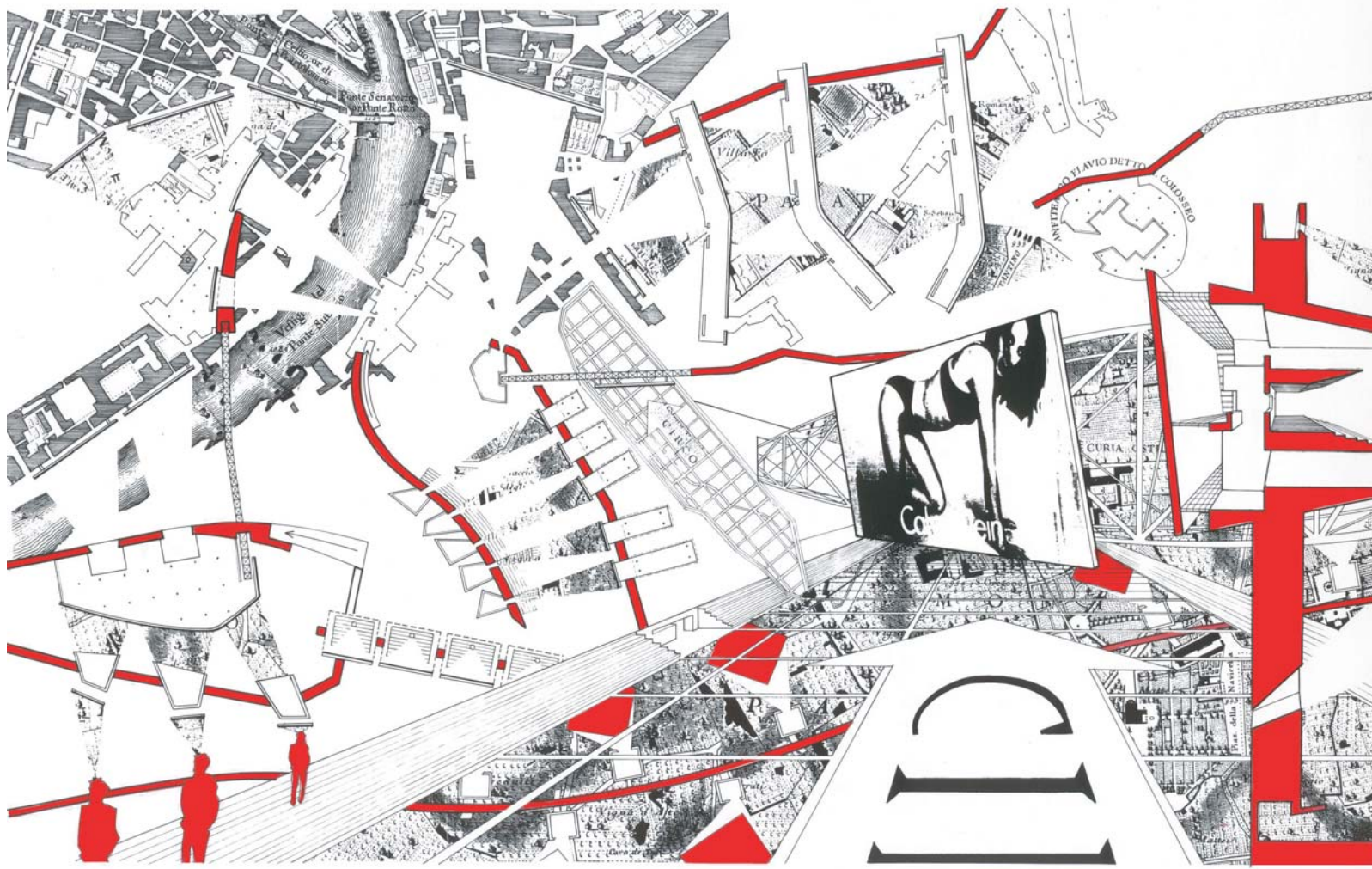


Roma Interotta



In the fall of 1997 12 young architects in New York City participated in an exercise intended to engender a discussion about the state of the contemporary urban environment. Each was given a plate of the Nollis Map of Rome to be modified as desired. The above plate which I manipulated represents the area of Rome including the Circus Maximus and the Coliseum. The original plate is represented on the right.



The pre-existing spatial ordering system represented by the Nollis map is based on a figure-ground reading of space and the relationships and connections between spaces. For this exercise a new spatial system is overlaid upon the found condition. The function of this new system is to provide the maximum exposure within the city to billboard advertising. This is achieved through the overlay of a continuous series of walls containing circulation, with housing and other functions hinged to them. The functional elements and the walls themselves contain advertising surfaces, and all spaces are oriented to have views of other advertising surfaces. The system reacts to site-specific characteristics at certain moments, for example at the Circus Maximus, which becomes a large urban space bridged by an advertising image. Where the new system intersects with densely built portions of the old city, viewing angles are carved away, creating a new interpretation of figural urban space. The project is predicated on the concept that the character of a city is enhanced as new systems are overlaid upon old, and that the syntax of those systems can be very diverse while maintaining a singular reading of urban space.