



## BIENNIAL OF ARCHITECTURAL AND URBAN RESTORATION

(logos and symbol deposited)

[www.brau.cicop.it](http://www.brau.cicop.it)

### Short introduction:

#### Aims, fields and framework

The project of the Biennale of Architectural and Urban Restoration has been designed and structured in the nineties during the course of several meetings between academics, interested in these issues, and on the occasion of national and international cultural events sponsored by the International Center CICOP Italy, a nonprofit cultural association established in 1994 in Orvieto-Italy.

It was the result of an attentive analysis of all cultural, social, economic, technological and economic aspects and factors which affect the implementation of the "Project of the Existing buildings", in order to promote and facilitate intervention strategies capable of managing, in an integrated manner, conservative and transformative processes of the built heritage.

The BRAU Biennial takes place in predefined locations – as in the case of Venice – but biyearly also following some "cultural axes", which are different from time to time and chosen by the CICOP Confederation-Italy on the advice of all the participants in the event. This choice is not random, but it is closely related to a topical social and cultural aspect and melts on the belief that cultural heritage - both tangible and intangible - is one of the most powerful peacekeeping tools because it is a source of multiple and shared cultural patterns.

For this reason, during the fifteen days of the BRAU Biennial from October 15<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, **several cultural events are promoted** in different locations, collaterally restoration projects exhibitions, which take place simultaneously in all of the participating cities: *exhibitions, conferences, itinerant workshops, award ceremonies*. These events involve particularly direct users of the local architectural and urban heritage, offering them an opportunity to expose and disseminate brilliant interventions in the field of restoration and debate on any local unresolved issues searching for shared solutions and comparing them with similar successfully solved situations.

**The first edition of the BRAU Biennial** was held in **2011** following the **national cultural axis** "Florence-Orvieto", in representative buildings, placed in their historic centers and along this path. 200 works and Restoration projects were exhibited in indoor exhibiting spaces of 3000 square meters, choosing several prestigious buildings but also several locations, which were unused but fascinating and valuable, thanks to their ancient history and the emotions experienced by their inhabitants, highlighting their values and the need for intervention.

Among them, the former St. Francis and St. John Convent in Orvieto, the Historical cellars of Montepulciano, the former St. Verdiana Convent in Florence, the Palace of the Seven and the former St. Rocco Church in Orvieto.

The inauguration ceremony took place at the People's Palace in Orvieto and the closing ceremony at the Rectorate hall of the University of Florence. The event was sponsored by the President of the Italian Republic, the President of the Italian Council of Ministers and some of the highest national and international cultural institutions, such as UNESCO and ICCROM (honorary chairmanship).

**The second edition of the BRAU Biennial** was held in **2013** following the **international cultural axis** "New Via Egnatia", promoted by the European Union and involving Italian, Greek and Turkish cities. Basic objective of BRAU2 was to highlight *cultural models*, which are consolidated over time and shared among Balkan countries, thanks to migratory flows of Via Egnatia from Italy (Apulia) to Greece (Thessaly and Macedonia) and Western Turkey.

The inauguration ceremony of BRAU2 was held in Apulia in two different cities, Taranto (Pantaleo Palace) and Brindisi (Officers' Club-Swabian Castle); the closing ceremony was held in Edirne and Istanbul (Kemerburgaz University).

Several exhibitions, showing more than 1000 restoration projects, were held in twenty prestigious historical and modern buildings, including:

in Apulia-Italy: Pantaleo Palace in Taranto, Aragonese Castle in Taranto, Aldo Moro University, former St. Francis Convent in Taranto, Officers' Club in Brindisi, MUST-Historical Museum of Lecce and Piccinino Maglie former factory in Lecce;

in Greece: Cultural Center of Ioannina, former Lazaret in Pavlos Melas-Thessaloniki, New Town Hall in Thessaloniki, in the former building Tabacchi of Kavala, in the Mall of Kavala, in the Historical Complex dell'Imaret Kavala, a former tobacco factory in Kavala, Mall of Kavala, Imaret historical building in Kavala and the former Ali Mehmete's historic home in Kavala;

in Turkey: the Faculty of Architecture in Adrianoupoli (Edirne), Ekmekçizade Ahmet Paşa Caravansaray in Adrianoupoli, the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture of the Istanbul Kemerburgaz University.

