

TERRAGNI, 2004.

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Is the architect from Northern Italy still relevant, one hundred years after his birth, sixty-one after his death?

Terragni seems relegated to a prestigious but dusty past. His most famous building was realised for a dictatorship long dead. *Casa del Fascio's* façade is familiar to everyone who once passed through a History of Architecture class. But what's usually left is hardly more than a faint memory of a black and white picture, made seventy years ago.

This memory is however strong enough to bring you to Como, once you are near enough. *Casa del Fascio* is central here but not quite, hidden behind the Cathedral, oddly cut from downtown by a railway and a busy road. The building hosts today the regional headquarters of one of the innumerable Italian police forces, whose affable officers allow one easily to visit.

And here you start to see what the History of Architecture class had trouble explaining. *Casa del Fascio* is not just another building with a well proportioned, golden rectangle-based main façade.

The façade develops into a series of sections; their succession creates a crystal-clear space. Like in classical music, a theme is repeated in different ways to achieve an unique result full of variety.

The building is not a definitive construction one can just contemplate; perfect in itself, alone. It is a resonance box. Not only because it is defined by successive plans reflecting each other. But because you feel the building reflecting your own enchantment. You don't have the sensation of contemplating a monument; you are engaged in a dialogue with a being full of life.

The building doesn't say anything about history or politics or Architecture fashions; its luminous message is valid out of time and regardless of age.

...Terragni built relatively much before he came back from the war just to meet a premature death in 1943. Besides *Casa del Fascio*, some of his buildings achieve an amazing degree of clarity and beauty - like Asilo Sant'Elia.

Far from the dramatic tumult from which they are born, Terragni's buildings still teach us that Architecture is not just the skill of putting bricks together. But a spiritual construction, expressed in stone, glass and concrete.

Yes, Terragni is still relevant today.



Images of Rustici Building, Milan. Photo Irina Suteu

*The Giuseppe Terragni centennial is celebrated by a series of exhibitions and events organised by the Comitato Nazionale per le celebrazioni del primo centenario della nascita di Giuseppe Terragni. For more details see [www.GT04.org](http://www.GT04.org).*