

March 30 – June 29, 2019

Lauretta Vinciarelli



Lauretta Vinciarelli (1943–2011) was born in Arbe, Italy and raised in Rome. She attended graduate school at the Università di Roma La Sapienza, earning her doctorate in architecture and urban planning in 1971. During her studies, Vinciarelli encountered the typological and vernacular approaches to housing and urban design of Ludovico Quaroni and Mario Ridolfi, which provided a foundation for some of the critiques of market capitalism and materialism that permeated Italian architectural discourse in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Vinciarelli moved to New York City in 1969, where she became involved in the Institute of Architecture and Urban Studies (IAUS) in 1975, continuing her involvement until its closure in 1984. Founded by Peter Eisenman, the IAUS served as a publishing house, think tank, exhibition space, and alternative school. In 1978, Vinciarelli was the first and, ultimately, the only woman given a solo show through the IAUS. She was a vital member of the ReVisions study group, formed in 1981 and continuing until 1986, with her IAUS colleagues Bernard Tschumi, Joan Ockman, and Mary McLeod, among others. ReVisions hosted public programs that explored the relationship of art, architecture, and ideology, while also organizing reading groups that focused on texts by prominent Italian architects and thinkers, such as Manfredo Tafuri, Galvano Della Volpe, and Antonio Gramsci.

Vinciarelli taught at various architecture schools during her career. She began with a position at Pratt Institute in 1975, and later taught at City College New York (1985–1992), and worked as a visiting professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago (1981) and Rice University, Houston (1982). Significantly, Vinciarelli was hired by the Dean of the Architecture School at Columbia University, James Stewart Polshek, in 1978, becoming one of the first women to teach studio courses at Columbia along with her colleagues Ada Karmi and Mary McLeod, hired in 1977 and 1978, respectively.

Developed in an atmosphere of Italian political protests beginning in the early 1960s, fomented by the impact of the world-wide protests of 1968, Vinciarelli’s pedagogical practice encouraged the questioning of entrenched principles of modern architecture, rethinking these values through the study of building typologies and their relationships to specific social and physical contexts. While at Columbia, Vinciarelli introduced “the type” and led courses on “carpet housing,” one of the four primary housing typologies taught there. Similar to the layout of ancient Mediterranean villages, in which there was a balance between individual and community spaces, “carpet housing” often deploys private and shared courtyards in low-rise, high-density apartment designs that resemble a textile or carpet when viewed from above.

In addition to her pedagogical legacy, Vinciarelli’s contributions to the field of architecture include her visionary drawings, which were produced during a period of increased interest in “paper architecture” and the presentation of architectural drawings in an art context. Using a typological approach that centers on shared fundamental building types that persist over time, Vinciarelli developed a method of “drawing as research” which is vividly demonstrated in colored pencil and watercolor in the architectural proposals and drawings from the 1970s and 80s included in this exhibition.

In 1976, Vinciarelli began a ten-year relationship, both as collaborator and romantic partner, with Donald Judd (1929–1994). Their collaboration can be seen in numerous realized and unrealized projects for Marfa, Texas and West Texas, more generally. Additionally, the two worked on a commission for a large work to be installed in front of the Providence City Hall (1984) and a proposal for a large complex for the Progressive Insurance company in Cleveland (1986). In the proposal for Providence, Vinciarelli created the axonometric drawing for the project, which Judd later installed in his Architecture Studio. Additionally, Vinciarelli contributed her drafting skills to Judd’s printmaking endeavors, making drawings for plates used to create a set of twenty-seven etchings (1983–1985).

Vinciarelli’s works have been collected by numerous museums including the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo; the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; and the Archive of the Biennale of Venice. Notably, Vinciarelli was the first woman to have drawings acquired by the Department of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1976. Recent exhibitions of Vinciarelli’s work include *Clear Light: The Architecture of Lauretta Vinciarelli* (2012), a retrospective exhibition held at the Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture at the City College of New York, and *Light Unveiled* (2016) at Totah Gallery, New York.