As for BRAU1, this event was supported by national and international Patronages, above mentioned and extended on this occasion to the three Countries involved in the cultural BRAU2 axis, which crosses Italy, Greece and Turkey.

The **selection of restoration projects** has been carried out according to the following criteria: *technological innovation, perceptive originality, aesthetic and sustainability between building and its territorial and urban context.*

The **thematic areas of the selected projects** involve 4 issues constantly re-proposed in every edition of the BRAU Biennial:

**A. Ongoing maintenance projects for small historic centers.**

The rapid changes in the socio-economic international scenario and demographic and geo-political challenges increase the discrepancy between the development of human activities and the "built environment", giving rise to different policy interventions, mainly determined by the economic conditions of each country. All issues, affecting the complexity of these processes, find solutions and permanent experimentation fields in small historical centers which are interested in creating "ongoing maintenance" systems for the local built heritage. Taking note of some of these main situations, the BRAU Biennial promotes debate and discussion in local, national and international contexts.

**B. Comprehensive restoration projects for monumental buildings.**

The interventions concerning historical Monuments are always torn between well known and conflicting reasons and economic, political, technical and managerial priorities. The solutions to even today unresolved problems can only come from a direct comparison, at the international level, by addressing and analyzing all the aspects which affect the decision-making processes.

On the occasion of the BRAU2, the emeritus professor and honorary chairman of the event, Theodosios Tassios, extensively analyzed this issue in his lectio magistralis, which ended with an assertion shared by all the participants:

*"... I believe that all of these personal and collective needs, that the monument should be able to fulfill, are much more important for modern man than it is customary to believe. In fact these monuments offer many other and more tangible gratifications, such as 'entertainment', which is an essential need, or the increase in revenue, thanks to the tourism industry. So, what can we do? Several clearly undemocratic cliques vandalize statues and facades of historical buildings and at the same time it happens that some of the Archaeological Superintendences need desperately staff. Solution: First of all, the currently presented pilot project to familiarize young people with Monuments. Secondly, the owners of the main educational institutions (and I mean the TV channels) can make sustained efforts to present the many joys of love for monuments to their viewers, hoping to attract the most sophisticated audience which has turned its back to television. Regional Training Centers can do the same. So? We will see how quickly our political leaders, feeling the pressure from below, will change the priorities of their business plans. What do you think about? Can we have a hope?"*

**C. Strategies for a reappropriation and adaptive reuse of disused buildings, located in urban and extra-urban areas; industrial archeology.**

The building market and the demographic and infrastructural transformations of historical cities, undertaken in Europe during the last century, now days are very complex, due to the scarcity of financial resources and the worsening of the conservative conditions and performance of abandoned buildings (cinemas, theaters, craft and industrial buildings, barracks, etc ...); therefore it is not enough to focus on a careful and interdisciplinary investigations of the processes which modify the built environment at local and regional levels. Thanks to a rich set of ideas and proposals, offered by the International Biennials of Restoration, new strategies can emerge in order to regain possession of this historical heritage and by relying on sustainable interdisciplinary approaches, sharing resources and values.

**D. Interventions on the modern building heritage.**

The intervention criteria on relevant buildings constructed in the twentieth century are defined on the basis of questionable and sometimes totally missing regulations, thus leaving great freedom to private enterprise and to personal interpretation. The specific restoration criteria of ancient monuments often work very well in the case of interventions on modern monuments, although focused on contemporary issues, involving highly specialized technicians and giving seldom a specific role to the traditional restorers. In fact the use of innovative construction techniques and the presence of modern materials, such as aluminum, require professionals able to intervene appropriately and with specific skills.

