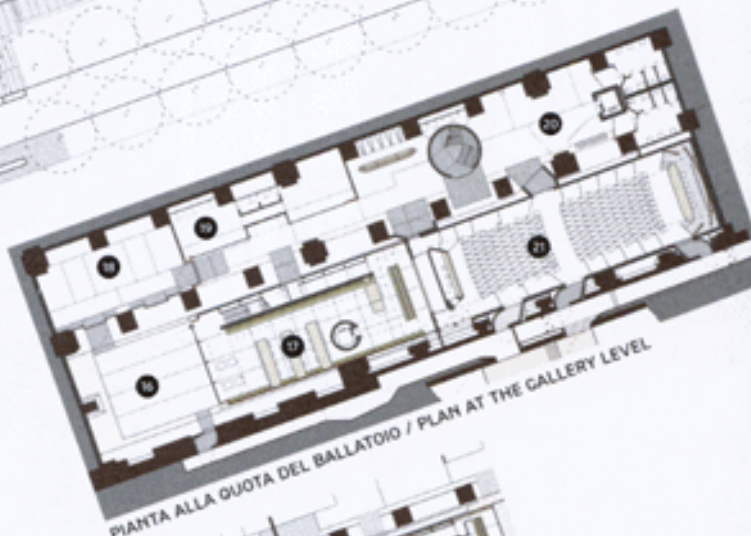
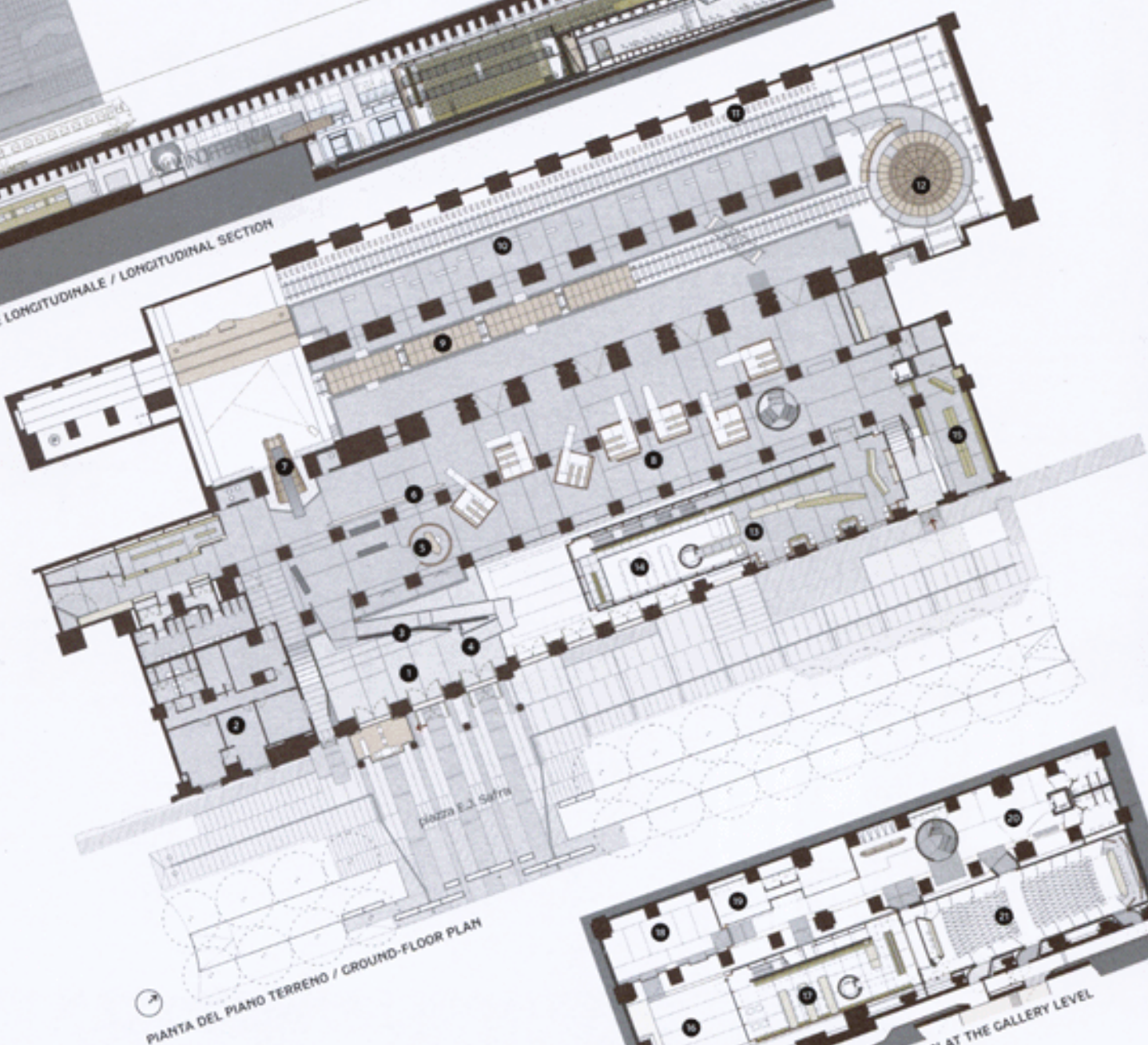
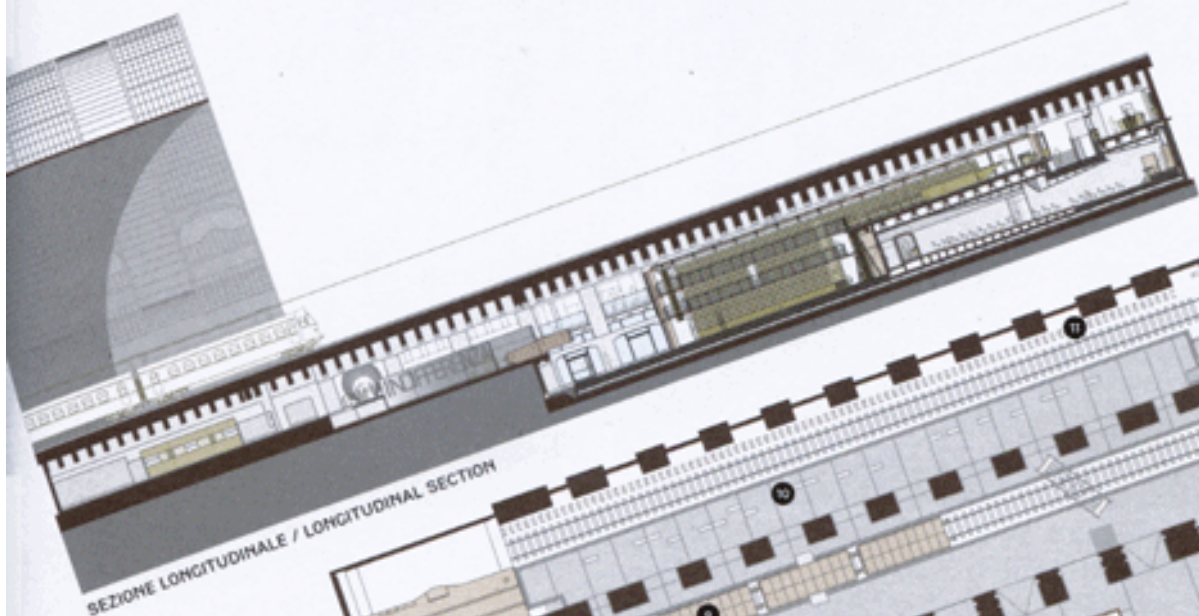
Today I am seeing again this space – called Place of Reflection – whose significance I have still not succeeded in appreciating clearly. Visiting it some time ago, at an earlier

