

**The conjured drawings of Carlo Scarpa:
a magic-real inquiry into architectural representation**

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in
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Doctor of Philosophy
in
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a magic-real inquiry into architectural representation**

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Abstract

This dissertation proposes a theory of architectural representation based on a close examination of Carlo Scarpa's drawing practices at the Brion cemetery located in San Vito d'Altivole, Italy. Informed by the literary practice of magic-realism and Massimo Bontempelli's thoughts on the ontology of the real, it projects Scarpa's drawing practices into larger questions of theory that parallel and intersect Giambattista Vico's philosophy of knowledge as making.

Architectural drawing is understood herein as a practice that belongs in the realm of magic. In theorizing on the intersection between magic and architectural representation, this dissertation focuses in the twentieth century, where magic in its original sense had seemingly become an obsolete tradition. Magic-realism acts as the contemporary theoretical framework to investigate the question. Such a framework is relevant because the movement acknowledged the perennial gap between how reality is defined and what reality really is. The movement intensified the notion that reality is not given but must be constructed, and its point of departure in the modern world is not something extraordinary, but that which circumvolves everyday life.

Structured in nine chapters that investigate a very specific set of drawings, Scarpa's way of working emerges through a very close reading of minimal events that become the locus for the theory proposed here. Architectural drawing understood as place of ambiguous realities offers a unique approach to architects' imagination. Such realities, however, are not a product of aleatory allegories, but they emerge within an immersive and witty approach to the work and the world.

*To all those who draw.
To all those who believe in magic.*

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Photo: Fondo Officina Fabbri Zanon

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Corner indentation filled with gold paint
Photo by Author

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Corner indentation filled with gold paint - zoom
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Corner indentation filled with gold paint - zoom
Photo by Paul Emmons

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Chapel ceiling at corner
Photo by Author

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Marco Frascari drawing

© Paola Frascari

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Marco Frascari

‘Scarpa Confabulation’

© Paola Frascari

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Marco Frascari

‘Scarpa Confabulation’ (detail)

© Paola Frascari

Figure 4.38 193

‘The Line’ (fragment)

Saul Steinberg

© Saul Steinberg Archive

Chapter 5: Latent lines: quintessential occultation

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Chapel floor plan (detail)

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Photogenic drawing negative; 3 1/4 x 4 3/16 in. (8.3 x 10.7 cm), irregular
The Rubel Collection, Purchase, Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee and Anonymous
Gifts, 1997 (1997.382.1)
© The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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William Henry Fox Talbot (British, 1800–1877)
Photogravure (photoglyphic engraving from a copper plate); Sheet: 5 15/16 x 4 7/16 in.

(15.1 x 11.3 cm); plate: 4 15/16 x 3 11/16 in. (12.5 x 9.4 cm); image: 4 1/8 x 3 in. (10.5 x 7.6 cm) Rogers Fund, 2004 (2004.111)

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Figure 5.9 **222**

Chapel Floor Plan (detail)

NR #2699

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Chapel elevation

NR #2573 recto

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Passage to chapel entrance

Photo taken under Carlo Scarpa's directions

For Memoria Causa Book

1972

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Chapel elevation (detail)

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Chapel northeast façade photo

Photo by Author

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Chapel elevation
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Chapel elevation and section
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Chapel elevation (detail erased lines)
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Photo by Author

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Family pavilion section (detail)
NR #4196
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Family Pavilion Section (detail)
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Family pavilion section (detail)
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Sam Cobean comic in The New Yorker
1950

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Family Pavilion Section (detail)
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Family Pavilion Section (detail)
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Family Pavilion Interior
Photo by Author

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Brion complex west wing plan and elevations
NR #2611r
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Brion complex west wing plan and elevations (detail)
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Propylei section (detail)
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“Hieratic Suprematist Cross”
Kazimir Malevich
(large cross in black over red on white)
1920-1921.
© Collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

Figure 7.11 306

Propylei elevation, section and floor plan

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Figure 7.12

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Propylei elevation, section and floor plan (detail of copied base drawing)

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Propylei elevation, section and floor plan (detail diagonal lines)

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Propylei elevation, section and floor plan (detail Scarpa sight and head)

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Propylei elevation, section and floor plan (detail Scarpa sight)

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Propylei elevation, section and floor plan (detail horizons)

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Propylei inside
Photo by author

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Propylei inside
Photo by author

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Corridoio floor
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Corridoio and pool underneath construction
Photo by Gianni Berengo Gardin
1972
© Gianni Berengo Gardin , CISA A. Palladio, Vicenza, Italy

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Corridoio floor drainage detail
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Photo by Author

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'Not to be Reproduced'
Rene Magritte
1937
© Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen
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Chapter 8: Appearing Lines: an epiphany in the octave

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'900' CAHIERS D'ITALIE ET D'EUROPE
Founders: Massimo Bontempelli e Curzio Malaparte
Year: 1926
Number: 1 (cahier d'automne)
Publisher: La Voce, Roma-Florence
Authors in this volume: Massimo Bontempelli, Mac Orlan, Renato Barilli, Corrado Alvaro, Emilio Cecchi, George Kaiser, Antonio Aniante, James Joyce and Achille Campanile
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Chapel door elevations and plan (diagram by author)
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Chapel door elevations and plan (detail)
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Chapel door elevations and plan (detail)
NR #2675 (diagram by author)
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Introduction

*I don't want to say to create, but to make. I always protest against those who use the term
to create.*

Carlo Scarpa¹

Never a Day without A Line

*The more I meditate on my art, the more I practice it; the more I think and act, the more I
suffer and rejoice as an architect; and the more I feel my own being with an ever surer
delight and clarity. I go astray in my long spells of waiting; I find myself again by the
surprise I give myself; by means of the successive degrees of silence, I advance in my own
edification; and I draw near to such and exact correspondence between my aims and my
powers, that I seem to myself to have made of the existence that was given me a sort of
human handiwork. By dint of construction, I truly believe that I have constructed myself.*

Eupalinos, or the Architect

Paul Valery²

A memorable story took place at the 'American Bar' in Vienna, designed by architect Adolf Loos. The Venetian architect, Carlo Scarpa, who was in town visiting, admired the room as soon as he entered; focusing specially on the marble coffered ceiling design. Immediately noticing a group of women sitting at the bar, he smiled and saluted them, making himself very quickly the center of attention. Shortly thereafter, the architect ordered a tape measure and champagne for everyone. While undergoing a careful process of measuring the bar details, he joked and participated in the social gathering. In surveying the room with his eyes and hands, he moved, wandered, and adopted eccentric positions as if he

¹ "Non volevo dire creare, ma fare. Io protesto sempre contra loro che usano il termine creare." Franca Semi. *A Lezione con Carlo Scarpa* (Venezia: Cicero, 2010), 118.

² Paul Valery. *Eupalinos or The Architect*, translated with a preface by William McCausland Stewart. (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 20-21.

did not want to miss any details. He was even assisted by a few of the ladies when he needed to measure larger parts of the bar. In awe with the proportions and relationships contained within the small bar, Scarpa eventually described the place as having a 'singular spiritual and emotional quality', despite the multiple materials and formal choices that Loos had put at work in such a small area.³

Although speaking more generally about the Venetian architect's passion for architecture, perhaps it is more accurate to note his particular way of engaging his surroundings. For Scarpa architecture and everyday life events intertwine without a clear separation, and this is how he approached the world and the work as a place for imagination. In fact, many instances tell the story of how everyday life events intersected and participated in Scarpa's architectural practice, or vice versa. Evidence of these events can be encountered in the Venetian architect's copious legacy of drawings as well as in stories told by people that worked with him or knew him.

Although Scarpa never acquired an architectural degree per se, he enrolled in the Royal Academy of Arts of Venice –*Regia Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia*– in 1919 where he joined architectural courses for three years.⁴ In 1926 he earned a diploma that qualified him to be professor in architectural design, and he became involved with teaching at the IUAV in Venice.⁵ Prior to obtaining his degree Scarpa had already began some collaborations in the field of architecture, an activity to which he would dedicate his life until his death on November 28th of 1978.⁶ Most of the projects he designed and built

³ Paraphrased story recounted by Peter Noever in the introduction of *The Other City*. Noever explains that one of the first encounters with Scarpa was at the Loos' bar. Peter Noever was an Austrian designer and art, architecture and media curator for the MAK – Austrian Museum of Applied Arts and Contemporary Art in Vienna. Noever was one of the editors of *The Other City* book which transcribes Carlo Scarpa's lecture of 1976 in Vienna and contains around 600 of the Brion cemetery drawings. Scarpa, Carlo. *The Other City: The Architect's Working Method As Shown by the Brion Cemetery in San Vito D'altivole = Die Andere Stadt: Die Arbeitsweise Des Architekten Am Beispiel Der Grabanlage Brion in San Vito D'altivole*. (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1989), 8.

⁴ Carla Sonogo. "Carlo Scarpa: gli anni'20" in *Studi Su Carlo Scarpa 2000-2002*, Kurt W Forster and Paola Marini eds. (Venezia: Regione del Veneto, 2004), 27.

⁵ Teaching Assistant of his dear professor Cirilli.

⁶ Carlo Scarpa died in Sendai, Japan.

were additions and renovations to existing buildings.⁷ On several occasions however, he was commissioned to work on entirely new projects. Specializing in museum and curatorial designs, Scarpa was involved throughout his life with the design of numerous exhibitions of notable artists such as Paul Klee, Giorgio De Chirico, Arturo Martini and Wassily Kandinsky among others.⁸ Learned and practical, Scarpa would read great literature masterpieces at night and spend hours speaking with his builders at the construction site during the day.⁹ Most of his time, however, was devoted to the making of drawings.

Saying that Scarpa drew almost all the time is perhaps not an exaggeration. He drew when he spoke; he drew when he went to the bathroom, when he was waiting for something and when he was at a restaurant or a bar.¹⁰ He even drew when he was at the doctor's office!¹¹ In addition, the architect constructed copious amounts of drawings for each of the architectural projects he worked on. Even for the design of several residential projects one can observe hundreds of drawings, fully detailed for projects that were not even built.¹² Drawing was for the Venetian architect a way of seeing, recalling, as he used to say to his students, that, "I draw in order to see."¹³ This form of seeing seems not just to have informed the architectural project as something isolated from the everyday life, but it was situated precisely within its materiality and qualities.

⁷ Sergio Polano. "Catalogue Raisonné" in *Carlo Scarpa: The Complete Works*, F. Dal Co and Giuseppe Mazzariol (eds). (New York: Electa/Rizzoli, 1985), 97-149.

⁸ Orietta Lanzarini. *Carlo Scarpa, L'architetto e le arti*. (Regione del Veneto: Marsilio, 2002).

⁹ Tobia Scarpa testimony. Interview by author, July, 2014.

¹⁰ Evidence of this type of drawings can be found at the archives where drawings in toilet paper can be found, as well as drawings made with a secretary's stamp, indication that perhaps he was 'playing' with the stamp while waiting.

¹¹ Doctor's letterhead paper with drawings by Scarpa can be found at the *Archivio de Stato di Treviso: Centro Carlo Scarpa*, Italy.

¹² I owe this insight to the phd candidate Lena Büchel whose work has focused on collecting all the information regarding the residential projects of Carlo Scarpa. I met Lena while I was working at the archives in Treviso and we would look at some of the fully detailed drawings together.

¹³ Cited in Edoardo Gellner, Franco Mancuso. *Carlo Scarpa e Edoardo Gellner. La chiesa di Corte di Cadore* (Electa, Milano 2000), 38.

Within such extensive practice of drawing, Scarpa developed a way of working that offers new insights into architectural representation. His particular form of addressing the architectural drawing constitutes an ontological system that intersects the reality of what is happening now, the reality of what has happened, and the reality of what will happen. Through drawing, the architectural project is made by the emergence and generation of sequential drawing acts that could be intentional as well as unintentional, meaningful and meaningless, expected and unexpected. The drawing becomes a locus that interacts with the actions and life of the architect, and each act, mark or event can transform, inform or perform the course and discourse of the design. In a class taught in 1976 at the IUAV in Venice, for example, Scarpa recommended to his students to approach the drawing table and the sheet of paper as a quotidian activity. Quoting Leon Battista Alberti as the author of Apelles' famous motto *nulla dies sine lines* (never a day without a line), Scarpa claimed to his students that drawing is a "form of life."¹⁴ Scarpa suggested that once the hand is trained to draw, it must be forgotten just like one forgets the vocal cords while speaking.¹⁵ It becomes one with the body as a tacit extension of the imagination. Becoming aware of one's reality in the world is a skill the architect needs in order to construct, discover and intensify the architectural project. In other words, reality's perception is not a-priori or given; it is always constructed.¹⁶ A close scrutiny of the perceived world is a practice that Scarpa also suggested as necessary for making drawings. Just like his admiration and curiosity at Loos' bar triggered immediately a desire to know better each dimension of the bar, his survey was simultaneously an emotional experience of drinking, sharing and perhaps flirting with the women that unnoticeably became his muses and his assistants.

