

# CARLO SCARPA

THE SHAPES OF LIGHT

I will say right away that Carla Scarpa has always been a secret idol of mine. Secret because art and architecture go hand in hand, but without exchanging opinions or confidences. However, certain aspects and, in general, all his work, have established some modalities of participating in space, of using and respecting materials, which have become true principles of a language that is not only architectural.

*Giulio Paolini*

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## CARLO SCARPA. THE SHAPES OF LIGHT

by PAOLO REPETTO

“For an architect the most important thing in the world, in life, is to be able to know the hour by looking at the sky, to recognize the hours of the morning, of the day, of the evening; one must know the vibrations, the half tones; one must acquire the visual power necessary to dream things.” What is architecture? What are these solid, static shapes that separate us from space, from the sky, from light? What are these parallelepipeds, these – often ugly – elaborate cubes in which we live? Beyond its first function, which is that of providing shelter from the cold and the heat, from rain, from wind and snow, a house, architecture, can be much more. The search for harmony. The fascination of that which is primordial. Carlo Scarpa was enamoured with the shapes of primitive huts: with the grace, the lightness, the elasticity of its lines; its proportions, its measures, the sobriety of the intimate interior space. In a book that he very much loved, *Eupalinos or The Architect*, Paul Valéry said that architecture is the closest form of art to music, because it is possible to distinguish three kinds of constructions, of buildings: the ones that are mute, the ones that speak, and the very rare ones that sing. In Scarpa’s view the only valid form of architecture, truly worthy of admiration, is

the one able to sing. In the book Socrates is surprised and enchanted by one of Eupalinos’s precepts: “My temple must move men the way they are moved by the object they love”. Eupalinos was the symbol of perfection of ancient Greek architecture, admired by Socrates and Phaedrus, and he dedicated his temple to Hermes to his love, a beautiful girl from Corinth – a temple where one “feels the presence of a person, of a woman at the moment of her blossoming, the harmony of a captivating being.” The harmony of a form modelled in an immobile mobility: an elegant static dance, a fascinating crystallized sound. Divided by an apparent, enormous difference – weight and lightness, fullness and emptiness, matter and spirit, body and light – architecture and music are actually united by the same yearning for subtraction, *kenosi*, emptying: here in an inner form, there in an outward movement, here in an invisible space, there along a visible path. They are united by the same capacity to envelop man in the magical sphere of harmony: their secret, deep and total order, allows us, through sight and hearing, to perceive for an instant, perhaps only for an instant, ecstatic experience, the exit from the prison of the self, from the world, through the intuition of absolute beauty in the form of immortality.

In his memorable preface to one of the most beautiful novels by Charles Dickens, Vladimir Nabokov writes: “All we have to do when reading *Bleak House* is to relax and let our spines take over. Although we read with our minds, the seat of artistic delight is between the shoulder-blades. That little shiver behind



is quite certainly the highest form of emotion that humanity has attained when evolving pure art and pure science. Let us worship the spine and its tingle. Let us be proud of being vertebrates, for we are vertebrates tipped at the head with a divine flame. The brain only continues the spine, the wick really runs through the whole length of the candle. If we are not capable of enjoying that shiver, if we cannot enjoy literature, then let us give up the whole thing and concentrate on our comics, our videos, our books-of-the-week. But I think Dickens will prove stronger." Dear Nabokov, we are with You, with Your marvellous spirit; we are with Your beautiful novels – one of our greatest joys is to read and reread one of Your masterpieces, *Prin* – and we also think, indeed we are sure, that true art will prove stronger.

When we enter the first room of the Fondazione Querini Stam-



palia; when we go up to the first floor of the Negozio Olivetti and at the top of the splendid staircase we turn to our right; when we contemplate the beautiful glasses, probably – together with music – the highest synthesis of matter and spirit, weight and lightness, ever achieved in a work of art; when we admire the light that gently rains in from the trihedron windows in the square room of the Canova Gipsothèque in Possagno; when we look at his very rare sculptures: *Crescita* [Growth], *Contafili* [Thread-counter] and the *Lampada Querini Stampalia* [Querini Stampalia Lamp]; when we walk through the solidified sounds of the Brion monumental complex, we have perceived and perceive every time the thrill between the shoulder blades. There is no mistake: we are looking at the divine in our midst, we are looking at very rare forms of genius. In that very brief instant, the shiver between our shoulder blades transforms us from

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View from inside the small church, Brion monumental complex

View from the stairs inside the Negozio Olivetti

beasts, limited in our body, to angels prisoners in time.

In 1926, after obtaining a diploma in Architectural Design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice – at that time there was still no degree in Architecture, his teacher Guido Cirilli established it shortly after, with a few other professors, at the IUAV Venice University – Scarpa decided not to take the national exam that would allow him to become a certified architect. He considered that examination a useless bureaucratic obstacle, and bureaucracy, throughout his life, remained one of his greatest enemies. Short-sighted and rigid Bureaucracy, as rule, norm, scheme, constraint, was the most distant and antithetical thing to his spirit. Not many artists and no other architect loved freedom as much as Carlo Scarpa: absolute freedom. Of course, his job was to build or rebuild and restructure on the basis of shapes of the past. But the true inspiration should not be limited to stone as such, to a wall as such, to a column as such. True inspiration often originated elsewhere: observing the transparent murmur of water, watching the metamorphoses of the clouds, contemplating the arabesques of the stars, admiring

the most important paintings, reading and rereading the great poets and writers of the past.

A very learned man, Scarpa loved painting and literature. A memorable verse such as the one found in *Marine Graveyard* of Paul Valéry, “Le don de vivre a passé dans les fleurs!”, could be an excellent source of inspiration, also for an architect. He had an absolute veneration for Roberto Longhi, the greatest Italian prose writer of the twentieth century: a huge talent that with infinite elegance was able to combine critique and literature, art history and the joys of storytelling, a vast knowledge and the happiness of narrating. More than once, in his lectures, he said that his anthology of writings on art, *Da Cimabue a Morandi*, that had just been published in the Meridiani series by Mondadori, should become the *livre de chevet* of every student and of every aspiring architect. There is a childhood experience that was fundamental: that of running and playing in a vast area filled with light – in the Santa Croce neighbourhood, in the spaces not yet built that faced the lagoon towards Fusina – where the vibrations of the sky and the sea merged into a dazzling symphony of silk and crystal. When in 1956 he was asked to expand the Canova Gipsothèque in Possagno, he once again demonstrated his great love for light and the fundamental role that its source, its point of origin, plays in the revelation of shapes. Scarpa conceived a particular arrangement for the Three Graces – wonderful arabesque of curves, sensual “mental snow”.



Inspired by a painting by Lorenzo Lotto, *Ritratto di giovane* [Portrait of a Young Gentleman] housed in the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice, the light had to penetrate suddenly, appear like an epiphany, from a small or large source. Thus Scarpa transformed a wall into a glass wall, with a small crystal ceiling, like a completely open parallelepiped; in the outside space he created a light surface of water, so that the music coming from the union of light and water, water and sky, would perfectly accompany the dance of the three *Graces*. (An idea Renzo Piano took up again and expanded in 1997, for the beautiful stained glass windows at the entrance to the Foundation Beyeler in Basel). In another room, in a different but similar way, he managed to capture light: using not flat but trihedron windows, he cut out magical slices of sky – giving viewers the impression that they can reach out and touch it! A splendid solution, which anticipates the memorable openings of James Turrell's *Roden Crater*.

Throughout his life, in all his work, Carlo Scarpa wanted to touch and give shape to the sky. There was always a fundamental difference between the palaces and the architectures of his hometown Venice, and the palaces and architectures of Florence or Bologna: these are often dark, those of his lagoon city always extremely bright. Light dominates Byzantine Venice: the same light that had captivated Turner, Ruskin and Monet; the light of palaces that are too heavy, with their interior thin slanting walls, deformed by the tension of the beams, placed in an unstable balance on the wooden platforms that stretch out over the water; the light of the aerial facades, exceedingly light – which even Frank Lloyd Wright, whom he adored, in his never realized project for the Masieri Memorial, seemed to have betrayed with protruding balconies that were too heavy; the marvellous light of

the “flames”: the thin and slender pinnacles with which the façades of St. Mark’s Basilica, Palazzo Ducale and other palaces terminate, where the free flight of white seagulls with their red feet weaved vast tapestries of chromatic transparencies. The moment stone merged with light, marble with the sky, was for Scarpa the pivotal one for the definition of a new type of architecture. Weight, the static nature of a building, had to be lightened and transfigured. The subtle and very delicate point in which matter encounters light, stone encounters air, cement encounters sky-blue, for him was, and had to be, the song of a new form. “Never close, never block, always stay in contact with the rest of the world”: with the vibrations of the air, with the colours of the sky. Of Palazzo Chiericati, designed by Andrea Palladio, and of other masterpieces by his, Scarpa admired “the trembling of form”: the sovereign ability to approach and combine stones, always leaving a few centimetres, some millimetres between one block and the other, a layer and the other, so as to always obtain a crack, a breath, where the vibrations of the air and the sky can sing. He considered Donatello the greatest sculptor of all time, because, more than Michelangelo, he was sensitive to light: to a more intimate and delicate modelling of more sensitive and elastic surfaces, where, at the highest point, matter and spirit, opacity and transparency, the visible and the invisible, are made to come together, by a “silver chisel in space”, in a real and impossible embrace. At the very young age of twenty, in 1926 Scarpa began working as a designer for the Cappellin Murano glass makers, where he stayed until 1931. Then, from 1932 to 1947 he was director of the artistic section of the Venini company. He designed and created unique, beautiful vases, in which the union between sand and water, matter and transparency, form and lightness, reached very high levels. His brother, Gigi Scarpa, recalls

Lorenzo Lotto, *Ritratto di giovane uomo* [Portrait of a Young Gentleman], 1530 c., Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice

Paolo Veronese, *Annunciazione* [Annunciation], 1556 c. (detail), Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice



how during those twenty years spent at the Cappellin glass production he would enthusiastically speak of the marvellous vase in the *Annunciazione* [Annunciation] by Paolo Veronese, housed in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, that acts as fulcrum of the painting and delicate decoration. He wanted to achieve the same grace, the same elegance, the same transparency. It was the starting point of his infinite love for perfection: the revelation of absolute form, in an extraordinary tension that always combined an enormous attention to detail, even the most microscopic and hidden one, to the harmony of the whole. A very refined taste, where colour becomes transparency, light becomes stone, and matter becomes a soft rainbow, obtained with various techniques: the mosaic of small tesserae transfigured by the colours of the “murrine”, the earthy cracked surfaces of the “corrosi” pieces, the archaic tones of the “sommersi”, the Mediterranean colours of the “pennellati”, the chromatic feast of the “iridati”, the waves and the geometries of the lunar crests of the “incisi”, the splendid arabesques in vegetable flakes of the “battuti”.

