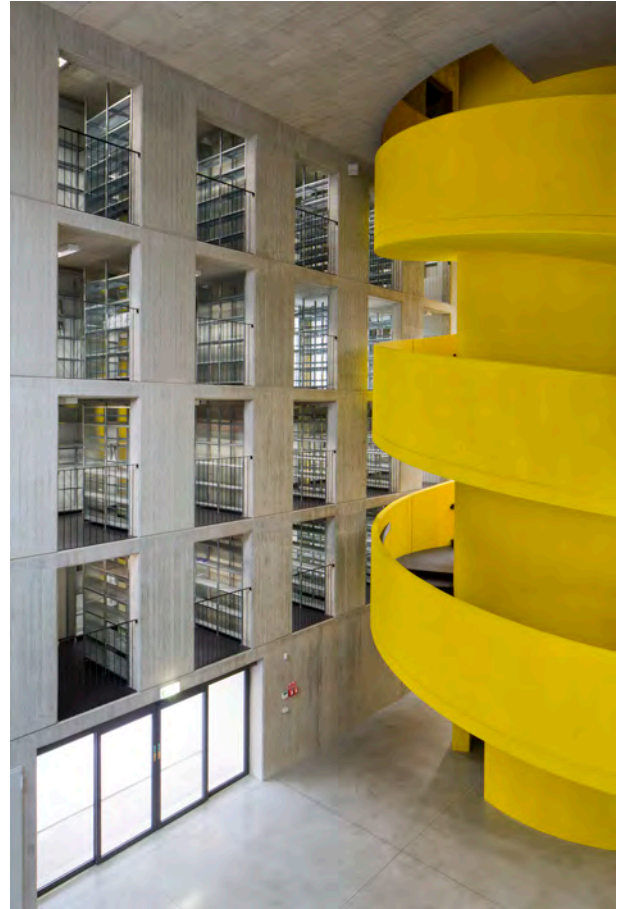


The House of Memory as seen from via Gaetano de Castilia (baukuh archive)



The archive and the yellow staircase (© Stefano Graziani)

House of Memory – Project Description

The “House of Memory” is an archive as well as an exhibition and conference space in Milan. It is the headquarter of five cultural associations whose aim is to preserve the memory of the conquest of freedom and democracy in Italy: the National Association of Former Deportees (A.N.E.D.), the National Association of Italian Partisans (A.N.P.I.), the National Association of Terrorism’s Victims (A.I.VI.TER.), the Association Piazza Fontana 12 December 1969 and the National Institute of Studies on the Italian Resistance Movement (I.N.S.M.L.I.). The building was completed in 2015, on the base of the project awarded first prize in an invited architecture competition organized in 2011. The new building is part of the recently transformed Porta Nuova area and is one of the elements of a network of new public spaces and facilities including the Headquarters of the Lombardy Region, the Riccardo Catella Foundation, the Art Incubator and the (soon to be completed) Park of the “Library of Trees”.



The core of the stairs during construction (© Stefano Graziani)



Inside of the building during construction (© Stefano Graziani)

House of Memory – Architectural Project

House, Monument

The House of Memory is a *house*, a collective house in which Milanese citizens hope to find protection for the memories they want to preserve.

Nobody inhabits this house, and in this case the word house is understood as an *envelope*, a *protected space*, or a *shelter* that crystallizes memory within the flow of the metropolis. The word “house” – which is far too familiar – paradoxically emphasizes the monumentality of the building, turning it into an archetype or a symbol. The House of Memory is a house, and therefore a *monument*. In this context, the house becomes an object to be both protected and exhibited, a treasury to be surrounded with an envelope that both defends and exposes its content.

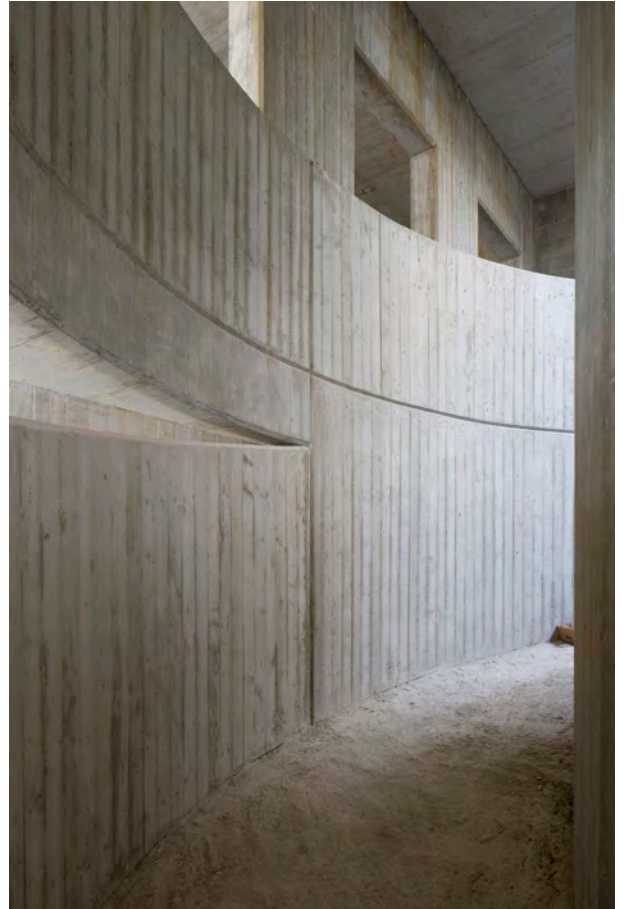
Styles of Memory

The idea to entrust a building with the task of preserving and transmitting memory might seem anachronistic and it is certainly problematic in the context of contemporary society. In fact, we are all quite suspicious (and not without reason) of attempts to capture





The staircase during construction (© Stefano Graziani)



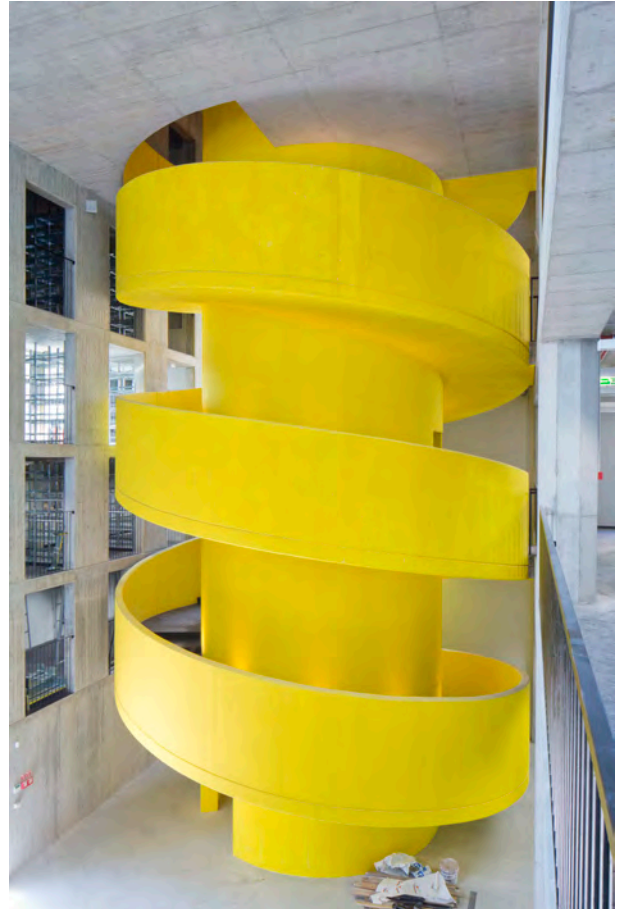
Detail of the stairs during construction (© Stefano Graziani)