From the earliest written words on architecture to the most contemporary ones, architects seem frequently concerned with the question of how an architect becomes an architect. Vitruvius expressed in Book One of *De architectura*:

¹⁴ Semi, *A Lezione*, 41.

¹⁵ "...che nella sua mano doveva essere dimenticato come si dimentica una corda vocale..." Ibid.

¹⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Collin Smith (New York: Routledge, 1958).

So architects who without culture aim at manual skill cannot gain a prestige corresponding to their labours, while those who trust to theory and literature obviously follow a shadow [*umbram*] and not reality [*videntur*]. But those who have mastered both, like men equipped in full armor, soon acquire influence and attain their purpose.¹⁷

For centuries architects have struggled with nurturing a realm for imagining and making places that, from the point of view of a contemporary understanding of reality, do not yet exist in the physical world. Resting at the core of the practice and theory of architecture, this ontological dimension has relied precisely in the conundrum of localizing the existence of the architectural project. Does the building exist in the architect's mind? Does the building exist in the architectural drawing? Does the building exist only when it is built? Vitruvius' conclusion that the architect needs to master both the realm of the physical, and the realm of the non-physical, suggests that the architect operates within an ambiguous realm of obscurity [*umbran*] and clarity [*videntur*]. The obscurity that Vitruvius referred to did not mean an absence; on the contrary it suggested a presence signified by a soul.¹⁸ That which was visible or seen, contrary to Cartesian notions of vision, was that which was perceived holistically through one's own body being in the world.¹⁹ In fact the Latin verb for seeing, *videre*, not only meant 'to see', but more accurately 'to perceive.'²⁰ Much water has run in the river of these questions from Vitruvius until today. Substantial shifts occurring in the XVII century signified major breaks in the conception and understanding of architecture and have ruled architectural education and practice until the present day.²¹

¹⁷ Pollio Vitruvius. *On Architecture*, translated Frank Granger (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press:1955), 7.

¹⁸ Victor Ieronim Stoichiță. *A Short History of the Shadow* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), 11-42.

¹⁹ René Descartes. *The Passions of the Soul*, trans. Stephen Voss (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1989).

²⁰ Short and Lewis. *Latin Dictionary*.

²¹ "The reduction of architecture to a rational theory, began to gain ascendancy toward the middle of the seventeenth, culminating in the theories of Jacques-Nicolas-Louis Durand and his critics. Durand's functionalized theory is already a theory of architecture in the contemporary sense: replete with the modern architect's obsessions, thoroughly specialized, and composed of laws of an exclusively prescriptive character that purposely avoid all reference to philosophy or cosmology. Theory thus reduced to a self-

The locus of the architectural project in the work of Carlo Scarpa offers a new insight to the ontological, practical and theoretical horizons of architectural drawing, questioning and perhaps dismantling on-going positivist approaches toward the practice of architecture. Scarpa's way of approaching architectural drawing offers important insights to the auto-generated digital obsessions of the XXI century which seem to desire a project of emergence without a real understanding and relevance for poetics and ethics.²² In the work of Scarpa, generation and emergence have a significant place within architectural drawing practices that centers and surrounds questions of poetics as well as ethics. Because for Scarpa drawing was a form of seeing, the drawing itself becomes a guiding tool as well as a place guided by the architect. The architectural drawing constitutes both a field for emergence and a field for generation. These two apparently incompatible forces are intertwined in the Venetian architect's work, defying architectural drawing conventions that have assumed truths about the role of lines in the drawing and clear differentiations between the life of the drawing and the life outside the drawing. Scarpa's way of working provokes new questions concerning the reality of architectural representation.

A Magic Real Story

*Humanity seems destined to oscillate forever between devotion to the world of dreams
and adherence to the world of reality.*

referential system whose elements must be combined through mathematical logic must pretend that its values, and therefore its meaning, are derived from the system itself. This formulation, however, constitutes its most radical limitation since any reference to the perceived world is considered subjective, lacking in real value." Alberto Pérez-Gómez. *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1983), 4.

²² Patrick Schumaker. *The Autopoesis of Architecture: A New Framework for Architecture* (London: Wiley, 2011).

A remarkably similar approach to making and everyday life appeared in Germany in 1925 with a movement called 'magic realism', a term first formalized by Franz Roh, a German artist and critic. Roh wrote a manifesto exposing the work of several artists who were looking at everyday life events in order to "celebrate the mundane and overturn the abstractions of Expressionism."²⁴ Exploring the work of artists like Georg Schrimpf, Roh suggested that the magical "palpitates and hides behind reality."²⁵ In order to develop his argument, he questioned the role of objects, finding an agency in both the objects of our everyday life and our own perception of them in how they affect and effect reality.²⁶ In other words, he distinguished between *how* reality is represented and *how* its representation allows us to see reality anew, emphasizing an anti-positivist principle that reality is constructed and not given. Rejecting the artistic imperative of extraordinary or divine events as distanced from the creative act, Roh inferred that the magical is already part of the real and the practice of looking closely and precisely at common events, normally taken as non-relevant, is what allows one to encounter the very heart of reality's mysteries. By nature oxymoronic, magic realism was founded on the duality of two seemingly different realms -reality and magic- precisely in order to open up a field for wonder and reflection rooted in an apparent 'unimportant' and 'given' occurrence: everyday life. Roh outlined the new formative man of this period as one who reconciles constructivist ideals "with a greater respect for reality, with a closer knowledge of what exists, of the objects he transforms and exalts."²⁷ He described the magic real artist as the one who not only contemplates and knows but is also as an artist of action.²⁸ Relying on both theory and practice, magic realism attempted to expose something hidden within the world. Derived from thought, the object is meaningful and acts upon the perceiver

²³ Franz Roh. "Magic Realism: Post-Expressionism" in Zamora Parkinson, Lois, and Wendy B. Faris, eds. *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 17.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

only insofar as the perceiver is experiencing it.²⁹ In this sense, objects are not just ‘there’ and I am ‘here’, but we are as we experience each other.³⁰

Roh illustrated magic realism as in opposition to two movements: 19th century realism and Expressionism, a movement concurrent with his time. In general terms, according to Roh, realism focused on the exterior appearance of things; while Expressionism relied too heavily on reality’s internal spirit.³¹ Magic realism thus became ‘the opportunity of reconstructing the object, starting exclusively from our interiority.’³² Roh proposed: ‘only when the creative process achieves its goal from the inside out can it generate new views of reality, which is at most built in pieces, never imitated as a whole.’³³ The intention was not imitation; rather it was to present reality anew based on concrete apprehensions of the world.³⁴ Roh, who was also a skilled photographer, portrays some of his own ideas in rarely discussed photomontages where he overlaps scenes of everyday life of the city with carefully constructed portraits, such as in a masterful piece owned by the Museum of Modern Art in New York. [fig. I.1] Here, an image of a tunnel with passing bikers and the interior scene of a female model photographed from above are fused together, offering a complex perception of exterior and interior space. As scholar Pepper Stetler has pointed

²⁹ In describing a scene of apples on a table, Roh recounted his captivation as not merely sensational nor merely formal. Instead, he expresses that, “I am overcome by a much wider amalgam of colors, spatial forms, tactile representations, memories of smells and tastes; in short, a truly unending complex that we understand by the name of *thing*.” Ibid., 24.

³⁰ This notion is also at the core of Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*.

³¹ Roh notes: “It is well known that the nineteenth century rarely attempted anything other than extrinsic imitation, and hence it had remain seated in front of nature or works of art or plaster casts, limiting itself in the end to copying the object before its eyes. When in violent reaction to this, Expressionism had crystallized the object’s exclusively internal aspect, the unusual opportunity of looking at the object close up from the other side had arrived; in other words, the opportunity of reconstructing the object, starting exclusively from our interiority.” Ibid.

³² Ibid., 25.

³³ Ibid., 24.

³⁴ Roh gives the example of Georg Schrimpf, an artist how used to paint landscapes and other scenes inside a room without any models or sketches. Schrimpf believed in rigorously representing the scene as if it were real but without imitating it, although closely looking at all the details as the painting was being constructed, remembered and becoming ‘familiar’ in a magic real form since it was not exactly a copy of something out there, and yet it seemed to be, at the same time that it was conceived in isolation. Another example Roh gives is the work of Alexander Kanoldt who constructed landscapes out of Italian cities. Roh emphasizes the important of opposites to emphasize the various methods for discovering a magic-real apprehension of the world. Ibid.

out: “perspective traditionally aligns vision and knowledge, eye and mind, this photograph ruptures this relationship. In other words, Roh juxtaposes a system of perspective with features that disrupt it, shifting its meaning into realms of imagination, dream, and desire.”³⁵ Another common technique that Roh performed to question reality through representation was to make negative prints of photographs, evoking a very distinct sense of light and shadow that allows us to see the photographed object anew. [fig. 1.2 – 1.3] Roh saw the juxtaposition of seemingly opposite forces as a method of searching for secret geometries, and these juxtapositions already constituted a way of working and thinking in a magic real way.³⁶

From its origins in post-war Germany, the 1927 Spanish publication of Roh's essay on magic realism in Madrid's *Revista de Occidente* signaled the birth of magic realism on the international stage.³⁷ The publication of the essay into another language opened up territory for many artists and writers to become acquainted with new ideas gestating at the time. Although magic realism as a movement in art did not span a great length in time, it opened up an immense territory within literature that remains present even today.³⁸

Magic realism as a literary movement first appeared in Italy through the publications of the Lombard writer Massimo Bontempelli. Holding similar principles as Roh, as well as some uniquely Italian ones, Bontempelli believed that magic realism was an invitation to re-write everyday life reality and to find the magical within. While the threatening changes of modernism worried many artists, writers and particularly architects, Bontempelli saw magic realism as an apparatus to construct and reveal myth and as a vehicle by which

³⁵ Pepper Stetler. “Franz Roh and the Art History of Photography” In *Modern Photographs: The Thomas Walther Collection 1909–1949 Object:Photo*, eds. Mitra Abbaspour, Lee Ann Daffner, and Maria Morris Hamburg. An Online Project of The Museum of Modern Art. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2014).

³⁶ Roh, “Magic Realism,” 27.

³⁷ Magazine directed by philosopher José Ortega y Gasset.

³⁸ From the work of Gabriel García Márquez to the contemporary writer Isabel Allende, magic realism in literature has remained actively present in the world through the work of multiple Latin American authors.

cultures could evolve from the past without ignoring it.³⁹ In 1926 he introduced magic realism in his literature journal '900' *Cahiers d'Italie et d'Europe*, a journal edited together with the journalist Cruzio Malaparte. Published in French as well as in Italian, the journal was an attempt to disseminate the work of Italian writers and other international figures such as James Joyce, Ramón Gómez de la Serna, and Virginia Wolf, into a broader audience. In fact, Bontempelli himself translated the work of several of these authors for the first time into Italian, including numerous fragments of Joyce's *Ulysses*.

Through the work of multiple and varied authors, '900' exposed the ideas contained within magic realism. Such an effort to discover and perhaps save reality from positivist definitions could only be attempted from an artistic dimension such as literature, art, music and according to Bontempelli, even architecture.⁴⁰ Bontempelli thought that a new art form could emerge from the intimacy between what was assumed to be reality and the fantasy practiced through one's imagination. He claimed imagination to be "the instrument to liberate ourselves from the repetition of the old and create an atmosphere that favors the new."⁴¹ Bontempelli saw the imagination as the only instrument capable of enriching reality.⁴² His goal has been understood as a desire to create a world of fantasy which not only would have the objectivity of the natural world, but that would emerge from it.⁴³

The journal was a difficult endeavor but bore its fruits in spreading the work of literary figures who emphasized the theoretical framework that circumvolved Bontempelli's magic

³⁹ Massimo Bontempelli. *Realismo Magico e altri scritti sull' arte*. A cura di Elena Pontiggia (Milan, Italy: Abscondita Srl.,2006), 21. All translations by author.

⁴⁰ *Studi Novecenteschi*. Quadrimestrale di storia della letteratura italiana contemporanea. Numero 12. (Padova: Marsilio Editori, 1975), 249.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 22.

⁴³ Estelle Gilson in Preface to *Separations*, citing a review in The New York Times review on Massimo Bontempelli. Massimo Bontempelli. *Separation, Two Novels of Mothers and Children*, trans. Estelle Gilson. (Kingston, New York: McPherson & Company, 2000), 8.

realism.⁴⁴ While the writer stressed the role of imagination as the means to re-construct myths, its basis was not arbitrary fantasy but was reality itself, i.e., the materiality of everyday life already announced in Roh's manifesto. According to Bontempelli, imagination needed to originate from a "realistic precision of the profile" and from a "solid subject held by the ground."⁴⁵ Looking at everyday reality with exactitude was a gate to access the unknown, yet precise, world of magic. Imagination, in this sense, was not that which directly envisioned the unknown, rather it was the force that searched for it, and the unknown was simply encountered by the efforts of actually seeing. In one of Bontempelli's novels, *The boy with two mothers*, the author offers a clear portrait of this notion of imagination. One of the main characters dies for lack of imagination, "when only imagination could have saved her."⁴⁶ Imagination constitutes an active force capable of acting within any reality or mysteries that may appear, despite all incoherence or seemingly impossible events.⁴⁷

For Bontempelli, the magical is discovered as already and always belonging to the real, rather than invented from it. Just as the magician collects and performs with precision every detail of the conjure, which is an exact set of relationships among elements already existing within the world, the magic realist must probe with precision and dedication everyday life events. Within such an inquiry one begins to discover, as if for the first time, all the things one has erroneously assumed. For this reason, the practice of precision

⁴⁴ The magazine only lasted three years and close in 1929. Bontempelli's associations with Fascism in the 20's and 30's and its breakage in the late 30's in Pietro Taravacci. "Il Realismo Magico di Bontempelli" in *Trimestre*, a XIII, no. 2-3 (1980): 217-237, and Giovanni Artieri. "Massimo Bontempelli e l'avventura novecentesca," in *L'osservatore politico letterario*, a. XXIV, no. 11, (novembre, 1978): 39-52.

