Arch 484/584 Studio Fall 2010  
**A Museum for the Tiber River, Rome**

Strongly recommended requisite in preparation for this studio will be the Fall Seminar: The Micro-Urbanism of Rome

Students will also be expected to take advantage of the exhibition at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, *Giuseppe Vasi’s Rome: Lasting Impressions from the Age of the Grand Tour*

This studio will focus on the design of a museum for the city of Rome that will celebrate the Tiber River, its history as well as its contemporary significance. The intention is to provide an immersive experience for visitors and Romans alike to explore and understand the river in its historic context studying both its natural and human built dimensions. The “meaning” of the river, including its practical, economic, cultural and symbolic roles, will be elucidated in the displays which will capitalize on the natural setting of the site on the southern tip of Tiber Island.

The Tiber Island or *Isola Tiberina* in Italian, is not only the sole island in the river it possesses the only remaining frontage along the Tiber that remains relatively intact after the building of the embankments which began in 1870. These 12 meter high walls spaced 100 meters apart and running through the center of Rome for 10 kilometers cut off the rest of the city, both visually and practically, from the river. The Island presents a unique opportunity to reunite the river and the city in a direct and poetic manner to reveal the intimate connection between the two that had existed for over two thousand years before the late 19th century engineering flood walls erased that relationship.
The Isola Tiberina has an interesting history that should also be considered. The island, which is linked to the city by its two ancient bridges, was famous in antiquity as a place of healing and even today the northern half is dedicated to a hospital that still serves the citizens of Rome. During the summer there are cinematic events along the shores of the island and during most of the year people enjoy fishing, strolling along its banks or lounging in the sun on its inclined ramparts. Close to the island is a fragment of the ancient Pons Aemilia called the Ponte Rotto or Broken Bridge which contributes to the overall picturesque composition of the island which has been the subject of countless views by artists.

Considerations/requirements beyond more typical displays are:

- A hydrometer to scientifically record the daily and seasonal levels of the river
- A display that records historic flood levels
- A topographic model of the river depicting its course through the city
- A display showing life along the river including water mills, or mulini, ferry boats, and other watercraft that plied the Tiber in the past

Contemporary artists have created works along the river (further upstream) using murals, lighting effects and performance pieces that suggest how the design of the Tiber River Museum might embrace contemporary as well as historic design initiatives.

References:

Canevari, Raffaele, *Studi per la sistemazione del Tevere nel tronco entro Rome*, Roma, 1875
*Aquae Urbis Romae: the Waters of the City of Rome* at http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/waters
*The Interactive Nolli Map Website* at http://nolli.uoregon.edu/
*Giuseppe Vasi’s Grand Tour of Rome Website* at: http://vasi.uoregon.edu/