memory into something as defined and irreversible as a building. And yet the House of Memory, by definition, cannot avoid *testifying* and so *resisting* in a fixed configuration over a long period. It is impossible to ignore that the House of Memory is a monument, although it operates in a society without any precise collective goals to assign to architecture. Instead of opposing this unclear condition, we imagined how to profit from it. In fact, it is precisely in this complex dimension that the potential of the new building lies: in the possibility of combining the slowness and inertia of architecture with the multiplicity and rapidity of contemporary media. Rather than awkwardly following in the footsteps of contemporary communication technologies through a medium as static as architecture (and rather than reducing the complexity of contemporary technology and media to the unavoidable immobility of architecture), we chose to underscore the potential difference between the House of Memory's solid exoskeleton and its fluid and mutating content. The new building highlights the complementarity of material and immaterial archives: different *styles of memory* coincide in an object that is ready to establish a dialogue with different audiences without renouncing the possibility of providing a unified representation. Thus a permanent stage set appears alongside a changing scenery, thereby producing a *machine of memory* that is both complex and univocal, both slow and mutating, and both multiple and





South and west façades (baukuh archive)



The staircase between the archive and the office spaces (© Stefano Graziani)

immovable. The new building profits from both its weight *and* its lightness. As an open and continuously updated archive, the House of Memory is ready to play host to a multitude of informal and unforeseen uses. As a heavy, compact volume, the House of Memory displays its inertia, choosing to remain a *stumbling block* left to hinder and repeat its own testimony.

Polyptich

The relationship between *memory* and the House of Memory is not one of direct translation. Contemporary Milan does not possess a stable, entirely shared memory, ready to be carved in stone without further interrogation. Rather than considering the House of Memory as an *expression* of shared memory, we preferred considering it as a *tool* for discussing the different elements that coexist within the collective memory of the city. The House of Memory tries to provide a shelter for the various and varied memories that are woven not only into contemporary society, but also in the minds of individuals. Firm, long-term memories thus coexist inside all of us with our own fleeting, delicate memories; public memories go hand in hand with private ones; explicit memories cannot be separated from unconscious ones.

The House of Memory is entirely covered with large images depicting Milan's recent





The House of Memory as seen from south-east (baukuh archive)



The yellow staircase and the first floor office space (© Stefano Graziani)

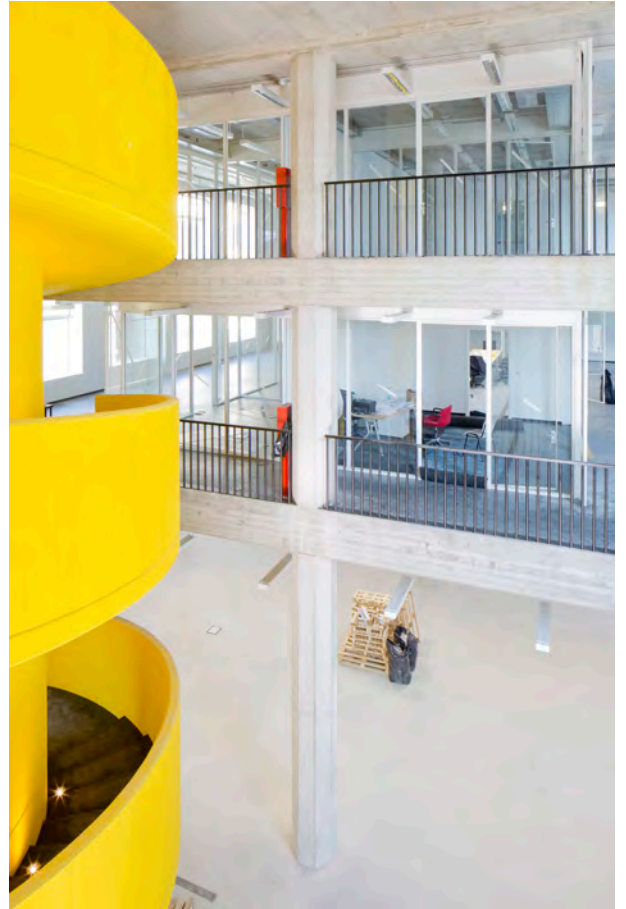
history. The shell of the new building is understood as a contemporary polyptych: this collection of images tries to suggest with great immediacy both the complexity and the ideal unity of Milan's collective memory. The decorated façade, more than defining a shared memory, exposes the need for such sharing. For this reason the images collected on the envelope of the House of Memory are at the same time explicitly monumental and deliberately fragile. In fact, given their construction, the images appear more clearly from afar and then they lose clarity by coming closer. They dissolve into a sort of floating dust, as if they would finally be unsure about the very same truth that they so proudly accepted to expose.

The iconographic program, carefully defined by a Scientific Committee, is made of nineteen portraits of anonymous Milanese citizens, which suggest the multiplicity of the populations that animated the city in the post-war period, and of eight historical images which record eight moments in the recent history of the city such as the deportation to concentration camps, the Liberation from Nazi-Fascism, the piazza Fontana bombing of 12 December 1969, This exterior decoration in polychrome brickwork establishes a direct relation with the Lombard tradition of buildings such as the Ospedale Maggiore and Santa Maria delle Grazie.





South and east façades (baukuh archive)



The office spaces at first and second floor (© Stefano Graziani)

Precedents

The House of Memory is a monument without many precedents. It is not really a museum, not really a cultural centre, not really a library. The House of Memory is somehow similar to an archive, a storehouse. In some ways it recalls the Venetian *scuole* or the monumental corn storehouses (Kornhäuser, or “houses of corn”) of medieval German cities.

The *scuole* were lay fraternities or trade unions that brought together groups of people with shared professions or ethnic origins. The *scuole* produced a very precise typology of buildings with a clear set of common features: an extremely decorative exterior, a large meeting room in the upper level, usually furnished with an amazing collection of paintings and connected to the ground floor by a monumental staircase.

