

Memory and things

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Memory settles into things and the forms of architecture.

The way cities, buildings, interiors and equipment are constructed conveys a unique shared idea of life and a view of the world. Architecture speaks to us and makes us feel at home in a space.

What does the passage of time entail? What meaning does it convey? This contribution explores the relationship between the meaning embodied in architectural forms and the inevitable changes that affect them.

Considering examples from diffused heritage, it questions their meaning and highlights the relationship between an apparent, somewhat superficial meaning — such as that expressed by symbols on façades, like those affixed by the Fascist Party at the entrance to the Colonie — and a deeper meaning. This deeper meaning expresses the capacity to welcome one person, a small group or many users in silence, amidst the chorus of voices, in light and shadow, as is still the case in the Colonie. It is precisely this deeper meaning that allows for a change in use, enabling the adaptation of spaces to actions that are fundamentally similar, reinterpreting and sometimes even overwriting a mere façade.

Furthermore, this contribution aims to examine architecture's capacity to accommodate bigger changes, such as those affecting living spaces. Here, the need to adapt to new situations, whether involving new households of various sizes or the demands of transience and economic necessity, clashes with a rigid structure nonetheless steeped in the memory and identity of a place and rooted in traditional ways of inhabiting domestic spaces. The contribution seeks to explore means and possibilities for accommodating people inhabiting the built environment amid change, paying particular attention to the scale of detail as a point of mutual interaction and design verification.