

ERASMUS EFFECT Italian Architects Abroad

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The number of people listed at the Anagrafe degli Italiani Residenti all'Estero (AIRE) is 4,341,156, that is to say, 7.3% of the 60 million or so people living in Italy.

And, among these, how many architects have made this choice? It's hard to know this figure exactly, especially today, in a professional context that's becoming increasingly nomadic: what's certain is that the *Erasmus Effect*, as we have chosen to call this trend, is gaining strength.

The phenomenon of "migrant" Italian architecture, i.e. architecture designed by those who open practices abroad and become affirmed as high-level professionals or authors of international renown, is nothing new: from Giacomo Quarenghi's role in Saint Petersburg to the work of Lina Bo Bardi in Brazil, down to Pietro Belluschi in the United States and Romaldo Giurgola in Australia, or Renzo Piano and Massimiliano Fuksas, the roads taken by some of our finest architects are solidly a part of the international historiography of architecture of which, in many cases, they represent the pinnacle.

By means of the exhibition *ERASMUS EFFECT. Italian Architects Abroad*, MAXXI Architettura confirms its role as an institution that's mindful of and sensitive to an analysis of the themes and tendencies of national and international contemporary architecture.

The show testifies to the presence of an ever-increasing number of young creative Italian minds that choose to move to other countries, casting light on the exemplary value of some of these stories and, above all, investigating the progressive acceleration that this phenomenon has undergone in recent times. By way of an in-depth study the team at MAXXI Architettura has essentially mapped out the new geographies of architecture within a synchronic reading of the contemporary scenario, while at the same time looking at the general information available on Italian creativity in the world.

From the key points of reference – the spread of inter-university exchanges such as the Erasmus Project and the emergence of several destinations time after time found to have an irresistible appeal for architects (Berlin, Barcelona, Rotterdam) – we come to the contemporary scenario in which the journey is undertaken in search of greater opportunities to achieve economic independence, professional success and creative accomplishment.

The exhibition garners and tells many stories: they are the stories of young architects who show how it's possible to be successful and produce quality architecture, thanks to the evident mental flexibility and the great spirit of adaptation that has always been a distinguishing feature of Italian culture.

Two important aspects of MAXXI Architettura's activity are underscored by this event. The first of these is the meaning and value of the research that the Museum of Architecture constantly carries out in regard to themes linked to its specific field, but that is expanded to include all the areas of contact and exchange of contemporary creativity.

The second concerns the role of this Museum, whose goal is to be an active sensor, an antenna that transmits and receives the most interesting and innovative signals in regard to contemporary architecture as it goes through its constant evolution.