stage in its construction, I remember having thought that the only simple and really necessary aid to meditation in the Memorial would be a chair. This sensation may arise from my almost allergic reaction to places of worship. And even now, sincerely, I am unable to fully grasp the need to set aside a specific space for reflection in the Memorial. Because, I repeat, all along the route through it, from the moment you enter, you are continually obliged to take in the nature of this tragedy, of this horrendous thing that happened. And it seems to me in a way that forcibly linking this awareness, this sense of unease, to a precise and specifically designed place seems to be trying to do too much. This Place of Reflection has been loaded with a great deal of meaning, and I don't know how much it will actually be picked up. Young people might even reject it, for example. All the other interventions in the Memorial are linked to forms of representation, and above all they always measure themselves against the empty space around them. Here, however, there is a precise desire for form, a highly architectural form. You feel the wish, almost an intention to compel absorption. There is direction behind it, it is *directed*, while it seems to me that in the rest of the memorial there is only an account. The rest is silence, this is perhaps the only space that needs to be filled: it is a theatre, as well as a chapel. I find this white lens, this light focused at a single point, leaving everything else in semi-darkness, very effective. At the beginning, as you enter, nothing can be perceived too clearly. You need to acclimatise. Only as you become accustomed does it become possible to read the space and the way in which it is constructed. And looking back from here, now that we have come out and turned around, it is really very beautiful.