One of his great predecessors, Adolf Loos, wrote that “ornament is a crime”; however, Loos was, in his own way, a great decorator. He too dedicated himself to glass, making beautiful cylinder shaped glasses in excellent Bohemi-

an crystal. With great knowledge and skill he worked with potash and lead, not with lime and soda – the way it was done in Italy – developing a very original bottom, obtained with an extremely refined stone honing system that created an effect of thin and rhythmic knurling. The glass possessed an “extraordinary vibratility, brightness, and elegance.” This was his decoration. Visiting one of his masterpieces in Vienna, the American Bar, Scarpa was enchanted by the subtlety of the proportions, the elegance of the materials, the splendid harmony of the lacunaria ceiling, which recalled the famous modules of the dome-spaceship of the Pantheon, reordered with the geometric elegance of regular rhythms. From the vegetal curves of the Jugendstil – Liberty – plant, Loos, Hoffmann and Behrens, had extracted the first, rigorous rationalist lymph; but the rational style could not be limited static modules. Even the absolute genius of Mies van der Rohe, visible in one of his masterpieces, the skyscraper Seagram in Manhattan, risked becoming something frozen, an extremely elegant tower that was excessively regular. The architect-sculptor Scarpa, always looking for the visual power necessary to dream things, loved asymmetry, apparent irregularities, sudden changes of rhythm, syncopations. Like a plastic Stravinsky, he amused himself in many works by modulating a rich series of asymmetric symmetries, of different and homogeneous volumes, of dissonant harmonies. In the Brion monumental complex, under the lyric, vast arcosolium, he exaggerates the “plastic dynamism” and conceived two high tombs inclined towards each other, to create a movement, a particular “dance move”. Then, in the upper part, he covered them with ebony: “I used wood because it is warm, if I put my hand here I cannot feel the cold of death.” Beating the drum of matter, his hands of light knew how to invent archaic rhythms, sudden sounds, ancestral timbres. And, like Stravinsky, history, tradition, cultures of the most varied civilizations, formed a huge, rich cauldron, from which to take and draw inspiration. In this sense, his famous paradoxical motto is the sign of genius: “The mediocre imitate, geniuses copy.” From the geometrical descending stone steps of an archaic Indian basin, to the very elegant relationship between the column and the transept of a Greek temple; from a detail of Andrea Palladio, to an unprecedented combination of wood and iron by Wright; from the crystalline, heraldic coats of arms of the small temple of St. Pancrazio by Alberti, to the de-

tails of an ancient Japanese handicraft device, everything could be combined in an unprecedented invention. However, in his obsessive attention for the smallest of details, for the achieved union between microcosm and macrocosm, in his extreme refinement, I would compare him not to Stravinsky but to Ravel, uniting them in an ideal crystal sphere – similar to a precious detail of a Memling altarpiece – where rich eclecticism is transfigured into a dance of coloured alabaster.

Between 1949 and 1950, at the age of forty-four, he travelled to the United States, above all to broaden his knowledge of the work of his idol: Frank Lloyd Wright, of whom he saw himself as the apostle, or better, as the Italian evangelist. He visited the Robie House, once again admiring his brilliant ability to combine the inner with the outer space, weight with lightness, the monumental with the intimate, in a felicitous journey where time becomes not only space, but substance of shapes and figures. He visited Jacob's House, where the emblematic fusion of wood and brick, exalted against the green lawn, is almost transformed into a secular temple. He contemplated the “light dome”, that is the Guggenheim: the first beautiful museum, a splendid building, not ideal as an exhibition venue, that tends to absorb all other artistic content presented inside. Then, on the terraces of the famous Fallingwater, a house that stands on a waterfall, he had one of the most beautiful experiences of his life: he felt he was standing on huge trays in reinforced concrete, supported in the lightness of space; it was like flying, feeling the sweet vertigo of emptiness, the trees falling on him, in the intense emotion of being suspended in the air. Later, in 1957, when he began to conceive the wide bases-platforms on which to place the marble and stone sculptures for the renovated Museo di Castelvecchio in Verona, he man-

aged to recreate the magical effect of lightness and suspension.

In one of his lectures, Scarpa once said that he had found an ancient book, its paper so beautiful he wanted to eat it. He was also an extremely sensual man. Surely he would have agreed with the brilliant definition given by Nicolás Gómez Dávila: “Sensual, sceptical and religious are not a bad definition of what I am”. He believed that a good architect is like a very skilled cook: “I compare the use of this material to the art of a pastry chef, who makes dough and then throws it in [translator’s note: the oven]. In nature, things are not like this: wood must be chopped, iron must be melted, it becomes one block, then it is drawn. Cement... it’s like making a cake, it is thrown in, cooked, then the formwork is taken away, and the cake is served.” Like a contemporary Abbot Suger – the legendary inventor of the first windows of medieval churches, the brilliant architect of Saint-Denis, where the Romanic darkness is elevated in Gothic brightness – Scarpa was convinced that through the senses man can approach the spirit, the divine, absolute Harmony. His great love for oriental and Japanese architecture confirmed this intuition;

by studying it, visiting it, he had learned to “know how to sensitize the things that are touched and the things that are seen”, through “a sensual, physiological, marvellous seduction”. According to him architecture was, like music, a richly polyphonic art, a plurality of voices, of perceptions: the harmony of cement must support the melody of the sky; the chord of a wall must merge with the harmonics of water; the fugue of the grooves must be combined with the timbres of various tonal modulations. Architecture, constructions, like cups, vast sounding boards, must appeal to all five senses: architecture must be a melting pot in which man, a visitor, can rediscover and exalt all forms of perception.



The fascination of sound. The richness of the combination of sight and hearing, touch and smell. During his first years as a professor at the IUAV University in Venice, in his home in Rio Marin, together with Bruno Zevi and Franco Albini, he had fun projecting slides of colourful paintings by Mondrian “onto the facades of the houses on the other side of the canal, to create the effect of Venice as *urbis picta*” (Pietropoli). Visiting an exhibition of Mark Rothko, he was captivated by the colours of his paintings and their refined combinations, which on more occasions inspired him, for instance when he created – helped by Eugenio De Luigi – the chromatic sections of the new arrangement of Palazzo Abatellis in Palermo, or the Museo di Castelvecchio in Verona. He greatly loved Morandi and Klee, and was in charge of the arrangement of two exhibitions dedicated to these artists: he loved Morandi for his very light, pinkish, inimitable shades; Klee for his dynamic, spatial and joy-

ful irregular shapes: “A line is a point that has gone for a walk”. An emblematic phrase by the great Swiss painter which, like a garments, perfectly fits also the character and figure of Scarpa: cheerful, outgoing, charming, as in a joyful play by Goldoni. In some beautiful Japanese venues, the Musk Garden and the Bamboo Forest – intimate and monumental, small and immense –, he listened to the sound of water, to the rhythmic, delicate falling of a drop, like a transparent and sacred echo inside a natural temple: between the pervasive, fresh, pale green of the timid and solemn columns of bamboo reeds. Thus, when designing the three steps that descend toward the lawn of the Brion monumental complex, Scarpa conceived three distinct degrees of sound: different thicknesses that produce different sounds at each step. Also the connecting part between the water basin and the tomb arch, is designed so as to create a transition from an initial rumbling to a transparent stillness.

Scarpa loved water: the wide stretch of water of his hometown Venice; the gray and immobile water of a

captivated Carpaccio; the richly coloured water of Monet; the cosmic boundaries of the mysterious encounter between the sky and the sea in Turner; the placid waters of marvellous pools, suspended in mid-air, of ancient Islamic architecture; the secret murmur of Japanese gardens; the rhythmic, vertical pace of its water drops; the magical encounter of light with this soft and immaterial material, of the sky with this solid and transparent presence, delicate and powerful, humble and sonorous. Asked to renovate the Museo di Castelvecchio in Verona, Scarpa – taking inspiration from solutions elaborated by ancient Islamic architecture – designed beautiful pools, which gently descended over various overlapping levels, intended to carry the water of the rivers Adigetto and Adige (a project that was never completed because of lack of funds). Then, in 1961 in Turin, at the *Mostra delle Regioni*, for the Veneto Pavilion, he created, like a ingenious and revived Monet – a cheerful terrorist of light –, an explosion of colours over the ever-changing reflections of the water.

His drawing recall the mobility, the fluidity, and the richness of water. Scarpa loved drawing, and for him – master in this art – drawing was the fundamental means to conceive and focus on an idea. He was left-handed, but could draw with both hands, also simultaneously. And, like Leonardo, he could write going backwards, inverting the letters so they could be read in a mirror. The mind, the unconscious, imagination was born in drawing. Once, awaking after having fallen asleep in a car, he told Mrs. Brion that ideas often came to him in a dream. So the tip of a pencil, or that of a charcoal pencil – hued but dry, dense but not heavy – was the first trace of a vision, the first sign of a shape that slowly, through various metamorphoses, could be concretely realized. He used to repeat the famous sentence that Leon Battista Alberti had taken from Pliny the Elder in his *Naturalis historia*, (XXXV, 36) referring to Apelles, the mythical painter of ancient Greece:

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Claude Monet, *Nymphéas*, 1907





Temple of Athena Nike, Athens

“nulla dies sine linea”: no day without a line. Like the hand of a good performer, of a good musician, also that of an architect must practice and move on paper every day: “The hand must jump freely. Have you ever seen a violinist play? Have you not envied the violinist at concerts? Here, you should make sure that your hand jumps on the paper the same way a violinist uses his bow.”

Scarpa loved an expression in *Towards a New Architecture* by Le Corbusier, which he read and reread: “Doric morality”. According to him, first of all, an architect was and is a moral being: “an architect must be a man who loves the truth”. One can lie to wives, friends, relatives, girlfriends, to the priest in church... But one cannot lie to oneself in one’s own profession. Doric morality. For various reasons Scarpa never visited the land of Phidias, the place of the Parthenon; but, as he declared more than once, his

great love, his secret love, was for the temples of ancient Greece and, above all, the small, grandiose temple of Athena Aptera, the temple of Athena Nike: suspended, fleeting, over the white rock of the Acropolis. A precious spot of pink light. A candid cell enclosed on its two main sides by the very elegant space-breath of the four Ionic columns. The noblest encounter of marble with light, of stone with the infinite variations of the blue of the sky. An archetype, an absolute model in which everything is perfection: the relationship between capital and column, the small space-light between the capital and the architrave; the architrave and the dance of the frieze. Probably for the first time in the history of architecture, this temple had shown that what is grandiose, solemn, can be generated by what is small. “There is greatness in small dimensions, which can be said to be grandiose: a space can be grandiose even if it is very small. These are issues concerning the relationship between the parts.” Several times, in his hometown Venice, Scarpa visited the large church of Saints John and Paul, its enormous interior space, but without ever being moved, without enjoying it. “It is very big and tall, but its height does not mean anything, and large does not mean grand. The little temple of St. Pancrazio by Leon Battista Alberti is larger, immense in size, because here the sense of space, the harmony of the parts is grand.” Visiting once more the little church inside the Brion monumental complex – to merely call it a “tomb” is sad and reductive – we perceive a thin thread, a delicate but profound ray, which from the core of beauty, like an arrow, pierces our emotion, and in an ideal and perfect light creates, with its trajectory, a marvellous unity: from the temple of Athena Nike, to the small temple of St. Pancrazio, to the Brion chapel, three of the most perfect, most luminous,

examples: here the intimate is solemn: here what is small is grand. Scarpa liked to say of himself: "I am a man from Byzantium, who came from Venice, passing through Greece." He very much loved a poem by Montale, that his friend Aldo Businaro had reminded him of, whose last lines he would have wanted as an epitaph on his tomb:

We don't know how we'll turn up  
tomorrow, hard-pressed or happy:  
perhaps our path  
will lead to virgin clearings  
where youth's water murmurs eternal;  
or maybe come down  
to the last valley in the dark,  
the memory of morning gone.  
Foreign lands  
may welcome us again; we'll lose  
the memory of the sun, the chime  
of rhymes will abandon the mind.  
Oh the fable that explains our life  
will suddenly become  
the murky tale that can't be told!  
Still, Father, you assure us of one thing:  
that a little of your gift  
has gone for good into the syllables  
we carry with us, humming bees.  
We'll travel far yet keep  
an echo of your voice,  
as grey grass recalls the sun  
in dark courtyards, between houses.  
And one day these noiseless words  
we raised beside you, nourished  
on fatigue and silence,  
will taste of Greek salt  
to a brother heart.