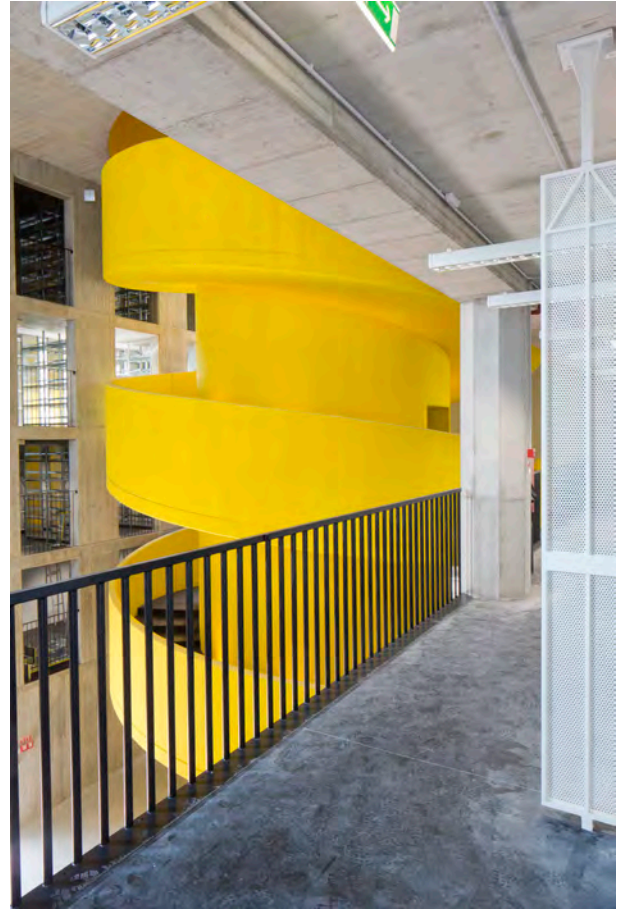
The Kornhäuser were large public granaries, sometimes exceeding the city halls in scale. The Kornhäuser were usually located in the city centre, given the need to defend the city’s food supply from foreign attacks. Because of their size and position, the Kornhäuser naturally became monuments. Also in this case, the simplicity of their interior was coupled with a richly decorated exterior.

This is also the case of Orsanmichele in Florence, a singular case of an Italian Kornhaus, for the building was originally a corn market and only later turned into a church. Orsanmichele





The House of Memory as seen from south-west (baukuh archive)



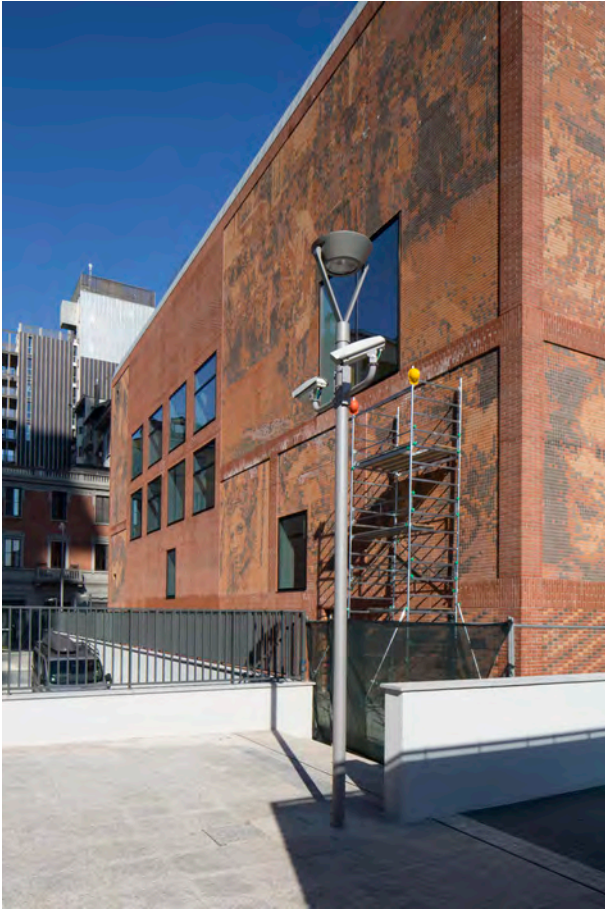
The stairs and the archive as seen from the office spaces (© Stefano Graziani)

displays fourteen niches on its exterior, each dedicated to the patron saints of the city's most important professional guilds. These niches house the most extraordinary collection of fifteenth century Florentine sculpture.

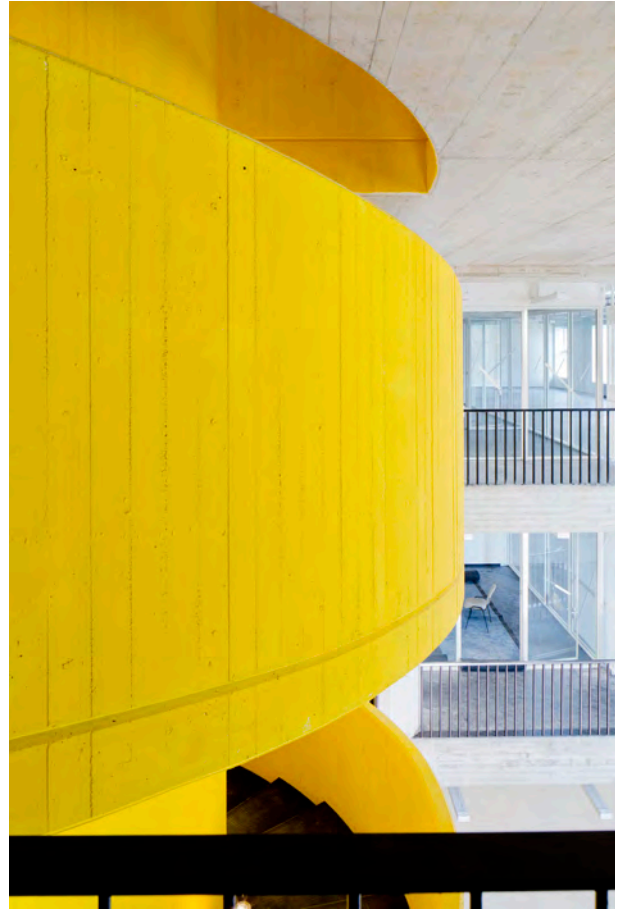
Global Memory / Local Memory

The House of Memory is made to establish a relation with the city's past. This relationship with the entire city's history, is – at local scale – based on a precise relationship with the history and identity of the “Isola” neighbourhood. The building is located at the borders of the Porta Nuova neighbourhood, among the new towers, the park and the 19th century urban tissue. The building is carefully inserted into its context, standing at the foot of the new towers and accepting the simple and clear rules of the humble and decent city next to it. At the fringe of an entirely new part of the city, the House of Memory maintains a relationship with the area's artisanal and industrial traditions. In this respect, the building's rough appearance – just a box with few windows – and the proud sobriety of its construction materials establish a deep and precise connection with the industrial tradition of the Isola neighbourhood.





