

YONA FRIEDMAN

Mobile Architecture, People's Architecture

23rd June – 29th October 2017

www.maxxi.art

"My understanding of architecture is very similar to my understanding of music: anyone can build, just like anyone can sing; however, some singers are so prepared that they become artists"
(Yona Friedman, 2017)

Rome, May 2017. The MAXXI dedicates the **YONA FRIEDMAN. *Mobile Architecture, People's Architecture*** exhibition, curated by **Gong Yan** and **Elena Motisi**, which shall take place from **23rd June to 29th October 2017** to **Yona Friedman** (Budapest 1923), a legendary architect, an exuberant, creative artist transcending disciplines, whose thinking is extraordinarily relevant.

This exhibition, which was organised by *Power Station of Art*, Shanghai – where it was presented in 2015 – is now hosted by the MAXXI with a new outfitting, conceived together with the architect.

Friedman – who built an apparently floating modular structure in 2016 for the Serpentine Gallery of London – believes that anyone can use simple, flexible mobile structures to design and build their own architecture, such as houses and the "spatial cities" that fluctuate over real cities.

On the occasion of the MAXXI exhibition, Yona Friedman's famous *Ville Spatiale* reaches Rome, and brings a fragment, which interacts with the **unpublished graphic elaborations** hanging on the walls, into the museum. But there is more: the exhibition includes **unpublished drawings** dating back to the 60s, his **mobile and "improvised" structures** and the instructions required to build them, **photomontages**, **videos** and a collection of **animation films**. Given that Friedman believes that contemporary museums should exhibit what really matters for people, he has created a temporary **Street Museum** containing objects that belong to citizens, which have been collected thanks to an *open call* by the museum.

Mobile Architecture...

This exhibition is an open window on Friedman's universal language, which, if applied in different contexts, can suit the ecological, social and sustainability needs of contemporary societies.

By use of **sketches, models and animations**, Friedman tells the story of his famous **Mobile Architecture** theory, conceived at the end of the 50s, which questions the very nature of architecture and the identity of those who avail themselves of it from a sociological, psychological and building standpoint. At the same time, he explores the theme of **improvisation**, which he theorised as a "possibility" in the world of architecture.

...People's Architecture

Friedman believes architecture should not be imposed on people, but rather be adapted to those who use it, keeping the daily life, needs, and wishes of citizens into account. It is a sort of "survival architecture" made of poor materials and simple shapes, built by craftsmen or even locals. Now more than ever, his work is extremely relevant: urban rearrangement can build a sustainable world, where the lives of people are valuable again. This vision, which may seem utopian, is in fact as realistic as all his other works are.

THE MAXXI EXHIBITION

Compared to the one in Shanghai, the Rome exhibition has been enriched with **unpublished, original material produced exclusively for the exhibition**, which explores core themes of Friedman's research, such as the importance of becoming acquainted with the creative and building process and the relationship with "those who inhabit the city", who can build their habitat autonomously with the instruments provided by the architect.

Some of his animations are included in the exhibition, such as the **large mural** reproducing one of the architect's drawings: a small dot asks "may I stay with you?" to another, which answers "please do!". This is a simple, joyful understanding of architecture – and thus society – which is inclusive, democratic, and self-managed.

Friedman has always believed that our thoughts are made up of images, and he has always explained his building techniques and thinking by use of drawings. Thus, the walls of Gallery 4 host the **comic-style**

instructions to build many of his architectural structures, of which some have been built here in large full-scale **installations**.

From **Griboulli** (1980 – 95) a tangle of metal wires conceived as a **Rod Net Structure** (1970) building system composed of rigid poles, linked by joints, which can be used to create any desired space, to the **Ville Spatale** (1958 – 62), the core theme of Friedman’s work, namely an aerial grid above ground level with corridors and houses designed by those who live there, a 9-metre-long model of which has been built for this exhibition. This model interacts with **unpublished visions dedicated to the city of Rome and the MAXXI** which were produced for the exhibition.

Moreover, the **Street Museum** (2017) was designed to contain 16 objects belonging to citizens, chosen for their meaning, which become “artworks” once exhibited inside glass cases. This shows how Friedman believes that the democratisation of museums can take place only when people have the possibility to show what matters to them.

The museum also exhibits a model of one of the modules of the **Museum of Simple Technology** (Madras, India, 1982), built in the 80s by a group of Indian basket makers following the architect’s instructions through the *Communication Centre of Scientific Knowledge for Self-reliance*. This project and the manuals created by the architect interact here with a **project for a refugee camp**.

The exhibition also includes an area dedicated to **Boulevard Garibaldi**, his home, his study, the place where he created and looked for inspiration. This section displays material linked to key moments of his life, from 1958, when he published the first manifesto of *Mobile Architecture*, to 2008.

Friedman’s thinking also emerges from an abstract of the **unpublished video-interview** called *Yona Friedman: an undisciplined inhabitant* (2017), made by Sylvie Boulanger, Director of the CNEAI Centre National Edition Art Image, and the **Film d’Animation** he made together with his wife Denise Charvein in the 60s, including the *Annalya Tou Bari* documentary, which was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival in 1962.

The **YONA FRIEDMAN. Mobile Architecture, People’s Architecture** exhibition includes a publication (*Quaderni del Centro Archivi del MAXXI Architettura*, Notebooks of the Archive Centre of MAXXI Architettura) with texts by **Hou Hanru, Gong Yan, Manuel Orazi** and an unpublished interview of **Elena Motisi**.

The press kit and images of the exhibition can be downloaded from the Reserved Area of the Fondazione MAXXI’s website at <http://www.maxxi.art/en/area-stampa/> by typing in the password **areariservatamaxxi**

MAXXI PRESS OFFICE +39 06 324861 press@fondazionemaxxi.it

soci
founding members



organizzata da is organized by



partner istituzionale
institutional partner



media partner



partner MAXXI Architettura
MAXXI Architecture partner



media partner MAXXI Architettura
MAXXI Architecture media partner

