

International Exhibition

Pier Luigi Nervi – *Architecture as Challenge*

April 29th – July 17th 2011
Torino Esposizioni, Hall C
Via Petrarca 39/B – TURIN, Italy



Pier Luigi Nervi (1891-1979) is one of the greatest and most inventive structural engineers of the 20th Century. With his masterpieces, scattered the world over, Nervi contributed to create a glorious period for structural architecture. Nikolaus Pevsner described him as “the most brilliant artist in reinforced concrete of our time”.

Some of his most important and iconic works were realized in Italy and Europe: the Exhibition Halls and the Palazzo del Lavoro in Turin, the stadium in Florence and the Sport Palaces for the Olympic Games of 1960 in Rome, the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris (with Macel Breuer and Bernard Zehrfuss), to quote just a few. An important group of his works is located in North America, the most famous being St. Mary Cathedral in San Francisco (with Pietro Belluschi), George Washington Bus Terminal in New York City, Scope Cultural and Convention Center in Norfolk, VA, Victoria Square Tower in Montreal and the Italian Embassy in Brasilia.

Nervi was nominated Honorary Member of important institutions like the American Institute of Architects, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Royal Academy in London, the International Association for Shell Structures (IASS), the American Concrete Institute (ACI), and elected member of the Académie des Beaux Arts of the Institut de France in Paris. Designated Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry at Harvard in 1961-62, he was nominated Doctor honoris causa of the universities of Edinburgh, Munich, Harvard, Varsavia, Budapest, etc., and was bestowed many prizes and medals, like the Royal Gold Medal for Architecture in 1960, the Emil Mörsch Medal in 1963 and the Feltrinelli prize of the National Academy of Lincei in Rome in 1968.

The international exhibition *Pier Luigi Nervi: Architecture as Challenge* celebrates the figure of this outstanding protagonist of contemporary architecture at the intersection between art and science of building.

Promoted, under the auspices of the President of the Italian Republic, by CIVA Centre International pour la Ville et l'Architecture, Brussels and PLN Pier Luigi Nervi Research and Knowledge Association, in cooperation with MAXXI Italian National Museum of the Arts of 21st Century and CSAC Archives of the University of Parma, the exhibition is co-sponsored by the Vatican City, the European Community, the International Olympic Committee and other prestigious institutions like ACI American Concrete Institute, ANCE Italian Association of Building Contractors, AICAP Italian Reinforced and Prestressed Concrete Association, AITEC Italian Cement Association and OICE, the Academies of Sciences of Turin and Milan. The interdisciplinary Scientific Committee chaired by Prof. Carlo Olmo, gathers some distinguished scholars of history of contemporary architecture, architectural engineering and structural mechanics.

Accompanied by an extended Catalogue edited by Carlo Olmo and Cristiana Chiorino with the cooperation of Christophe Pourtois, Marcelle Rabinowicz and Elisabetta Margiotta Nervi and published by Silvana Editoriale in three editions (English, French and Italian), the exhibition is based on a research/educational program developed during the last three years with the scientific support of the Politecnico di Torino, the Universities of Rome and La Cambre-Horta School of Architecture, Brussels. It presents a wide panorama of Nervi's works, with special attention to those listed below, displaying original drawings, 3D models of the main structures and an ample documentation of the experimental activity performed at the time at ISMES laboratories in Bergamo, Italy and at the Politecnico di Torino, that supported the conceptual design and reliability assessments of most of Nervi's projects (three of the remaining original reduced scale models for wind tunnel and mechanical testing are shown).

Such an extended analysis and critical appraisal of Nervi's work is expected to offer a significant contribution and new hints to the present debate on the role of formal inventiveness in the design of structures and, in a broader perspective, to the dialogue between architecture and engineering.

After the successes of previous editions CIVA in Brussels, the Biennale of Architecture in Venice 2010 and in in the in the new prestigious venue of MAXXI National Museum of the Arts of 21st Century in Rome, designed by archistar Zaha Hadid, **the Exhibition is presently on show until July 17, 2011 in Turin** – as part of the events celebrating the 150th anniversary of Italian Unification – within the marvelous Turin Exhibition Hall designed in the '50s by Nervi. The next location will be Berlin in the fall of 2011. Then the Exhibition will embark in a wide international tour towards other prospective locations in Asia, North America and other parts of the world to celebrate not only the genius and inventiveness of Pier Luigi Nervi, but also his genuine international spirit, as a designer, builder and educator. On that occasion, a reprint after 50 years of his celebrated Charles Elliot Norton Lectures "Aesthetics and Technology in Building" delivered at Harvard in 1961-62 will be available.

