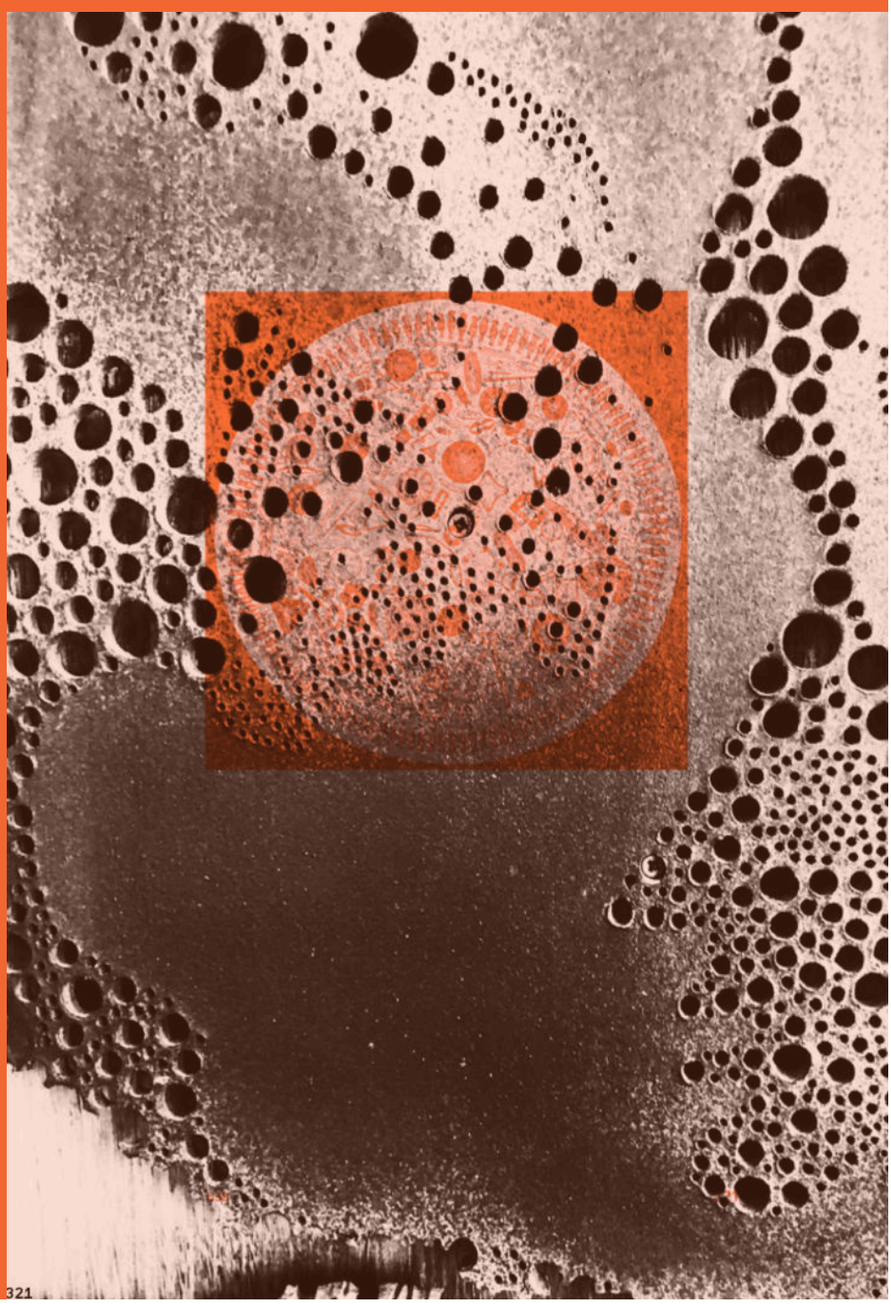
FIGURAZIONI

SPECIAL EDITION



ACQUAROMA. THE CLIMATE CHANGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DIALOGUE AND LIVE WITH THE NONHUMAN WHICH IS INCUMBENT ON US.

