The area San Lorenzo takes on a series of historical significant modifications over time. The district was inserted inside the second circle of walls 1284, after which it was approved a further expansion the new remarkable Central Market “Mercato Centrale” structure by Giuseppe Mengoni, 1870. Street trading started to occur and still characterize the area today.

Many of these important buildings arise in the San Lorenzo district thanks to the Medici family: The palazzo Medici, the new Basilica rebuilt by Brunelleschi with the interventions of Michelangelo and other artists, and the stupendous New Town Hall, the latter being an example of the Baroque style. The San Lorenzo district was formed in relation to the basic lines of the Roman city, which correspond to the axes of the most important developments of the urban structure.

Public places such as art galleries, museums and libraries in Florence are experiencing an interaction and exchange between different people and cultures. The project's objective is to provide Florence with a new concept of culture house open for everyone would not solve the problem, as there are many of these young guys when it comes to employment, social integration as well as different cultural aspects by its very multi ethnic population. The project aims to: address a current need, reduce some gaps and to find a way to relate to what it once was - a place for the community character and organized by the public, reflective and innovative cultural experience from a local, artisan. The project's objective is to provide Florence with a new concept of public places such as art galleries, museums and libraries in Florence are experiencing. The current public places are exposing local and national sponsorships and contributions by the City of Florence. Most of these institutions would benefit all parties, since we all have a lot to learn from each other, by being exposed to and engaging with different cultures and art forms.}

For my final project I have chosen an ancient convent and ex-house of reliefs, art and history of the Medici family, starting from the Grand Duke to the Grand Duke of Medici in Italy. The choice of city was made considering the various influences that the city of Florence has had throughout the centuries, and the importance of the cultural heritage that it has preserved. The site plan of the project is based on the historical plan of the site and the existing conditions. The project is divided into three main areas: the San Lorenzo Basilica, the former convent, and the ex-house of reliefs. The San Lorenzo Basilica is a large church that was built in the 16th century and is one of the most important religious buildings in Florence. The former convent is a historical building that was once used as a convent and is now being repurposed for cultural purposes. The ex-house of reliefs is a small building that was once used as a house and is now being repurposed for art and history exhibitions. The project is designed to create a new cultural center in the San Lorenzo district that will bring together art, history, and culture. The project is designed to be energy efficient and sustainable, and it is expected to provide a new cultural experience for the residents of Florence.
The Overall Condition of the Property is considered good since the work of the '80s went ahead with the intervention of the '80s. The project intended to build offices for the "Guardia di Finanza" in the beginning of the 19th century when large industrial environments were made.

The complex was enclosed in a cage of scaffolding and metal sheets and suffered badly with scum problems and drug dealing, and became a real case of the Italian bureaucracy. 2007 scaffolding and metal sheets was taken away from the outer facade.

The "Region of Tuscany" made an agreement to make Sant'Orsola an extension of the Central Market dedicated to business but was then left on hold...

1985 - 2007   Abandoned & Enclosed in a cage of scaffolding and metal sheets

1980-1985   Restoration

Sant'Orsola was bought of the State to create offices for the "financial police. They started the renovations until the 1985 when financiers suddenly realized the site was not suitable for their needs and the project was abandoned. The "Region of Tuscany" made an agreement to make Sant'Orsola an extension of the Central Market dedicated to business but was then left on hold.

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1950 - 1980 Downtown shelter for the evicted

When it was abandoned and no longer in use it became a shelter for the evicted.

Sant' Orsola housed classrooms and offices for the University of Florence. Later it became a downtown shelter for the evicted.

1940-1950   Extra space for Florence's University

The building complex of Sant'Orsola presents the result of a numerous changes over time, mainly dictated by functional issues and consequent variations of the target. Such interventions and transformations have been realized in order to adapt the existing structures to new functions, to modify the original structure and to enhance the building's adaptability.

The vertical load bearing structures, originally dictated by functional issues and consequent variations of the target. Such interventions and transformations have been realized in order to adapt the existing structures to new functions, to modify the original structure and to enhance the building's adaptability.

The Benedictine order settled until 1435, followed by the Franciscan order. The convent was suppressed in the early nineteenth century.

1309 - 1810   Convent

Sant'Orsola was founded as a small convent for women, with respect to the basilica of San Lorenzo. The Benedictine order settled until 1435, followed by the Franciscan order. The convent was suppressed in the early nineteenth century.

Then in place of the fourteenth century convent of Sant'Orsola, Bartholomeo Silvestri renovated/ built the Tobacco Factory. From here it is possible to see an example of industrial buildings in the urban context. The Tobacco Factory was added to the "Silvestri Tabacchi". This former tobacco factory was transformed into the whole area of the Santa Lucia built in the 19th century. The Tobacco Factory is an early example of industrial buildings in the urban context. The Tobacco Factory was added to the "Silvestri Tabacchi". This former tobacco factory was transformed into the whole area of the Santa Lucia built in the 19th century.

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My project offers an alternative to the functions that the city of Florence wanted to invest even if their plans in the current situation is on hold. The idea is to turn the currently totally enclosed and abandoned Sant'Orsola building into an open and welcoming cultural centre with a central, open square (Piazza) full of life. The centre would be divided into three parts:

1) The first, North-East part, dedicated to contemporary art including galleries and studios.
2) The second, West part, with focus on different cultural activities such as different cultural dances, language cafés with language exchange, café/restaurant with multi-ethnic cuisine, free internet points etc.
3) The third, the south-east part is dedicated to educational aspects, such as seminar rooms, space for workshops and offices.

The basement with an auditorium/aula with stage and flexible, movable seats would complement the main functions (art gallery, activity and educational spaces) for temporary events depending on the current need and requests.
"The squares must be so many different markets, one for gold and silver, another for herbs, another for cattle, another for wood, and so on. Each whereof ought to have its particular place in the city, and its distinct ornaments."

Leon Battista Alberti (1452)
The project is all about the relation between “inside” and “outside”; with all its courtyards, piazzas with old “portico”, passages, loggias, cloisters (to the left) and the above atrium with an outdoor concrete staircase which also serves as a place to sit.

MATERIALS:

THE FACADES:
The buildings actual state can more or less be described as an abandoned ruin - where almost all outer window- and door openings have been clogged with bricks and a facade consists of grey concrete.

The idea with the new facades for the project is to relate to what it once looked like when it was a factory according to information and photos, therefore choosing big, industrial-like windows that let in a lot of natural light and a beige mortar for the facades. The facade material should have a prominent colour and texture. The combination of calcium and cement has been chosen for its high resistance to weathering.

Concrete-based mortar is useful for its reliability, but at the same time it should be insensitive to water, which is a common problem in the region.

Calcium-based mortar offers less resistance and has a slower setting time. Nevertheless, it has qualities that are better adapted to restoration. This material presents a zone of plastic deformation which permits it to absorb, without breaking, the deformations that are common in monuments.

ROOF:

Black, metal roof sheeting.

Advantages: light weight, portability & durability, as well as little maintenance and that the metal is recyclable.

FLOOR:

Polished concrete, which is a good sustainable design flooring because it makes use of the materials already present. This is an essential factor in our situation.

Advantages: low maintenance, low sound, dust free, slip resistant and easy to clean. The relatively high coefficient of friction can make it non-slippery. Polished concrete reduces dust issues and cleaning problems, and it does not require much maintenance.