**Public building**

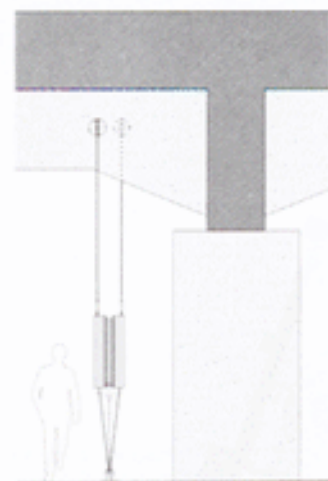
I am not the person who ought to be saying it, but this Memorial seems to me to be one of the few interventions to have been realized in Milan in recent years which are at a European level. I find it has a quality of its own in its terseness, in its materials, in its dimensions, in the fact that it is a true public service. It does not have the defect linked to most new works of architecture, which put themselves on display rather than being created to serve some other end. And I'm sure that the presence of people, even in large numbers, will not be able to demean this architecture, these spaces. In a public building this is one of the most important results you could wish for.





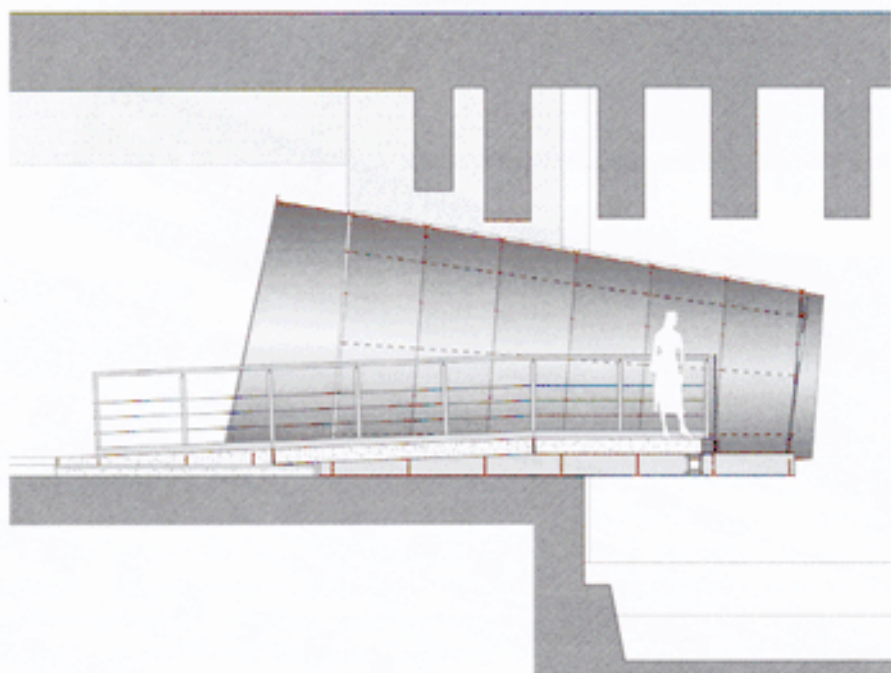
- 1 Atrio / Hall
- 2 Uffici Fondazione / Foundation offices
- 3 Muro dell'indifferenza / Wall of indifference
- 4 Rampa / Ramp
- 5 informazioni / info-desk
- 6 Monolite / Monolith
- 7 Osservatorio / Observatory
- 8 Sale delle Testimonianze / Halls of records
- 9 Vagoni / Wagons
- 10 Linea del Tempo / Timeline
- 11 Muro dei nomi / Wall of Names

- 12 Luogo di Riflessione / Place for Reflection
- 13 Laboratorio della Memoria / Workshop of Memory
- 14 Biblioteca / Library
- 15 Bookshop
- 16 Patio
- 17 Sala lettura / Reading room
- 18 Sala dei Memoriali / Hall of Memorials
- 19 Archivio / Archive
- 20 Foyer
- 21 Auditorium



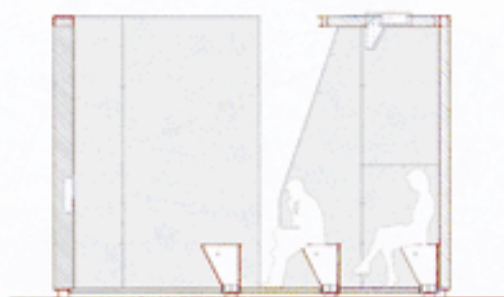
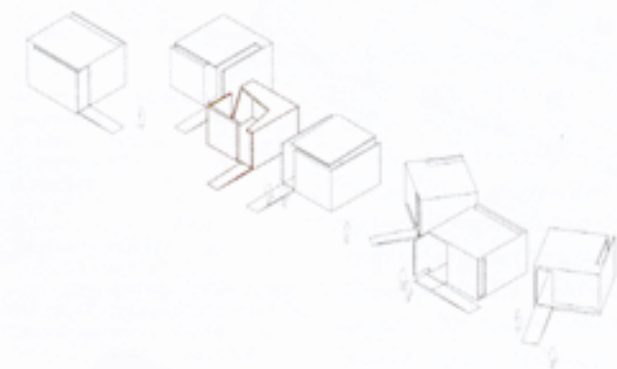
**Monolite** (da realizzare) Un prisma sospeso (lungo circa 14 m) nel quale vengono proiettati video interattivi.