West façade (baukuh archive)



The staircase and the office floors as seen from the archive (© Stefano Graziani)

Networks

The House of Memory lies at the centre of an important network of public spaces and facilities, including the new headquarters of the Region of Lombardy, the Riccardo Catella Foundation, the Incubator of the Arts and soon the new park of the “Library of Trees”. Within this network, the House of Memory operates as a point of exchange or a place for public debates: the building does not only *testify* to the struggle to obtain freedom and democracy, but also *performs* as a platform for the latter’s everyday exercise.

The extreme simplicity of the proposed scheme allows for a maximum flexibility of the building’s internal organization, which can adapt to the ever-changing needs of a contemporary cultural institution. The House of Memory will be the centre of a system of places of memory at the scale of the whole city, offering information about those places and providing a shared multimedia infrastructure available to all the “institutions of memory” scattered throughout the city.

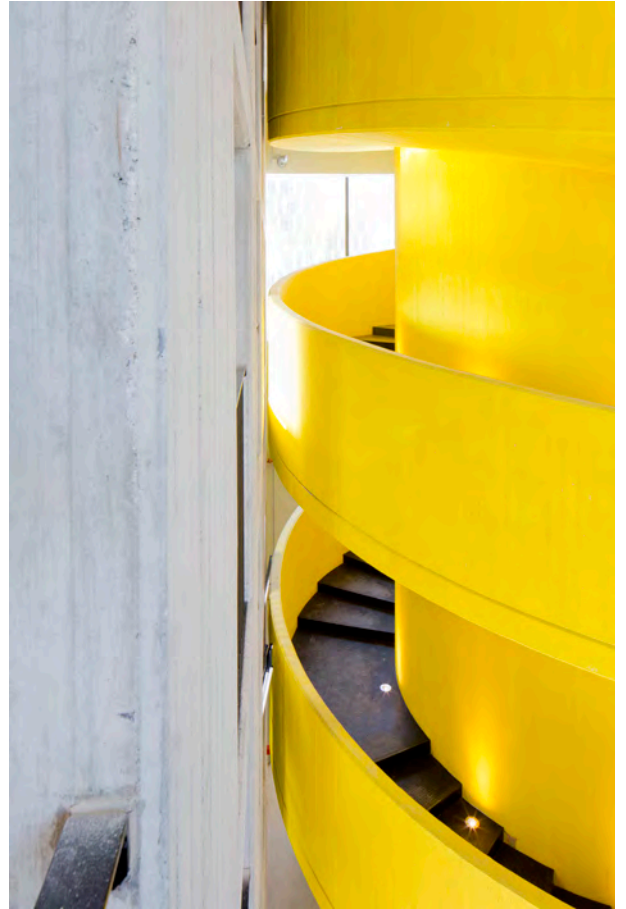
Description

The House of Memory is a very simple building: it is a box with a rectangular base of 20m by 35m, and 17.5m high.





South façade (baukuh archive)



Detail of the stairs and the open archive (© Stefano Graziani)

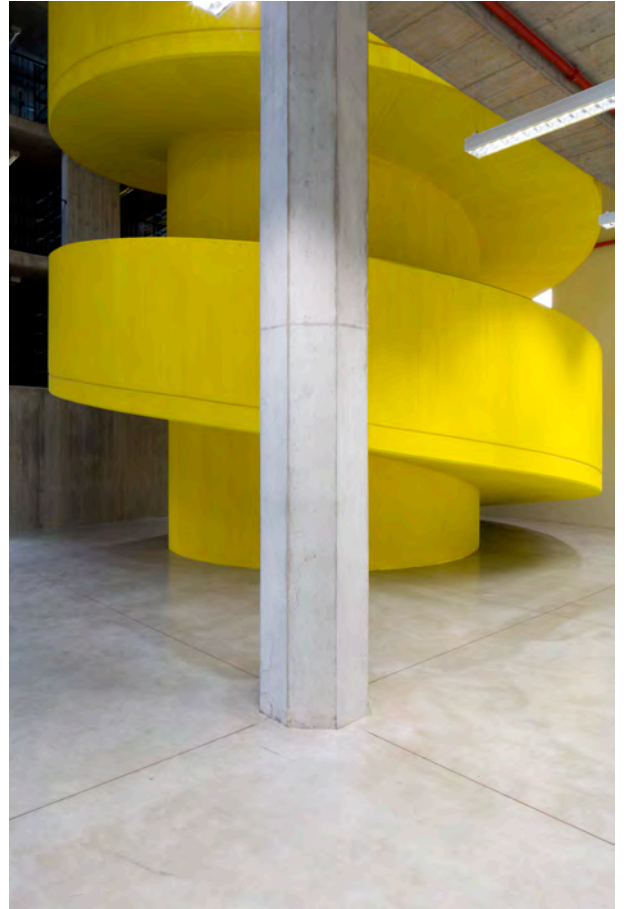
The building is divided into three parts that are connected to one another by an entirely open ground floor. Two thin layers along the building's shorter ends house the archive (South), the restrooms and technical installations (North), and the vertical circulation. The open space at the ground floor is subdivided in three parts by two octagonal columns. One third of this area reaches the building's full height and includes a spiral staircase. The rest is occupied by exhibition spaces and offices disposed on three levels. This internal organization – with the enormous, yellow staircase inserted between the three levels of offices and exhibition spaces and the five levels of archive – introduces a greater scale into the building. The contrast between the tight levels of the archive and the colossal dimension the staircase allows the office and exhibition spaces to acquire spaciousness; the visitor perceives a vaster, more generous atmosphere.

The yellow staircase is not only the building's main distributive element, but it is also the device that establishes a relation among the visitors and the collection. Given that the preciousness of the archive does not allow the visitors to directly access to the documents, the relationship between the citizens and the collection is established through the rotating movement created by the staircase. The visitor repeatedly comes closer to and then moves away from the collection, thereby experiencing a complex sequence of views of the documents





The House of Memory as seen from via Confalonieri (baukuh archive)



The yellow staircase at the ground floor (© Stefano Graziani)

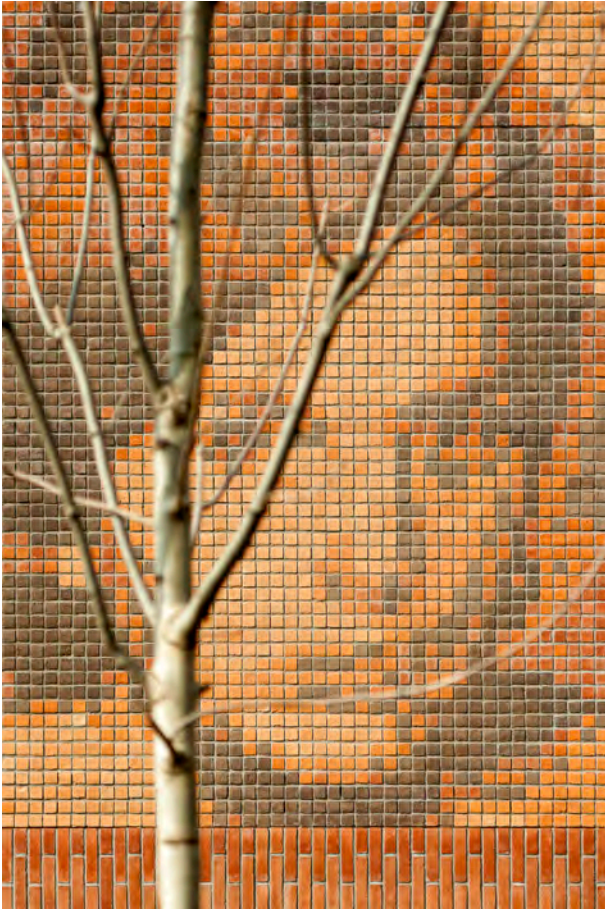
and, behind them, of the park outside.