⁴⁵ Amelia Catherine Moser. *Il futuro e tutto nella notte: Anna Maria Ortese, Massimo Bontempelli and Magic Realism*. Dissertation presented at Harvard University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Romance Languages and Literature Department (2004), 37.

⁴⁶ Bontempelli, *Separations*, 164.

⁴⁷ In fact, the character of the novel *Arianna*, dies because she cannot believe first that her son is actually the son of another woman, and then when her son leaves them both, her pain is so great that she cannot take it, whereas the other character imagines and believes her son to still be in the world with her.

understood as a practice of grasping details and subtleties of very common events was a quality that accompanied magic realism.⁴⁸

Emerging from this particular form of writing and thinking, Bontempelli declared in an important collection of essays *L'Avventura Novecentista* published in 1938 that: “the real norm of the art of narration is to describe the dream as if it were reality, and the reality as if it were a dream.”⁴⁹ By inverting the two realms, one truer realm could emerge that was actually a place for the arts. In explaining the poignancy of the phenomena, Bontempelli pointed out that, “... strangeness is exasperated reality; it is to shift the angle from the surface of reality in order to glimpse reality in its depth.”⁵⁰ In this same book, the Italian writer addressed the field of architecture as the most propitious environment for the magic real to emerge. Lamenting that many adjectives, like ‘rational’ and ‘functional’, have been typically allocated to describe the architecture of the XX century, Bontempelli alternatively saw the field of architecture as one of the healthiest grounds to find myth within everyday life.⁵¹

Toward this end, in 1933 Bontempelli founded the journal *Quadrante* with journalist and art critic, Pier Maria Bardi. This magazine was supported by many of the Italian rationalist architects such as Giuseppe Terragni. Also, many widely known international architects like Walter Gropius and Le Corbusier were published in it. Bontempelli believed that the expressive center of Italian life was architecture and if something ought to be changed

⁴⁸ Technically speaking, magic realist literary texts have, according to Wendy Faris, five clear elements that distinguish it from other literary realms: the first is an ‘irreducible element of magic’; another is the descriptive nature of the work based on a “strong presence of the phenomenal world; a third one is the unsettling doubts that the reader may experience in order to reconcile and understand two contradictory events; a fourth one is the narrative merging different realms, and a final one is “a disturbance of notions about time, space and identity. Faris, Wendy B. *Ordinary enchantments: magic realism and the remystification of narrative* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004), 7.

⁴⁹ In Massimo Bontempelli. *The Faithful Lover* trans. Estelle Gilson (Austin, TX: Host Publications, 2007) introduction quoting from Massimo Bontempelli. *L'avventura novecentista: Selva polemica (1926-1938); dal "realismo magico" allo "stile naturale" soglia della terza epoca* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1938)

⁵⁰ “Quello che chiamate stramberia e realta esasperata; e spostare un angolo della superficie della realta, per farvi intravedere la realta piu profonda. Vorra dire ritrovare il senso del misterio, e l'equilibrio tra il cielo e la terra.” Bontempelli, *L'Avventura Novecentista*, 351.

⁵¹ Bontempelli, *Realismo Magico*, 47-48.

within the rational and emotional turmoil of the time, it had to be architecture.⁵² For him, architecture constituted the one instance where all the senses were involved and where everyday life could be perceived differently by inhabiting it.

In an unpublished and undated treatise entitled *Natural Magic*, Bontempelli studied older forms of magic, including the works of Paracelsus, Marsilio Ficino, Francis Bacon and others.⁵³ His interests in magic seemed to have illuminated several thoughts on the very notion of magic realism. In this treatise the Italian writer dedicated a section to *Natural Architecture*. In this particular study, Bontempelli saw a sympathetic relationship between magic and architecture that was born in the fact the architecture was concerned with both the search for a spiritual beauty and the beauty natural to practical life. Architecture's origin in the necessity of functioning, accommodating, and sheltering, at the same time in a poetic realm of expression, is what allows it to be intrinsically magic real. Regarding the arts in general, Bontempelli expresses:

All arts were born from the need to express oneself, to stop and then to put oneself outside and to make an object, or any movement from the subjective life, that is the lyric one. This is the spiritual and metaphysical genesis of art. However, in its material and empirical genesis, each art is born in practical life.⁵⁴

He then distinctly points out architecture as the one discipline where its practical as well as spiritual nature remain within the work:

⁵² David Rifkind citing M. Bontempelli from David Rifkind. *Quadrante and the Politicization of Architectural Discourse in Fascist Italy Dissertation*, presented at Columbia University, Graduate School of Art and Sciences (2007).

⁵³ Massimo Bontempelli. *Il libro degli arcani*. Getty Museum Special Collections, Massimo Bontempelli Papers; Box 27, Folder 21.

⁵⁴ "Tutte le arti sono nate dalla necessità di esprimersi, di fermare e poi collocare fuori di sé, e far diventare oggetto, qualche movimento della sua vita soggettiva, cioè lirica. Questa è la genesi spirituale, metafisica, dell'arte. Ma quanto alla sua genesi materiale, empirica, ogni arte nasce dalla vita pratica." Bontempelli, Massimo. *La Architettura Naturale*. In unpublished manuscript. Getty Museum Special Collections, 2.

The art in which the sense of beauty remains in time mixed with a practical scope, is architecture.⁵⁵

Although not an architect, Bontempelli nevertheless referred frequently throughout his various works to the field of architecture as the locus for magic realism to perform and to remain over time. Magic realism in architecture, however, was never officially proclaimed as a movement and very little research has been executed into its relevance within the field.

Throughout the XX century, Italy attempted to bridge its identity with the future without eliminating its past. The architecture from the past, constituting such a strong imprint on the everyday life, could not simply be forgotten. From the failure of the 1902 international exhibition of decorative arts in Turin, where art nouveau was clearly perceived as a rival to the classical national tradition; to Gio Ponti's⁵⁶ 1933 statement as a clear criticism to Le Corbusier that "houses are NOT machines for living – but sanctuaries of stylish beauty and refined comfort that provided the 'setting for Italian life,'" Italy struggled with the adoption of modernism as an authentic son.⁵⁷ On the one hand, Fascism's approval of rationalist architecture provided a venue to define Italy's identity within the modern world; however, such rationalism was always tinted with the colors of Italians' emotion towards their own history.

After WWII Italy entered a period of difficult reconstruction which was jarring enough to awaken new notions about reality. In the film industry, this was captured by Neo-Realism, an attempt through the medium of film to capture the everyday life of destruction and the working class within it.⁵⁸ Once again, a close look at reality attempted to uncover hidden

⁵⁵ "L'arte un cui il senso del bello rimane più a lungo mescolato con lo scopo pratico, è la architettura," Ibid., 3.

⁵⁶ He was the director of the design magazine Domus (using the Latin name for house as a sign of belief in the classical).

⁵⁷ Terry Kirk. *The architecture of modern Italy. Volume II: Visions of Utopia, 1900-Present*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 72.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 140.

qualities within that which was apparent. Regarding architecture, postwar architects aspired to reflect upon ideals of the renewed society in every aspect of their work.⁵⁹ Luigi Moretti, for example, stated the importance of condensing “the reality of utility, of needs, into expressiveness.”⁶⁰ The language of architecture throughout the XX century, Moretti thought, could reconcile the future as something discovered within the past, and he believed in the potential of an engaged look at everyday phenomena as a productive source. In Gio Ponti’s view, Italians needed to love materials, use them and support their technical and aesthetic qualities in order to extract maximum results.⁶¹ In 1946 Mario Ridolfi published *the Manuale dell’ Architetto*, an architectural manual intended originally to be a book of standards for Italy’s reconstruction. However, Ridolfi, having illustrated many plates himself, interpreted the manual as a collection of juxtaposed details and architectural examples that had little to do with making index-able building standards. According to scholar and architect Marco Frascari, Ridolfi “converted the *Manuale dell’Architetto* into a unique contribution of tectonic norms,” where “craftsmanship is the invention of solutions not from abstract notions but discovered while working; solutions suggested by a comprehension of the organic nature of the material and the specificity of design problems.”⁶² For Ridolfi, an architect’s immersion into making is what brings forth architectural inventions. He stated that:

Pupils should learn to represent objects in such a way that they can be reconstructed... I tell them that they should see the opaque objects as if they are transparent. They should learn to see also beyond them to be able to draw them in a constructive manner.⁶³

⁵⁹ Ibid., 145.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 152.

⁶¹ Ibid., 159.

⁶² Marco Frascari. “The Well-Tempered drawings of a Reflective Architect,” Washington Alexandria Architecture Center, Virginia Tech, 4.

⁶³ Ibid., 4-7.

Carlo Scarpa, a good friend of Ridolfi, remained always in the periphery of modernism's turmoil in Italy,⁶⁴ although he was well aware of several of these iconic characters.⁶⁵ Among his abundant library, Scarpa owned numerous works of Bontempelli. In his copy of *L'Aventura Novacentista*, held in his son's library today, Scarpa apologizes in a note to his wife for 'not being able to resist buying a copy of the exemplar' despite their very constrained economical situation.⁶⁶ Clearly, Scarpa was very enthusiastic about purchasing Bontempelli's 1938 book edition where magic realism, as we have seen, was discussed as an aspect of architecture. As will be shown, Scarpa sympathized with approaches to the work, such as Ridolfi's or Bontempelli's, where things are conceived from within reality, not from afar, but as things are made.⁶⁷ While Bontempelli's discovery of the magic real occurs through his written stories and novels, it occurs within the making of drawings for Scarpa. But, since all architects draw, we ask the question: what makes Scarpa's way of drawing magic real? Through a close reading of his drawings, this work begins to unfold such a key question.

As Bontempelli saw the significance of architecture through his literary work, Scarpa pointed out several times in his lectures the necessity of literature for the architect's education.⁶⁸ This approach, where everyday life experiences are apprehended as stories or fables, not only resonates with Bontempelli's magic realism, and architects like Scarpa, but can be expanded by the work of another Italian thinker, Giambattista Vico. A Neapolitan philosopher, rhetorician and historian from the XII-XVIII century, Vico constructed an entire new science based on the principle that knowledge is an act of making.

⁶⁴ Marco Frascari expresses the strong friendship between the two in many of his papers, including in "The Well-Tempered drawings of a Reflective Architect."

⁶⁵ Scarpa mentioning Le Corbusier works many times in his lecture and interviews. He admired the Swiss architect and knew his work well. He also collected several Italian journals of the time. *Semi, A Lezione*.

⁶⁶ Visit to Carlo Scarpa's library today located at his son's house in Italy. Interview by author.

⁶⁷ Maria Antonietta Crippa, also addresses Massimo Bontempelli as one of Carlo Scarpa's favorite writers. Crippa, Maria Antonietta. *Carlo Scarpa: Theory Design Projects*, edited by Marina Loffi Randolin, (Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1986), 15.

⁶⁸ Eupalinos, or the Architect comment. Reference to many poets and writers in his lectures.

An Italian Wisdom

It is tempting to say that in life there is no strong and fast separation of reality and illusion, in the sense that reality is not given; rather, it is constructed – of experiences and perspectives that are individual as well as collective, perceived as well as decided, intuited as well as codified.

Lawrence Kimmel⁶⁹

In Scarpa's project for the Tolentini gate to the IUAV, the architect invokes Vico's famous dictum, *verum ipsum factum*, in an witty play of carved letters that addresses both the name of the school and what Scarpa believed the school's education should emphasize: drawing as a form of knowing [fig. 1.4].⁷⁰ Proclaimed by Vico in the XVIII century, the dictum signified that truth and that which is made are interchangeable, i.e. that humans can only know what they make. In his book *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*, published in 1710, Vico opens chapter one by expressing:

For the Latins, *verum* (the true) and *factum* (what is made) are interchangeable, or to use the customary language of the Schools, they are convertible. For them, the verb *intelligere* is the same as 'to read perfectly' and 'to have plain knowledge'. In addition, their *cogitare* was the same as our vernacular 'to think' (*pensare*) and 'to gather' (*andar raccogliendo*). [...] Therefore, just as *legere* (to read) is applied to one who combines the written elements of which words are composed, so *intelligere* (to understand) may be the combining of all parts of an object from which its most perfect idea may be expressed.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Lawrence Kimmel, "Reality and Illusion in the Work of Art" in *Human creation between reality and illusion* ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, Dordrecht (The Netherlands: Springer, 2005), xv.