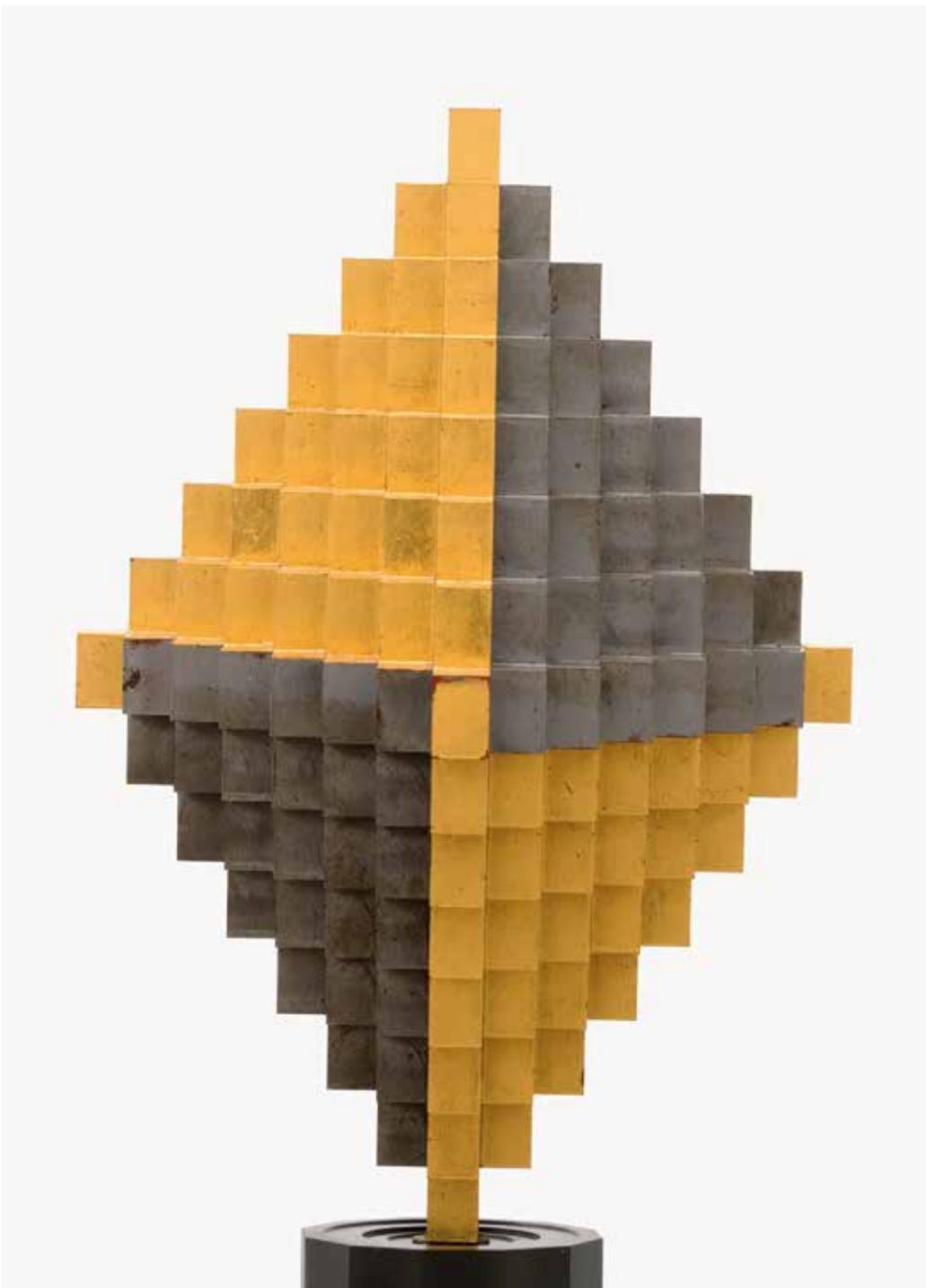
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**Cavalletto** (Easel), from 1950  
mahogany wood, drawn steel and burnished Muntz  
metal  
260 x 74 x 64 cm  
various copies produced

It was created starting from 1950 as an exhibition piece for Scarpa's famous restoration interventions at the Museo Correr in Venice, 1952; at the Palazzo Abatellis in Palermo, 1953–54; and at the Museo di Castelvecchio in Verona, 1957–75. Slender and elegant, thin but robust, it is probably the most known and famous object of Carlo Scarpa.



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**Crescita** (Growth), from 1968

milled and gilded steel

168 x 44 x 33 cm

edition of 20 (not numbered), designed for the exhibition *Linee della ricerca contemporanea*, Venice Biennale, 1968

Resting on a single corner, with a slightly inclined axis, it can rotate, creating the effect of a prismatic planet. Two versions were made in several copies: one with gold-plating directly on the iron, another with small gold inserts inside each dihedral.







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**Crescita** (Growth), from 1968  
milled and gilded steel with cubes inside each dihedral  
168 x 44 x 33 cm  
edition of 10 (not numbered)

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**Elemento funzionale del cancello di entrata del Negozio Olivetti**

[Functional Element of the Entrance Gate of the Olivetti Store], 1956  
steel and Muntz metal  
82 x 40 x 27 cm

Identical copy of the original, in steel and Muntz metal; it has the emblematic form of his eclectic style, between East and West, lightness and depth, where the smallest of details has the same importance of the whole, and its mechanical function is transfigured by the beauty of a sculptural object, unique and original.



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**Tirante Negozio Olivetti** (Tie-rod Olivetti Store), from 1970  
steel and Muntz metal  
78 x 15 x 18 cm  
edition of 3 (not numbered)

Copy of the upper part visible on the second floor of the Negozio Olivetti in Venice (1956). Fixed on a base that allows it to rotate, it can be studied in all its details. It is yet another admirable mechanism where the structural function is transfigured by the beauty of a sculptural form.



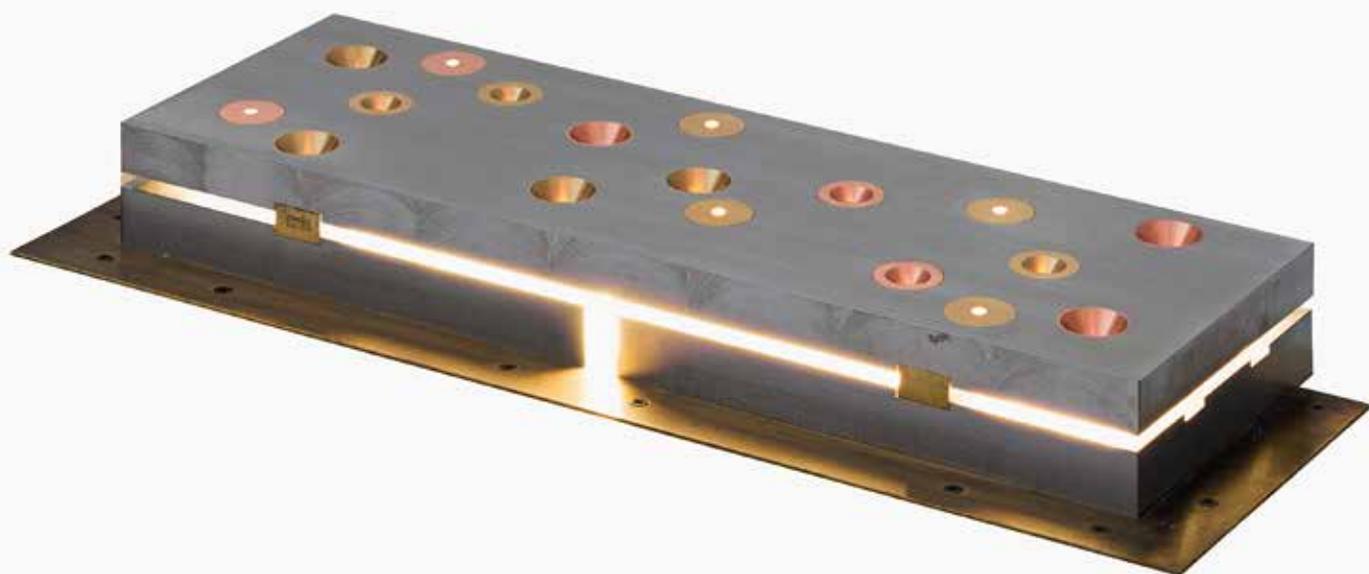


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**Croce complesso monumentale Brion** (Cross, Brion Monumental Complex), from 1975

brass and white cement  
40 x 49 x 14 cm  
edition of 3 (not numbered)

The first version of the cross was created in white concrete and brass for the Brion monumental complex in 1975, in San Vito di Altivole, Treviso, where it appears embedded in the sliding portal at the entrance, made in reinforced concrete. Some identical editions were created for private and domestic use: resting on a brass base, they are more sensitive to light, with a rotation of 360 degrees.



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**Lampada Querini Stampalia** [Querini Stampalia Lamp], from 1962

steel, Muntz metal and copper

18 x 24,5 x 61 cm

edition of 4 (not numbered)

The first version was designed to be placed on the floor of the second room of the Fondazione Querini Stampalia (1962) in Venice. Through numerous holes the light is projected with an effect of luminescence, towards the boundaries of a space that is both domestic and that of a museum, intimate and solemn.

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**Tavolo modello "Sarpi"** ("Sarpi" table), 1970s-80s  
drawn and satin-finish steel  
production Cassina, Meda  
71 x 211.5 x 132.5 cm



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**Poltrona modello "Cornaro"** ("Cornaro" armchair, 1973)  
wood and padded velvet  
Simon – Gavina  
66 x 147 x 83 cm



## A PROUD VENETIAN

by CHARLES HIND

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My first exposure to the work of Carlo Scarpa was in 1996, when I was appointed Curator of Drawings at the Royal Institute of British Architects. The Drawings Collection then occupied the ground and first floors of a large Georgian house on the corner of Portman Square. Hanging in the Study Room, Library and Ante-Room (three of the principal former reception rooms) were three fine chandeliers, which I was very quickly told, were the work of the Venetian architect and glass designer, Carlo Scarpa (1906–1978). Reinforcing their presence, in my office, hung a large square model of painted and gilded wood, of his Tomba Brion, at San Vito di Altivole, just south of Asolo on the edge of the Venetian plain. The model was a gift from the architect, reinforced by his drawings for the tombs, presented in 1974 as a mark of his gratitude to the RIBA for holding the first exhibition of his work in England. The chandeliers were a purchase from Venini (with a generous discount) shortly afterwards, following our policy that if we needed anything useful, if possible, we would buy something designed by an architect. Over the five years it took to pack up the collections in preparation for our move to the Henry Cole Wing of the Victoria & Albert Museum, I had numerous approaches from architects asking if they could buy at least one of those chandeliers. All were rebuffed and during the move, money was found to replace missing or damaged elements and today, they hang in a sculptural group in my present office, regularly in use to light a conference table below them.

These two groups of objects in the RIBA demonstrate the range and power of Scarpa's life as a designer, in brick, stone and concrete on the one hand and in glass on the other. He was born in Venice and remained a proud Venetian for the rest of his life.

**26** He graduated as an architectural designer in 1926,



at the Accademia di Belle Arti and began a teaching career almost immediately at the Istituto Universitario di Architettura. At the same time, from 1927–30, he was artistic consultant to the Murano glassmakers MVM Cappellin. In these early years, he did relatively little architectural work, concentrating on drawing and painting and making experiments with glass. His designs for windows for another Murano firm of glassmakers, Venini, led to another artistic consultancy with them, 1930–47, reflected in this exhibition. This fruitful period, in which he experimented with light, form and

developed new techniques, only ended when Scarpa decided to devote himself full time to architecture.

Scarpa's first significant architectural work was the restoration of Ca' Foscari (1936–37), a palace on the Grand Canal owned by the University of Venice. It was the first demonstration of his ability to understand historic fabric and styles, whilst making his own interventions both sympathetic, yet unmistakably contemporary. This is particularly apparent in his museum installations, such as the Paintings Galleries at the Museo Correr in Venice and the Museo di Castelvecchio in Verona, as well as in his museum extensions (especially the Gipsoteca Canoviana at Possagno).

