

MAINTENANCE OF CONTEMPORARY DESIGN THE CASE OF MAXXI

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The history of reinforced concrete employment is over a hundred years old. From the first experiences of inventors and pioneers, the full affirmation of the new material, up to the recent perspectives made possible by technical progress, this history has been characterized by a thick twist of conceptual as well as technical-scientific aspects.

An extensive heritage of constructions has been created in which reinforced concrete represents the main element - material, technical-constructive and cultural – including situations in which this material takes on the role of representing the formal and expressive characteristics of the buildings themselves. This is the case of concrete left exposed out of design choice. With reference to this type of application, an expressive and research current developed, that from the interpretation given by masters such as Perret and Le Corbusier, evolved to the present day, following the innovations that have characterized the use of this "artificial stone", both in technical and conceptual terms. However this "modern" material, initially considered superior to other "natural" materials in terms of durability, revealed many aspects of vulnerability, especially when left exposed. More recently a consistent technical-scientific research was developed about it, aimed at improving its performance characteristics and identifying appropriate systems of protection and maintenance. At the same time it became a subject of interest for technicians of conservation, although with some initial operative difficulties.

Among the constructions made of concretes of next generation there is the MAXXI in Rome, designed at the beginning of the new millennium by Zaha Hadid, an architect who clearly showed an innovative conceptual approach towards this material.

The proposed subject is to prove - in a realistic experience represented by the need to perform the maintenance of the outer surfaces of the MAXXI - the actual relationship between prevention, maintenance and restoration applied to contemporary architecture, something of recognized architectural importance, even if temporarily not part of the buildings that must be protected "by law." The project will be presented for a conservative maintenance on a new building, made entirely with an innovative exposed concrete that needs appropriate conservative procedures and materials. This project tried to combine the need to identify a "protocol" of maintenance respectful of conceptual formal and technical-constructive characteristics of the building, with the economic and operational aspects related to periodic maintenance of large surfaces.