⁷⁰ Semi, *A Lezione*.

⁷¹ Giambattista Vico. *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians: Unearthed from the Origins of the Latin Language: Including the Disputation with the Giornale De' Letterati D'italia*. trans. L. M. Palmer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 45-46.

Vico's key arguments were based in philological and historical research from hidden knowledge embedded in the Latin language. Vico's philosophy that man can only understand what he himself has made was a direct contradiction to Descartes' dictum: "I think, therefore I am." In Vico's view, thinking and being are not separated from having a mind and a body. Because we consist of a body and a mind, we can actually think, but thinking itself is not the cause or justification of being. This understanding, then, sees thinking as already embodied in making; that is, the mind is active, constructive and productive as it thinks through one's own body.⁷² Although Descartes's philosophy was so influential in subsequent centuries and even until today, including that of architecture,⁷³ Vico offers important illuminations to architectural issues that have remained in the darkness of analytical approaches to the field.⁷⁴ Opposed to later positivist views that created, as Alberto Pérez-Gómez has stated, "the illusion of the infinite capacity of human reason to control, dominate and put to work the forces of nature," Vico's synthetic approach operates in a realm where, while reason is finite and incapable to understand everything, poetic making is endless.⁷⁵ Especially relevant for architects' understanding of their project's reality is the importance of not-knowing, a realm that Vico always saw as productive. In referring to this, Vico writes:

...the human mind, because it is limited and external to everything else that is not itself, is confined to the outside edges of things only and, hence, can never gather them all together. For this very reason it can indeed think about reality, but it can not understand it fully. On that

⁷² Descartes sees certainty and truth as the same, whereas for Vico, one can be certain that one thinks, but this does not mean that he knows the truth of why he thinks. 'One thinks because one is made of mind of body. One is not made of mind and body because one thinks. Thinking is thus only a sign that one has a mind, but it is not the cause.' Vico, *Ancient Wisdom intro*, 22.

⁷³ Alberto Pérez-Gómez. *Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1983)

⁷⁴ Analytical thinking versus Synthetic thinking.

⁷⁵ Pérez-Gómez, *Crisis of Modern Science*, 273.

account the human mind partakes from reason, but it can not understand it fully.⁷⁶

Humans, Vico explains, will never be able to understand reality fully because so many elements that belong to the world we inhabit have not been created by us, especially ourselves. For this reason our understanding of reality becomes always and forever limited, but it is this very limitation that causes humans, out of a necessity and curiosity to understand, to make things.⁷⁷ And it is within this act of making that humans have discovered things they were not yet seeking and that have proven to be beneficial to them. Vico exemplifies this by saying:

For just as chemistry in its pursuit of a vain goal has unintentionally given birth to an arts that is effective and most beneficial to making – pharmaceuticals- so likewise the quest of human curiosity for a truth denied to man by nature has begotten two sciences that are most useful to society –arithmetic and geometry- and from these, in turn, it has begotten mechanics, the parent of all the arts necessary to mankind.⁷⁸

When one makes, the *factum*, one makes truth, the *verum*, i.e. what man discovers when he makes is not something that was already there, but something that has been made in the search for something that it is not completely known until it is made. This, of course, becomes relevant for the work of architects who design buildings, details and parts that do not yet exist. Not knowing, contrary to analytic approaches to architecture where the project results from the prescription of already known methods, principles or formulas, becomes under Vico's synthetic approach something that must be constructed. When something is constructed, it becomes discovered and thus its making becomes its own

⁷⁶ Vico, *Ancient Wisdom*, 46.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

reality that inevitably interacts with the world's reality which is never possible to attain.⁷⁹ Such a principle also enforces the magic-real understanding that there is always something hidden within reality, i.e., reality is always occulted to us. That which can be discovered becomes an artifice of human ingenuity that departs from a precise look at events, phenomena, or things which are tightly intertwined within things we have assumed to be true but we have not made. For this reason, magic realism proposed to re-make and re-look at the everyday life as a way to find truer truths through works of art, the only place where we could be closer to ourselves.

On this regard, Vico suggested that men must cultivate the quality of *ingenium*. Sometimes translated as ingenuity, *ingenium* is the faculty that "connects disparate and diverse things."⁸⁰ Described as the "mother wit," *ingenium* is a natural faculty to man and a faculty that can be refined. For Vico, imagination was the eye of *ingenium*, a thought that is emphasized and developed in his later and most important work *The New Science*.⁸¹ Judgment, which also is natural to man, is the eye of the intellect, and it participates in the things man makes. In this sense, making, relying on both *ingenium* and judgment, is neither arbitrary nor it is prescribed.

Verum ipsum factum constitutes a place of generation as well as a place of emergence. It thus creates a vital theoretical framework that accompanies, together with magic realism, the practice of drawing of the Venetian architect, Carlo Scarpa. In addition to Scarpa's reference to Vico's work at the IUAV entrance project, the architect kept a copy of *The New Science* in his library. Although intellectually linked, the relationship between the two in the development of this work should not be seen as primarily historical. Rather, Vico's

⁷⁹ Discovery is the result of luck; making, the result of hard work. I wanted, therefore, to have geometry taught through forms, not through numbers or species, so that, even if learning did but little to develop the wits, yet it would strengthen the imaginations, which is the eye of the mother wit, just as judgment is the eye of the intellect. Vico, *Ancient Wisdom*, 104.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 96-97.

⁸¹ Giambattista Vico. *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*. Translation of the Third Edition (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1968), 83,116.

philosophy acts as a framework from which to understand Scarpa's drawing practices and for constructing a theory of architectural representation.

From a practice to a theory of drawing

A person died in Italy; his family wanted to honor him because he had worked his way up from the lower class through force of will and hard work. So the family wished to honor him with a tomb. [...] In fact I had what I consider a rather social-minded idea: a place that belongs to everyone, where children could play for example.

Carlo Scarpa⁸²

On September 12 of 1968, the founder of the Italian design company Brion-vega, Giuseppe Brion, unexpectedly passed away in Genoa, Italy.⁸³ To honor him, his wife Onorina Tomasin wished to bring her dead husband to his natal place, San Vito d'Altivole, a small town in the province of Treviso. Tomasin commissioned the design of Brion's tomb to the Venetian architect Carlo Scarpa, a familiar figure among her and her relatives.⁸⁴ In 1969 she purchased a piece of land that initially consisted of 68 square meters and in matter of a few months grew to 2,400 square meters.⁸⁵ The design and increased scope of the work after the acquisition of the larger piece of land was needed to act as an extension of the old cemetery and to be accessible to everyone.⁸⁶ The now L-shaped site

⁸² Carlo Scarpa in *The Other City* – Vienna lecture, 19.

⁸³ Vitale Zanchettin. *Carlo Scarpa: Il complesso monumentale Brion* (Regione del Veneto: Marsilio, 2003), 17.

⁸⁴ Ennio Brion interview. *Ottagono magazine* / The Brion family was already familiar with the architect's work, which had begun to be published in important architectural magazines. Guido Pietropoli states that Scarpa knew the Brions from his visits to Asolo. Guido Pietropoli. *La Tomba Brion* (Pieve di Soglio, Treviso: Grafiche Vincenzo Bernardi, 2009), 7.

⁸⁵ "L'idea mi venne il giorno del funerale di mio marito, nel 1968. Lui amava molto l'arte, da ragazzo era andato in bicicletta a Milano per vedere il Castello Sforzesco, ammirava molto Scarpa. Quando lo incontrerai al funerale, mi venne l'idea di seppellirlo lì, vicino al suo stabilimento. Così andai in Comune, e scoprii che mio marito aveva già acquistato il terreno per la tomba tre mesi prima di morire." Onorina Brion In Michele Dzieduszycki "Era un abusivo, come tutti i geni," in *L'Europeo magazine* (Italy: Rizzoli, June 1984): 89.

⁸⁶ Document at *Archivio Di Stato di Treviso, Centro Archivio Carlo Scarpa* – Project description.

surrounded two sides of San Vito's existing cemetery. Later that year, Scarpa began work on what would become his last built project.

The Brion cemetery project consists of a record of more than 1,500 drawings and hundreds of documents, notes and copies, currently archived in Rome at the *MAXXI, Museo nazionale delle Arti del XXI secolo*. These drawings were constructed over a period of nine years. While a good amount of them were constructed in the initial years of the project, the architect kept drawing for the project until his death. Significantly, Scarpa is buried in a small piece of land between the old and the new parts of the cemetery, remaining forever bonded with one of the most mysterious projects he ever executed. Although past and more recent research on the Brion cemetery has brought to light several facts, dates and events that occurred while the cemetery was being built, very few theories have emerged from his way of working. There are very rich sources for understanding the events and conditions of the project, including valuable testimony by builders who worked for him, recollections by his colleagues and former students such as Guido Pietropoli and Franca Semi, and, finally, the illuminating anecdotes of his son Tobia.

The scope of this dissertation proposes a theory of architectural representation based on a close examination of Scarpa's drawing practices at the Brion cemetery. Informed by the literary practice of magic realism and Bontempelli's thoughts on the ontology of the real, it projects Scarpa's drawing practices into larger questions of theory by relying on Giambattista Vico's philosophy of knowledge as making. While the historical connections between these various characters and Scarpa will become evident, this work is primarily interested in constructing a specific theory of drawing that invites architects to realize the potential of drawing as a way of thinking. Although not primarily concerned with an assessment of current practices, it also acts as an inherent critique to predominant modes of positivist and analytical approaches to drawing. By enhancing and intensifying the presence of the everyday life within the practice of drawing, Scarpa was able to find a unique mode of working where various worlds come together and interact within the

making of the project. In addition, the architect considered every type of line, mark, stain or note as a possibility that may detour the design into another realm. The constant questioning to each mark that entered and left the drawing did not rely so much on drawing conventions or habitual drawing actions. Each mark was considered as a potential element that may be hiding something fruitful for the design. For this reason, many of Scarpa's drawings are full of copious marks such as: smudges, stains, erasure marks, notes, musical references, milimetric differences between one line and another one, everyday life scenes, familiar faces and different types of lines. The drawing itself becomes a world within the world where not clear boundaries exist between one and the other.

Figures Introduction

Fig. I.1

Franz Roh, photomontage

Title: Untitled

Negative Date: 1928–33, Print Date: 1928–39, Medium: Gelatin silver print, Dimensions: Image 5 3/4 × 8 3/4" (14.6 × 22.2 cm)

Place Taken: Munich

Credit Line: Thomas Walther Collection. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Norman F. Donant, by exchange

MoMA Accession Number 1833.2001, Copyright © Estate Franz Roh, Munich, Museum of Modern Art



Fig. I.2

Franz Roh, photograph

Title: Actress (Schauspielerin)

Negative Date: 1928–33, Print Date: 1930–35, Medium: Gelatin silver print, Dimensions: Image 6 1/8 × 8 3/8" (15.6 × 21.2 cm) Sheet 7 1/16 × 9 7/16" (17.9 × 24 cm)

Place Taken: Munich

Credit Line: Thomas Walther Collection. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Norman F. Donant, by exchange

MoMA Accession Number: 1834.2001, Copyright © Estate Franz Roh, Munich, Museum of Modern Art



Fig. I.3

Franz Roh, photograph

Title: Untitled

Negative Date: 1928–33 , Print Date: 1928–35, Medium: Gelatin silver print,

Dimensions: Image 8 1/16 × 5 9/16" (20.5 × 14.2 cm)

Place Taken: Munich

Credit Line: Thomas Walther Collection. Gift of Thomas Walther

MoMA Accession Number: 1834.2001, Copyright © Estate Franz Roh, Munich, Museum of Modern Art



Fig. I.4

Carlo Scarpa

Tolentini, IUAV entrance, Venice Italy

Photo by autor



Chapter 1

Initial Lines: a certain idea about ideas

The assayer is the one that tests the gold.

Ottavio Besomi¹

1. Key marks

The only certainty is that nothing is certain.

H. the Elder²

What is the role of initial architectural drawings in a project like the Brion cemetery, designed through more than 1,500 drawings? In a 1971 interview Carlo Scarpa was asked to describe the work of the architect.³ He explained that it has to do with technique. Invoking Le Corbusier, he remembers the Swiss architect mentioning that he was always carrying a pencil in his pocket and by ruminating over and thinking at various times, sometimes he would acquire an idea. He would then schematize it in a small piece of paper.⁴ Scarpa calls this act “*la prima punta*” of the design process, which translates into “the first clue.”⁵ The architect expresses, just like Le Corbusier, that he cannot simply begin to work in a project without an initial idea: “if an idea does not come to me, I cannot

¹ “*Il saggiaiore è l’artifice che saggia l’oro*” – to translate the word *saggia* as a verb into English is almost impossible. The right wrd is *provare*, which in Italian means both, to taste and to test. *Del Lungo I, Favaro a. La Prosa di Galileo per saggi criticamente disposti ad uso scolastico e di cultura*. Galilei, Galileo, 1564-1642. *Il saggiaiore* / Galileo Galilei; edizione critica e commento a cura di Ottavio Besomi e Mario Helbing (Roma: Antenore, 2005) introduction.