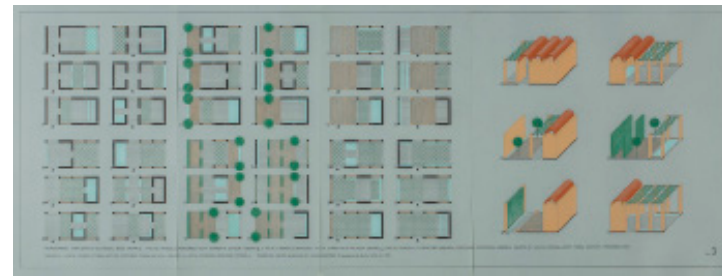
Represented in this exhibition are Vinciarelli’s drawings for gardens and structures in West Texas and Puglia, Italy, projects which illustrate her architectural sensibility and interest in typological thinking, which she shared with Judd.

The works included in this exhibition are from the collection of Judd Foundation. Judd purchased a number of Vinciarelli’s drawings, including the *Puglia Project*, shortly after their realization. The remainder of the installed drawings and watercolors were generously gifted to Judd Foundation in 2012 by Vinciarelli’s husband, Peter Rowe, the Raymond Garbe Professor of Architecture and Urban Design and Harvard University Distinguished Service Professor.

Exhibition text:

Caitlin Murray
Director of Marfa Programs and Archivist

Dr. Rebecca Siefert
Visiting Lecturer, Governors State University



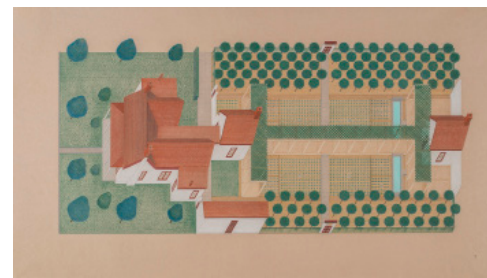
I

Lauretta Vinciarelli and Leonardo Fodera
Puglia project, 1975–1977
Ink and colored pencil on mylar
13 drawings, various sizes

Commissioned by the Puglia Regional Administration in Southern Italy, the unrealized Puglia project is a typological study of gardens. The first drawing outlines the elements of the garden project: fences, hedges, walls, floors, passages, structures, and roofs. Additionally, Vinciarelli and Fodera note that the garden or park should be a place of shade with water and plants, a place “of encounter, contemplation, play and rest.” The second drawing proposes additional elements for the garden: stairs, canals, water basins, children’s play equipment, and furniture. Throughout the remainder of the drawings, Vinciarelli and Fodera posit various combinations of these elements. For example, will the garden have tree cover or

a built roof, or perhaps a combination of the two? The micro gardens, designed as modules, could be combined and interlocked to form a variety of spatial fabrics. Instead of conceiving of her work as the creation of architectural objects, Vinciarelli worked to create spatial fabrics that considered the space around the buildings, which is often treated as leftover space or a void, as integral to the architecture. Judd also echoed this sentiment in his 1977 statement “Judd Foundation,” in which he wrote: “The space surrounding my work is crucial to it: as much thought has gone into the installation as into a piece itself.” Key elements of the Puglia project include the pergola, the water feature, and the courtyard, all elements that Judd integrated into his home and studio in Marfa, La Manasana de Chinati/The Block in the 1970s and 80s.

The Puglia project was featured in *Architecture Design* in June 1977; in *Domus* in July 1978; and in *A & U* in April 1981.

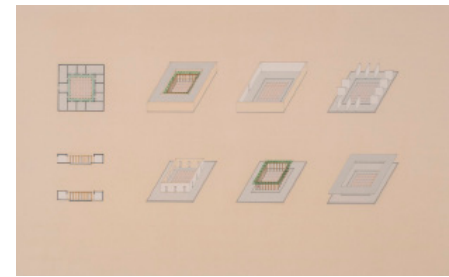


III

Lauretta Vinciarelli
[Project for a Productive Garden in an Urban Center in South West Texas],
c. 1979
Colored pencil on tracing paper
3 drawings, each 23¼ × 41¼ inches
(59.1 × 104.8 cm)

In 1979 Judd purchased Vinciarelli’s drawings for a garden at the Walker House, a home he owned in Marfa. Similar to the drawings for the Puglia project, the drawings for the Walker House introduce various elements of the garden, such as pergolas, trees, and water features to be employed in the construction of the “garden as a spatial fabric.” Though the

plan for the Walker House garden was unrealized, the influence of Vinciarelli’s proposal can be seen in realized structural elements that Judd incorporated at other sites. For example, the pool for the Walker House closely resembles the pool Judd later realized in concrete at La Mansana de Chinati/The Block. Additionally, the doors on the north and south side of the property resemble the doors on the north and south side of the Arena at the Chinati Foundation, the public art foundation that Judd established in Marfa in the mid-1980s.



