

REPORT

tirana

TZI

rivista internazionale di architettura e arti del progetto gennaio/febbraio 2021

tirana

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tirana itineraries


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The House of Leaves

Studio Terragni Architetti

project: Elisabetta Terragni architetto
(Studio Terragni Architetti Como/New York) and Daniele Ledda, graphic designer
collaborators: Paola Frigerio, Mike Dolinski, Yiwei He, Fabrizio Cantoni, Filippo Ferrari, Alessandro Tonelli
team: Bashkim Shehu, Artan Puto, Fabian Kati
client: Albanian Government, Ministry of Culture
works: 2015-2017
area: 800 mq

text by Studio Terragni Architetti
photos by Elena Dorfman,
Daniele Ledda

Fino a pochi anni fa questo misterioso edificio nel centro di Tirana era il quartier generale del Sigurimi, la polizia segreta albanese, il famigerato braccio operativo della lunga dittatura di Enver Hoxha. La sua posizione era cruciale nella geopolitica della città perché appariva come una normale villa urbana discretamente arretrata dal filo stradale e completamente coperta di edera, in una parola, anonima. La trasformazione di questa "Casa" in un luogo di Memoria richiedeva interventi delicati e attenti perché la condizione di abbandono faceva parte della sua storia così come lo erano le sue ferite da curare ma non da cancellare. Comunque la si percorra essa rivela, insieme alle decine di oggetti e postazioni di ascolto e spionaggio, le sue incongruenze e le sue cancellazioni. Lentamente i livelli della storia sono stati svelati, gli oggetti recuperati, i documenti esposti, lasciando al visitatore il tempo di pensare e ricordare.

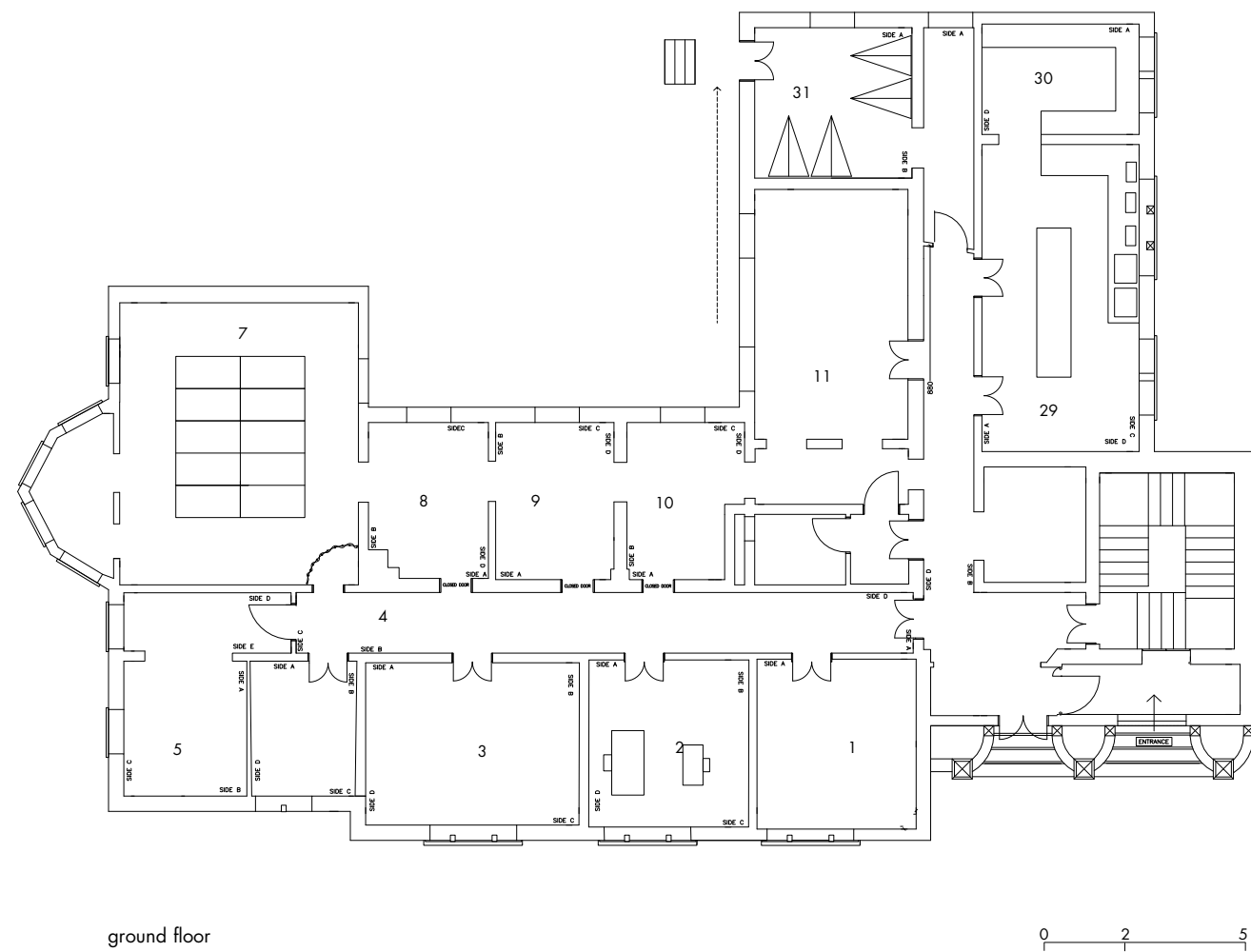
Sono state utilizzate due lingue albanese e inglese per tutti i testi per colmare i vuoti temporali e spiegare alle nuove generazioni quello che è potuto succedere ma anche permettere al visitatore di muoversi solitario seguendo il proprio ritmo emotivo. House of Leaves era e rimane un labirinto di stanze, mantiene le tracce della sua trasformazione da villa a clinica fino a luogo segreto della sorveglianza nazionale così come le sue incongruenze, le sue ferite e i suoi luoghi inaspettati. Il progetto ha trattato la casa con cura, dove necessario ricucendo le ferite, rivelando le incongruenze e aprendo passaggi per lasciar emergere le memorie scomode.