² “*Solum ut inter ista certum sit, nihil esse certi.*” Pliny. *Pliny: Natural history, Volume I, Books 1-2*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), sect. 5.

³ The word used for asking the question is *mestiere*, which in Italian also means craft, expertise and vocation. Maurizio Cascavilla. *Un’ora con Carlo Scarpa* interview, *RAI/Incontri* series, c. 1972, Cura di Gastone Favero. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4cB1vIFDcb4> Accessed on March, 11, 2015.

⁴ “*Che cos’e’ il mestiere di architetto? E’ un mestiere come un altro, ha la sua tecnica. I suoi modi di fare, potrei rispondere non so, come Le Corbusier che è stato chiesto: come fa a progettare? lui ha detto che tiene in tasca un piccolo pezzo di matita, rumina sopra, ci pensa diverso tempo e poi, magari, gli viene! l’idea e allora la schematizza [...] La Prima Punta. Ora, anch’io non riesco mica a lavorare direttamente subito. Se non mi viene l’idea non riesco a far nulla.*” Cascavilla, *Un Ora*, Minute: 0:15-0:55.

⁵ Ibid.

do anything.”⁶ As the monologue continues, Scarpa indicates that the idea and the making, or *fare* of the project, are distinct realms.⁷ However, while the idea is not the answer to the making of the project, it is essential for it, as he expresses several times: “You always want a certain idea.”⁸ After having a “certain idea,” one needs to make the project. Gesticulating over his drawing table, he explains this form of making by delineating with his hands the limits of the building site, the tools he uses, and some aspects of his way of drawing.⁹

The notion of having a ‘certain idea,’ emphasized by Scarpa, appears as a detail but a telling phrase. Clearly a ‘certain idea’ differs significantly from ‘having an idea that is certain.’¹⁰ The distinction lays precisely in their degree of certainty. A ‘certain idea’ can mean an undefined one, similar to when one begins a story ‘once upon a time...,’ it is particular and simultaneously unspecified.¹¹ In this common phrase for storytelling the time is a particular moment, yet it is also unknown. Oppositely, an idea that is certain is one already defined and known. This chapter is concerned with the openness of ‘certain ideas’ for architectural drawings instead of their definite certitude. ‘Certainty,’ when considered as something uncertain, darkens the paths towards both prescriptive and aleatory answers, challenging the architect to proceed by a third mean: the probable. Indeed, something ‘probable’ in its original meaning was not something aleatory,¹² but

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ The Italian word *fare* shares Latin origins with the word *fortuna*, suggesting that to make is to also accept the fate of something. Andrews, E. A., Charles Short, Charlton Thomas Lewis, and William Freund. *A Latin Dictionary* Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary. Rev., Enl., and in Great Part Rewritten. by Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

⁸ “*Sempre ti vuole una certa idea.*” in *Un Ora con Carlo Scarpa*. Minute: 1:17.

⁹ Scarpa praises in this portion of the interview his early education. He indicates that he uses very traditional tools like triangles, demonstrating with agility how he uses them by moving around the page with two of them and a pencil. Ibid.

¹⁰ Please note that the words ‘certain,’ ‘certainty’ or ‘certain idea’ typed with single quotations marks refer to the notion of the word that will be explored throughout the chapter, which is different from the word certain as something definite.

¹¹ In fact, the Latin word *certo* has an entry that means indefinite, and it is translated as similar to the word *quidam* which is translated as ‘a certain something or a somebody’ and also as a temporal clause such as ‘once a upon a time’ which is indefinite yet specific. Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*.

¹² Jacob Bernoulli, an 18th century mathematician, in his treatise on conjecture, *Ars Conjectandi*, announces that ‘probability is a degree of certainty and differs from absolute certainty as the part differs from the

something that needed to be believed and also demonstrated by means of observation.¹³ The 'probable' has a degree of 'certainty' that is similar to Scarpa's expression of the 'certain.' Scarpa's initial ideas, as we will see are not aleatory nor entirely deliberate. Rather, they linger in between these two conditions. So, why does the question of having a 'certain idea' matter?

The practice of architecture has been long dominated by the need and use of ideas.¹⁴ From ideas that embodied cosmic and human proportions to abstract conceptual and formal investigations, architects usually confront, when they begin a project, the question of how to begin.¹⁵ Vitruvius related the act of arrangement (*dispositio*) with that of ideas (*ideae*), and these *ideas* were non other than forms of expressing architecture through three types of graphic constructions: ichnography (plan), orthography (elevation), and scenography (perspective or section).¹⁶ The word 'idea' comes from Greek *eidos*, which means 'form' and its root *idein* means 'to see.'¹⁷ According to Vitruvius then, drawing was a form of seeing with both, mind and eyes. Common in the current practice of architecture, ideas are understood as doors capable of giving access to the design. Once an idea appears, it unlocks a door that promises to give admission to the rest of the project development. Just like in prescriptive parametric design projects, once parameters

whole.' Ian Hacking explains: 'He thinks certainty of two sorts, objective and subjective. Anything that will occur is already objectively certain. A historical dictionary gives a good reminder of what is going on here: the word "certain" once meant what was decided by the gods. If some events were objectively uncertain then the gods could not have made up their minds.' Ian Hacking. *The emergence of probability: a philosophical study of early ideas about probability, induction and statistical inference* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 145-146.

¹³ On book II, chapter 6 *On pozzolana*, Vitruvius uses the term *certum* to refer to the probable conditions of a site: "If, therefore, in these places there are found hot springs, and in all excavation, warm vapours, and if the very places are related by the ancients to have had fires ranging over the fields, it seems to be certain [Videtur esse certum] that by the violence of fire, moisture has been removed from the tufa and earth just as from lime in kilns." Vitruvius, *On Architecture* (1931), 103.

¹⁴ Erwin Panofsky. *Idea: A Concept in Art Theory*, trans. Joseph J. S. Peake (New York: Icon Editions, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1960).

¹⁵ Alberto Pérez-Gómez. "Questions of Representation: The Poetic Origin of Architecture" in *From Models to Drawings: Imagination and Representation in Architecture*, eds. Marco Frascari, Jonathan Hale, Bradley Starkey (London: Routledge, 2007), 11-22.

¹⁶ Vitruvius, *On Architecture* (1931), 25.

¹⁷ In Antiquity, philosophers like Cicero, Plato, Seneca and Plotinus described an idea as something seen in the mind, not with the eyes and as having a direct influence in the making of works of art. Panovsky, *Idea*, 11-32.

are input the rest follows to form the future edifice. The conceptual construction of a secure frame through which the architect's imagination enters, thanks to such idea, stabilizes possibilities and thus alleviates anxiety levels proper to the beginning of projects that yet do not exist. However, are there other forms of approaching ideas that may be more fertile for the architectural project?

Rather than considering an idea as a stable frame or door through which the architect enters the design, I would like to suggest the inverse, where the idea is a key of a door that has been lost or misplaced. On the one hand, this notion lessens the need to open something that appears as closed, since the door itself is not available. On the other hand, the idea as a 'key' increases the desire to know its origin, thus prolonging wonder and exploration. In fact the Latin root of the word 'key' is associated with the act of closing, *chiudere*, and not with the act of opening as we often think.¹⁸ In the original sense of closing, a key acts as the tool that keeps secrets safe, an artifact of concealment and not of revelation. Contrary to the dominating notion that an idea reveals the project to the architect, as if the idea is transparent and luminous, I would like to propose that an idea conceals the design, and thus generates wonder. Its role relies on allowing the architect to be curious about its past as a way to move towards its future, i.e. to explore from where ideas come from in order to discover what they will mean. The metaphorical location of 'a certain idea' in a portable wondering object, the key, creates a field of expectation and desire that is opposed to the anxiety of having a closed door that can only be opened with a very good idea.¹⁹

We must not underestimate the rhetorical subtlety of Scarpa's words. The word 'certain,' in Scarpa's thinking, suggests his 'idea' about ideas. The architect's instinct to refer to a

¹⁸ In Italian the word *chiudere* (to close) has a Latin origin in the word *claudo*: to shut something that is open, to close or to shut up. Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*.

¹⁹ Bernoulli in *Ars conjectandi* explains that the word "expectation" should be understood as: "the hope of getting the best diminished by the fear of getting the worst. Thus the value of our expectation always signifies something in the middle between the best we can hope for and the worst we can fear." Hacking, *The emergence of probability*, 144.

'certain idea' is indicative of a mode of thinking present within his way of working. This mode reminds us of the work of 18th century Italian rhetoric professor, philosopher and historian, Giambattista Vico, highly regarded by the architect. From books in his library to the use of Vico's famous axiom, *verum ipsum factum*, in one of his projects, Scarpa was aware of the significance of Vico's philology for architecture.²⁰ In his book, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*, Vico elucidates the open nature of ideas by expressing: "...as words are symbols and signs of ideas, so ideas are symbols and signs of things."²¹ In its Latin root, the word *certum* derives from the word *cerno*,²² which means: "to separate, to distinguish by the senses, mostly by the eyes and to make present."²³ It also means to foresee or discern future events. The 'certain idea' that Scarpa invokes, acts perhaps as a 'key' idea, that is, an object of wonder and, as we will see, of presaging.²⁴ Perhaps it is through the potentiality of the 'certain' that we can begin to understand why the initial drawings made for the Brion cemetery are so conclusive despite the fact that the project was completed over a period of 9 years.

Interestingly, Vico addresses notions of the 'certain' (*certum*), recounting it as a component related to the true, yet not as the truth itself (*verum*).²⁵ For the Italian philosopher, ideas are metaphysical forms and, from these, physical forms may be fashioned. These metaphysical forms, which he calls *genera*, are infinite and perfect, yet the way in which one finds them is not defined nor easily accessed.²⁶ He suggests that

²⁰ The axiom translates: "the true is the same as the made." See Donald Verene: *Knowledge of Things Human and Divine: Vico's New Science and "Finnegans Wake"* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 2003), 104.

²¹ Vico, *Ancient Wisdom*, 46.

²² Lewis & Short, *Latin Dictionary*.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Presage: *prae-* pre + *sāgīre* to perceive keenly or acutely, to feel or to perceive before hand, to have a presentiment of a thing – *sage*: is also connected with *sapere*: wisdom, with 'sage': the scented herb used for cooking, and with *sapore*: taste. Ibid.

²⁵ The concept of the *certum* appears first in the *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians* (1710) on Chapter Two: Genera or Ideas, in the *Universal Law* (1720) on books 82-83, and in the *New Science* (1744) on Book I: Establishment of Principles, CXI.

²⁶ "The finest orators are not those who wander among common places, but those who "stick to particulars." Again, the useful historians are not those who crudely narrate the facts and their general causes, but those who hunt the ultimately distinctive circumstances of the situations and uncover the causes peculiar to them." Vico, *Ancient Wisdom*, 60-61.

these ideas exist only if they are taken as something that makes the mind in a certain way formless, so that the ideas “can more easily take on specific forms according to different situations.”²⁷ However, when architects experience the feeling of having an idea, it might seem initially to be very clear, and yet when one tries to represent it or tell what it is, it never seems easy to do so. We must then ask: under which circumstances and how can this formless mind that Vico suggests, take on the forms of something specific?

While Vico’s famous axiom, *verum ipsum factum*, equates the true with the made, it is not immediately clear what this means for the practice of architecture.²⁸ Because architects are continuously confronted with drawing things that do not yet exist, the issue of making as ‘the true’ (*verum*) is not so easy to discern. It seems that the notion of the ‘certain’ could be a clue to the dilemma. Vico asserts that the ‘certain’ (*certum*) has two meanings: “what is explored and indubitable, and the peculiar as opposed to the common—as if what is peculiar [to me] were certain [for me], but what is common were, so to speak dubious.”²⁹ To have a ‘certain idea’ then, would be to have a particular thought that is not yet clear as to why it feels clear. It thus reveals itself, when physically manifested, as a clue that identifies the existence of concealed information without revealing it.

The ‘certain,’ suggests to be that which is particular and true within a system of conjecture, and not within a system of the already true (*verum*).³⁰ Conjectures join

²⁷ “That all things can be found in the infinite is evident, but in what way you are to find them there is not.” Ibid, 60.

²⁸ Donald Verene explains: “It is this everyday speech of the masses that most closely preserves the origin of the Latin language. Vico’s etymology is speculative. He is finding in the origins of Latin exactly the principles necessary for the argument of his metaphysics. *Verum* has the sense of what is ultimately true of something, the expression of its reality. *Factum* is the opposite of the modern concept of a “fact” - something that is simply considered to be there in the world. *Factum* (*facio, facere*) has the sense of something “done” or “made,” “produced” (in Italian, *fare, fatto*). The true for Vico is something that is made by mind, the principle of human or divine knowledge. Making, for Vico, is combining elements into a whole. The whole may be a word, an idea, or a thing. As *legere* (to read) is to combine written elements into words, so *intelligere* (to understand) is to combine in mind all the parts of a thing in order to express the most perfect idea of it.” Verene, *Knowledge of Things*, 104.

