

*You will begin to wonder that human daring ever achieved anything so magnificent.*  
John Ruskin, *Mornings in Florence*, 1875

Ruskin's quote describes a magnificent country, Italy, envied and loved by the whole world. Unfortunately, this to-be-admired and to-be-preserved heritage locates on a fragile palimpsest. Seismic activity, hydrogeological instability, and human faults (negligence, conflicts of competence among public institutions, lack of dedicated finances and of suitable projects) are leading threats of the Heritage.

In Italy, some preventive actions against earthquake effects have been taken on in the last decades. They usually focus on buildings, including museums, the so-called culture containers. The latter must fulfill their task of conservation and preservation of cultural goods. Therefore, besides structural anti-seismic solutions, the museum's efforts focus on objects conservation, environmental control, and visitors' impacts on expositions.

From the museum design perspective, excellent architects have designed unique architectures and set up scenographies hosting outstanding collections. Their effort was to match architectural and cultural programs. The past century marked a profound transformation in museum culture. Instead of constructing contemplative and cultural products for selected intellectual audiences, museums and temporary exhibitions became intermediaries of mass education and mass entertainment. The publics changed, so did museums and exhibitions. Among the assorted families of buildings marking the city experience of the last two centuries, the museum building seems to constitute a recognizable architectural type, a consolidated one. The relation between the museum and the city changed. In some instances, the museum serves as a tool for the regeneration of abandoned factory workshops. In others, the collections find a place in the so-called *objects trouvés*, old palaces, or churches. The use of a building as a museum changed or reinterpreted the original destination. In Italy and Europe, environmental or historic preexistences host museums, characterizing the exhibit setting. Regarding the collections, the protection of a vast and multifaceted heritage from dangers and risks seems an impossible mission. Each time we see images of injured museum

collections caused by earthquakes, we think: “we could have prevented that.” As Stefania Viti suggested (Viti 2018), each museum should recognize, evaluate, and know its collections’ vulnerability. Indeed, RESIMUS, RESilience MUSEums research project by DIDA, Department of Architecture, University of Florence, is devoted to the seismic vulnerability of the museum collections. Since the beginning, the RESIMUS collective work stressed a non-original conclusion: we cannot afford to maintain separate skills and knowledge focusing on museum and exhibit design. RESIMUS is the chance to connect different pieces of knowledge and skills that might raise the safety of the collections and promote the enhancement of the museum heritage.

Giada Cerri’s book *Shaking Heritage* is part of the RESIMUS research framework. It completes three years of dense activity. Theoretical studies and applications express the urgent need to preserve the collections through an integrated strategy. The proposed Approach shows an attempt to foster the museum design culture by including the anti-seismic solution in museum collections and setups. Due to internal and external complexities, the museum choices might collide with the best practices for seismic safety. Cerri’s work does not hide these difficulties and focuses on the criticality of the resulting project. Evaluating the different points of view, trying to get close to various questions and follow-up analysis, recomposing the so-called art of extending (*arte del porgere*), the research represents a precious first step in museography and seismic assessment of the museum collection field.

The RESIMUS research highlights that seismic protection of museum collections is a constructive process. That is necessary, possible, and, above all, we cannot postpone it.