

KUNST MERAN
Im Haus der Sparkasse
MERANO ARTE
edificio Cassa di Risparmio

A MERANO ARTE

FROM OCTOBER 15, 2017 TO JANUARY 14, 2018

THE EXHIBITION

ARMANDO RONCA. Architecture of the modern in South Tyrol

The exhibition introduces the works by the architect from Verona that has forged the new face of Bolzano and Merano

The show analyzes also other plans by Armando Ronca, as the extension of the Giuseppe Meazza football stadium in Milano San Siro.

Opening: Saturday October 14, 2017, at 7pm

Curators: Andreas Kofler and Magdalene Schmidt

Merano Arte will host, from October 15, 2017 to January 14, 2018, an exhibition that will introduce for the first time in an organic way, Armando Ronca's (Verona, 1901 - Bolzano 1970) work, the architect that in the course of his 35-year activity made over 30 buildings that have literally forged the face of Bolzano and Merano.

The show, curated by Andreas Kofler and Magdalene Schmidt, will study in-depth Armando Ronca's work through a comprehensive photographic documentation made by Werner Feiersinger, and a series of historical documents – photographs, copies of maps, perspectives and sections – subdivided by the decades in which they were done.

A section of the exhibition will be entirely dedicated to the Eurotel complex of Merano, while a documentary made by Daniel Mazza and Giuseppe Tedeschi, and one curated by Susanne Waiz and Carolina Rigoni that will focus on the architect's plans by hinting also at the private aspects of his life, in order to outline an unpublished portrait.

Together with the activity he performed in South Tyrol, Ronca directed his Milan office, and was active at a national level with prestigious plans, like **the seat of the daily newspaper Alto Adige** (ex La Provincia di Bolzano), the **Eurotel** building chain, the church of San Pio X in Bolzano and the second refitting and **extension of the Giuseppe Meazza football stadium in Milano San Siro.**



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At the beginning of his professional career, Armando Rocca took part in shows and competitions together with his colleague Giovanni Lorenzi, starting with his actual professional career in the mid '30s with plans in Bolzano, Merano, and Trento. The '50s and '60s are marked by his highest production with the building of great part of his works. Two centers of particular interest can be identified in Ronca's production: the residential buildings, to which also the Eurotel complex constructions belong, and the public buildings for cultural and meeting activities.

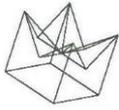
The architectonic styles of the various eras of which he was the protagonist can be read in the over 50 buildings he succeeded in making before his death in 1970.

His contribution to the South Tyrolean architecture has to be seen within his professional trajectory that mirrors the national planning course between the prewar, the postwar reconstruction, and the economic recovery phases. Starting from the '30s, the architect takes part in the outline of an "Italian" Bolzano, he will be the only one at the height of bringing to South Tyrol the evidence of the critical-historical debate that took place at a national level in the postwar period. Ronca took part in the design of the South Tyrolean rationalist landscape by adhering to the Italian standards, while his local colleagues preferred a domestic Rationalism with a socialist and Viennese imprint.

Among the numerous buildings by Ronca, the one that stands out is the seat of the daily newspaper *La Provincia di Bolzano* (1939–1940), since it merges the rhetoric of the regime structures with functionalist elements. The refitting for the newspaper *Alto Adige* founded in 1945, born out of the suppression of *La Provincia di Bolzano*, leaves traces of the previous construction only on the lateral front. Ronca creates new facades, modifies the allocation of the spaces and adds three floors, two of which for residential purposes. The fronts drawings, of which two variations exist, show the genial interplay of the horizontal and vertical elements used by Ronca explicitly and within a decorative aim to mitigate its severity with the use of arched openings.

Among the plans carried out by Armando Ronca, as previously mentioned, also the one for the second extension of the Milanese stadium of San Siro emerges, the structure of which was made starting from 1925 on the initiative of the then President of the Milan team, Piero Pirelli. The structure, as from the plan by Alberto Cugini and Ulisse Stacchini, was initially made with four rectilinear galleries. After having acquired the stadium, the Municipality of Milan starts in 1935 a first extension operation curated by the Engineer Bertera and the architect Perlasca, while the second extension is entrusted to Ferruccio Calzolari and Armando Ronca.

The Merano Eurotel, opened in 1959, is often to be seen as the main work by Armando Ronca and it is also representative of the frequent collaboration between the architect and



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the Vanzo constructing company. The commercial idea of the Eurotel Group was born in a period of strong economic growth that, on one side, incentivized mass tourism, and on the other stimulated the wish of distancing itself from it. The possibility of traveling was multiplied in those years, but for many the classical model of the hotel represented an anonymous structure often too expensive, while a boarding house seemed too intrusive. The Eurotel conception started from the complexity of these needs, by combining the principle of hotel hospitality with the one of a typical own home, to offer a commercial model that suggested a form of investment in a residential solution for a carefree holiday. Another element in favor of the Eurotel system was the possible exchange of apartments between owners in different sites of the chain. It was thus fundamental to standardize the residential units so that they were compatible one with the other. It is for this reason that Ronca developed two typologies, conceived and furnished in a similar way. The architect aimed at the spirit of one of his idols, **Le Corbusier**, who in 1952 had completed in Marseille his first *Unité d'habitation*. The choice of the site on which to build his first Eurotel, and thus the prototype for all the following buildings, was in the town of Merano.

On the occasion of the show, an in-depth catalogue with the documentation will be published, made under the scientific direction of Jörg Stabenow with photographs by Werner Feiersinger, and with the contribution of Andreas Kofler, Massimo Martignoni, Giorgio Mezzalana, Magdalene Schmidt, Luigi Scolari, and Jörg Stabenow, edited by Park Books.

A series of guided tours to several of the most representative architectures made by Armando Ronca in Merano and Bolzano will be organized within the exhibition, curated by Flavio Schimenti, Magdalene Schmidt, and Peter Schrofenegger.

Merano, August 2017



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Title: **ARMANDO RONCA**
Architecture of the Modern in Merano

Length of the exhibition: October 15, 2017 – January 14, 2018

Site: Merano Arte - Edificio Cassa di Risparmio
Portici, 163 – 39012 Merano

Curators: Magdalene Schmidt and Andreas Kofler

Press conference: Thursday, October 12, 2017

Opening: Saturday, October 14, 2017

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