

MARCO CASAMONTI

Founding partner of the *Archea* firm, Casamonti graduated with honours in 1990, winning a competition announced by the architecture faculty of Genoa the following year and receiving a study grant within the context of the PhD in architectural planning. He received his PhD from the architecture faculty of Genoa in 1994 with a dissertation titled "History and Design, a central issue in the architectural debate of the post-war years".

He began cooperating with various architecture firms already before graduating, including that of Professor Paolo Portoghesi. In 1988, after working together on the competition for the "recovery of the Murate prisons", he founded the *Archea* firm with Laura Andreini and Giovanni Polazzi, commencing an intense professional activity.

Didactic activities

Already before graduating he began cooperating with the university as an assistant and subject expert in the architectural planning course held by Professor Aurelio Cortesi.

In 1996 he won the competition announced by the architecture faculty of Florence for a position as PhD in the disciplinary sector of 'ICAR 14 – architectural and urban planning', beginning to teach the course on the distributive character of buildings at the architecture faculty of Florence in the same year.

In 1998 he won a national competition qualifying for the position of associate professor, and was invited to teach at the architecture faculty of Genoa, where he had continued to collaborate as a teacher in his own disciplinary sector over the years.

In 2001 he won the competition announced by the architecture faculty of Palermo, receiving an appointment as full professor in architectural and urban planning. In 2004 he was entrusted with a professorship at the architecture faculty of Genoa, where he still teaches. He has directed the PhD course and he currently sits on its Board of Professors.

In the course of the years he has been invited to teach at the newly founded architecture faculty of Parma, while he has been invited as visiting professor and critic abroad, by leading international institutions as Barcelona, Graz, Mendrisio, Zurich, San Paolo, Beijing and Vancouver.

Professional activity

In 1988 he founded the *Archea* firm together with Laura Andreini and Giovanni Polazzi. When *Archea Associati* was founded Silvia Fabi, who began to collaborate with the firm already in 1999, also became a partner. Various teams of designers work for the firm, which has branches in Florence, Rome, Milan and abroad in Dubai, Beijing and San Paolo; the total number of architects varies from 80 to 110 persons.

The firm conducts planning and research activities in the fields of architecture, town planning, landscape design and industrial design; in the latter sector Casamonti acts as art director for some of the leading manufacturers of architecture and building components

(Martini Illuminazione, Sannini Impruneta, Ceramica Cielo, GranitiFiandre, etc.). The complementary character of the fields of interest and research, as well as the wide range of scales and dimensions in which he operates, from critical analysis to supervision of building sites, have enabled him to become expert in dealing with the different phases and forms of architectural planning, and in particular to specialize in town planning, that also represents the sphere of research and scientific-cultural reflection of his own disciplinary sector in an academic context.

He has participated, together with Studio Archea, in many important national and international architecture competitions and consultations, obtaining numerous recognitions and prizes: in 1998 the firm won the competition for the office and shopping centre of Calenzano in Florence, in 1999 the third prize for the new headquarters of the architecture faculty of Venice and in 2000 the second prize for the headquarters of the Italian Space Agency in Rome. In 2001 and 2002 it was a finalist in the projects for the rapid train stations of Turin and Florence, and it was invited by the Novoli real estate operator, under the scientific direction of Aimaro Isola and Francesco Dal Co, as one of the nine Italian groups selected for the construction of a block in the area formerly occupied by Fiat in Florence. In 2003 it won the competition for the expansion of the port of Savona and the one for the planning, upgrading and adaptation to standards of the Michelangelo Camping in Florence.

In 2004 the firm was invited, together with the architect Rafael Moneo, to participate in the competition for the new Cinema Palace in Venice. In 2005 it participated in the competition by invitation for the realization of one of the 10 towers comprised by the master plan for the new centre of Tirana, with the winning project that is currently in construction. In 2005 it won the international competition by invitation promoted by Pirelli Re and Morgan Stanley – tied with Michael Maltzan Architecture – for the former Ansaldo area in Milan in the Greater Bicocca district. In 2007 the firm was classified as number two in the competition for the assignment of the executive planning and execution of the works for the “Music and Culture Park of Florence”.

The firm has participated in numerous competitions in China since 2006, including the important project of the Meixi Lake Cultural Center of Changsha in 2011, designed on the basis of the master plan of the New York-based firm KPF. In the same year the firm also participated in, and won, the competition by invitation for a hotel in Doha, Qatar.

Within the context of the professional activity conducted together with the Archea firm he has realized a series of architectural works which, in addition to having been published in leading international magazines and books on an international level (Abitare, Casabella, Domus, L'Arca, in Italy, A&V and Disegno interior in Spain, AIT and Detail in Germany, etc.) have been selected for important reviews and exhibitions on architecture.

Research activities

He has over the years combined his activities in the fields of architectural planning and teaching with an intense work of in-depth research and critical reflection on the subjects of architecture, publishing treatises and texts.

In 1993 he began to collaborate with *Area*, an international architecture magazine. In 1995 he was appointed its editor-in-chief, redesigning it completely, changing it from a quarterly periodical focused on design and visual communication to a bimonthly dedicated to architecture, and moving the editorial staff from Milan to Florence.

In 1998 he was appointed scientific curator and editor-in-chief of the architecture sector of the publishing house Federico Motta Editore, selecting authors and types of publications for the publishing house according to an editorial line based on contemporary design research and creating chains of publications: Designs and sketches, Typologies, Great Works, Tools, etc. In 1999 Federico Motta took over as editor of *Area*, and the magazine was given a new graphic appearance by AG Fronzoni.

In 1999 he was appointed editor-in-chief, with Paolo Portoghesi as scientific director, of the magazine *Materia*, also published by Federico Motta Editore. The magazine became a quarterly publication on architecture associated with the study of materials and building techniques.

As of 2006/2007 the Motta Architettura publishing house, to which Federico Motta Editore had transferred all activities linked to architecture, was taken over by the Sole 24 Ore Group; Marco Casamonti thus becomes scientific director for architecture of the Sole 24 Ore Editorial Group.

Over the years he has written and/or edited numerous volumes, treatises and articles, as well as the editorials of *Area* from issue no. 14 of 1993 to no. 120 of 2012.

He has also been invited to hold numerous conferences and lectures at bodies, institutions and universities all over the world, and has curated and coordinated countless cultural events and exhibitions. For two years, from 2006 to 2008, he has been appointed scientific director of the Annals of Architecture of Naples, an important cultural institution founded by the Region of Campania, the Province and County of Naples and the departments, professional associations of architects and engineers and the Federico II University of Naples. During his period as director he has organized important exhibitions and conventions at the Palazzo Reale of Naples. He has also, in his capacity of editor-in-chief of the international architecture magazine *Area*, promoted and provided for the scientific coordination of events and exhibitions held at leading cultural institutions, including the Venice Biennale, the Milan Triennale and the Palazzo Ducale in Genoa.