Carlo Prati

Figure 1
Carlo Prati. *ACQUAROMA. Primo quadro. Anfiteatro Flavio.* Digital collage 2020

1. Roma was built over water and over water it has developed and grown over time. Hidden and submerged patterns of arteries of rivers, canals, springs and lakes move and lie below the contemporary metropolis. Nowadays, while several researches address the relationship between the Eternal City and surface water (the Tiber, the Aniene, aqueducts, baths, etc.), just as many target underground waters, a remarkably high percentage of the overall water resources available on the territory which may actually represent an outstanding wealth and a unique opportunity for the future development of the city. Some stunning discoveries have recently proved such point: in 2009, during the excavation works for the underground C Line, the path and history of the Third river of Rome (Volturnus, the river-god, according to some sources) was defined with certainty and marked the completion of a 10-year long archaeological research (Rossella Rea) closely related to the rehabilitation and enhancement of the Colosseum, under which the third river and the Fosso di San Clemente meet and converge.

A new study (Franco Barberi and Maria Luisa Carapezza) has definitely established that a large underground river (larger than the above-ground one and flowing a few hundred meters on both its sides) runs under the Tiber at a depth of between 30 and 60 meters. In 2013, during a survey of the tuff quarries recently discovered under the Forlanini Hospital, a team of speleologists stumbled over an amazing view: a 2,000 sq m underground lake most likely generated by a hidden spring twenty-five meters below the Monteverde district.
During the twentieth century, other sensational discoveries included, in the 1930s, the remains of a Roman sepulcher submerged in a small emerald- colored lake (from 3 to 6-m deep) under the cellars of the Apostolic Chancery palace. More recently, an increasing focus around this issue has led to in-depth surveys of underground waters in the back-fill soils of the city, which actually constitute the first stratigraphy layer of the Roman territory; such surveys have established the presence of a major water table with which the urban environment actually interacts (due both to natural dynamics and to the use of the underground for facilities and infrastructures).

2. ACQUAROMA is primarily the result of this research hypothesis about the dialogue between archaeology and design and the special relationship established between time and architecture through water in the eternal city. Such dialogue might greatly benefit from a cross-disciplinary exchange involving geology, climatology, archaeology, restoration, art, etc. In this sense, most major archaeological sites in Rome may be interpreted as the hubs of a complex network of water-related architectures; my series of digital collages analyzes some of the most famous ones (starting with the Colosseum and the Basilica of Maxentius), although the central Campus Martius is a constellation of absolute architectural events in itself: the "sacred area" in Largo Argentina with the Temple of Juturna (Temple C) sited at the outlet of the Acqua Vergine, or the Baths of Agrippa and the museum system of the Crypta Balbi (access point to a partially visible urban fragment mostly hidden below the current stratigraphy). Furthermore, with some images ("Monte Gianicolo and Rione Parione" in particular), I intend to achieve a second recognition, that of anthropic forms in relation with waterways (for example, on the river banks and underwater embankments), which defined and influenced the culture and traditions of Rome across the centuries (agriculture, rituals, work, etc.).

3. Furthermore, ACQUAROMA results from some crucial questions inspired by my research about the possibility of an architecture beyond the end of the world: what will Rome look like in the age of global warming? What effect will rising water levels have on the architecture and monuments of the eternal city?
Could the ecological crisis be considered as an opportunity to dialogue and live with the non-human which is incumbent on us?
Assembling water and artifact through the technique of digital collage primarily means meditating on our relationship with time as stated by Iosif Brodskij «I simply think that water is the image of time» [...] «Water

Figure 2
Carlo Prati. *ACQUAROMA. Mappa Idrografica di Roma.* Digital collage, 2020.

equals time and provides beauty with its double». Such work on the construction of water images allows me to simultaneously stage landscape and persistence of time and to reveal the metaphysical stillness of architecture.

This defines a new Forma Urbis in the passage to the urban scale, a new image of Rome in the age of global warming. For this reason, ACQUAROMA results from a reinterpretation of G.B. Nolli's "Topography of Rome" from 1748 (collage dimensions 310 x 250 cm.) on the altimetric curves of which three different levels of rising waters are marked. Starting from this, a limited number of «Quadri» and visions of the upcoming city are recognized (as in Piero Sartogo's "Roma Interrotta").

Finally, I intend to clarify the role of Rome as the favorite subject of my collages: among the many reasons for such choice, I consider it important to underline how the eternal city effectively represents an actual paradigm of non-place. According to such perspective, Rome is the total representation of a fluid system; such nature highlights the interconnection among the objects in a way that blurs the morphological unity of the system itself. The city is a widespread global entity, a widely scattered agent, a giant slum planet.

