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TAGLIASACCHI AND ZANETTA

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For their remarkable research into the color scheme for the city of Turin during the period 1800-1850, which is historically unique.

On 19 November the 1985 Sikkens Award was awarded to the Italian architects Germano Tagliasacchi and Riccardo Zanetta in the RAI, for their unique historical research into the 19th-century use of color in the architecture of the city of Turin and the application of that knowledge in the current development of the old inner city of Turin. It also served as the stimulus for the advisory role which the foundation was to play in a number of other comparable projects.

The architects Germano Tagliasacchi and Riccardo Zanetta were given the Award for their remarkable research into the history of color, which they have carried out in Turin from 1978. In their joint doctorate project, *I colori di Torino 1800-1850*, supervised by Professor G. Brino of the Facoltà di Architettura del Politecnico in Turin, they revealed the main elements of a historically unique color scheme for that city. The customary ideas of a “yellow” Turin were disproved by this. The researchers were interested in the question of how color had been used as an urban policy under the French administration during the first half of the 19th century, a use of color which was then lost. The situation was investigated house by house, street by street. On the basis of documents in the archives regarding 160 recommendations on color, both for individual facades and for whole streets and squares, they were able to reconstruct the chromatic ground plan. At the time the intention was to achieve a visual unity and rhythm in accordance with the classical rules of symmetry, regularity and uniformity by applying different colors to the predominantly 17th-century facades. Color was not so much a decorative element as an instrument to govern the public character of the urban space in a systematic and relatively easy way.

This historical research resulted in new and valuable data for the much more extensive international studies into the development and transformation of urban space in the 19th century. Furthermore, this research not only led to numerous well documented publications, but in Turin in particular it led to a coherent use of color for the public spaces in the city which was stimulated by the council. A strategy was developed for this purpose in which the

municipal authorities tried to tempt private home owners to adopt a historically justified and architectural use of color in the city on the basis of a number of strategic projects, for example, with the area around the town hall. For this purpose, Tagliasacchi and Zanetta created a color plan both for the historical inner city and for the periphery. Initially this was a plan without any legal validity and was mainly supported by the personal enthusiasm and energy of both the two researchers and the alderman at the time.

The presentation of the historical research of color took place at a time that the architecture of historical inner cities had become a subject of great interest both in the political and in the professional world, and not only in the Netherlands. Tagliasacchi and Zanetta deserve credit for showing the role that color played and can still play in the design and spatial experience of urban space in the broadest sense, at the right moment and with a great deal of understanding. The Turin project was to serve as a model for future recommendations and projects of the board of directors of the Sikkens Prize Foundation.