Light enters the building in many fashions. The offices have large windows concentrated in the corresponding parts of the façade. The building's open-space configuration and internal subdivision with glass emphasize the abundance of light. The entrance hall, the large staircase and the ground floor receive light from a handful of very large openings; grazing light invades the semi-darkness and generates a calm and solemn space.

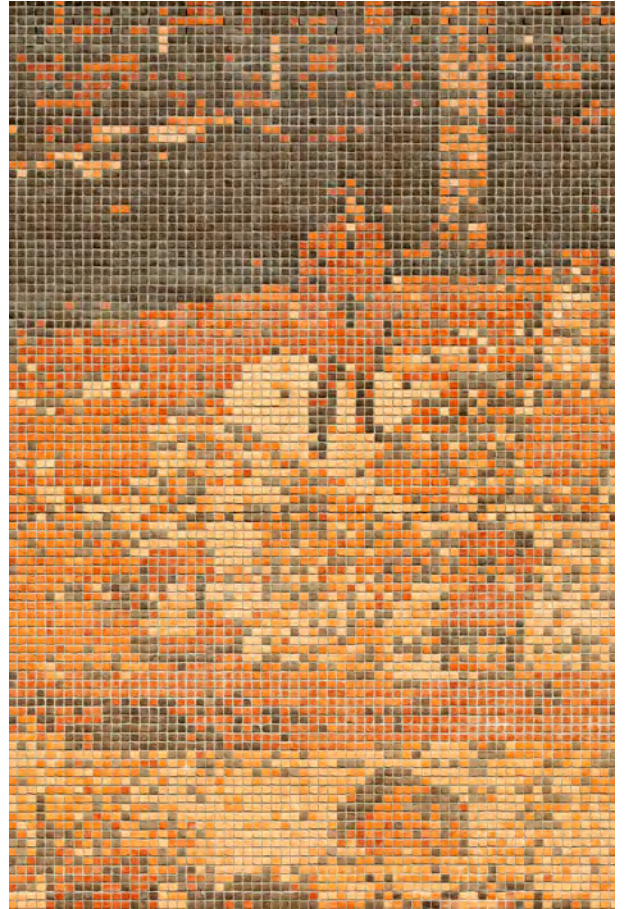
Structure / Materials

The House of Memory is made of very simple materials, both inside and outside. The reinforced concrete beams and pillars follow a square grid, with a span of 10m. The circular stair is in reinforced concrete. The ground floor pavement is in polished concrete. It is replaced with linoleum on the office levels. The partitions between the offices are made of glass panes from pavement to ceiling. All offices are organized as open spaces around a core of more private spaces and meeting rooms. The simplicity of the scheme allows the different associations to select the office layout they prefer and also allow them to share services among different offices, so enhancing the co-operation among institutions and thus reducing expenses.





Detail of a portrait on the east façade (© Giulio Boem)



Detail of an historical scene on the south façade (© Giulio Boem)

The House of Memory is an extremely compact building. This shape involves a significant reduction of the construction and maintenance costs, limiting the amount of external surfaces with respect to the overall volume of the building. The compactness of the building and the limited amount of glass surfaces also provide a great thermal capacity, that contributes to the overall energy saving. The external walls' considerable thickness (45 cm) reduces the energy losses. The extreme simplicity of the constructive solutions chosen throughout the building (raw concrete pillars, exposed installations) allowed maintaining extremely low construction costs (around 1400 €/sqm).

Façades

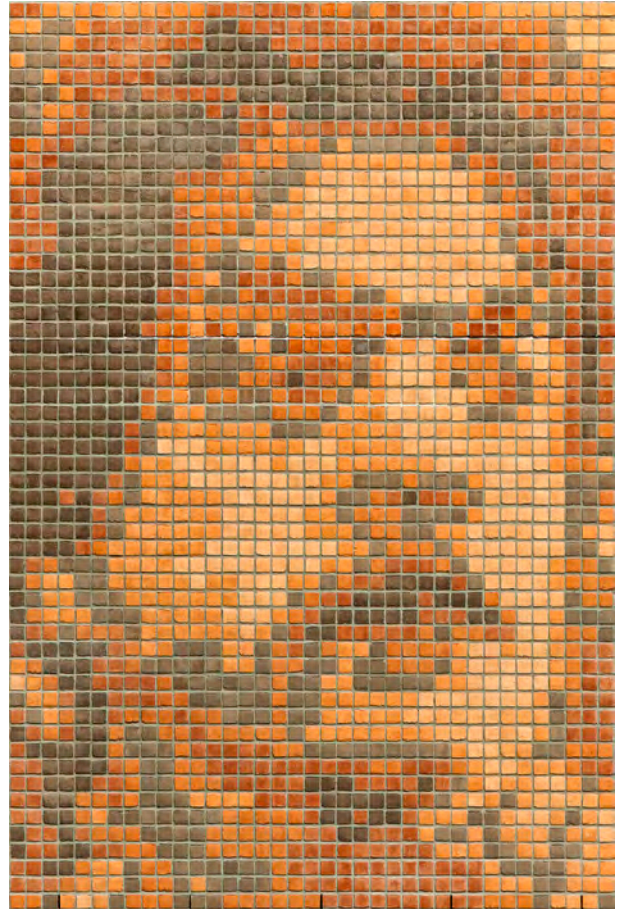
The façades of the House of Memory are entirely realized in bricks and combine a frame made of pilasters and architraves in slight relief with large recessed panels decorated with images in six tones. These large panels are subdivided in nineteen squares with portraits (4.6 x 4.6m) and eight large rectangles with historical scenes (9.6m in height and with variable width). The polychrome bricks, in a range of six different colours, have been especially produced to specific dimensions (5.5 x 5.5 x 12cm) by SanMarco SRL.

The images are elaborations on the base of archive photographs. Details within the





Detail of the south façade (© Giulio Boem)



Detail of a portrait on the south façade (© Giulio Boem)

photographs have been cropped in order to match the façade panels' proportions. These portions of photographs have been then reduced to a number of pixels equal to the number of bricks contained in the panel and then processed and subdivided in six colours, so that to each brick in the façade panel would correspond to a pixel of the elaborated image. The result of this process was a matrix with numbers from 1 to 6 (corresponding to the different colours of the bricks). The matrix has been later printed and applied onsite (in scale 1:1) in order to precisely guide the disposition of the bricks.