²⁹ Vico, *Ancient Wisdom*, 62.

³⁰ §321: “The certitude of the laws is an obscurity of judgment backed only by authority, so that we find them harsh in application, yet are obliged to apply them by their certitude. In good Latin *certum* means

together facts, indications, and signs into one place in order to generate thoughts. The meaning of the word simply means ‘to come together.’³¹ A conjecture within the language of auguries came to be the conclusion drawn from signs or omens.³² While conjectures are not the true (*verum*) in Vico’s terms, they can provide access to it through presaging, which acts as the *factum*, the made. The *verum ipsum factum* is then encountered through presaging the signs within the realm of the *certum*, which for Vico is a product of human consciousness.³³ The conjecture acts as a place or a kind of *templum*, a demarcated area within the sky to read the auspices and the stars.³⁴ To have a ‘certain idea’ is to build this ‘temple’ as a place where presages live. The ‘key idea’ found through presages does not open doors but rather induces wonder regarding its origin.

Returning to Scarpa’s thoughts, he adds that a ‘certain idea’ for the project must be drawn on a separate piece of paper, emphasizing that the place for the ‘idea’ is a different one from where the rest of the project drawings will be. By having the idea literally in his hand, Scarpa emphasizes its role as an artifact that calls for presaging. For the Brion cemetery, it is through the generation of thousands of drawings that he is going to read the presages of his own marks until he has forecast the fate of the building partially already made through the first lines (*certum*).

Paraphrasing another maxim the Venetian architect used to employ: “I draw in order to see,” more is revealed.³⁵ Vision for Scarpa was a way of knowing that which he was feeling

“particularized,” or, as the schools say, “individuated;” so that, in overelegant Latin, *certum* and *commune* are opposed to each other.” Vico, *New Science*, 83.

³¹ *Conicere*: to throw together, *conjecto*: to throw, cast, bring together, *conjectus*: (Lucretius) A crowding, connecting, or uniting together. Lewis & Short, *Latin Dictionary*.

³² *Ibid*.

³³ Donald Phillip Verene. *Vico's Science of Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 44.

³⁴ *Templum*: “area for auspices, shrine” (Livius Andronicus; temple, *-orum* ‘plank, purlin –Lucretius) Derivatives: *contemplare*: ‘to gaze at, observe.’ Probably from the root temp- ‘to stretch, string’, hence ‘stretching, measuring’. Lewis & Short, *Latin Dictionary*.

³⁵ “*voglio vedere le cose, non mi fido che di questo. Voglio vedere, e per questo disegno. Posso vedere un’immagine solo se la disegno*” Cited in Edoardo Gellner, Franco Mancuso. *Carlo Scarpa e Edoardo Gellner. La chiesa di Corte di Cadore* (Electa, Milano 2000), 38.

in his mind.³⁶ Thoughts are things that need to be made through the act of drawing. As Anita Seppilli expresses in her book on *Poetry and Magic*, in the works of magic “the act of thinking not only has demiurgic power, it always has a direct action: or rather, “is” an action.”³⁷ For Scarpa, drawing is similar to a magical act in that, as it is made it is performed and seen. During a lecture given at the IUAV (*Università IUAV di Venezia*) the architect stated: “the eye sees and interprets, and then can memorize a light, a transparency, a color, a sensation...”³⁸ Thinking, in this sense, has a creative power only as an embodied action. In addition, seeing is considered as a mnemonic power.

It would seem that the entire design beginning relies on something that is almost impossible: to draw something invisible that is certain in its capacity of being uncertain and, yet, is something that can be felt! It could be inferred that a ‘certain idea’ is not something that Scarpa sees in his mind but something closer to a feeling, a presentiment manifested through drawing. Such a drawing provides him with clues that only then he can see and interpret. In fact, this is substantiated by Scarpa’s own words when on one occasion he was asked why he designed some details the way he did. He obscurely responded by stating that was just a coquetry, as if he could not really explain why he did it, however such details stand in full correspondence and sympathy with the projects.³⁹ The word he uses, surprisingly is *civetteria*,⁴⁰ which besides meaning a form of flirtation, derives from the word *civetta*, a special bird, similar to an owl, considered sacred in

³⁶ I purposely join the words ‘thinking’ with ‘corporeality’ to refer to Vico’s notion that the first poet’s mind was corporeal and the imagination was buried in the body. Charles Peirce notion of ‘not having thoughts’ but ‘being thoughts’ also refers to this notion. Charles S. Peirce “How to Make Our Ideas Clear,” *Popular Science Monthly* 12 (January 1878): 286-302.

³⁷ “L’atto del pensiero non ha solo potenza demiurgica, esso ha sempre un’azione diretta: o per dir meglio, “è” un’azione.” Anita Seppilli. *Poesia e magia*. 3a ed. riv. (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1982) 126. Translation by author.

³⁸ Semi. *A lezione*, 41. Translation by author.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 269.

⁴⁰ In Carlo Battisti’s, *Etimology Dictionary*, book that Scarpa would respect and consult. The origin of the word is also related to ‘giocare’ to play and also to a young cow: ‘giovenca’. Carlo Battisti. *Dizionario etimologico italiano*, ed. Giovanni Alessio (Firenze, Barbèra, 1950-57), Vol. 2.

ancient Greece.⁴¹ This bird had the power to foresee the future, so it was considered a bird of divination and was also associated with prudence and surveillance. Coquetries or flirtations are, in fact, demonstrations of feelings that are hidden yet evident through subtle signs. In fact, the most seducing form of flirtation is the one that attempts to hide as many clues as possible, and by hiding, it reveals. The architect seems to indicate with his *civetteria* that even when he has finally made something, he cannot, by discursive thought, explain why the detail was right. For this reason he needs to appeal to a feeling rather than to a rational explanation.

We must not confuse Scarpa's initial signs or sketches for the Brion project with vagueness or lack of clarity. In fact the initial drawings that the architect makes show very clear architectural intentions, full of specifications and with a general understanding of the total design, even when compared with the built edifice today. So how is this possible? How can he be so certain and yet so uncertain about what he is drawing? Perhaps the *certum* is a field of particularities that one feels and makes, a kind of flirtation to one's own uncertainties. As Donald Kunze has stated: "the *certum* is like when you are traveling in a country whose language you don't understand: ALL the signs seem important even though most of them are just advertisements."⁴² Or, as Howard Tuttle explains:

The Rosetta stone...first contained graphic material that was merely marks upon a surface – a sensory *certum*. Then these undecipherable symbols were correlated with other symbols whose meaning was understood. The *factum* of the stone was attained when Champollion penetrated the inner significance of hieroglyphics by his philological methods. Here in philology

⁴¹ Battaglia, Salvatore. Grande dizionario della lingua italiana. Indice degli autori citati nei volumi III. (Torino: UTET, 1973) "Alla civetta attribuivano il Greci la cognizione delle future cose, e però l'avevano consacrata a Minerva, come simbolo della prudenza e della vigilanza."

⁴² Donald Kunze. August, 2014 correspondence. I thank Donald Kunze, a Vico scholar and former student of Donale Verene, for helping me in my quest to discover and understand aspects of the *certum* in the work of Giambattista Vico.

the spirit of the creator became present to the spirit of the interpreter.
Knower and object became one.⁴³

Possibly, in works of architecture, the 'certain' is the means by which one makes a non-certain conjecture about the project. In recollecting from where these drawn ideas originated, in addition to knowing more about the particularities of the project, it is found that some uncertainties were after all certain. However, this can be only discovered if a full journey through 'certainties' has been transited.

Perhaps the notion of the 'certain' can explain the mystery of Scarpa's initial sketches for the Brion cemetery being both minimally and greatly different from those made toward the end of the project, although within this differences a period of 9 years exists. The ambiguous process of conjecturing and recollecting the past in order to discover the future is where the notion of the 'certain' relies.⁴⁴ Thinking that the project already exists as the ideas are drawn creates a very different approach to the work, because in such instances the architect is not concerned with finding the perfect key, but with following clues, traces, and recollections. The *certum* makes available the presence of signs, marks and sketches as presages that can be manifested because they exist in the ambiguous realm of being true and not true, of being felt and being thought. For these reasons the architect does fear them but also relies on them fully. As Vico clearly states in his *New Science*, "the order of ideas must follow the order of things," so it is only by having presages (*certum*) manifested within the drawing, that the true (*verum*) can be accessed

⁴³ For Vico all cultural creations are apprehended first as particular and immediate sense residues, which he called the *certum*. But for Vico the new science must be able to interpret from initial sensory state the symbolic significance of the object. Now we are at the stage of the *factum*. Howard N. Tuttle. "The Cultural World in Vico and Dilthey" in *Giambattista Vico's science of humanity*, eds. Giorgio Tagliacozzo and Donald Phillip Verene; consulting ed., Isaiah Berlin ... [et al.]; special advisors Ernesto Grassi ... [et al.] (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, c1976), 246.

⁴⁴ "For the Latins, *verum* (the true) and *factum* (what is made) are interchangeable, or to use the customary language of the Schools, they are convertible. For them, the verb *intelligere* is the same as "to read perfectly" and "to have plain knowledge." In addition, their *cogitare* was the same as our vernacular "to think" (*pensare*) and "to gather" (*andar raccogliendo*)." Vico, *Ancient Wisdom*, 46.

through making (*factum*).⁴⁵ The *certum* is a realm that accepts ambiguity without having to choose or discard anything. It offers a place where all signs have value and where all signs are read as possible. When designing a new project or building, there is an ambivalent movement, a change of roles between what an idea is and what the thing could be. The too fast and too easy reification of the idea as thing becomes a dangerous path for architects. The *certum*, instead, propagates a field where things must be discovered and ideas must be traced and interpreted.

In the case of Scarpa, the construction of presages to discover the fate of the building is skillfully performed in several ways. First, the architect had the habit of drawing copiously every day of his life and drawing was the way by which he understood the world.⁴⁶ Second, despite the similarities between initial sketches and final edifice, Scarpa was known for taking many years to finish a project, something that would explain the practice of deciphering that he exercised. And third, his dedicated work within existing buildings gave acuteness and trained his eye in recognizing values, details and peculiarities usually unseen to most people.⁴⁷

The *certum's* potential can be further illustrated with an undated drawing that Scarpa made. This drawing is not associated with any particular project; in fact, it is not technically an architectural drawing. [fig. 1.1] It is constructed with a green ink pen and most of the lines are drawn with the same intensity on a sheet of cream-colored Fabriano paper. The drawing shows a group of wiggles aligned within a rectangular, un-delineated shape in the middle of the sheet. The wiggles are closer together at the top of the sheet where the head of a woman emerges sticking out sympathetically from the group of

⁴⁵ "This was the order of human things: first the forests, after that the huts, thence the villages, next the cities and finally the academies." Ibid., 70.

⁴⁶ Archived at Treviso and Rome (MAXXI) all kinds of miscellaneous drawings over receipts, toilet paper, prescriptions, cigarette labels, business cards, etc., indicate Scarpa's practice of drawing as an everyday activity.

⁴⁷ Marco Frascari used to tell the story of how Scarpa would visit the construction site at night with a flashlight or candle to see better certain details that during daylight would blend within the rest of the field of vision. Marco Frascari lectures at WAAC, VT, 2004.

wiggles. She is looking away, towards the left. Only half of her body is drawn, as if the other part would be hidden within the wiggles. Because she is leaning slightly to the left, her breast is visible in profile as she is naked. In one of Scarpa's lectures given at the IUAV in 1972, Scarpa states that marks in a drawing act as:

...surprises of the imaginative plot of signs that come, sometimes from ideas, if one has the intuition to understand everyday life, and this type of intuition is equivalent to that which allows one to construct many thoughts while looking at the hair of a woman.⁴⁸

This elegant description of what an idea is constitutes the potential of the *certum*. Understanding the *certum* as the hair of a woman, full of potentiality, is how I suggest Scarpa constructed his first ideas for the Brion cemetery. Curiously, in the black book where he started its design, a drawing of the long hair of a woman appears on page #117, next to which he writes: *I capelli di Alison di Londra, Aprile 1969*. [fig. 1.2]

2. Discerning the past | Concerning the future

We'll find him," Luciana went on, "by following the signs in the stars. I understand them all. Look at them. Maybe there are some up there you'll recognize, too. What is it?"

"Nothing. I don't see anything. I don't understand anything. I can't even see the sky any more. The only think I see is a mist. Forgive me."

"Let me take your hand. Why are you trembling? Come, don't give up, Arianna. We have to find him. But it takes real faith. If you doubt, we won't find him.

from *The Boy with Two Mothers*, novel by Massimo Bontempelli⁴⁹

⁴⁸ "e dalle sorprese dell'immaginifica trama di segni che vengono, qualche volta vengono delle idee, se uno ha intuit da capire le cose della vita, l'intuizione che permette di far tanti pensieri anche guardando la capigliatura di una donna" Semi, *A Lezione*. 225. Translation by author.