Info and guided tour of the Exhibition:

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Catalogue:

Silvana Editoriale: www.silvanaeditoriale.it (Enter: Nervi)

Guided tours of buildings by P. L. Nervi in Turin on Saturdays:

http://www.urbancenter.to.it/indexSchedaConf.php?id_conf=227

Hours:

Daily: 11 a.m - 6.30 p.m; Friday 11 a.m - 9 p.m; closed Tuesday

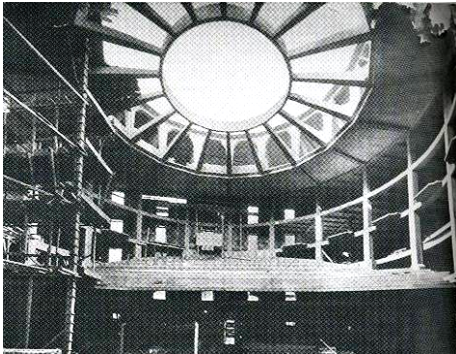


Fig. 1: Pier Luigi Nervi – Cinema-teatro Augusteo, Naples, 1924-29



Fig. 2: Pier Luigi Nervi – Municipal Stadium, Florence 1930-32



Fig. 3: Pier Luigi Nervi – Orvieto aircraft hangar, 1935-38



Fig. 4: Pier Luigi Nervi – Orbetello aircraft hangar, 1939-42

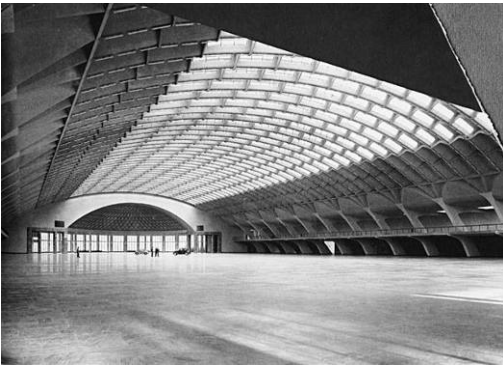


Fig. 5: Pier Luigi Nervi – Agnelli (B) Hall for Torino Esposizioni, Turin 1947-48



Fig. 6: Pier Luigi Nervi with Macel Breuer and Bernard Zehrfuss – UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 1952-58



Fig. 7: Pier Luigi Nervi with Annibale Vitellozzi – Small sport complex, Rome, 1956-57



Fig. 8: Pier Luigi Nervi with Annibale Vitellozzi – Small sport complex, Rome, 1956-57

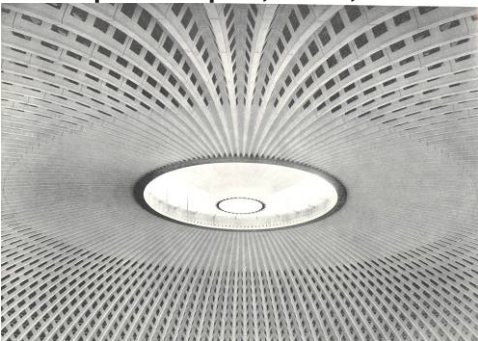


Fig. 9: Pier Luigi Nervi, with Marcello Piacentini – Sport complex, Rome 1958-60



Fig. 10: Pier Luigi Nervi – Flaminio Stadium, Rome, 1957-59



Fig. 11: Pier Luigi Nervi, with Antonio Nervi and Gino Covre – Palazzo del Lavoro, Turin, 1959-61



Fig. 12: Pier Luigi Nervi, with Antonio Nervi and Gino Covre – Palazzo del Lavoro, Turin, 1959-61



Fig. 13: Pier Luigi Nervi, with Luigi Moretti – Victoria Square Tower, Montreal, 1961–1966



Fig. 14: Pier Luigi Nervi – Risorgimento Bridge, Verona, 1963-68



Fig. 15: Pier Luigi Nervi, with Pietro Belluschi and McSweeney, Ryan and Lee Architects – St. Mary Cathedral, San Francisco, 1963–1971

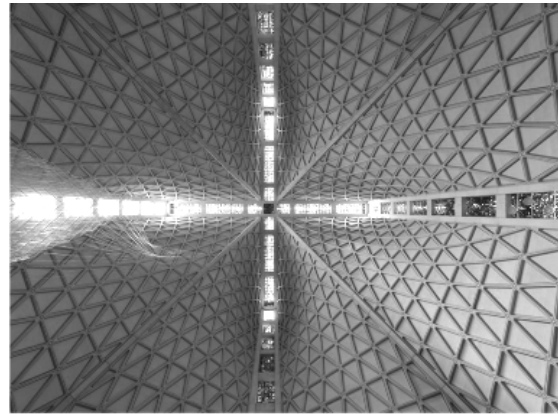


Fig. 16: Pier Luigi Nervi, with Pietro Belluschi and McSweeney, Ryan and Lee Architects – St. Mary Cathedral, San Francisco, 1963–1971



Fig. 17: Pier Luigi Nervi with Antonio Nervi – Papal Audience Hall, Vatican City, 1963–1971



Fig. 18: Pier Luigi Nervi with Antonio Nervi – Italian Embassy, Brasilia 1969–1979