

CINEMA THEATERS IN EMILIA ROMAGNA. STRATEGIES FOR THE KNOWLEDGE OF A LARGE- SCALE NEGLECTED HERITAGE

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ABSTRACT

At this time, there are over three hundred cinema theaters on the territory of Emilia Romagna. Most of them date from the second half of the 20th century. For some decades after World War 2, cinema interprets and materializes multiple needs from the civil society and political and economic powers (from Italy and abroad). In most cases the life cycle of these buildings turned out to be extremely short, being related to a particular way of enjoying the movies.

This paper explores the large-scale heritage composed by cinema theaters in the Emilia Romagna region, merging information from direct surveys with data available from diverse inventories, bibliographical and archival research, studying the phenomenon from the point of view of architectural conservation.

Two theoretical areas regarding cinema theaters are explored. On one hand the physical components, meaning the analysis of the urban location, spatial configuration and reasons guiding the design. On the other hand, the movie-going as a social phenomenon. Cinema is not only a dark room where the light operates, but a place embodying several factors at the economic, technological, social, and symbolic level. The reflection on the intangible components allows to consider the significance of some architectures beyond their possible standardization or constructive poverty.

Questioning the future of cinema theaters on a large scale entails the creation of a link between different approaches to memory: the preservation of signs in the architectural materials, the transmission of intangible components and finally the responsibility to meet the needs of contemporaneity.

Keywords: Cinema theaters, Emilia Romagna, 20th century architecture, Conservation, Intangible heritage