⁴⁹ Bontempelli, Massimo, 1878-1960. *Separations: two novels of mothers and children*, trans. Estelle Gilson, 1st ed. Kingston (NY: McPherson & Co., 2000), 161-162.

Scarpa initiated some of the drawings for the Brion cemetery project in a black bound sketchbook known today as ‘the black book’, ‘*il quaderno nero*’, by scholars and archivists.⁵⁰ The same year that the project started the architect traveled to London for the exhibition ‘Frescoes from Florence’ that he assembled.⁵¹ The drawing of Alison previously mentioned, suggests that maybe he had this portable and easy-to-carry sketchbook with him during the trip.⁵² While it may seem sometimes that Scarpa began his designs from a careful origin in details, I would like to contend a quite different case that emerges from looking at his sketchbook, where both, very general and very particular elements seem to hold equally important values for the beginning of the project. Skilled in moving back and forth between the two scales, he makes available, through copious amounts of drawings, a field of graphic clues that allows him to discover the design. Several pages within the black book show general drawings about the entire scope of the cemetery, accurately showing its final construction. Although the project took so long to reach completion,⁵³ the general layout of the cemetery was defined within the first 2 years of the work.⁵⁴ Between 1971 and 1972 almost all the concrete work had been cast.⁵⁵ In fact, Scarpa commissioned a model of the Brion cemetery and presented it to the client just a few months after the design had begun.⁵⁶ [fig. 1.3] In less than 6 months he ‘knew’ what the project was going to be, but it took him 9 years to complete its design and build it.

⁵⁰ Guido Pietropoli, architect and Scarpa’s collaborator in multiple projects including the Brion cemetery, has offered in multiple events key information of the project, allowing scholars and archivist to find some chronological order within the work.

⁵¹ Zanchettin, Vitale. *Il complesso monumentale Brion*. (Regione del Veneto: Marsilio, 2003), 17.

⁵² The black book’s dimensions are close to the A4 format (21x29,7cm).

⁵³ Scarpa did not considered the project to be finished, but he passed away in 1978 before he could see it, to his eyes, finished. Interview by author with Guido Pietropoli. (Rovigo, June 2013).

⁵⁴ Zanchettin, *Il complesso*, 201-204.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ The model of the Brion cemetery design is today kept at the RIBA Library Drawings Collection in London, UK.

On page #12 of the black book, the architect draws several parts of the cemetery containing specific information that coincides, quite closely, with the built work today existing at San Vito d'Altivole. On one side of the page various sketches appear isolated one from others. [fig. 1.4] Most of these sketches are drawn with blue ink pen and just a few of them with pencil, possibly the same pencil used later on the other side. The small sketches are primarily concerned with the shape of what Scarpa called the *arcosolium*. An *arcosolium* was an ancient arched, recessed structure used for entombment, and it is here depicted in several possible shapes. Most of the configurations shown are not yet curved, as the final design will show. Some of the sketches, however, present a triangular structure working as a beam. [fig. 1.5] Other sketches are depicted as the joining of two beams that meet at the center and would conform to the structural forces of a three-point arch. [fig. 1.6] In all the cases, the structure hovers over the place where the individual tombs of Giuseppe Brion and Onorina Tomasin are today located, siting delicately on the ground through a pin connection detail.

In a different sketch on the page, there is an inked delineation of the entire site showing where the different buildings of the project will be placed within the L shape site. [fig. 1.7] This sketch is also very accurate with respect to the final locations of the various structures of the project. All the sketches on this page appear as if the architect is trying to acquire a general sense of the project's full scope. This is noticeable not only because of their general and synthetic shape, but also because they are drawn very small on the page and in a very diagrammatic fashion. Page #12 is one of the few in the black book where the shape of the *arcosolium* is quite different from the final design, suggesting that this may be one of the very first drawings the architect made. Surprisingly, as one of the first drawings, it is quite clear that there is a great correspondence with the final project. The constellation of twinkling diagrams contrasts with detailed architectural parts on the other side of the page.

A dense field of marks, lines, words and symbols flow visually around this side, physically intertwined through overlapping lines. [fig. 1.8] Almost all the drawings on this page have been rendered in pencil. The majority of the pencil lines have been drawn with the same intensity, suggesting that a constant degree of attention characterizes the construction of these graphic thoughts.⁵⁷ The drawings are also concerned with the *arcosolium*, which in this page appear closer to its final design. This becomes evident from the only use of ink present on the page. Using as a reference a sketch from the other side, the architect traces within its boundaries, a curved plane that resembles the actual *arcosolium* beam and differentiates greatly from the sketch from which he is tracing. [fig. 1.9] The lightness of the sketchbook pages and the strength with which the pen was pressed make the first drawing present on the other side, allowing the architect to recollect and change it as he is re-seeing it. As if following the clues he has set up for himself, Scarpa finds new ways, each time, to read his own marks.

Another indication of the curvature of the *arcosolium* structure is drawn right below the ink sketch. The small drawing is diagrammatic. There is a horizontal pencil line indicating the floor plane, which descends into another horizontal line, indicating a lower floor level. [fig. 1.10] From this sunken area, very fast and wiggly lines ascend upwards without any specific shape from the center of the floor. A curved line arches over all these lines and is represented with an arrow that goes from right to left. The line indicates the trajectory of an arrow crossing over the field of ascending lines from a sunken floor. This expressive drawing is indicative of clues that Scarpa will keep revisiting making them finally present in the edifice.

The sunken floor of the area of the *arcosolium*, for example, is a detail that remained in the final design. The presence of the wiggly lines ascending, are quite literally felt at the

⁵⁷ The practice of emphasizing one line over other to remark parts of the design was very common in the work of Carlo Scarpa. In the process of design he would draw many kinds of lines to make the drawing validating certain parts by rendering them stronger. According to Franca Semi, Scarpa would only make a line really strong if he was certain of the design he was making. Interview by author with Franca Semi (Venice, June 2013).

center of the *arcosolium* thanks to the flow of air currents. This is not a metaphor, it is an actual physical principle that occurs thanks to the currents of air passing across the semi-covered area that is sunken. In addition, because the entire floor of this area slopes towards the center, Scarpa added a series of water drains that are also, inevitably, vents. The feeling of air moving vertically occurs thanks to these groups of drains/vents located at the heart of the floor. These drains not only receive water, they create an air pressure difference within the currents of air trapped under the roof that are subtly but clearly felt while standing at the center. Scarpa, in fact, dedicated several drawings to exploring how these drains could exist. Although he could have solved the drainage problem with just one opening, he designed five. A central one, larger than the others, is incorporated into the design of the floor pattern.⁵⁸ [fig. 1.11] The other four, copiously drawn, are very small but distinct ones, made out of bronze. [fig. 1.12 - fig. 1.13] The presence of air, from the very beginning of the project, was considered as a key element in the design. This is noticed today at the site, and it is present in this initial set of sketches. Not only did Scarpa suggest these flowing lines in the drawing as air, but he also wrote the word *aria* (air) in another sketch on the same page. This time, the sketch shows a schematic plan of the *arcosolium* and the rest of the complex [fig. 1.14] While in previous drawings the shape of the *arcosolium* floor was rectangular, by this time it has become circular. Next to the circular floor, Scarpa draws an arrow and writes: *circolazione aria* (circulation of air). His note highlights the previous evidence of air having a determining role in the experience of the place.

Also on this sketch, Scarpa makes a drawing of the sun and indicates the south facing side. The tombs are oriented in this very initial drawing as well as in the built work with the heads of the bodies facing north. Onorina is aligned with the east and Giuseppe with the west. In another small plan drawing on this page Scarpa emphasizes these positions. [fig. 1.15] By placing the bodies as such, both tombs will presence the trajectory of the sun

⁵⁸ Guido Pietropoli has suggested that the openings are symbols of keys. Perhaps a notion that poses the *arcosolium* as a place giving access to another realm. Interview by author to Guido Pietropoli. (Rovigo, June 2013).

from the south side, while the east and west sunlight is eluded by the presence of the arched structure of the *arcosolium*. In addition, because the heads of the bodies are facing north, a person in between, touching both tombs as indicated in Scarpa's sketch, will also be, hypothetically, facing north at the same time that his/her shadow is being absorbed within the shadow of the *arcosolium* roof. [fig. 1.16] It is long known that a person who does not have shadow is a person that is dead.⁵⁹ The shadow of the living becomes, through the architectural experience, one with the shadow of the deceased. The east and west orientations, marked by the dead bodies and blocked by the structure of the roof, clearly shields the experiences of the sun rising, and sun setting. The light that the dead and living bodies experience at the *arcosolium* is concerned with the trajectory of the sun, a reminder of the temporality of life.

Towards the left of the same page, a much larger drawing inscribes a circle that corresponds to the *arcosolium* floor. This one is noted by Scarpa as an *isola de morti* (island of the dead), which of course is the area isolated from the project to honor the dead bodies of the Giuseppe and Onorina. [fig. 1.17] If in the middle of the ocean, an island signifies life for the living. In the middle of the land, could a place full of water signify death? One of the thoughts of the architect was to place the tombs over a circular area of water, like it is seen in some of posterior drawings. [fig. 1.18] This design however, could not be accomplished because the client did not approve it. Still, by sinking the floor of the entire area, Scarpa secures the temporal permanence of water within the confinements of the island. It is important to note that the architect's thinking often inverts the assumed order of things. An island, for him, may be not that which stands alone, but that which sits within. The notion of the island is developed throughout the project as that which separates and joins ambiguous realms - death and life, distance and nearness, openness and enclosure, above and below.

⁵⁹ Victor Ieronim Stoichiță. *A Short History of the Shadow* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997).

Close to the previously examined sketch, two more drawings provide clues to later discoveries. In one of them, Scarpa indicates that something ought to be read when approaching the tombs of the Brion couple. [fig. 1.19] The design suggests that a prayer would be delivered from a pedestal standing at each side of the tombs. The prayer would be impressed in gold on a piece of parchment held by a solid piece of ebony wood. The joint between the two is rendered mobile allowing the 'page' to be turned. While the highly specific detail was not included in the final design, it had, nevertheless, its repercussions for it. The act of reading remained within the project through the colorful glass and gold tiles in the *arcosolium* ceiling. [fig. 1.20] These tiles, formed by two thin pieces of colored glass and a thin sheet of gold leaf slid in between create a vibrant reaction to one's vision, provoking an attention similar to the act of reading.⁶⁰ According to Pietropoli, Scarpa thought that this mixing of materials and colors – gold, silver, blue and green – would create a sparkling effect on vision.

Curiously, in a reflected ceiling plan drawing of the *arcosolium*, Scarpa draws himself to scale, centered on one side of the structure, looking at the tiles which do not follow the projection of the curved beams but have been drawn as if the ceiling was flat. [fig. 1.21] By inverting the relationships between above and below, Scarpa's drawing emphasizes the below and above conditions of his thinking. In the drawing the architect reads the ceiling configuration as if he is standing on the ground, emphasizing the physical impossibility of this situation, unless the ceiling drawing would be a reflection of him holding a mirror, or looking at water. The ambiguity of the drawing accepts and demonstrates that, in fact, the ceiling affects how we read the floor and vice versa. The ancient practice of reading the sky (above) and the earth (below) has its origins, as we have seen, in the word *templum*.⁶¹ The word contemplation, Vico tells us, is a combination of the words *coelum*, sky, and the *templum*, area designated in the sky for reading auguries.⁶² Contrary to modern notions of

⁶⁰ I thank Guido Pietropoli for showing me an actual ceiling tile and explaining, always so insightfully and patiently, how these were made and what Scarpa thought of them.

⁶¹ Lewis & Short, *Latin Dictionary*.

⁶² Vico, *New Science*, 391.

contemplation as a passive state, Scarpa seems to have appealed to early forms of contemplation where the active reading of signs within auspices is a form of discovering.

The specified ebony wood for the prayer's pedestal in the drawing also remains present in the final project. [fig. 1.8] In a place for reading, the wood is placed in the tombs area where the names of the dead are inscribed with ivory, a material that just like parchment belongs to an animal's body. While I am not stating that these early details translate directly into final ones, it is relevant to show the sympathy existing between Scarpa's initial ideas and the details found today in the project in order to further expand on the potentiality of the 'certain' as a complex system for reading and making drawings.

One last sketch from this page [fig. 1.8] is concerned with the tombs themselves. [fig. 1.22] Drawing just one of them as a monolithic structure formed by two pieces, the base of which one has an opening in the lower part, the architect traces two parallel lines that depart from the profile of the base and cross over the floor. The detail suggests a physical connection between the two tombs. This sketch, made as a perspective, emphasizes the two lines showing both the tombs' base profile and the floor where they sit. Contiguous to this drawing, the architect writes: '*simbolo de unione*' (symbol of union). In several subsequent drawings, such symbol becomes a band of black and white tiles crossing from one side of the circular floor to the other, emphasizing the entire diameter of the footprint. [fig. 1.23] Several other sketches are contained within this portion of page #12, but enough has been said to demonstrate how generalities and particularities are equally concerning for the architect.