Until a few years ago, this mysterious building in the center of Tirana was the headquarters of Sigurimi, the Albanian secret police, the notorious operational arm of Enver Hoxha's long dictatorship.

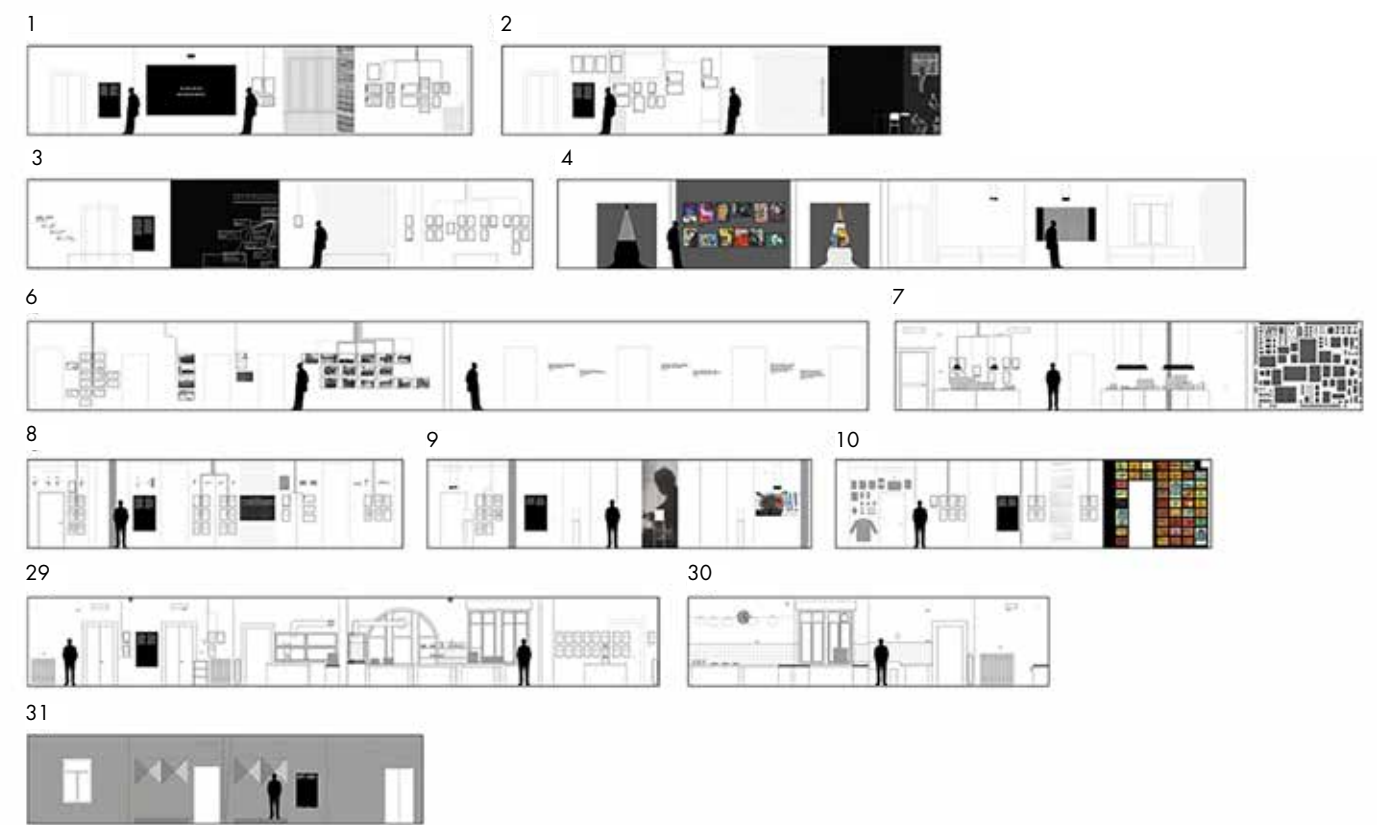
Its position was crucial to Tirana's geopolitics because it looked like a normal city house, set discreetly back from the street line and completely covered by ivy; in a word: anonymous. Transforming this "house" into a place of memory required delicate, careful operations because its state of abandonment was part of its history as were its wounds, which were to be treated and not erased. But as one walks through it, it reveals its inconsistencies and erasures, alongside the dozens of objects and listening and spying stations.

Slowly, the layers of history are revealed, the objects recovered, the documents displayed, giving visitors time to think and remember. We used two languages, Albanian and English, for all the texts to fill the time gaps and explain to new generations what was let to happen as well as allow visitors to proceed on their own, following their own emotional pace.





ground floor



elevations ground floor



Elena Dorfman



Dantele Tedda



Elena Dorfman

House of Leaves was, and still is, a maze of rooms and still bears the marks of its transformation from a house to a clinic and then the secret place of national surveillance. We handle the house with care, and where necessary we mended the wounds, revealed the inconsistencies and opened passages to let the uncomfortable memories emerge.



Elena Dorfman