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| Futurist Architecture |
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| The members of the futurist group most associated with architecture during the movement were Antonio Sant'Elia (1888- 1916), Virgilio Marchi (1895- 1960), Enrico Prampolini (1894- 1956), Ivo Pannaggi (1901- 1981) and Angiolo Mazzoni (1894- 1979). Antonio Sant’Elia was born in Como, Italy and graduated from a local institution in 1906 with the qualification of master builder. His first career was as a draughtsman within the city architects department of Milan, and he subsequently studied architecture at Accademia di Brera between 1909 and 1911. In 1912 he designed and built the Villa Elisi in San Maurizio, Como, which shows little relationship to the futurist architecture he would advocate, although there are subtle suggestions apparent in one first floor window detail.  Following the *Manifesto and Foundation of Futurism,* the architectural facet of the futurist movement became explicit in July 1914 after the publication of Antonio Sant’Elia’s manifesto *Futurist Architecture*, a text document supported by sixteen architectural drawings exploring proposals for a futurist city (three of which were prepared by Mario Chiattone), contesting the very presence of architecture in its current context stating: “Architecture has not existed since the year 700.” |
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Source: http://www.wired.com/images\_blogs/photos/uncategorized/2008/11/11/santelia.jpg  Following the *Manifesto and Foundation of Futurism,* the architectural facet of the futurist movement became explicit in July 1914 after the publication of Antonio Sant’Elia’s manifesto *Futurist Architecture*, a text document supported by sixteen architectural drawings exploring proposals for a futurist city (three of which were prepared by Mario Chiattone), contesting the very presence of architecture in its current context stating: “Architecture has not existed since the year 700.” The manifesto continued its radical commentary by dismissing Neo-classicism and all forms of decorative architecture as “absurd” and advocated “raw, naked, or violently coloured materials” that would empower futurist architecture to arrive at its own definition of decoration. Complementing this abrasive dismissal of ornament and decoration, futurist architecture should seek inspiration within the industrial and mechanical man-made world; declaring that futurist architecture will be one of “cold calculation, bold audacity and simplicity.”  Sant’Elia’s designs of the supporting proposals followed the text clearly - visually elements were dynamically executed with the use of ellipses and powerful lines, forms were stretched and extruded, emphasising the celebration of speed and movement that was to become a recognisable language of futurist architecture. The proposals also rejected ornament and decoration with a particular bias for an aesthetic of modern living and values of sensibility, themes common in many strands of modernism. This work was first presented as untitled work as part of an exhibition on modernism in May 1914, immediately after which Sant’Elia joined MARINETTI who reviewed the text and published it as a manifesto.  File: PannaggiICostruttori.jpg  Figure 2 Ivo Pannagi, I costruttori, 1925.  Source: http://www.atlantedellarteitaliana.it/immagine/00026/17716OP2882AU29785.jpg  In 1916, both Sant’Elia and Umberto Boccioni (who was a futurist and sculptor with an architectural interest) were fatally wounded during World War I, and subsequently Marinetti looked to Virgilio Marchi to champion futurist architecture. Virgilio Marchi was a production designer and an architect, and taking a lead from both Sant’Elia’s architecture and Giacomo Balla’s paintings, he wrote a second manifesto of architecture in 1920 entitled *Manifesto of Dynamic Instinctive Dramatic Futurist Architecture,* and followed with his book *Architettura Futurista* in 1924 which sought to further establish his critical position within the futurist group. The two texts were intended to campaign for futurist architecture but were much more aligned to stage set design and interiors, before Marchi himself shifted to other interests during the 1930s.  Ivo Pannaggi was born in Macerata, and whilst he studied architecture in Rome and Florence, he ultimately became a practitioner of art. Marinetti revived the futurist movement after the Great War, and with Vinicio Paladini, Pannaggi wrote the *Manifesto of Futurist Mechanical Art* in 1922. Although not explicitly mentioning architecture, this manifesto strongly referenced earlier futurist manifestos and the appreciation of industrial steel and its associated mechanics that were shaping the world. These contextual observations were explicitly painted by Pannaggi in some works celebrating the human actions of making and construction, two examples being *Il Lavoro,* and *I costruttori,* both 1925, exploring themes also celebrated in Russian Constructivism of the same period. A natural progression for Pannaggi was to develop designs for futurist clothing that continued the theme of the body and industrial materials.  