

## ENERGY. OIL AND POST-OIL ARCHITECTURE AND GRIDS

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In all of its architecture exhibitions, the MAXXI has focused greatly on the themes and topics that bring architectural culture closer to its space and time. The *SPAZIO* and *RE-CYCLE* exhibitions, its commissions to photographers and many other projects all bear witness to the museum's painstaking research aimed at the conceptual space where creative work and technical know-how come together in real life. The exhibition *ENERGY, Oil and Post-Oil Architecture and Grids* is fully a part of this strand, thereby confirming the museum's attention not just toward the masterpieces and the masters of architecture, but the more delicate processes of the changes taking place in the territory. In keeping with the museum's youthful tradition, this exhibition, which is born from the collaboration with some of the major Italian companies, is not limited to showcasing architectural drawings and models, but assembles a thought-provoking mosaic of works and studies that often encroaches upon the worlds of art, planning, science and communication.

The initial theme of the exhibition is among one of today's most heatedly debated issues: in the future, which spaces and devices will allow the individual citizen access to energy for movement and for all of their other needs? Where will we get "fuel"? What will "fuel" be like? Above all, we ask how architecture will contribute to the new scenarios, taking for granted that the range of forms and sources of energy will not remain unchanged. So the exhibition starts from a strong point: the remarkable quality of the production of Italian architects involved in these themes during the "golden age" of energy growth, in the early decades following the Second World War. And more generally speaking, the virtuous alliance for modernity that in those years brought together technicians, intellectuals and some of the most innovative and visionary figures, like Enrico Mattei. For the first time the industrial culture saw the involvement of architects in the country's race toward innovation, responding eagerly and creatively. Much of the exhibition starts out from its acknowledgement of the major archives (eni, Autogrill, IUAV, the MAXXI itself) and then reminds visitors how the issue of energy is close to everyone's lives and that it requires excellent planning. The beautiful projects of the 1950s represent a great premise for describing the present-day scenario, recounted by three superb photographers, as well as that of the future, dealt with by seven architects from every continent. From their work we expect to learn not just how we will move around in the future, what we will put in the fuel tank of our "vehicle," and how refueling will be carried out, but how the new production and distribution of energy will affect the landscape, the built-up environment, the perception of urban space and the relationships between people. *ENERGY* has a twofold strategic value for the museum. On the one hand, it once again uses exhibitions and site-specific commissions to architects to add to and qualify its collections, which are by now quite solid for the 21st century. On the other, it enhances its collaboration with the institutions and companies that work in important sectors such as the one here, and that therefore play a pivotal role in Italy's future. It does not involve them merely as sponsors, but builds virtuous cultural rapports, ones that envision an exchange of knowledge, a sharing of archives, a common construction of research paths of which in Gallery 1 we only see the most evident aspect of cultural relations that go much farther.

Lastly, *ENERGY* bears witness to the MAXXI's straightforward and direct commitment to "talent scouting" and the construction of a fertile and active dialogue with the finest emerging architectural (and photographic) energies, wherever they may be on the planet, and however their *modus operandi* may be consolidated. With the small group selected by curators for the exhibition, the MAXXI virtually searched for its interlocutors in North and South America, Asia, Africa, Australia and Europe, and it found three of the finest photographers in Italy, as well as interesting architects in Chile, Japan, South Korea, Australia, South Africa and Italy. If we compare the museum's initial mission and its vocation toward innovation and exchange between cultures with architecture's current need to harness all its best energies and produce new ideas, then we can look with confidence to the approach and to the themes raised by this event. Once again, our initiative will foster a discussion that will certainly transcend the museum walls and the boundaries of the disciplines and sciences involved.