



COSANTI FOUNDATION

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For Immediate Release

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**COSANTI FOUNDATION – ITALIAN PROJECT PRESENTS A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH ARCHITECTS, PAOLO SOLERI AND MARIO BOTTA**

ARCOSANTI – Friday, October 18, 2002 Cosanti Foundation presents a once in a lifetime opportunity to hear and participate in a discussion between Architects Paolo Soleri and Mario Botta.

**MARIO BOTTA**

Born in Mendrisio, Switzerland in 1943, Botta trained as a technical draftsman before he studied at the Liceo Artistico in Milan. From 1965 to 1969 he studied at the Istituto Universitario di Architettura in Venice. During this same period he worked as an assistant to Le Corbusier and, then, to Louis I. Kahn. He opened his own practice in Lugano, Switzerland in 1970.

Essentially Modernist in approach, Mario Botta has been strongly influenced by both Carlo Scarpa and Louis Kahn. Although his later works increasingly accept existing forms and styles as the starting point of design, Botta still adheres to a philosophy of historical determinism in which architecture acts as a mirror of its times.

Botta's works characteristically show respect for topographical conditions and regional sensibilities and his designs generally emphasize craftsmanship and geometric order. Because he attempts to reconcile traditional architectural symbolism with the aesthetic rules of the Modern Movement, Botta is often identified with the Italian neo-rationalist group, the Tendenaz.

Botta built exclusively in Switzerland during his early career, gaining international acclaim for such buildings as the Capuchin convent in Lugano, the Craft Centre in Balerna and the Administration Building for the Staatsbank in Fribourg. Since the second half of the 1970s, his houses have become more classical in plan and elevation, and in the 1980's he has secured international commissions such as the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco, California

**PAOLO SOLERI**

*“We are stardust on its way to self consciousness,”*  
Paolo Soleri

Paolo Soleri, a resident of Arizona, is one of the most erudite and original thinkers to tackle the problems of urban existence. A native of Torino, Italy Paolo Soleri spent the early part of his life absorbing Italian landscape and culture. Not surprisingly, European communities greatly influenced his work and philosophy.

*“If we eliminate all the cities from this continent, what remains is not much. Even though we Americans tend to be very skeptical about the city, we must recognize that the city is still the place where things are happening in scale and in quality.”*

In 1946, Soleri earned a Ph.D. in architecture from the Torino Politecnico in Italy. The next year, he moved to the United States to work in Frank Lloyd Wright's apprenticeship program. The programs, at Taliesin West in Arizona and Taliesin in Wisconsin, afforded Paolo Soleri the opportunity to apply the intellectual puzzles of architecture into physical solutions through construction. He valued that connection and incorporated the importance of mind-body balance into his daily life and into his life work.

In 1950, Paolo Soleri returned to Italy where he was commissioned to design a large ceramic factory, “Ceramic Artistica Solimene.” This experience provided him with knowledge of ceramic techniques, knowledge he would apply later to producing windbells. Windbells, Soleri would discover over the next thirty years, would prove to be the major source for funding construction that would test his theoretical work.

*“If you had told me fifty years ago that I would build my activities from the proceeds of windbells, I would have said you were crazy.”*

In 1956, Paolo and his wife Colly, returned to Scottsdale, Arizona from Italy with their two daughters. They established the not-for-profit educational foundation, Cosanti Foundation. Over many years, architectural students, who were studying at Arizona State University, were instrumental in helping to build the Cosanti Foundation. Today, this center is complete with six main buildings for producing bronze and ceramic bells, office and gallery space, and living space for Soleri and a number of his employees.

The main project for the Cosanti Foundation is Arcosanti. Located in the Sonora desert of Central Arizona, it is being developed as a prototype urban laboratory that is designed to house 5,000 residents. Designed and built as an integrated “arcology”, minimizing both the amount of space needed for human habitat and energy requirements to power the “city”, while maximizing the interaction and accessibility associated with the city and natural environments. Soleri, who has enlisted more than 5,000 volunteers to build Arcosanti and still maintains on-going workshops and weekly dialogues with volunteers and students.

While it is common for an architect to produce a solution for a single building or even a group of buildings, Soleri is the rare architect who is willing to address the mega issues that face humanity and then design whole urban environments to abate those concerns. By clustering together in cities and leaving the fertile land for agricultural production, Soleri believes he has identified how to create cities that serve humanity, while, at the same time, preserve the earth’s valuable resources.

*“...we need to take the American dream and frugalize it...more oriented toward the inner life of individuals and societies. You might need less of the physical in order to produce more of the mental and spiritual.”*

**EVENT: BOTTA MEETS SOLERI: ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

**EVENT COST: \$8.00 per person.**

**TIME: 3 p.m**

**LOCATION: ARCOSANTI. Arcosanti is located 2 1/2 miles northeast of Cordes Junction (exit 262) off of I-17, about 60 miles north of Phoenix or 35 miles southeast of Prescott.**

**BLACK NO TIE ITALIAN DINNER: Arcosanti Café**

**DINNER COST: \$12.00 per person**

**TIME: 6 p.m.**

**LOCATION: ARCOSANTI CAFÉ**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: LINDA ROBY 928-632-6202, [pr@arcosanti.org](mailto:pr@arcosanti.org)**

Simple Guestrooms (with beautiful sunrise views) are available at very reasonable rates between \$20 and \$30 per night.

RESERVE ROOMS WITH GALLERY: 928-632-6217

Visit our website: [www.arcosanti.org](http://www.arcosanti.org)