



scuola archivio leonardi

Call 2019/2020

The School

Scuola Archivio Leonardi is an independent school established to disseminate the working methods developed by the architect Cesare Leonardi (Modena, 1935), a multifaceted and little known figure in the contemporary architectural and artistic scene. Over the course of almost fifty year's activity, Leonardi was involved in architecture, urban design, photography, interior design, sculpture, and painting, working on the confine between artistic design and practice. His "transverse" approach was characterized by a capacity to develop unique ideas in different disciplinary spheres, and this represents the cornerstone for the School's philosophy.

The objective is to train designers outside the logic of "specialization", instead enabling them to manage the specific demands of projects through critical capacity, investigative work, and technical know-how. In this approach, design vision and practical handcraft skills are perceived as inseparable, the *modus operandi* through which to understand and transform reality.

Emblematic of Leonardi's activities is his twenty year "Alberi" (Trees) study together with Franca Stagi, taking concrete shape in the creation of parks and a concept of the city based on a balance between people and nature. Another design example was the fame he achieved for industrial furniture in the 1960s and 1970s, with his Dondolo and Nastro chairs. This was followed by a line of modular furniture created for himself in his own workshop, the "Solidi" (Solids), a reaction to a trend that is currently influencing the market, trades, and the idea of design itself.

Leonardi's Trees and Solids represent the two main nodes around which the School is organized. On different but complimentary scales, they provide participants with a concrete field of application and a potential interpretative key for contemporary design dynamics.

The Archive

Cesare Leonardi's home and studio is in Modena Ovest, the first artisan village in Italy. Today this space hosts the Archivio Architetto Cesare Leonardi association, a collective of architects and academics, including some previous collaborators with Cesare Leonardi, who for more than ten years have been dedicated to the protection, cataloguing, and divulgation of the works of this Modena architect.

Here the crowded shelves in yellow wood, handmade following strict modular criteria, contain his life's work. Architectural designs, photographic compositions, wooden models, sculptures, and prototypes of every kind are packed into the space alongside items linked to family life and his origins, the concrete expression of his philosophy that life and design were inseparable. The School arose out of a desire that the Archive should not simply be a valuable collection of documents, available for occasional consultation, but should instead represent a stimulus for cultural values and design approaches in the areas that Leonardi was involved in.

Who is it for

The School targets young students, designers, and researchers who want to develop an individual project through a multidisciplinary approach in the fields of architecture, design, artisan manufacture and urban transformation.

Teaching

The school teaches an annual programme divided into two seasonal Modules: one in the autumn dedicated to *Solids* and one in the spring dedicated to *Trees*. Each Module is subdivided into four weekly sessions, from Tuesday to Friday, in which participants are guided along a path of learning and experimentation, applying the working methods developed by Leonardi and aiming to provide instruments that nourish coherent personal development.

As part of teaching is a program of study visits to places that are relevant for the covered subject, and the direct knowledge of the Archive's materials. Participants can also take part in public initiatives organized by the school including complementary courses, workshops, conferences, and master classes.

Module Solids

Applying a "handcraft" design and construction method, starting with wood boards generally used in building for concrete shuttering, Leonardi designed objects starting from single 150 x 50 cm boards (or multiples and submultiples of the same) without wasting any material. Starting from this "self-imposed" rule, and cutting board in various ways, more than three hundred items of furniture were created. The same combinations give rise to unexpected variants since the individual parts can be assembled in different ways. They were mostly chairs, but included benches, tables, cupboards, divans, and platforms. A "global" solution intended for furnishing living spaces that is unitary and flexible at the same time, also as regards location since most of the Solids are designed to have wheels.

Week I "Knowledge": October 22 to October 25

Week II "Process": November 19 to November 22

Week III "Construction": December 10 to December 13

Week IV "Individual Project": January 14 to January 17

Module Trees

In 1982 Cesare Leonardi and Franca Stagi published the volume, "L'Architettura degli Alberi (The Architecture of Trees)", a reference manual for generations of students and landscape architects. It was the result of twenty years' research, travel, cataloguing, and finally meticulous redesign of trees on a scale of 1:100. The research included a study of the shadows of the tree crowns projected onto the ground, and the seasonal colours of each individual species, leading later to a series of park projects, some implemented while others remained on paper. In the early 1980s this dedication to trees combined with design experience led them to the conception of a modular matrix for planting, which they called *Struttura Reticolare Acentrata* or SRA. The purpose of a SRA is to establish conditions of equilibrium for cohabitation between men and trees, without one imposing on the other.

Week I "Knowledge": March 17 to March 20

Week II "Process": April 21 to April 24

Week III "Construction": May 12 to May 15

Week IV "Individual Project": June 9 to June 12

Teachers

The teachers include architects, artists, and craftsmen selected by Archivio Leonardi and Amigdala for their methodological relevance to Cesare Leonardi's work. The course is co-ordinated by the architects Andrea Cavani and Giulio Orsini, founders and curators of Archivio Leonardi, and by Federica Rocchi, Director of Amigdala - Periferico Festival.

Venue

OvestLab, a former crafts workshop managed by Archivio Leonardi and Associazione Amigdala, is located in the Villaggio Artigiano Modena Ovest, an artisan district designed in 1953 by Mario Pucci and a symbolic place in the history of the economic and social development of the city. This was the first prototype artisan village in Italy, a suburb that gave form to a model of development capable of combining life and work, manual skills and business, production chain and community spirit.

At OvestLab the students of the School have a shared work space available where they can learn, design, and build. Conceived as a crafts workshop, the space provides the basic equipment and materials to create models and prototypes, along with workstations where they can study and draw.

How to apply

Selection is open to young people, preferably between 18 and 35 years old. Each module has 10 places available.

To apply for selection, **fill in the form** (available on the website www.scuola.archivioleonardi.it) **within September 30, 2019**, attaching an individual project, implemented or to be implemented, concerning the school topics, in particular craftsmanship and/or landscape.

The project proposals will be developed through workshops, working sessions with tutors, professors and visiting lecturers.

All candidates will be informed of the selection results by e-mail within October 7.

Solidi Modul will start on October 22.

Fees

After receiving confirmation of admission to the School, it is necessary to pay the **course subscription fee within October 14:**

2.000 euros for one module

3.500 euros for both modules.

Applications sent within August 19, if selected, would benefit of a reduced fee of 250 euros (1.750 euros one Module and 3.250 euros both Modules).

Information on scholarships and other opportunities offered by the School will be published on the website www.scuola.archivioleonardi.it

For further information write to: info@archivioleonardi.it