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2022

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Meditz, Moritz, "History and Technique in Reinforce Concrete Formworks: A study of Pier Luigi Nervi Approach" (2022). *Symposium of Student Scholars*. 98.

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History and Technique in Reinforce Concrete Formworks: A study of Pier Luigi Nervi Approach

The last hundred years in architecture and civil engineering have been widely dominated by the use of concrete, which became the second most consumed commodity after water. The traditional use of rigid, flat formwork panels has defined reinforced concrete members as a uniform cross-section, prismatic structural elements in both design codes and construction methods. These resultant shapes have become practically an inevitable conclusion for concrete constructions. This presentation focuses on alternative formwork construction looking at the work of engineer, architect and builder, Pier Luigi Nervi (1891–1979). Nervi was an adjunct professor at the University of Rome and a prolific writer, which used formwork to define the ever-evolving relationship between building forms, techniques and materials. Seeing technique as preceding form, he examined structural elements that resisted the passage of time and outlasted building typologies and styles. Combining Nervi's published and unpublished work, this presentation explores Nervi's style through the lens of architectural formwork, placing the engineer's use of reinforced concrete in the particular historicity of this material and in the longer continuum of construction history.

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