HOUSE OF MEMORY

via Confalonieri 14, Milan

technical data*client:* City of Milan*developer:* HINES ITALIA SGR SpA*architectural design:* baukuh*structures:* Arup Italia srl*HVAC:* Deerns Italia spa*fire protection engineering:* Gaeengineering srl*quantity surveyor:* J&A consultants srl*construction company:* Edilda Edilizia Lombarda spa*competition:* 2011*detailed construction design:* 2013*construction:* 2013-2015*public spaces (exhibition, conference, reading room):* 550m²*offices (associations):* 800m²*archive:* 320m² (160,000 volumes)*services:* 200m²*gross surface:* 2500m²*costs:* 3.600.000 €*Associations composing the "House of Memory":*

- Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Movimento di Liberazione d'Italia (I.N.S.M.L.I.)
- Associazione Nazionale Partigiani d'Italia (A.N.P.I.)
- Associazione Nazionale Ex Deportati (A.N.E.D.)
- Associazione Italiana Vittime del Terrorismo (A.I.VI.TER.)
- Associazione Piazza Fontana 12 Dicembre 1969 Centro studi e iniziative sulle stragi politiche anni '70

Scientific Committee for the selection of images on the façades of the House of Memory:

- Roberto Cenati (A.N.P.I.)
- Ada Lucia De Cesaris (City of Milan)
- Adolfo Mignemi (I.N.S.M.L.I.)
- Paolo Silva (Associazione Piazza Fontana 12 Dicembre 1969)
- Nadir Tedeschi (A.I.VI.TER.)
- Dario Venegoni (A.N.E.D.)

in collaboration with Alberto Saibene and Giovanna Silva



baukuh

baukuh produces architecture.

Designs are independent of personal taste. No member of baukuh is ever individually responsible for any single project, each of which is the product of the office as a whole. Working without a hierarchical structure or a stylistic dogma, baukuh produces architecture out of a rational and explicit design process. This process is based on a critical understanding of the architecture of the past. The knowledge encoded in the architecture of the past is public, and starting from this public knowledge, any architectural problem can be solved.

baukuh was founded in 2004 and is now composed by Paolo Carpi, Silvia Lupi, Vittorio Pizzigoni, Giacomo Summa, Pier Paolo Tamburelli and Andrea Zanderigo. baukuh is based in Milan and Genoa.

baukuh won international competitions (Amsterdam 2003, Budapest 2003, Pavia 2006, Genoa 2009, Torino 2010 and Hoogstraten 2013), produced masterplans (Amsterdam 2004-07, Venice 2007), built public and mixed-use buildings (Brugnato 2007, Tirana 2007-09) restored public buildings (Zandobbio 2014) and curated exhibition design (Padova 2006). baukuh took part in the Rotterdam Biennale (2007 and 2011), in the Istanbul Biennial (2012) in the Venice Biennale (2008 and 2012) and was part of the research group for the Dutch National History Museum (2011).

Vittorio Pizzigoni teaches at the University of Genoa, Pier Paolo Tamburelli teaches at University of Illinois at Chicago, Andrea Zanderigo is a teaching assistant at EPFL Lausanne.

posta@baukuh.it

www.baukuh.it



List of images represented on the façades of the House of Memory:

A) UPPER PART/ HISTORICAL SCENES

NORTH FAÇADE

→ unknown author, *The Partisan Commander Cino Moscatelli announces the Liberation of the City*, piazza Duomo, 28 April 1945 (Archivio Publifoto, Milan)

EAST FAÇADE

→ Domenico Carulli, *General Strike on Occasion of Aldo Moro's Kidnapping*, piazza Duomo, 16 March 1978 (Archivio Fotogramma, fondo Giancarlo De Bellis, Milan)

→ Silvestre Loconsolo, *Workers of Sit Siemens during a Strike*, July 1969 (Archivio del lavoro, Milan)

→ autore ignoto, *Devastation of the Headquarters of the Socialist Newspaper "Avanti!" by Fascist Militia*, 24 March 1924 (Fondazione Anna Kuliscioff, Archivio fotografico, Milan)

SOUTH FAÇADE

→ Adriano Ferraris, *Hall of the National Bank of Agriculture after the Terrorist Bombing*, piazza Fontana, 12 December 1969 (Archivio La Stampa, Turin)

→ Francisco Boix, *The Stairs of Death at Weiner Graben, inside the Nazi Concentration Camp at Mauthausen-Gusen*, 6 May 1945 (Archivio Fondazione Memoria della Deportazione, Milan)

WEST FAÇADE

→ Uliano Lucas, *Immigrants Crossing the Swiss-Italian Border*, Luino, 23 December 1974 (Archivio Uliano Lucas, Milan)

→ Daniele Bonecchi, *Manifestation of the Students of the Liceo Donatelli against Sexual Violence*, 1976 (Archivio Fotogramma, fondo Giancarlo De Bellis, Milan)

B) LOWER PART/ PORTRAITS

NORTH FAÇADE

→ Massimo Vitali, *Funerals of the Victims of the Piazza Fontana Terrorist Attack*, piazza Duomo, 15 December 1969 (Museo di Fotografia Contemporanea, fondo Lanfranco Colombo, Cinisello Balsamo)

→ Silvestre Loconsolo, *Union rally at Breda Siderurgica*, 27 April 1977 (Fondo Acquisizioni Archivio Contemporaneo, Archivio di Etnografia e Storia Sociale, Regione Lombardia, Milan)

→ Armando Rotoletti, *Celebrations for Palm' Sunday*, quartiere Sarpi, 12 April 1992 (Fondo Mondo Popolare, Archivio di Etnografia e Storia Sociale, Regione Lombardia, Milan)

→ Gianni Gelmi, *Protests for Censorship of the Students' Magazine "La Zanzara"*, Liceo Parini, March 1966 (Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Milan)

EAST FAÇADE

→ Silvestre Loconsolo, *Manifestation for the International Woman's Day*, March 1974 (Archivio del lavoro, Milan)



→ Domenico Dabbrescia, *Typography of the Newspaper "Corriere della Sera"*, via Solferino, 30 March 1962 (Fondazione Corriere della Sera, Milan)

→ Silvestre Loconsolo, *Theatre Performance*, Piccolo Teatro, 8 February 1965 (Archivio del lavoro, Milan)

→ Giuseppe Morandi, *Workers in the Stables*, Voltido, Summer 1967 (Archivio Giuseppe Morandi, Piadena)

→ Federico Patellani, *Manifestation after the Proclamation of the Results of the Institutional Referendum*, piazza Duomo, early June 1946 (Fondo Federico Patellani, Archivio di Etnografia e Storia Sociale, Regione Lombardia, Milano - Museo di Fotografia Contemporanea, Cinisello Balsamo)