**Monolith** (to be built) A suspended prism (about 14 m long) in which interactive videos are projected.



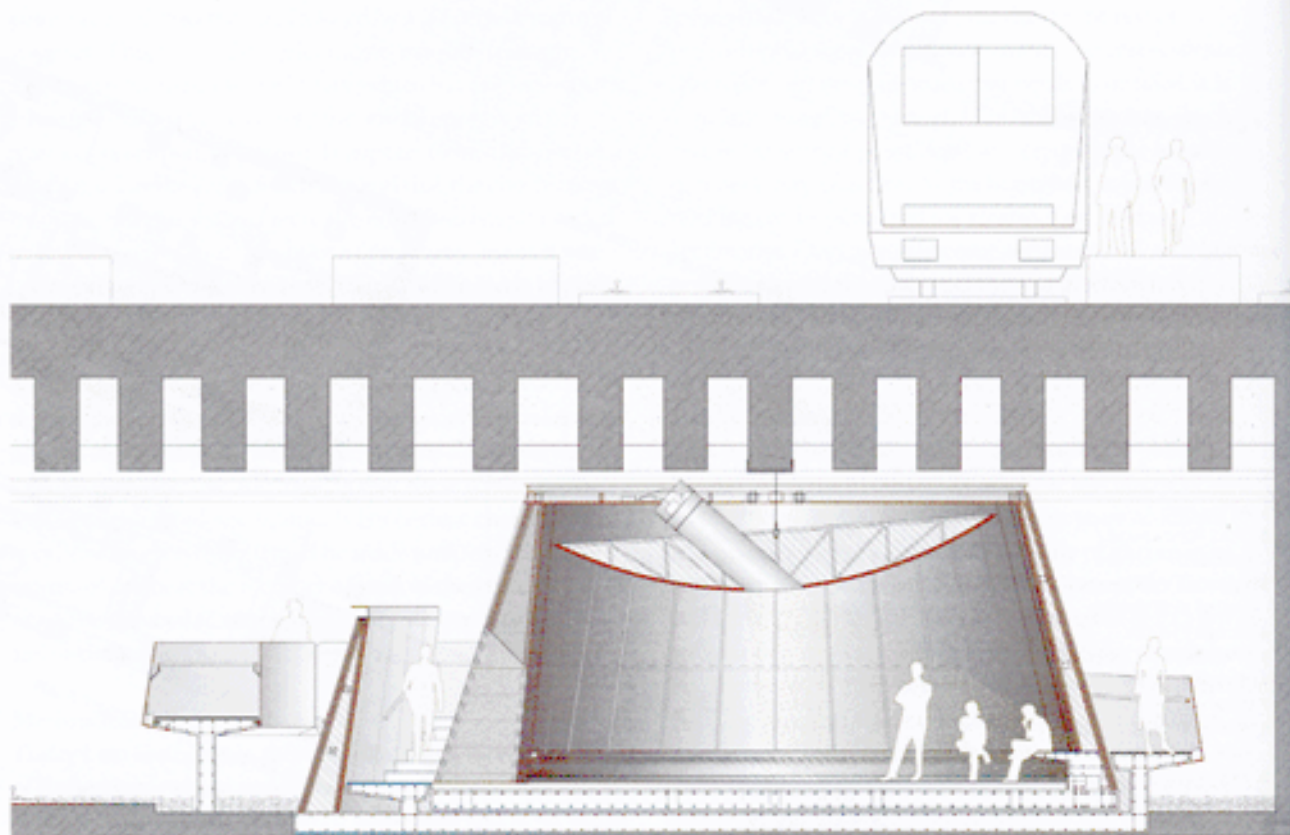
**Osservatorio** (da realizzare) Un elemento troncoconico si affaccia sull'area dei binari consentendone l'osservazione attraverso un sistema di vetri e lenti. Ai lati sono previste sei postazioni individuali di ricerca.

**Observatory** (to be built) An element in the form of a truncated cone faces onto the area of the tracks, allowing them to be observed through a set of panes of glass and lenses. At its sides, it has six individual research stations.



**Sale delle Testimonianze** (da realizzare) Sette ambienti virtualmente cubici (4x4 m) all'interno dei quali sono proiettati video che raccolgono le testimonianze dei sopravvissuti alle deportazioni.

**Testimony Rooms** (to be built) Seven virtually cubic rooms (4x4 m) in which videos with testimonies of survivors of the deportations are projected.



**Luogo di Riflessione** Un volume troncoconico (con un diametro di circa 10 m), spazio isolato, quieto, privo di connotazioni simboliche e sonore.

**Place of Reflection** A volume in the shape of a truncated cone (with a diameter of around 10 m), an isolated, quiet space, devoid of symbolic and acoustic connotations.