It is apparent in all his work involving the conversion or extension of historic buildings or completely new work how important Venice and its history was to him (the glass mosaic tiles for example at the Tomba Brion). Yet he

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Zanon, Venice, 1970s  
bronze  
8 x 3.5 x 1.5 cm

Small plate designed to hide the screws of the covering in ebony and Muntz metal of the sarcophagi of Giuseppe and Onorina Brion.

**Ovaloide** [Ovaloid], 1968  
turned and gilded bronze  
108 x 130 x 15 cm

It was designed to be displayed on the façade of the Italian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 1968. On a large iron oval, two oval spheres in turned and gilded bronze define the space now in a vertical direction, now in a horizontal one. An elegant and implicit tribute to Lucio Fontana, in 1968, the year of his death.

was also very open to outside influences as well, and elements of the Brion complex for example recall ancient Greece and traditional Japanese architecture, resulting in a synthesis that was uniquely Scarpa's. Japan was a major influence in his later work and he died there in 1978 as a result of a fall down a staircase. Earlier influences include Frank Lloyd Wright and Art Nouveau in various of its European manifestations but always with a twist. He was also prepared to think the unthinkable.



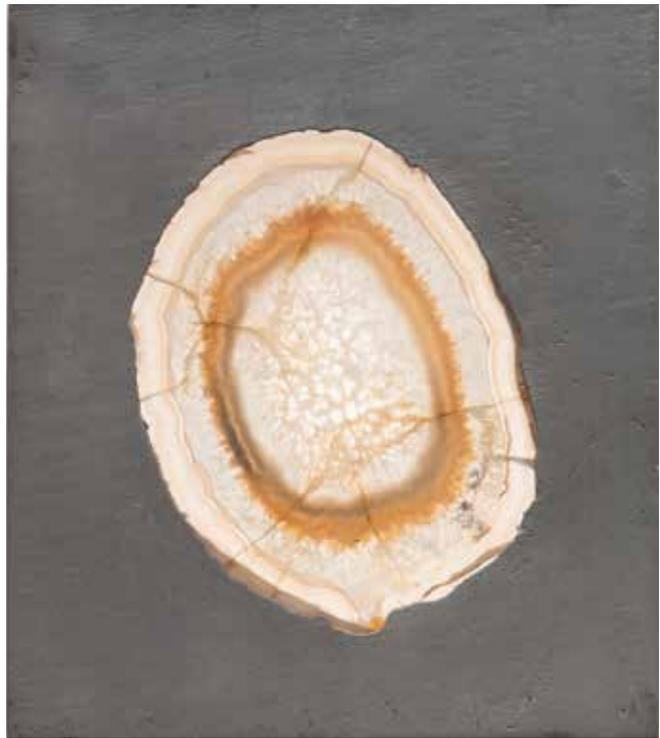
VIVO, 1970s  
plate in lead and agate  
15 x 16.7 x 4.5 cm

Created by Tobia Scarpa for the anniversary of his father's death.

In a city where defence against flooding is a major preoccupation, his restoration of the Palazzo Querini Stampalia reversed the usual thinking and sought ways to welcome water *into* the building during an *acqua alta* rather than push it out, thus making it a feature rather than a calamity. Born in a city dominated by water, it is not surprising that water in around and near his buildings and gardens are an important feature.

Perhaps as a result of Scarpa's work with glassmakers, he loved to use luxury materials such as variously coloured marbles, alabaster, bronze, polished stucco, gold leaf, rosewood and ivory to contrast with the rough surface of concrete, which was his primary building material. But even his use of concrete is unique to him in the elaboration of the shuttering necessary to create the stepped and scooped profiles that are characteristic of his work. He must have worked with devoted builders given the complexity of the shuttering that he demanded and amongst modern architects, his attention to detail is almost unmatched.

From the 1940s, Scarpa also became a significant exhibition designer, beginning with his Klee exhibition at the Venice Biennale of 1948 and a Mondrian show in



Rome in 1960. Older Londoners will remember his Quattrocento Florentine frescoes show at, of all unlikely venues, the Hayward Gallery (1969). But these shows were a logical extension of his commitment to bringing the past and the present together in conversation.

It is extraordinary that this distinguished architect and designer had to wait until 1973 before he earned that exhibition at the RIBA but the growing list of publications on Scarpa suggests that his reputation continues to grow.



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Cleto Munari, Vicenza  
silver cutlery designed in 1977  
2 sets each made up of 7 items



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**Velati**, Venini, Murano, 1940 c.  
Sommerso bowl in rose pink, lightly iridised  
h 6 x 9 x 9 cm

Venini, Murano, 1938 c.  
Trasparenti Bollicine ovoid bowl in ruby red  
h 6 x 9 x 7 cm

Venini, Murano, 1938 c.  
Trasparenti Bollicine ovoid bowl in straw yellow  
h 6.5 x 8.5 x 6.5 cm

Venini, Murano, 1934 c.  
Sommerso Bollicine bowl in orange shaded "aranci-  
ato" with gold leaf inclusions  
h 7 x 13 x 12.5 cm



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Venini, Murano, 1938 c.  
two bonbonnières in straw yellow Sommerso glass with corroded and iridised  
surface  
h 6.7 x 5.5 x 7.5 cm

Venini, Murano, 1935 c.  
Sommerso oval vase in green with bubbles and golden leaf inclusions  
h 23 cm





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Venini, Murano, 1936 c.  
Bollicine vase with cover and base in crystal  
h 16 x d 15 cm

Venini, Murano, 1936 c.  
clear Corroso bowl, lightly iridised surface  
h 6,5 x 5 x 5 cm, d 13 cm

Venini, Murano, 1936 c.  
Corroso bowl in turquoise and green, lightly iridised surface  
h 7 x 5.5 x 5.5 cm, d 13 cm





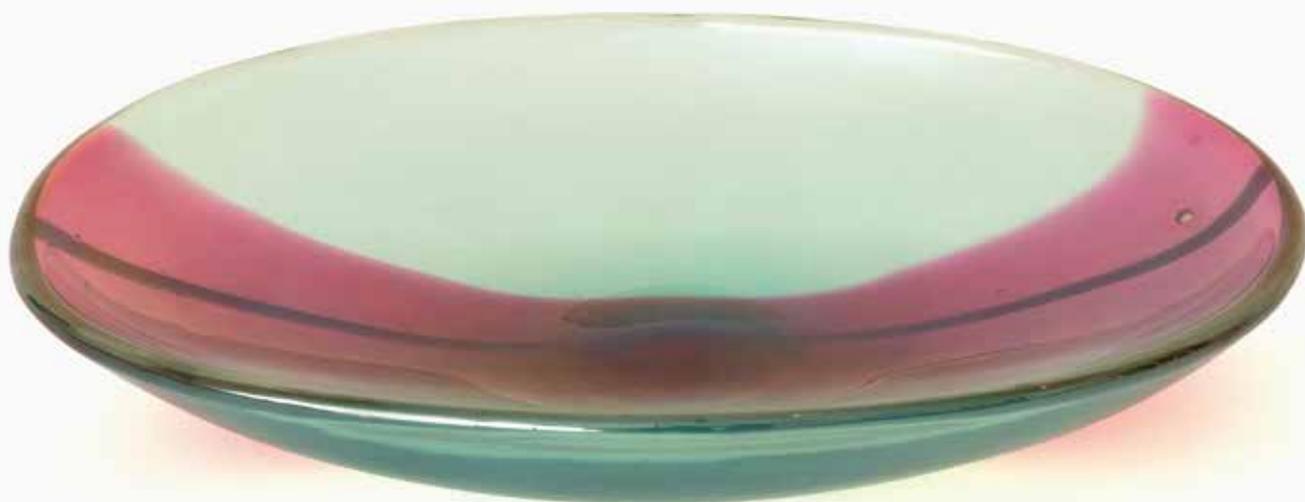


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Venini, Murano, 1936 c.  
Velati Sommerso rectangular bowl, in cyclamen, lightly iridised surface  
h 5 x 7 x 5 cm

Venini, Murano, 1936 c.  
Velati Sommerso rectangular bowl, in cyclamen, lightly iridised  
h 8 x 9 x 5 cm

Venini, Murano, 1940 c.  
strongly iridised green dish with cyclamen and black ribbing  
h 4 x 23 x 17.5 cm







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Venini, Murano, 1935 c.  
Corroso iridised truncated pyramid vase  
h 16 x 14 x 14.5 cm

Venini, Murano, 1936 c.  
cup with blue and Sommerso filigree milk glass  
h 5 x 8 x 8 cm

Venini, Murano, 1938 c.  
Sommerso truncated pyramid vase with cor-  
roded surface and engraved strip  
h 9.5 x 15.5 x 10 cm





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Venini, Murano, 1936 c.  
Corroso bowl with jagged rim, in blue, heavily iridised surface  
h 3.5 x 8.5 x 7 cm

Venini, Murano, 1935 c.  
Sommerso bowl in two colours, iridised and corroded surface  
h 7 x d 10 cm

Venini, Murano, 1936 c.  
clear Corroso bowl with jagged rim, slightly iridised surface  
h 9 x d 14.5 cm

MVM Cappellin, Murano, 1925 c.  
spherical vase, straw yellow blown iridised glass with base and opening in pink glass  
h 17.5 x d 15 cm







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Venini, Murano, 1936 c.  
Corroso bowl in aurato, lightly iridised  
h 6 x 8,5 x 8,5 cm

Venini, Murano, 1936 c.  
Corroso bowl in dark amber, lightly iridised  
h 7 x 5 x 5 cm, d 11 cm

Venini, Murano, 1934–36 c.  
Bullicante Sommerso vase in red orange with gold leaf inclusions  
h 21 x 12 x 10 cm





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Venini, Murano, 1934 c.  
Bullicante Sommerso square vase in amethyst with gold leaf inclusions  
h 9 x 7.5 x 7.5 cm

Venini, Murano, 1940 c.  
Sommerso iridised oval cup  
h 7 x 11.5 x 10 cm

Venini, Murano, 1936 c.  
Bullicante Sommerso rectangular bowl in emerald green with gold leaf inclusions  
h 10 x 12 x 8 cm





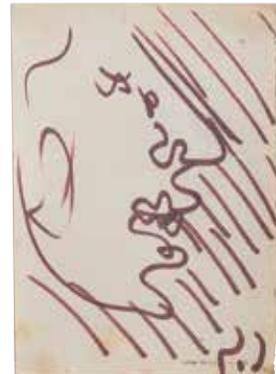
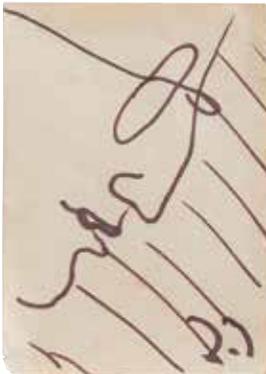
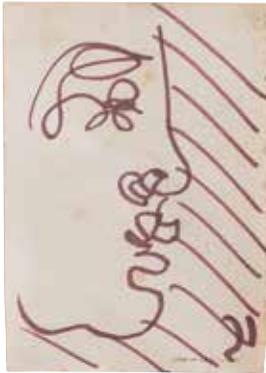
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Venini, Murano, 1934 c.  
Bullicante Sommerso bowl in rose pink with gold leaf inclusions  
h 7 x 12.5 x 12.5 cm

MVM Cappellin, Murano, 1925 c.  
spherical vase, fumé blown glass with base and opening in green glass  
h 18 x d 16 cm