→ Filippo Romano, *Progetto per il reinserimento socio-lavorativo dei detenuti previsto dall'art. 21 della legge 354/75*, Parco Nord, 2009 (Archivio Filippo Romano, Milano)

→ Federico Patellani, *Slums in the Ortica Area*, 10 July 1945 (Fondo Federico Patellani, Archivio di Etnografia e Storia Sociale, Regione Lombardia, Milano - Museo di Fotografia Contemporanea, Cinisello Balsamo)

SOUTH FAÇADE

→ Ermanno Rea, *Milan Stock Exchange*, early 60s (Archivio Ermanno Rea, Milan)

→ unknown author, *Audience at a Lecture at the Casa della Cultura*, 1957 (Archivio Casa della Cultura, Milan)

→ Uliano Lucas, *Alfa Romeo Plant*, Arese, 1978 (Archivio Uliano Lucas, Milan)

→ Ferdinando Scianna, *Festival at Parco Sempione*, 1978 (Fondo Mondo Popolare, Archivio di Etnografia e Storia Sociale, Regione Lombardia, Milan)

WEST FAÇADE

→ unknown author, *Evening School for Former Partisans*, Affori, Summer 1945 (Archivio fotografico Istituto nazionale per la storia del movimento di liberazione in Italia "Ferruccio Parri", Milan)

→ Federico Patellani, *Manifestation after the Proclamation of the Results of the Institutional Referendum*, piazza Duomo, early June 1946 (Fondo Federico Patellani, Archivio di Etnografia e Storia Sociale, Regione Lombardia, Milano - Museo di Fotografia Contemporanea, Cinisello Balsamo)

→ Vito Scifo, *Festa dei Gigli*, quartiere Giambellino, June 1982 (Fondo Mondo Popolare, Archivio di Etnografia e Storia Sociale, Regione Lombardia, Milan)

→ Giovanna Silva, *Ramadan Prayer*, Viale Jenner, September 2008 (Archivio Giovanna Silva, Milan)

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-Adolfo Mignemi (I.N.S.M.L.I.)

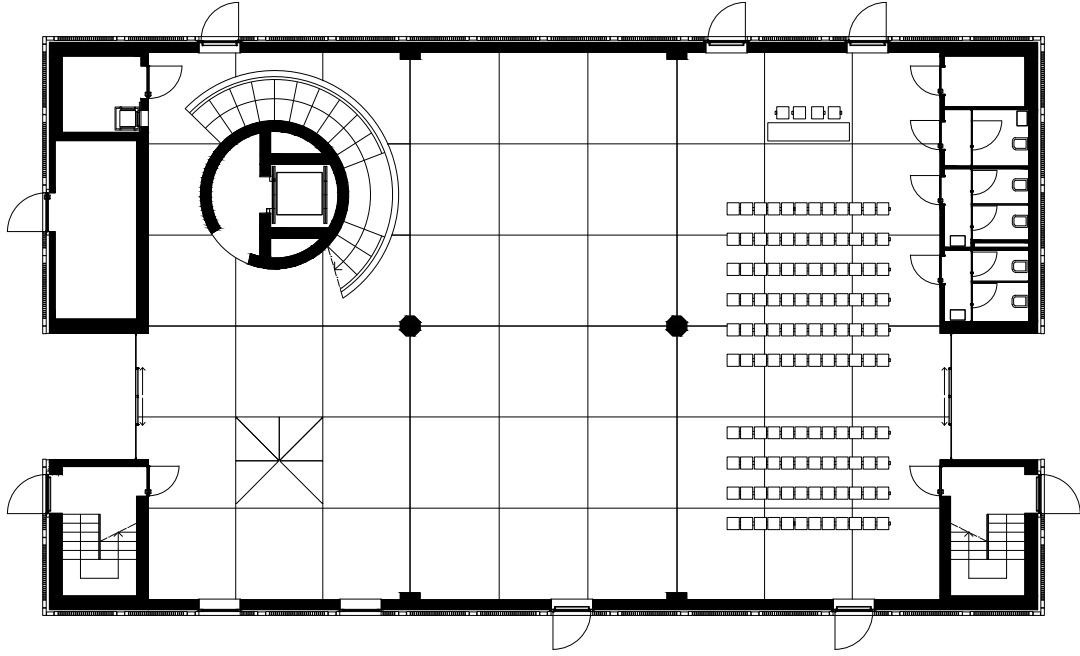
-Paolo Silva (Associazione Piazza Fontana 12 Dicembre 1969)

-Nadir Tedeschi (A.I.VI.TER.)

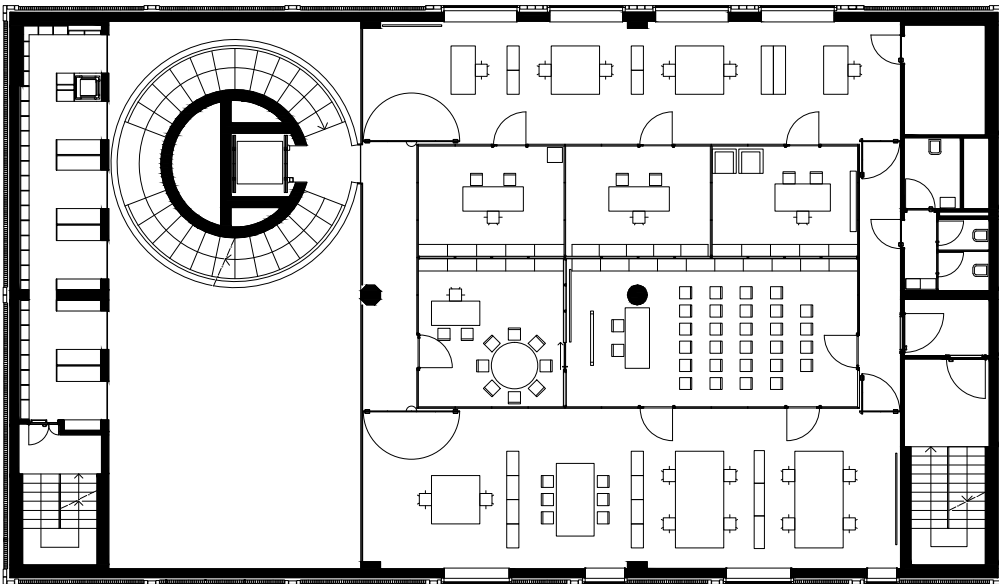
-Dario Venegoni (A.N.E.D.)