No one was expecting to have also to use ordinary reinforced concrete buildings, constructed immediately after the Second World War. Therefore these buildings require now special interventions in terms of structural restoration, but especially to adapt them to new standards (systems, functions and aesthetics) which should be defined in relation to the economic and technological resources of each country.

The BRAU Biennial promotes an international debate with the aim to find innovative ideas and solutions for the recovery of their residual potentialities (perceptive and aesthetical values, technological and functional peculiarities), in order to define realistic policy that don't lose sight of the local economies.

Even UNESCO has suggested a definition of "Modern Architectural Heritage" and the criteria for its restoration. However, through a differentiated effort, offered by several countries in the world (the poorest and the most advanced ones) aimed to extend the "life" of these buildings, it's possible to track down one or more aspects and values thanks to which a cultural building, although not historical, is worthy to be preserved over time.

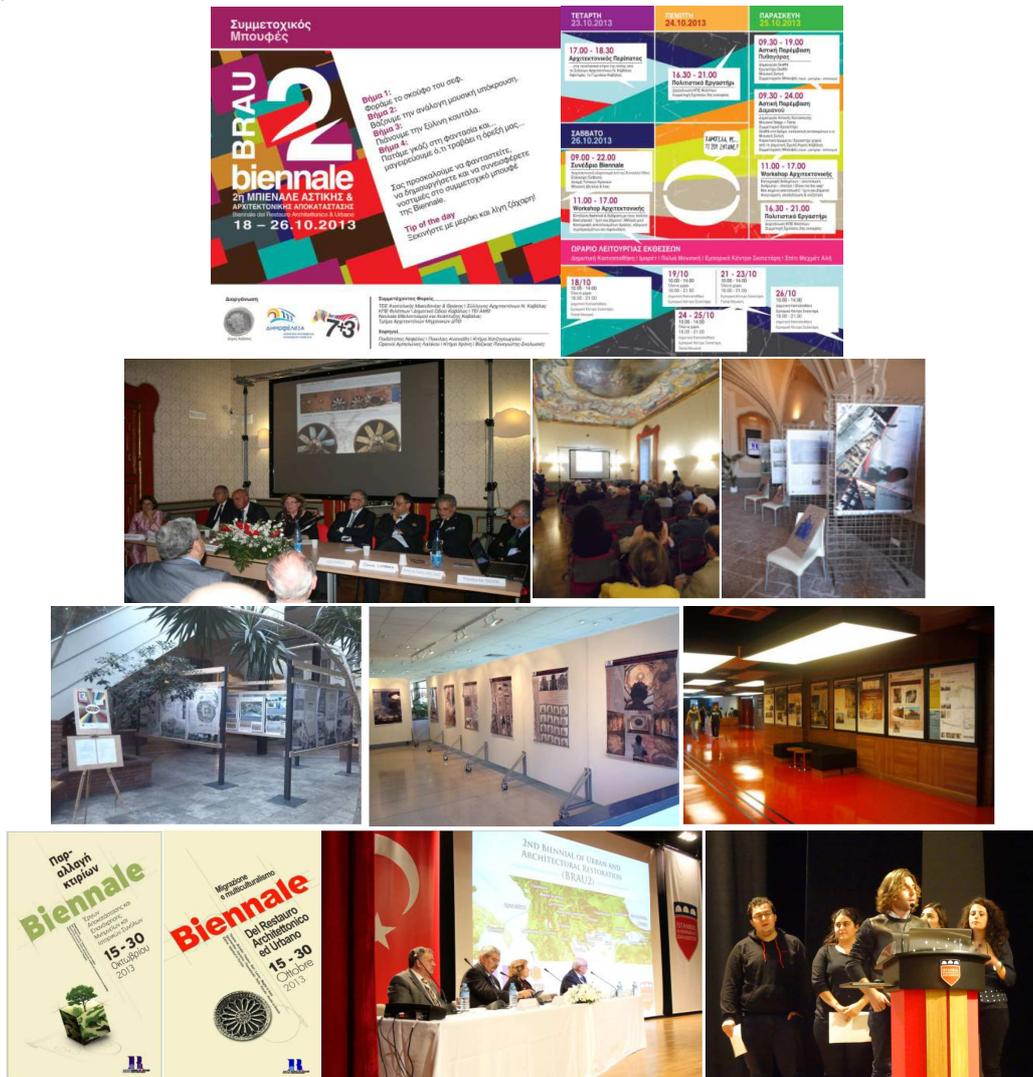
## BRAU3

Nowadays this initiative can be proposed again, thanks to the brilliant results obtained in the first two editions.

The main success of BRAU1 and BRAU2 Biennials consists in the extraordinary side Cultural Projects, promoted and organized by local organization committees, including:

- *Educational workshops* addressed to primary school students and aimed at knowledge of built cultural heritage and its restoration. Graffiti in public places and on restored or not restored buildings.
- *Photo exhibitions* concerning illustrations of buildings and places characterized by peculiar historical and artistic interest, seen from the point of view of amateurs and professional photographers.
- *Singing, dancing and culinary performances* held in historic or abandoned streets of the cities involved in the Biennial, in order to put under the spotlight and attract the interest of local citizens for the architectural and urban restoration.
- *Special itineraries* for the visit of buildings and places characterized by great historical and architectural value, abandoned or waiting for restoration, thanks to the collaboration of experienced guides (architects, historians, archaeologists); for example, the tour of cemeteries concerning different religions, very close each other and placed in the Pavlos Melas district (Thessaloniki-Greece) and some banners, located in the ancient streets of the historical downtown of Taranto.
- *Little urban restoration works* conducted on this occasion in several parts of the city involved in the Biennial, as an example and stimulus for future interventions.