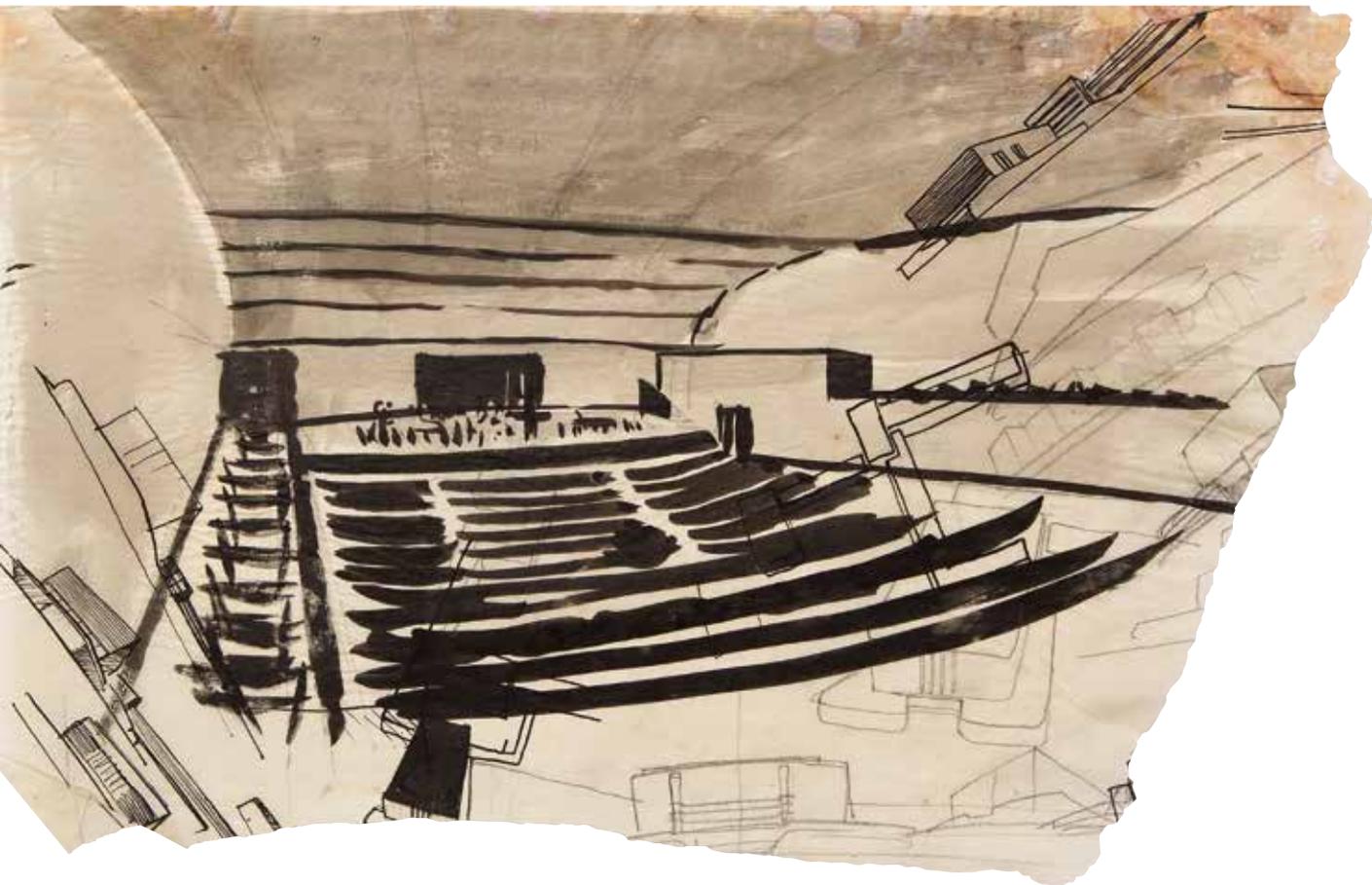






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**Sei profili maschili e femminili**  
(Six Male and Female Profiles), 1970s  
marker on paper  
each 13 x 9 cm



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**Studio prospettico dell'Aula Magna di Ca' Foscari, Venezia**

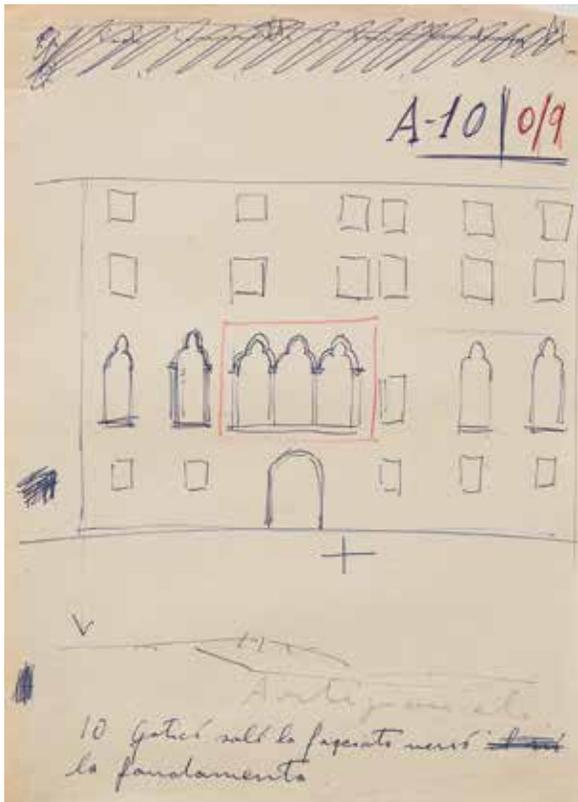
[Prospective Study of the Great Hall of the Ca' Foscari], 1935–37

tempera and water colour on tracing paper

22 x 33.5 cm

Between 1935 and 1937 Carlo Scarpa carried out the restoration and arrangement of the University of Venice. His planning also aimed to change the function of the most prestigious rooms in Ca' Foscari, which became the offices of the Rector and the Great Hall. On the sides of the draft and at the bottom are some sketches of the Nicelli Airport of the Venice Lido, by Scarpa himself, which date to 1935.

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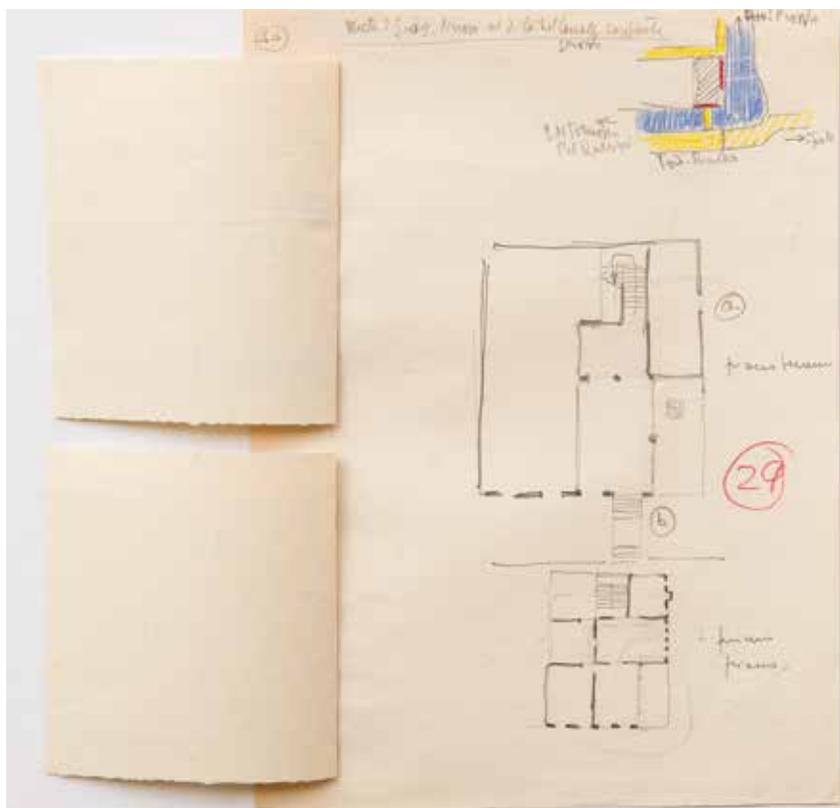
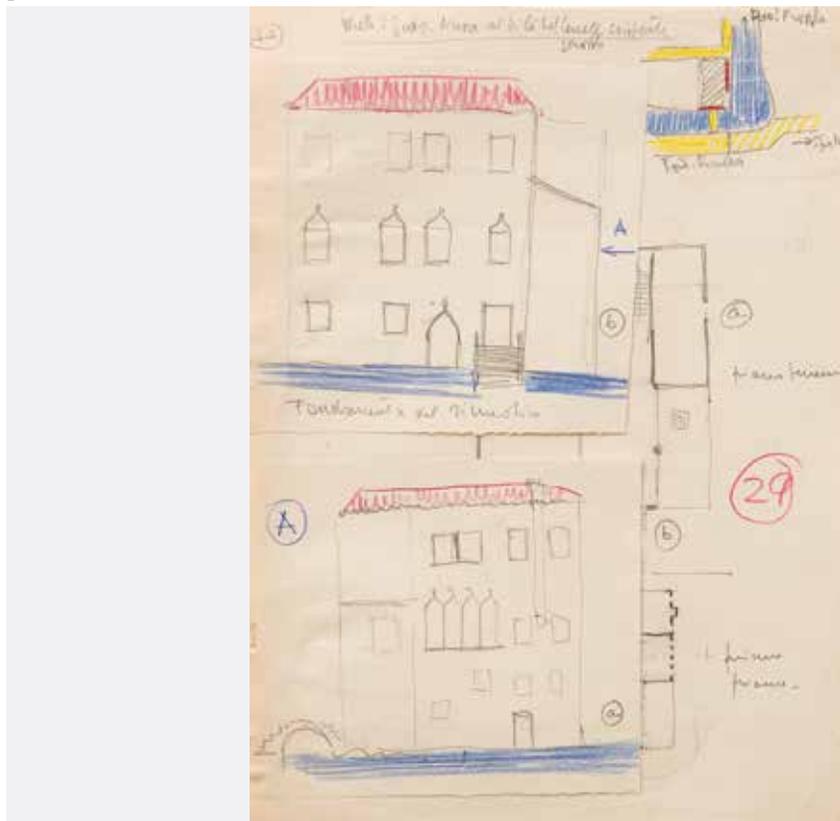
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1940s c.  
 coloured pencils on paper  
 8 sketches for a survey of the buildings in Venice  
 28.8 x 20.7 cm









