

Farewell to Roberto Palumbo, Architect

by Eleonora Carrano

He was Professor and Dean of Faculty at the School of Architecture Valle Giulia, Sapienza University, Rome; an assistant to Saul Greco; and an outstanding figure of an intense architectural period in Italy.

His research was focused on medical facility construction and social housing. His militant professional years intersected with the political events and complex architectural changes that occurred in Italy from the seventies until the first decades of the new century.

Namely, the decade late sixties-late seventies saw a transition in culture and society which universities weren't always ready to capture. The occupation season began, and 'mass university' was then born. At the same time, substantial interventions of public residential construction were implemented thanks to Law no. 167; in 1976, the Venice Biennale welcomed architecture, and appointed Vittorio Gregotti as head of the biennial international show; in 1978, Aldo Moro's murder marked the beginning of the undoing of Italian politics; in 1980, Postmodernism debuts at a Biennale curated by Paolo Portoghesi with the title "Presence of the Past".

Concomitantly, Palumbo devoted himself to public competitions for medical facility constructions, realizing several hospitals and winning mentions and awards. Throughout the 1980's, he collaborated with Giancarlo Pennestri, specializing in this sector, while contemporary architecture left PoMo behind to welcome Deconstructivism and an often gratuitous, excessive constructive formalism. Arch. Palumbo instead stuck to the unity of thought and action as well as theories – in his own words – that were always "applied and verified".

In his academic life, Arch. Palumbo was committed to innovation and to the promotion of teaching architecture, strongly contributing to the debate on the discipline.

Embrice 2030 is keen to remember Giorgio Palumbo also because, for a short time, he shared some of the association's projects.

His most outstanding works are listed in the article, including several photographs of his buildings.