- *Lighting and outdoor digital projection* in urban environments or on abandoned buildings, to catch the attention of citizens to the abandoned architectural heritage and trigger debate about their need of restoration and regeneration.
- *Idea competitions* on street furniture design, as benches, trash cans and streetlights, included in specific environmental education programs, carried out by local schools.

All these initiatives are well documented on the BRAU website ([www.brau.cicop.it](http://www.brau.cicop.it)); some illustrations, merely by way of example, are shown below.



The success, achieved by BRAU2, is strongly connected to its sub-theme, "**Migration and Multiculturalism along Via Egnatia**", as well as the careful selection of sites flanking the new Via Egnatia.

Over the last three years CICOP-Italy has been strongly committed around this topic, in order to contribute to the European and intercultural dialogue in the Balkans, to lay the foundations of a peaceful coexistence.

Given the success and acclaim to date achieved, CICOP-Italy believes that the third Biennial will pursue the fundamental objectives of the previous editions, starting again from the same places where the BRAU2 has been done most successfully in 2013.

The main difference, in comparison with the previous two editions, consists in turning the international cultural axis in a multiethnic and quadrupled axis; in fact the axis of the BRAU3 starts from the ancient Via Egnatia and continues to the north of the Balkan countries terminating in Germany.

Therefore, the title of the **BRAU3** is:

## **WITHOUT BORDERS** **Culture Without Borders, Countries Without Boundaries**

**BRAU3** aims to contribute in changing the static conception of built heritage, developing a constant and dynamic relationship between cultural heritage and its context, even over its territory, promoting multicultural projects.

**BRAU3**, as well as the BRAU2, will respond to the need for more visible and effective integration between different cultures, in terms of mainstreaming between development policies and managing strategies, at all levels.



CICOP-Italy, established in 1994 by a group of architects and archaeologists in Orvieto, gives its contribution to raise awareness, educate and inform about issues concerning Responsible Preservation and Sustainable Restoration, becoming over time important and accredited in the international public debate. A long history, characterized by the originality of its vision, thanks its interdisciplinarity, tackled in a comprehensive way all the issues regarding the Project for Existing Building Heritage.

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