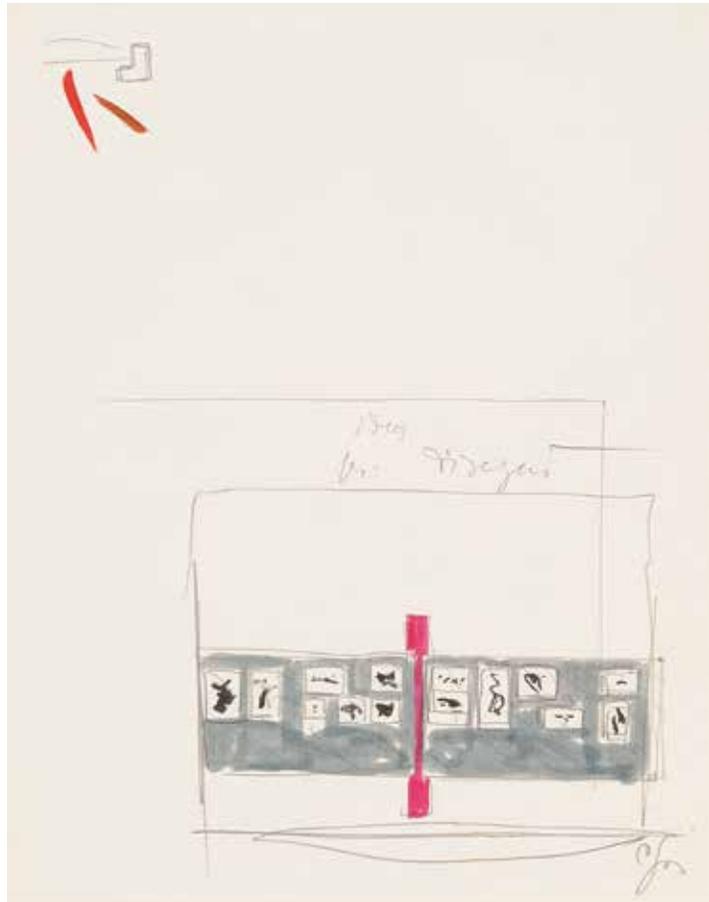
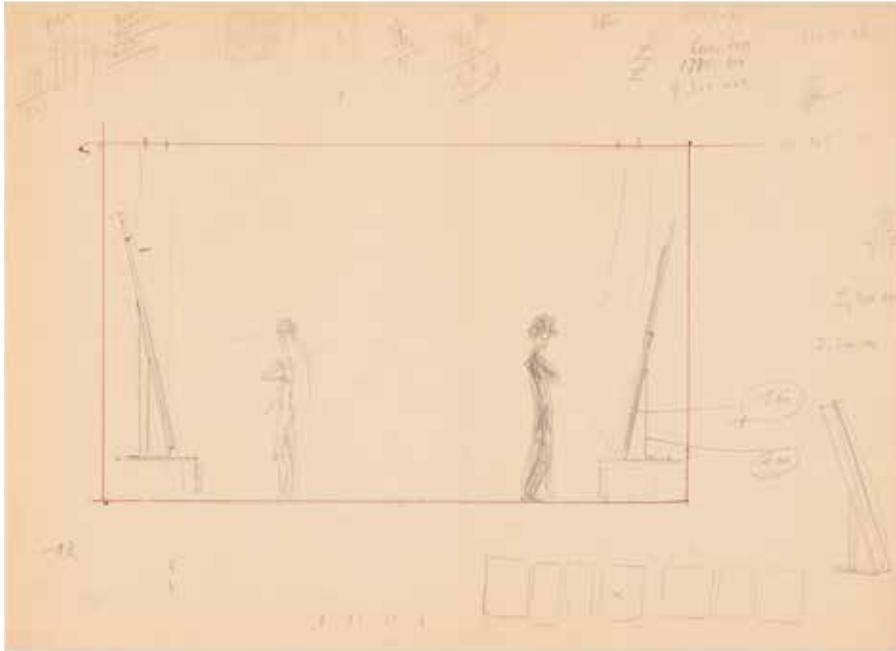
**Studio**, 1976  
pencil on paper  
30 x 21 cm

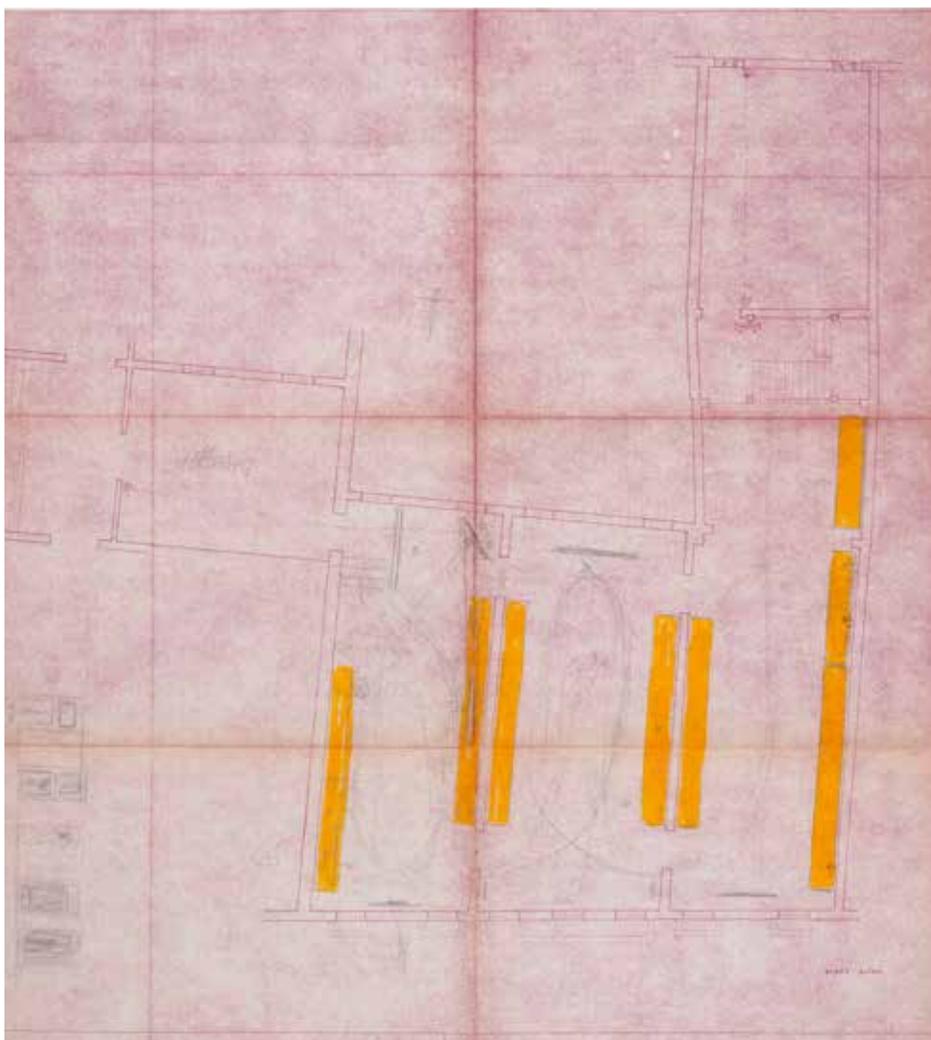


**Studio**, 1975  
pencil on paper  
30 x 21 cm

**Studio**, 1975  
pencil on paper  
21 x 30 cm







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Exhibition of the painter Mario Cavaglieri (Rovigo, Accademia dei Concordi, May 1978)  
cross section of the exhibition room  
graphite on paper  
25 x 34.5 cm

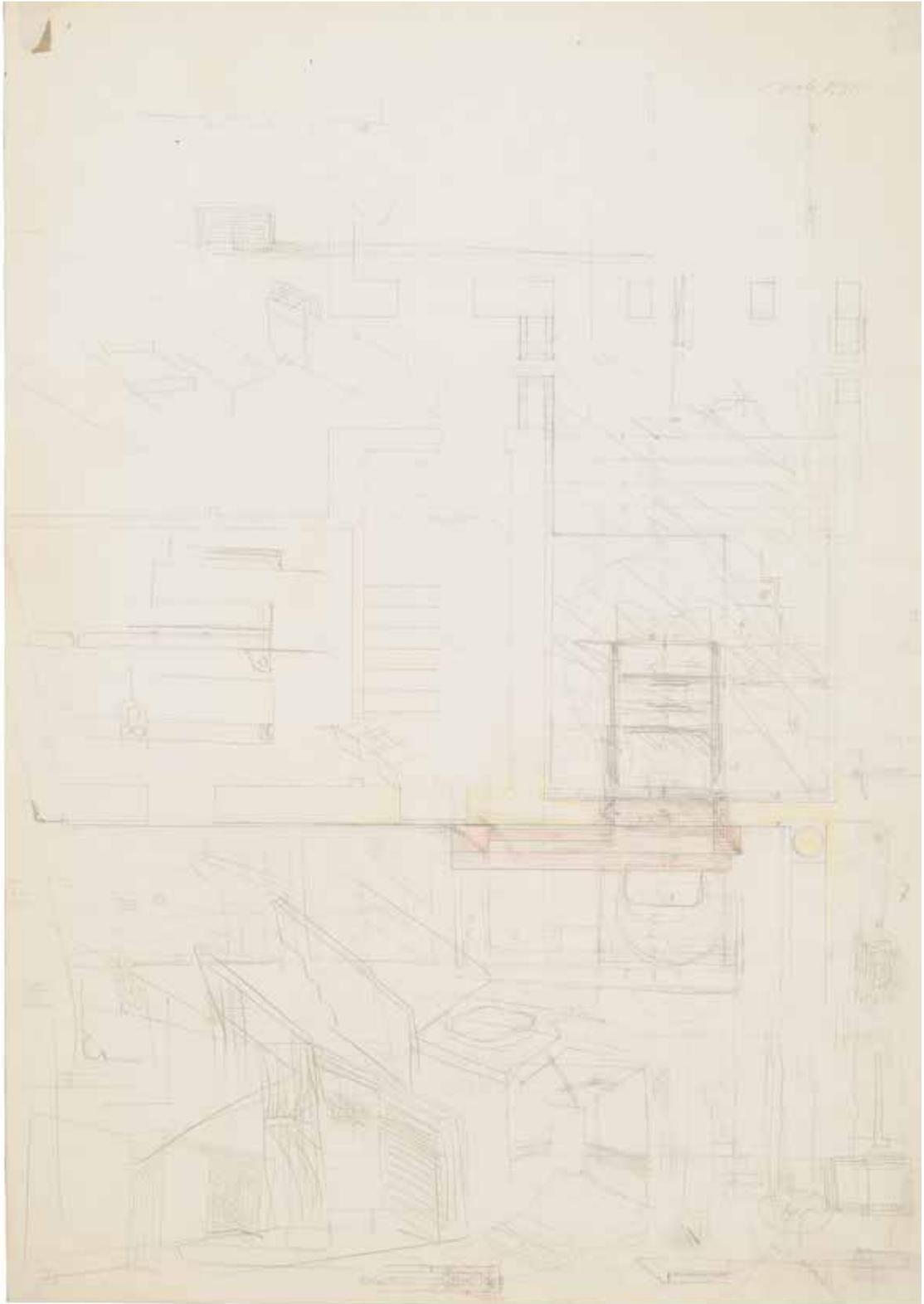
Exhibition of the painter Mario Cavaglieri (Rovigo, Accademia dei Concordi, May 1978)  
study for the arrangement of the paintings  
graphite and marker on paper  
28 x 22 cm

