ALDO ROSSI (1931-1997) was an Italian architect, theorist, and leader of the architectural movement La Tendenza. His theoretical work was influenced by 1920's Italian modernism, Adolf Loos, and Giorgio De Chirico. Rossi was an influential critic of the then dominant modern movement, arguing that Modernism failed to realize its projected utopia. Spurning the then fashionable debates on style, Aldo Rossi instead criticized the lack of understanding of the city in current architectural practice. Aldo Rossi argued that a city must be studied and valued as something constructed over time, particularly urban artifacts that withstand the passage of time. This directly contradicted Modernisms polemics against monuments. Aldo Rossi held that the city remembers its past and uses that memory through monuments: that is, monuments give structure to the city.

Rossi wants the City to be understood as Architecture, thus recognizing that architecture has a self-determining autonomy. Architecture then is not just the visible image of the city and sum of individual architectures, but a construction of the city over time, thereby linking the past with the present. Construction over time signifies the ultimate goal of the collective, creating an environment which it may inhabit. Architecture is inseparable from life and society. People create them with an intention of aesthetic and the creation of better environment of life and living.

The city ought to be conceived as a unified element, a synthesis of many different parts. This does not mean though that a city should not be viewed according to its parts, i.e. a singular place, a locus solus. The city and its parts are always undergoing some changes due to natural and human-made phenomena. In this process of urban dynamics, the only fixed points and signs of the collective will are monuments.

URBAN ARTIFACT AS WORK OF ART:
The city is a human-made object, a work of both engineering and architecture. The city is also characterized, like certain elements of the city, i.e. urban artifacts, by its own history and thus its own form. Functions are dominated by form and forms determine the individuality of every urban artifact. Rossi argues that the whole is of greater importance than the single parts, therefore, he wants to examine the total architecture of the city in terms of its parts.
TYPHOLOGICAL QUESTION AND NAIVE FUNCTIONALISM:
Although many studies address the problem of typology in relation to function, Rossi argues that they fail to go beyond the problem function. He rejects function as an explanation of urban artifacts because the function of urban artifacts is subject to change over time. For Rossi, “type”, as it relates to functions, is insufficient for classifying cities. He rejects functionalism, argues that urban artifacts are free from rules of function, their forms are capable of incorporating new function if they undergo some architectural alteration.

THEORY OF PERMANENCE:
Urban history is the most useful way to study the city. The persistence of the city is revealed through monuments and the city’s basic layout and plan. Cities try to maintain their axis of development by retaining their original layouts and expanding according to the meaning of their urban artifacts. Permanence may be “propelling” or “pathological.” A monument becomes propelling when it survives thanks to a form that accommodates different functions over time. When an artifact is isolated in the city, it is pathological.

CITY AS A SPATIAL SYSTEM:
The city is conceived as a spatial system composed of many parts. This part and whole character of a city challenges a fundamental component of functionalism, zoning.

HISTORY AND THE COLLECTIVE memory:
History is the collective memory of city people and it has a direct influence on the city itself. This history is expressed through monuments. Urban history is most useful in studying the urban structure, for more typical historical methods isolate the past from the present.

THE MONUMENTS:
According to Rossi, monuments serve to transmit ideas within the urban context. The persistence of a city is revealed through monuments, which serve as physical signs of the past. Yet it must be clear that Rossi advocates that the dynamic process of the city tends to be more of an evolution rather than a preservation.

THE LOCUS:
The Locus is conceived of a singular place and event, which works as the relationship of architecture to the construction of the city and the relationship between the context and the monument.