II

Lauretta Vinciarelli
[Drawings of the hangar and open and enclosed court house], 1980
Colored pencil on vellum
4 drawings, each 20 × 32 in. (50.8 × 81.3 cm)

Variations of the courtyard as a type are featured throughout Vinciarelli’s practice. In these drawings, Vinciarelli explored various configurations of hangars and courtyards, noting that these typologies could be combined to suit the existing materials and climate of Southwest Texas and Northern Mexico. Judd’s re-purposing of existing hangar structures was an important facet of his architectural work in Marfa, where he restored three hangars that he conceived of in relation to courtyard environments.



IV

Lauretta Vinciarelli
[Water enclosure in landscape], 1986
Watercolor
3 drawings, each 22½ × 29½ inches
(57.2 × 75.9 cm)

Vinciarelli began to work in watercolor in 1986, often depicting spaces that resemble places where she lived. As Vinciarelli stated in a 1997 interview, “Architecture is not the main focus of my work. Architecture, the traces of it that are in my paintings, is only the support for transforming fields of light and color into ‘places.’” These spaces were not intended to be built, but instead explored concepts of light, color, memory, and perspective. Of Vinciarelli’s use of watercolor as a

medium, art critic, historian, and Vinciarelli’s friend, Ida Panicelli, described the process as one requiring “total concentration, and a very steady hand – it made no allowance for error; if any were made, the sheet was lost and she would have to start over again.”

In the three watercolors, perhaps depicting the mountainous vistas of the West Texas desert or Central Italy, Vinciarelli’s attentiveness to light can be seen through the shadows on the water created by the surrounding roofless structures or the perimeter of trees. “I started doing watercolor with water in mind and water as a means,” Lauretta stated in 2009, “So it became water also literally.”

Lauretta Vinciarelli
101 Spring Street
March 30–July 20, 2019

Public hours:
Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays
1:00–5:30pm

Lauretta Vinciarelli
is made possible
with support from
Ronnie Heyman and Loren Pack
& Robert Beyer

Exhibition Checklist

Short Wall:

I

Lauretta Vinciarelli and Leonardo Fodera,
Puglia project, 1975–1977
Ink and colored pencil on mylar
17¼ × 22¾ inches (44 × 58 cm)

Lauretta Vinciarelli and Leonardo Fodera,
Puglia project, 1975–1977
Ink and colored pencil on mylar
17¼ × 42½ inches (44 × 108 cm)

Lauretta Vinciarelli and Leonardo Fodera,
Puglia project, 1975–1977
Ink and colored pencil on mylar
17¼ × 22¾ inches (44 × 58 cm)

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Puglia project, 1975–1977
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Puglia project, 1975–1977
Ink and colored pencil on mylar
17¼ × 17¼ inches (44 × 44 cm)

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Puglia project, 1975–1977
Ink and colored pencil on mylar
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Puglia project, 1975–1977
Ink and colored pencil on mylar
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Lauretta Vinciarelli and Leonardo Fodera,
Puglia project, 1975–1977
Ink and colored pencil on mylar
17¾ × 17¾ inches (44.2 × 43.8 cm)

Lauretta Vinciarelli and Leonardo Fodera,
Puglia project, 1975–1977
Ink and colored pencil on mylar
17¼ × 17¼ inches (44 × 44 cm)

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Ink and colored pencil on mylar
17¼ × 17¼ inches (44 × 44 cm)

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Ink and colored pencil on mylar
17¼ × 17¼ inches (44 × 44 cm)

Long Wall (left to right):

II

[Drawings of the hangar and open and
enclosed court house], 1980
Colored pencil on vellum
20 × 32 inches (50.8 × 81.3 cm)

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