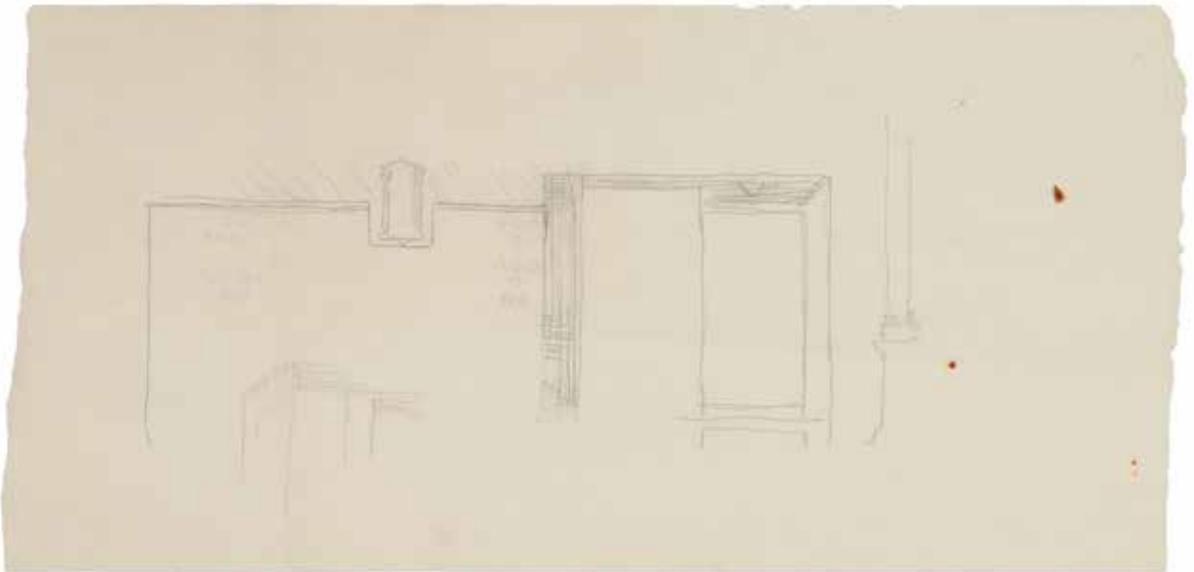
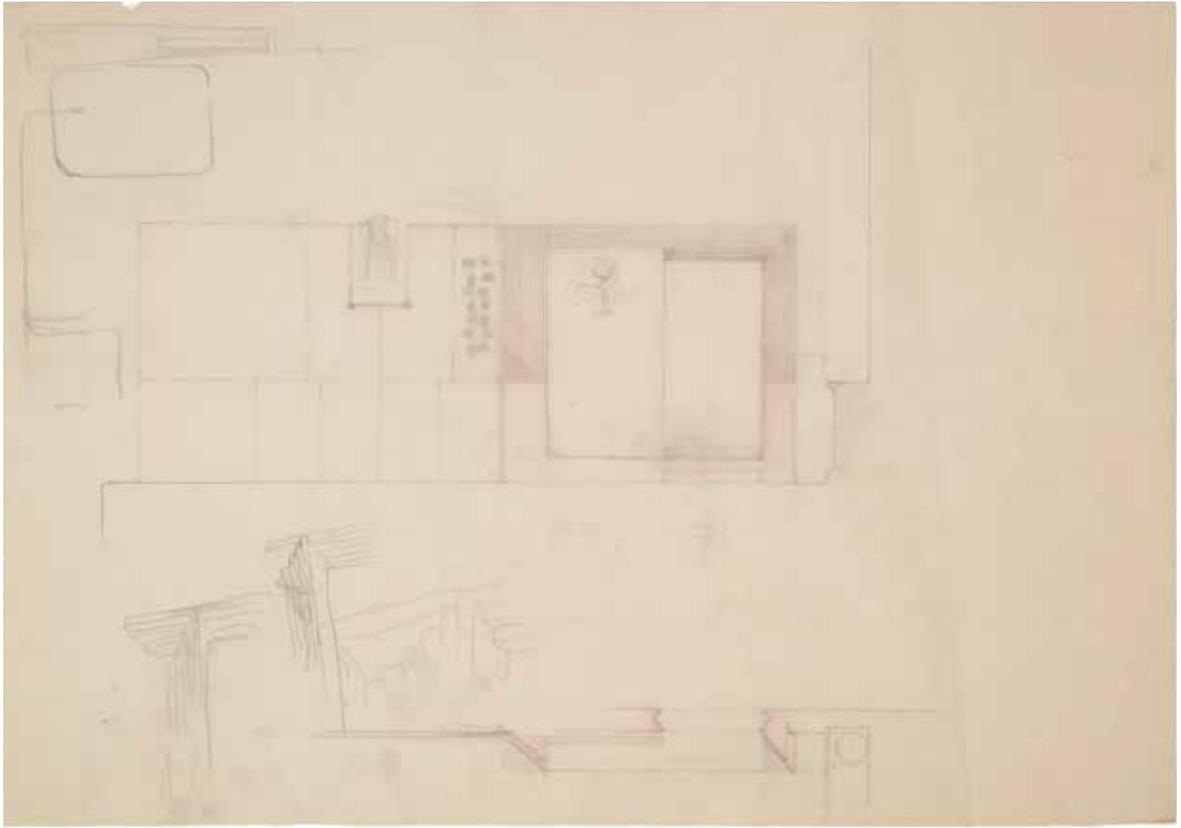
Exhibition of the painter Mario Cavaglieri (Rovigo, Accademia dei Concordi, May 1978)  
study of the exhibition's arrangement  
graphite and marker (author's notes) on heliographic paper  
68 x 61 cm

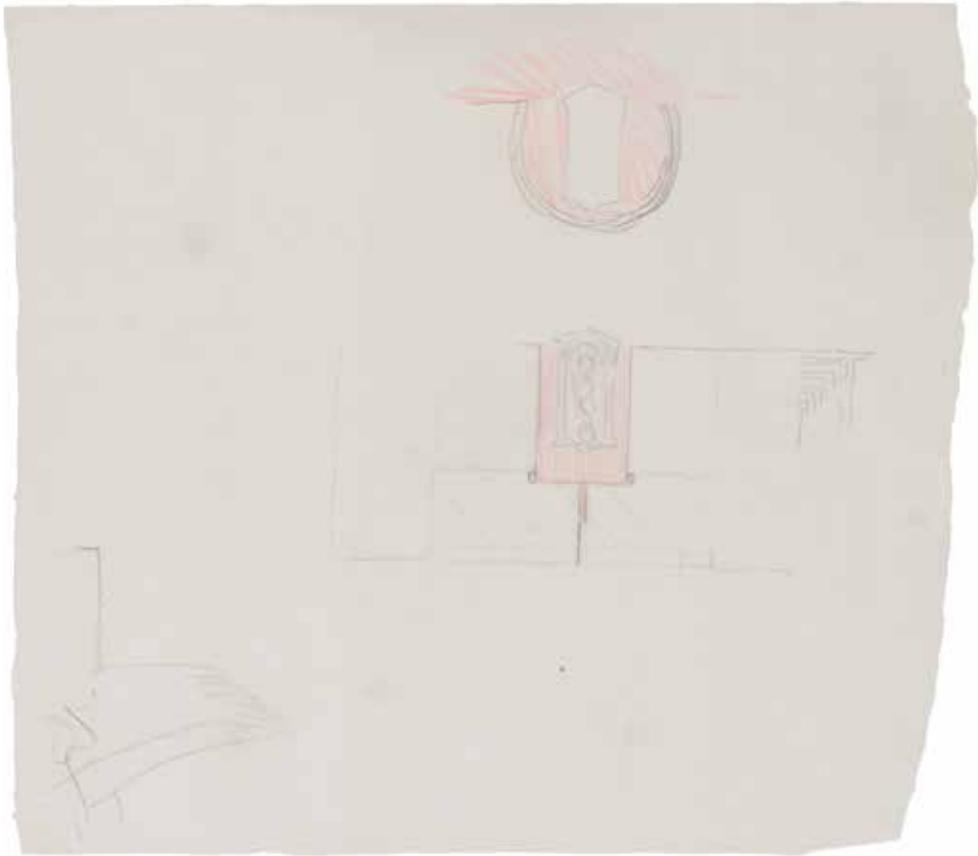
Restoration of the ex convent of St. Sebastian in Venice, 1975–78  
details of the boiserie in Room A, study of the corner  
graphite and coloured pastel on graph paper  
29.7 x 21 cm

Restoration of the ex convent of St. Sebastian in Venice, 1975–78  
plan of the entrance, first studies of the facade  
graphite and coloured pastel on cardboard  
70 x 50 cm









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Restoration of the ex convent of St. Sebastian in Venice, 1975–78  
entrance portal, study of the marble slab  
graphite and coloured pastel on heliographic paper  
46 x 66 cm

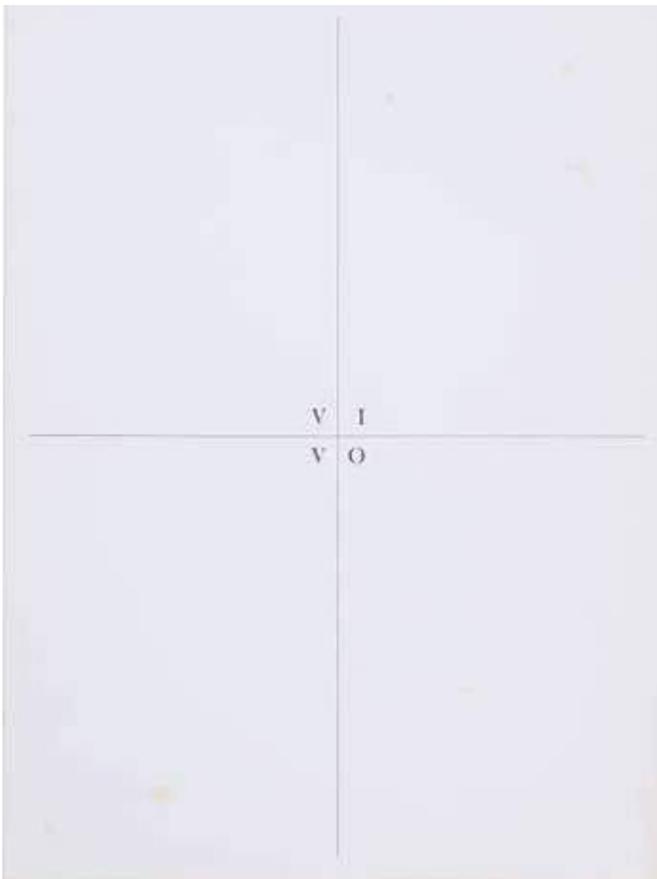
Restoration of the ex convent of St. Sebastian in Venice, 1975–78  
entrance portal, study of the portal of St. Sebastian, study of the opening in the marble slab and transenne  
graphite on tissue paper  
30 x 62 cm

Restoration of the ex convent of St. Sebastian in Venice, 1975–78  
entrance portal, study of the portal of St. Sebastian, study of the Saint's aedicula  
graphite and coloured pastel on tissue paper  
34 x 29.5 cm



**Cartella VIVO [VIVO folder], 1970s**  
containing 9 graphic works by Carlo Scarpa  
project of Tobia Scarpa  
29.7 x 21 cm

Printed text with the reproduction of the last words written by the professor before his death and their translation.









Carlo Alberto Scarpa was born June 2, 1906 in Venice. He was the son of an elementary teacher, Antonio Scarpa, and Emma Novello. In 1908 the family moved to Vicenza, where Carlo enrolled at the Technical School, after completing his elementary studies. Carlo spent his holidays, together with his brother Gigi, in the countryside around Vicenza, and at the eighteenth-century mansion of the counts Tacchi, his godparents; these places remained engraved in his memory, so much so that as an adult he often returned to visit them. At the beginning of 1919 his mother Emma died. A few months later, in April, the family decided to return to Venice. Here, despite his young age, Carlo decided to take the entrance examination for to the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, which, however, he did not pass. His father encouraged his efforts though, and Carlo passed the exam held the following session, thus being able to enrol in the Academy. While still studying, he started to work professionally with affirmed civil construction firms. In particular, from 1922 to 1924, he was an assistant to the architect Vincenzo Rinaldo. In 1925 he obtained the first work he carried out autonomously: he designed and directed the construction of a small build-

ing, annexed to an eighteenth-century villa on the banks of the river Brenta in Dolo (Venice). From 1925 to 1926, the Murano glassmakers Cappellin and C. commissioned Carlo Scarpa to construct some industrial buildings (for a total of 1,200 square meters); the static restoration of Palazzo Da Mula in Murano followed. In the meantime, he collaborated with Professor Franco Pizzuto on the construction of various buildings. In October 1926, presenting an ex-tempore project for an embassy, Scarpa graduated in Architectural Design obtaining full marks at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Venice. During the years spent as a student at the Academy, he became friends with Pino Ponti, who after the two-year preparatory period opted for the course in painting, and with Toni Lucarda who instead took up sculpture. In the same years he frequented the Venetian Carlo Maschietto who, having become an engineer, remained a constant collaborator and friend. A similarly strong friendship was formed with Giletto Tito and with the painter Mario De Luigi, who became Scarpa's collaborator at the time of his first works with furniture and restoration. In 1926, as soon as he graduated, and having managed to avoid military service,

he began his teaching activity at the Institute of Architecture in Venice. The educational activity was inseparably connected and mutually complementary to all of his work. In the years 1926-27, 1927-28 and 1928-29 Scarpa was an assistant of Professor Guido Cirilli, professor of architecture. While teaching, Scarpa became interested in Murano glass production as an artistic consultant and became dedicated to both drawing and painting. The graphic production of this period is linked to his activity in Murano and is freely inspired by the work of Braque, Picasso, Léger and Matisse. The paintings of the same period show a preference for landscape themes and are influenced, in technique and representation, by the examples of André Derain and Mario Sironi. In these years, Scarpa and De Luigi came into contact with Lionello Venturi, whom they met in Venice during a conference on Modigliani held by the famous art historian for a circle of artists that gathered in the Palazzo delle Prigioni – the two Venetian friends were among the first protagonists of this circle. Between 1929 and 1932, Scarpa carried out his first interior decoration works. In the meantime, he came into contact with artists and critics such