In 1930 and fourteen years after Sant’Elia’s fatal wounding in World War I, the city authorities of Como commissioned a memorial to the fallen of the Great War. The design was based on one of Sant’Elia’s visionary structures following Marinetti’s influence on the client. Enrico Prampolini, although a stage designer, had designed the 1927 *Futurist Pavilion* in Turin, and was appointed as project leader. However, the project fell behind schedule and during 1931 the city had appointed fascist architect Giuseppe Terragni (and his brother Attilio) to complete the design and procurement of the memorial. The result was a completed building which does embody some qualities of futurist architecture; although Terragni’s rationalist approach is evident in the form of the elements and their proportions, together with the introduction of Serizzo granite and Nabresina marble as finishing materials.  File: GiuseppeAndAttilioTerragniMonument.jpg  Figure 3 Giuseppe and Attilio Terragno, Monument to the Fallen, Como, 1931-33.  Source: http://farm5.staticflickr.com/4152/5065206736\_316f48c285\_o.jpg  Exemplars of formative futurist architecture never directly manifested into completed buildings due to the early deaths of Sant’Elia and Boccioni, and the lesser engagement of Prampolini and Ivo Pannaggi (who never completed his architectural training, and became more interested in painting). However, a fine example of a building that embodied Sant’Elia’s ideas of celebrating speed, dynamism and the mechanical world was the Fiat Lingotto Factory (1923) in Turin, designed by engineer Giacomo Matté-Trucco. Although the building is formal modernism in its language, the production line was functional and symbolic of new industry. The production line transcended an upward spiral cutting through five storeys, sequentially designed to assemble the Fiat, which was finished with a loop test track on the roof celebrating the idea of industrial progress.  Angiolo Mazzoni, a city architect and engineer with a political attitude, became a member of the National Fascist Party in 1926, and joined the second-phase futurists group in 1933 after he was dropped from the *Stazione Santa Maria Novella* project in Florence, whereby following architectural competition Mussolini favoured Gruppo Toscano’s design. In the same year, construction for Mazzoni’s *Heating Plant and Controls Cabin Building* commenced adjacent to the new station site, the design embracing futurist ideas as the form of the building is spatially complex, acting as a metaphor for the complexity and dynamism of the technology and actions of maintenance it housed. In the following year he signed the *Manifesto of Aerial Architecture* with Marinetti which called for an architecture taking a lead from the dynamic tropes of Italy’s new communications networks and infrastructure. Mazzoni continued to be involved in infrastructure projects, although the dynamism of his futurist language became much more rational. His close connection with the Fascists led to an premature end of his architectural career in Italy, and following the end of World War II he fled to Bogota, Columbia.  The futurist movement dissolved following the death of Marinetti in 1944, however the radical ideas exemplified within the futurist’s architectural position continue to influence contemporary architecture, most recently and notably Zaha Hadid’s BMW Factory in Leipzig, Germany (2001- 2005) and Denton Corker Marshall’s Manchester Civil Justice Centre in Manchester, England (2002- 2007).  Other members of the futurist group engaged with architecture:  Fillìa (Luigi Colombo’s pseudonym) (1904- 1936), notable works: established the Futurist movement in Turin, 1923.  Alberto Sartoris (1901- 1998), notable works: contributing grand prix winner of the *Prima Mostra* *dell’Architettura Futurista,* 1928.  Nikolay Diulgheroff (1901- 1982), notable works: *Design for a Lighthouse* (unbuilt), 1927.  Luciano Baldessari (1896- 1982), notable works: exhibition design for *Silk Villa Olmo,* Como, 1927.  Luigi Figini (1903- 1984), notable works: *House in Milan,* (with Gino Pollini), 1934-35.  Gino Pollini (1903- 1991) notable works: *SS. Giovanni e Paolo Church,* Milan (with Luigi Figini), 1968.  Mario Chiattone (1891-1957) notable works: *House of Trade Unions,* Lugano, 1931.  Fortunato Depero (1892- 1960) notable works: *Skyscrapers and Tunnels,* (painting), 1930.  Mino Somenzi (1899- 1948) notable works: Manifesto of Aerial Architecture (with Angiolo Mazzoni), 1934.  Marcel Janco (1895- 1984) notable works: *Apartment Building,* Bucharest, 1937. |
| Further reading:  (Berghaus)  (Costa Meyer)  (Greene and Salaris)  (Kern)  (Kirk)  (Rainey, Poggi and Wittman) |