in collaboration with Alberto Saibene and Giovanna Silva



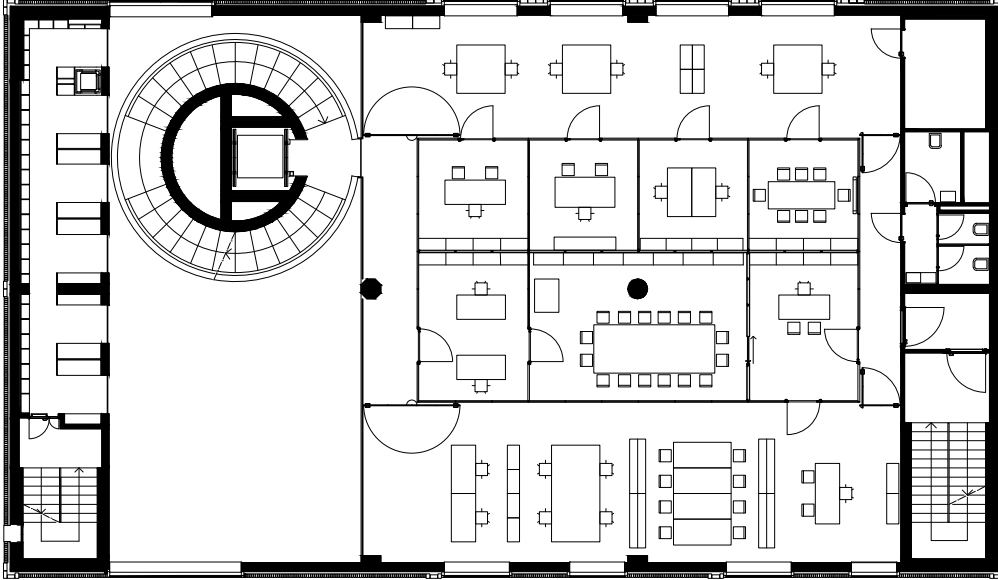


Ground floor 1:250

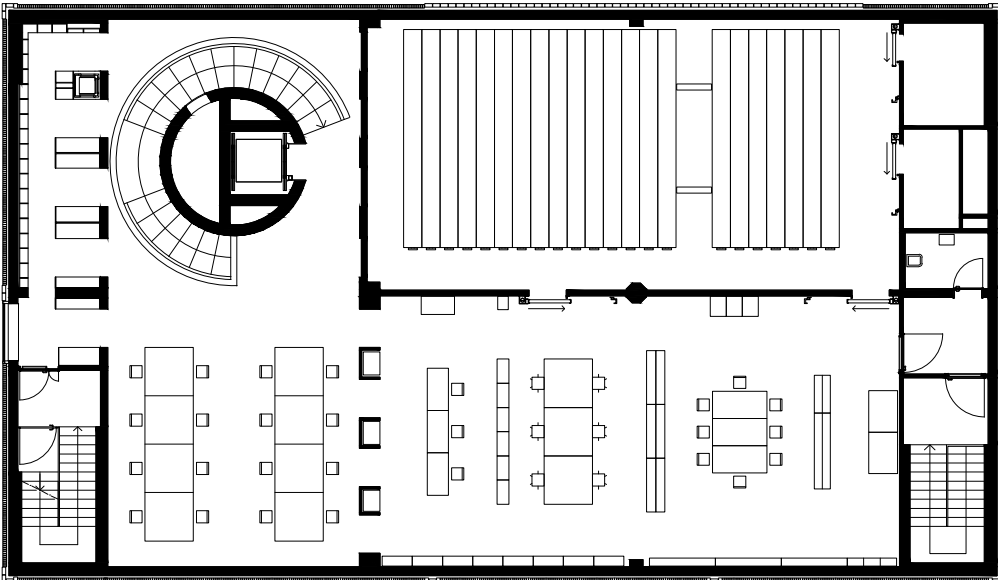


First floor 1:250



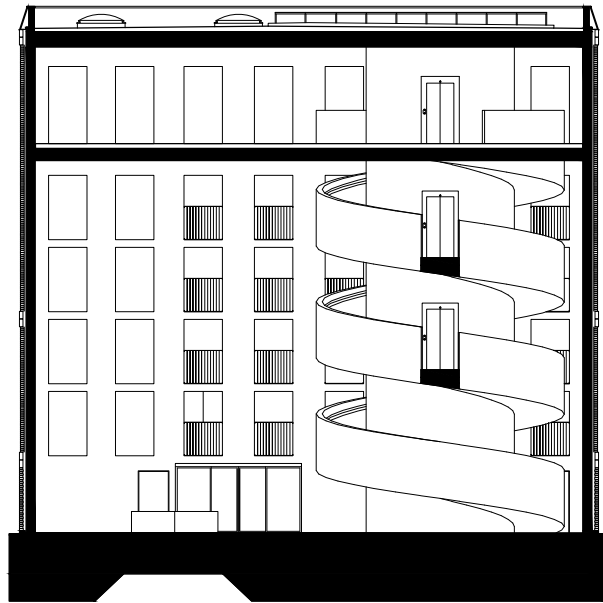


Second floor 1:250

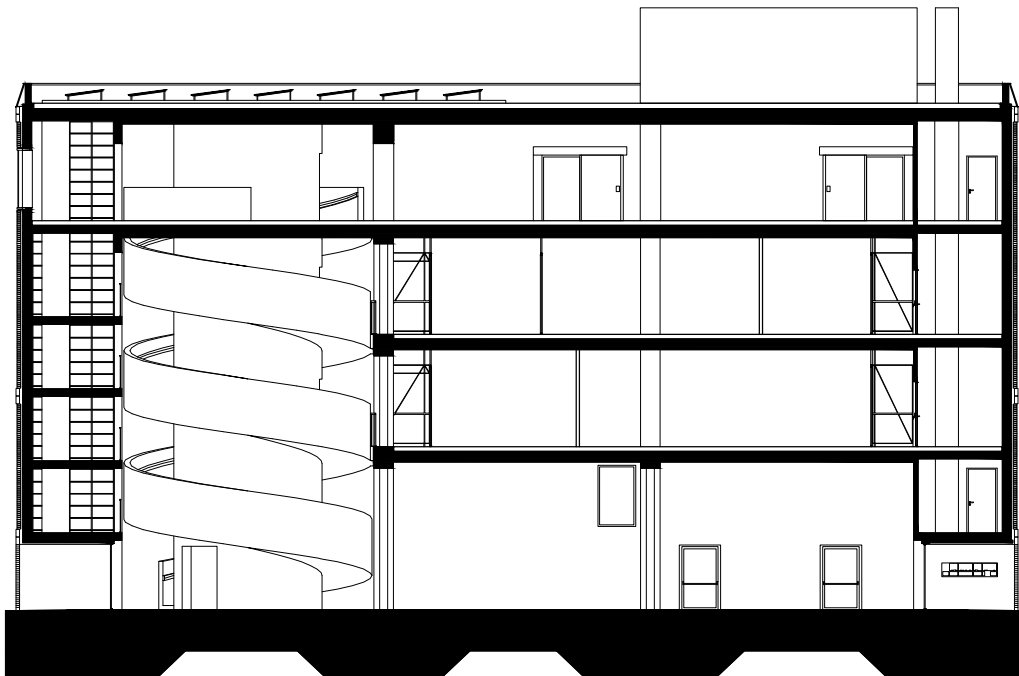


Third floor 1:250





Cross section 1:250



Longitudinal section 1:250