as Aldo Camerino (whom Scarpa later secretly hosted during the racial persecutions promoted by the fascist regime), Vincenzo Cardarelli, Carlo Izzo, Diego Valeri, Giuseppe Ungaretti and Massimo Bontempelli. The favourite meeting places of these intellectual circles were the Florian café and the bookshop "Il Campanile" in Piazza San Marco. The owner of the bookshop was the anarchist Ravenna, a well-educated and knowledgeable man: it was thanks to him that Scarpa learned of a vast bibliography of texts on art unpublished in Italy or prohibited by the regime, at a time when he was beginning to form his personal library, and could count on the collaboration of his brother-in-law, a bank employee on ships travelling overseas, for the purchase of books abroad. Other occasions of important meetings for Scarpa were the various editions of the Venice Biennale. On the occasion of the exhibitions promoted by this organization, he had the opportunity to meet and become friends with Felice Casorati, Carlo Carrà and, later, with Virgilio Guidi, and above all with Arturo Martini. In 1928, an important exhibition by Cézanne was organized by the Biennale. Scarpa, enthusiastic about the work of the French painter,

defended him passionately against the criticisms of Adriano Tilgher put forward in the book *Il pastore e la zampogna*, published that same year. Also present at the Biennale were exponents of the Viennese and German architectural scene, to which Scarpa refers in some works. In 1930 Scarpa became acquainted with a vast repertoire of images of the works of Mies van der Rohe and Frank Lloyd Wright, through publications in German – even though he did not know the language. In 1932 he displayed at the Biennale, with Mario De Luigi, a "fresco" mosaic entitled *Il bagno* [Bath], and participated, with the engineers Angelo and Benedetto Piamonte, in the competition for the construction of the new Accademia bridge in Venice. In 1934, Scarpa, with the same designers and with Mario De Luigi, participated in the competition for the design of the Venice-Mestre land use plan. In 1933 he started his partnership and professional collaboration, which lasted until 1947, with Paolo Venini. With the Murano glassware company Venini, Scarpa took part in Italian and foreign exhibitions, obtaining, among other things, a diploma of honour at the Triennale of 1934, for the glass objects presented. Also in 1934, he married Onorina Lazzari, niece

of the architect Vincenzo Rinaldo, for whom he had worked as a study assistant in the early years of the Academy. He moved his residence from Fondamenta degli Eremiti to Rio Marin, also in Venice. In the same year, Scarpa personally met Josef Hoffmann. He also met the architect Guido Pellizzari, and together they designed, also with Benedetto Piamonte, the passenger building at the Venice Lido airport. In 1935 Scarpa obtained his first major public contract: the Faculty of Economics and Commerce at the University of Venice, directed by Professor Lanzillo, commissioned the restoration of Ca' Foscari. The work lasted two years. His son Tobia was born in 1935. In 1937 he entered into friendly relations with the Venetian gallerist Carlo Cardazzo, for whom, on several occasions, he was in charge of arranging art exhibitions. Always in 1937 Scarpa curated his first exhibition as designer. It was an exhibition on Venetian jewellery, held in the Sansovino lodge in Piazza San Marco. The friendship with the poet Giacomo Noventa dates to 1938: a fraternal bond that lasted a lifetime. At the beginning of the 1940s, Scarpa became closer to Arturo Martini, and the two shared a house for a year. Significantly, on the occasion of the

last Biennial of the Fascist regime (1942), together with Mario De Luigi, Scarpa was in charge of the design of the exhibition of Martini's sculptures. This is how he began his long consultancy activity for the Venetian exhibition organization. In 1945 he was entrusted by the Venice Superintendence with the general reorganization of the Gallerie dell'Accademia, a work that occupied him on various occasions for twenty years. During the academic years 1945-46 and 1946-47 he held a professional drawing course at the Industrial Art Institute of Venice. From 1946 he collaborated with the architect Angelo Masieri, a student with whom Scarpa was tied to by esteem and friendship. The following year he participated, with some students and with Carlo Maschietto, in the contest for the drafting of the general land use plan of the Lido of Venice, obtaining a mention and the reimbursement of expenses.

Also in 1947 he was invited by the Association for Organic Architecture, of which he was a member, to hold an important conference in Venice, entitled *Qualche considerazione sul Liberty*. Moreover, at the Milan Triennale, the Veneto Institute of Labour employed him as consultant for advice on contacts

with industrial and craft companies in the Veneto region. In 1948, Scarpa set up a retrospective exhibition of Paul Klee, for the 24th Venice Biennale: it is one of the fundamental stages of his career as exhibition designer. In 1949 he was a member of the jury in charge of judging the works presented in the section dedicated to short films and artistic documentaries in the context of the 10th International Film Festival of the Venice Biennale. In 1950, after the construction of the Book Pavilion in the gardens of Sant'Elena which host the buildings of the Venice Biennale, architecture publications began to take an interest in Scarpa's work. The following year, on the occasion of the conferral of a *honoris causa* degree in architecture to Frank Lloyd Wright, he met the American architect in Venice. A previous meeting had taken place at the exhibition, organized in Florence by Carlo L. Ragghianti, on Wright's work. In 1952 Angelo Masieri died in a car accident. In 1953-54, invited by the superintendent Giorgio Vigni, Scarpa spent long periods in Sicily, working in Palermo at the restoration of Palazzo Abatellis and in Messina, for the preparation of the exhibition *Antonello da Messina e il Quattrocento siciliano*. In the same years he was entrusted-

ed by the Venezuelan government, following an indication of the architect Gasparini, a pupil of his, with the construction of the pavilion for art exhibits at the gardens of Sant'Elena in Venice. In 1954 he was invited to join the technical commission set up by the Ministry of Education for the arrangement and design of the Uffizi Galleries in Florence. On this occasion he made friends with Giovanni Michelucci and was appointed as a member of the Academy of the Arts of Drawing in Florence. Starting this same year Scarpa held annual lectures for the Fulbright Program in Rome, at the invitation of the American commission for cultural exchanges with Italy. The lesson held in 1954 is titled *Esperienze museografiche*. Also in Rome, he lectured on the topic *Problemi di museografia contemporanea*, on behalf of the General Direction of Antiquities and Fine Arts, at the refresher course for museum directors at the Italian Institute of Archaeology and Art History of Palazzo Venezia. In 1955, on the recommendation of some renewed architects and critics and with the solidarity of various associations of architects, Scarpa was nominated for an honorary degree in architecture. In Rome he held a lesson for the Fulbright Program titled

*Esame critico di alcune opere personali.* In the academic year 1955-56, in the experimental course of industrial design organized by the Venetian Institute for employment in Venice, he directed the section dedicated to teaching metalworking techniques. On December 22, 1956, Scarpa received the Olivetti national award for architecture in the rooms of Ca' Rezzonico in Venice. In the same year he was in Rome to design the exhibition dedicated to Mondrian, at the National Gallery of Modern Art; he also held a lecture for the Fulbright Program entitled *Architettura razionale e architettura organica in Italia*. While his fame grew, Scarpa was forced to defend himself in court from accusations that questioned the lawfulness of his work as an architect made by the national association of architects of Venice. The numerous court cases following this accusation, although they always ended favourably, left a painful mark. In 1957 he returned to Sicily to design a service sector building in Catania, commissioned by a private individual, which then became a store – La Rinascente. In Milan he held a conference titled *Posizione dell'architetto moderno in Italia* at the MSA headquarters. He was then invited by FIDAPA to hold a conference in Venice, Ar-

*chitettura contemporanea americana.* In Rome he met Alvar Aalto, at a conference held by the Finnish architect. In 1958, the first part of his restoration of the Castelvecchio Museum in Verona was inaugurated, with the exhibition *Da Altichiero a Pisanello*. In Rome he held the annual lesson for the Fulbright Program, titled *Inserimento moderno nell'ambito storico veneziano*. He was appointed Resident Academic for the class of architecture by the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice. In 1959 in Rome he held the lesson for the Fulbright Program entitled *Problemi museografici nell'esperienza personale*. In these same years, as a designer for the Venice Biennale, he became acquainted with the most interesting exponents of the new generations of Italian and foreign artists, while strengthening his relationships with some important professors, colleagues of his at the IUAV. In 1960 Scarpa was awarded second prize by the Reed & Barton firm of Boston in the competition for the design of silver cutlery, which he worked on with the collaboration of his son Tobia. He was invited to present his work in the solo architecture exhibitions section of the 12th Triennale in Milan. For the preparation of the commemorative exhibition of

Wright's work, he was awarded the Grand Prize by the international jury of the 12th Triennale in Milan. With the conference, held in Rome for the Fulbright Program, entitled *Esperienze di ricerca formale nelle ultime opere personali*, he concluded the cycle of lessons which had begun in 1954. At the University of Venice he held a conference titled *Commemorazione di F. L. Wright*. On appointment of the Ministry of Education, Scarpa served as member of the board judging the national exam for teaching positions in technical and industrial institutes for textile workers and dyers. In the academic year 1960-61 he held a visual training course at the Institute of Industrial Design in Venice. In 1962, Scarpa became member of the B2 Committee, section Shape and Design, of the International Glass Commission, based in Paris. In 1962 he moved from Venice to Asolo (Treviso). In Rome he received the national prize IN-ARCH for the restoration of the Castelvecchio Museum and the gold medal appointed by the Ministry of Education. In 1966 he was invited to take part in an international competition for the planning of a new art gallery in Munich, and to present his works at the museum's exhibition on architecture, organized by the Mu-

seum of Modern Art of New York. In 1967 Scarpa received in Rome the award of the President of the Republic for Architecture. He travelled to the United States, where he visited the works of Wright. On that occasion he met Louis Kahn, who was then his guest in Italy. He was in charge of designing the section "La Poesia" of the Italian pavilion at the 1967 Expo in Montréal. In 1969 he was called to Berkeley, California, to design the exhibition of drawings by Erich Mendelsohn; he also travelled to London to design an exhibition of Florentine frescoes. He was invited to take part in a competition for a new theatre in Vicenza. He was then invited to Japan, thanks to the interest of Aldo Businar, his friend and client, as a consultant to the companies Cassina and B&B. In 1970 he designed an exhibition dedicated to the work of Giorgio Morandi in London, at the Royal Academy, and was appointed member of the Royal British Institute of Design. In 1972, Scarpa moved his residence from Asolo to Vicenza. After hav-

ing substituted the director of the UAV for two academic years, he was appointed director himself. In 1974, at the invitation of the Royal Institute of British Architects, he presented his works at the Heinz Gallery in London. At the request of the Olympic Academy and the municipality of Vicenza, he organized another solo exhibition in the rooms of the Domus Conestabilis of the basilica, and then he was appointed member of the Vicenza Olympic Academy. In 1975 he went to Paris to arrange an exhibition of his works at the Institut de l'Environnement and was made honorary member of the Pierre Chareau Foundation. At the invitation of the Secretary of State for Culture of the French Government, in 1976 he took part in the competition for the planning of the Picasso museum in Paris. He was named National Academic of San Luca. In 1977 he was invited to give a lecture at the Vienna Academy. In 1978 he held a personal exhibition at the I.D. gallery of Madrid. The University Institute of Architecture in Venice

awarded him a *honoris causa* a degree in architecture, a few months before his death which occurred in Japan, Sendai, November 28, 1978. In accordance with his testamentary disposition, Scarpa's remains are buried in the Brion tomb, in the cemetery of San Vito d'Altivole, near Asolo.



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