Rome is a universal paradigm of city that can represent an ideal case study in order to test the viability of the theories and experiments I am working on.

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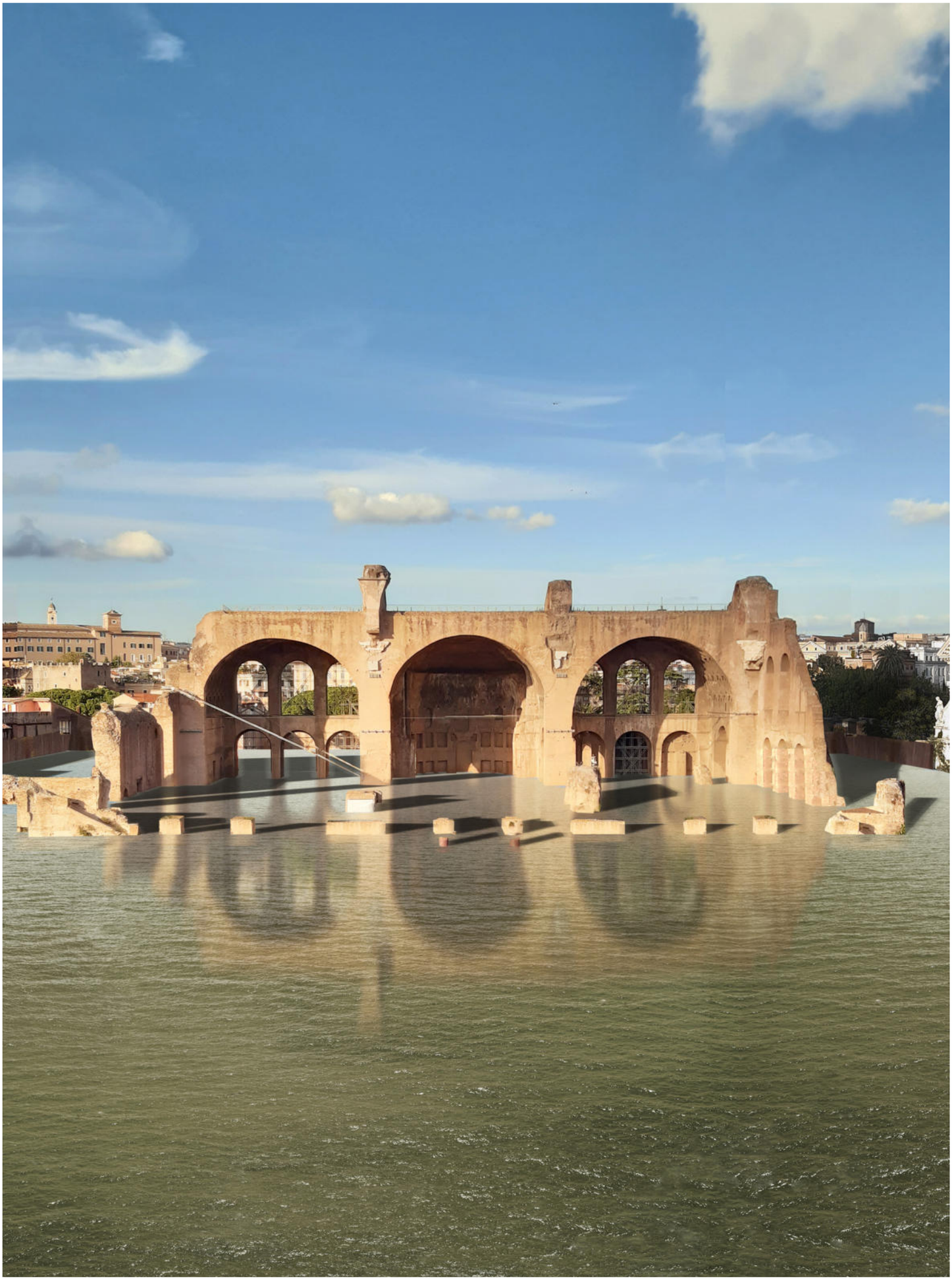
opposite page Figure 3
Carlo Prati. *ACQUAROMA. Primo quadro. Il Tempio della Pace.* Digital collage 2020



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