Through these examples it is shown how Scarpa's 'certain idea' is transformed into a divinatory practice for making a project that is certain. His client, Onorina Brion elucidates aspects of Scarpa's way of working that demonstrate the key importance of grasping signs at any given moment to discover the design:

I have been good because I have understood Scarpa, I have indulged him. I never made money an issue. Sometimes he disappeared and when I phoned he altered his voice and pretended to be another person. Then he returned. I remember traveling in the car with him, he would fall asleep for a moment, and then he would wake up and draw something on a box of matches. He said that certain ideas were coming while dreaming.⁶³

The acts of discerning and concerning are already in action with the first marks he makes. These acts are possible through the potentiality of the *certum*, which makes available every sign as possibly determining. The acts of discerning and concerning denote two actions: to distinguish, separate or foretell; and also to care, to consider or to be attentive to a sign.⁶⁴ The *certum*, which can manifest itself in infinite marks, traces and drawings, requires the architect to be skilled at reading, selecting and finding the project within a sea of clues.

3. Sagacious Marks

Heaven is all one fearful presage,

And the world itself a riddle.

Pedro Calderon de la Barca⁶⁵

⁶³ Testimony by Onorina Brion: *“Io sono stata brava, perché ho capito Scarpa, l’ho assecondato. Non gli ho mai fatto delle questioni di denaro. Qualche volta lui spariva e quando gli telefonavo alterava la voce e fingeva di essere un altro. Poi tornava. Ricordo che viaggiava in macchina con me, poi se addormentava un momento, poi si svegliava e disegnava qualcosa dietro una scatola di fiammiferi. Diceva che certe idee venivano in sogno.”* Michele Dzieduszycki. “Era un abusivo, come tutti i geni” in *L’Europeo*, Number 25, (Milan: Rizzoli Editore, June 23 1984): 89. Translation by author.

⁶⁴ Lewis & Short, *Latin Dictionary*.

⁶⁵ *‘Tutto il mondo è un prodigio e tutto il cielo è un presagio.’* This quote appears in the opening page of Massimo Bontempelli’s *L’Aventura Novecentista*, 1938 edition. Carlo Scarpa owned this book and in his copy he encircled de la Barca’s quote in pencil. The quote belongs to the ending verses of Calderon de la Barca’s play *Life is a Dream* (1635).

In order to read the presages that the field of the *certum* provides within the practice of architecture, we must examine thoroughly what presages are and how they behave. Despite the ancient practice of divination, I attempt to vindicate the relevancy of reading signs for the architectural drawing and for everyday life in general. As Carlo Ginzburg has pointed out, the reading of clues may have began, in fact, in everyday practices such as hunting or medicine. The philosopher explains that:

Man has been a hunter for thousands of years. In the course of countless chases he learned to reconstruct the shapes and movements of his invisible prey from tracks on the ground, broken branches, excrement, tufts of hair, entangled feathers, stagnating odors. He learned to sniff out, record, interpret, and classify such infinitesimal traces as trails of spittle. He learned how to execute complex mental operations with lightning speed, in the depth of a forest or in a prairie with its hidden dangers.⁶⁶

For Vico, divination was the first wisdom of men, it derived from particularities and signs that the field of the *certum* made available for reading. Vico also addressed the reading of signs as related to everyday life in his definition of curiosity:

Curiosity – that inborn property of man, daughter of ignorance and mother of knowledge – when wonder wakens our mind, has the habit, wherever it sees some extraordinary phenomenon of nature, a comet for example, a sun-dog, or a midday star, of asking straightaway what it means.⁶⁷

While divination in the original sense is an unreachable notion for how most live today, it is not unreachable if we think of it as a process of inverting the signs of everyday life into

⁶⁶ Carlo Ginzburg. *Clues, Myth and the Historical Method*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi. (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1986), 102.

⁶⁷ Vico, *New Science*, 189.

clues for something that may be otherwise hidden. In fact, this was precisely the maxim introduced in the XX century by the art and literary movements of magic realism. Artists and writers belonging to this new line of thinking declared that reality needed to be understood as magic-real, an oxymoronic axiom that intended to conceal and reveal simultaneously the mysteries within everyday life events, artifacts and phenomena. The German art historian, Franz Roh, declared in 1925: "...with the word 'magic' as opposed to 'mystic,' I wish to indicate that the mystery does not descend to the represented world, but rather hides and palpitates behind it."⁶⁸ Rejecting the artistic imperative of extraordinary or divine events in the creative act, Roh inferred that the magical is already part of the real, and the way to access to this is simply by seeing the clues that have been hidden within everyday life. By nature oxymoronic, magic realism was founded on the duality of two seemingly different realms (reality and magic) precisely to open up a field for wonder and reflection rooted in an apparent 'unimportant' and 'given' occurrence: our everyday life.

An example of this can be found in Scarpa's words when he describes the city of Venice through a very particular set of details. Scarpa describes it as being composed of three key elements: the first are the crowns (*coronamenti*), which he identified as the azure skies; the second are the building cornices (*cornici*), which he called the building's "flames" and were characterized by the whiteness of limestone; and the third are the red-legged seagulls (*gabbiani*), which populated the texture of the city floors.⁶⁹ These three elements conglomerate to make the city 'marvelous'. The unusual details Scarpa chooses to describe Venice are telling of his mode of capturing aspects of the world that so often go unnoticed. Roh, however, described the magic-real artist as the one who not only contemplates and knows, but also is an artist of action.⁷⁰ Such statement becomes particularly relevant when investigating Scarpa's own actions within the Brion cemetery. Because this project is one of the few buildings the Venetian architect designed as stand-

⁶⁸ Roh, "Magic Realism," 15.

⁶⁹ Semi, *A Lezione*, 9- 21.

⁷⁰ Roh, "Magic Realism," 23.

alone, it demonstrates more directly the role and potential of initial ideas understood as Vico's *certum*.

After Roh's declaration of magic-realism in Germany, the Italian writer Massimo Bontempelli would express within the field of literature: "...the real norm of the art of narration is to describe the dream as if it were reality, and the reality as if it were a dream."⁷¹ Somewhat different to Roh's notion, Bontempelli became a very influential figure for magic-realism in Italy producing many essays, novels and articles that were significant to architects, artists and writers. He believed that if reality can be re-told as a dream, following strictly all its signs, one could achieve a truer encounter between the work and life.⁷² Magic-realism was not understood as something that one applies to things; it is how we experience the world regardless, thus we must become aware of it through imagination. Bontempelli highlights imagination as the only tool for magic-realism. Imagination, however, does not refer to a vague, imprecise territory, but a very precise one, closer to the practice of divining auspices.⁷³

Presages allow creative processes when there is not an existing reality to read, but there is a need to read a reality. The word presage has an ambiguous meaning. Niccolò Tommaseo, an Italian linguist, makes the distinction between an augury and a presage. He states that an augur is an external clue and that a presage is an internal feeling.⁷⁴ However, the presage has the condition of being both, internal, as a presentiment; and external, as the manifestation of a mark, sign, trace or something physical in the world that acts as an auspice. The word is formed by the word 'sage,' meaning acuteness or to

⁷¹ "La vera norma dell'arte narrativa è questa: raccontare il sogno come se fosse realtà e la realtà come se fosse un sogno." Bontempelli, *Realismo Magico*, 51. Translation by author.

⁷² "L'immaginazione non è il fiorire dell'arbitrario, e molto meno dell'impreciso. Precisione realistica di contorni, solidità di materia ben poggiata sul suolo; e intorno come un'atmosfera di magia che faccia sentire, traverso un'inquietudine intensa, quasi un'altra dimensione in cui la vita nostra si proietta." Bontempelli, *Realismo Magico*, 72. Translation by author.

⁷³ "l'arte vuol dire risolvere, o scrutare, o esprimere il proprio mistero; e ogni creatore trae speciali conseguenze e forme da questo travaglio; e ogni secolo viene a trovare raggruppati i suoi poeti più diversi secondo strane somiglianze." Ibid., 71-72. Translation by author.

⁷⁴ Carmine Di Biase. *Il Dizionario Dei Sinonimi Di Niccolò Tommaseo* (Napoli: Federico & Ardia, 1990).

perceive keenly, and from this one we obtain the word sagacity.⁷⁵ Sagacity is a quality that denotes wisdom from experience. In his book *On Divination*, Cicero refers to the words presage and sage on several occasions. The philosopher indicates that the act of presaging requires ability and technique, and it is not something that comes from a divine mandate (presentiment), but something that requires skillfulness to detect and to read (auspices). This is why witches were called *saga*, because they knew but also wanted to know. This name is also given to dogs that thanks to their very acute noses are capable of finding very subtle traces within the world. In Cicero's words:

Common usage would not have rashly hallowed the use of the word *praesagire*, if it did not correspond to some reality:

As I was leaving home, my soul presaged that I was leaving in vain.

Sagire means to have a sharp perception, from which old women are called *sagae*, because they want to know much, and dogs are called *sagaces*. So the person who has the knowledge (*sagit*) of something before it happens is said to 'presage' (*praesagire*), that is to perceive the future in advance.⁷⁶

In defining what divination is, Cicero uses two key terms 'presentiment' (*praesensio*) as an awareness of what may happen, and 'knowledge' (*scientia*), as something that needs to be exercised, learned and developed.⁷⁷ In his commentary on *De Divinatione* David Wardle explains, "first, that divination does not provide merely intuition, but information about the future to the rational faculties, and secondly that this is not done arbitrarily, but by the employment of technics."⁷⁸ Cicero himself qualifies the practice of divination as a product of "difficulty and hard work learning," exemplifying this through the actions of

⁷⁵ sagittal: an arrow, shaft, bolt. Pliny: the herb arrow head (sage): 21, 17, 68 and 111. Lewis & Short, *Latin Dictionary*.

⁷⁶ Marcus Tullius Cicero. *Cicero On divination: De divination*, trans. with introduction and historical commentary David Wardle. Book 1. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 67.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 93.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Romulus.⁷⁹ Earlier in the book he defines two kinds of practices of divination, one that is learned and one that is simply a product of the mind. Cicero expresses:

So I agree with those who have said that there are two kinds of divination, one in which technique has a part and the other which involves no technique. For there is a technique for those who by conjecture deduce new things and have learn the ancient by having observed them. On the other hand, they involve no technique who foretell the future by no reason or conjecture (by having observed and recorded signs), but by a certain stirring of the mind or some free and unrestrained movement, as happens often to people when dream and sometimes to those who prophesy in frenzy, like Bacis of Boetia, Epimenides of Crete, or the Sibyl of Erythrae.⁸⁰

Presages are both presentiments and signs that we find within us, in the world and through the work. Both of these kinds, in order to be read, require sagacious skills, past experience and acute perception. When defining divination Vico states that to divine is “to understand what is hidden from men, the future, or what is hidden in them, their consciousness.”⁸¹ There is a clue in his words that places consciousness and that which is hidden within the past, since something hidden is something already there. The extrovert and introvert reading of signs connect men and their work with the future through their past.

To think of the ‘idea’ of the architect, or the initial concept of a building as a field of presages, that is, the *certum*, places the present as an infinite time that embraces the reading of the past as a way to enter into the future. Scarpa’s initial drawings act as presages that need to be read and discerned. These actions allow the architect to find

⁷⁹ Ibid, 70.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 57.

⁸¹ Vico, p.91.

clues of where the project could go, wondering first from where these clues originated. This past reading is not, as historians tend to classify, in reference to something concrete, a symbol or a building he saw. This past reading, possibly, must not be coined, deciphered or possibly revealed. It is simply the action of going backwards and recollecting why an initial 'certain idea' was even drawn that creates inevitably a creative process of revelation and discoveries. This can only be achieved through an activity of recollection that is actively manifested, in the case of Scarpa, through drawings. In the example that Ginzburg recounts, it is storytelling: "The hunter would have been the first to tell a story because he alone was able to read, in silent, nearly imperceptible tracks left by his prey, a coherent sequence of events."⁸² Here the external manifestation occurs in the making of a story by joining the different traces into a possible sequence of events. In the case of Scarpa, the manifestation occurs through copious amounts of drawings. The difference between one case and the other is that Scarpa needs to bring forth, through traces, his own presages. The sagacity and skill of confronting what he knows and what he does not know through the medium of drawing, allows him to achieve new ways of seeing his own work.

I would like to end this chapter by quoting a fragment from the short novel *Time Machine* by H. G. Wells. The reference to this book is quoted by Scarpa in one of the pages of the black book next to a further developed drawing of the *arcosolium*. Immediately below the book citation, Onorina Brion's face is drawn. Because her pupils have not been drawn, she seems to be absorbed into another time, like looking into the past or future. She also appears smiling. [fig. 1.24] In this same drawing, Scarpa already specifies that the ceiling of the *arcosolium* will be made of *mosaico oro verde* (golden green mosaic), a curious presage that remains evident in the built work today. In Wells novel, time is flexible and things move back and forth revealing themselves in various states:

The landscape was misty and vague. I was still on the hill-side upon which this house now stands, and the shoulder rose above me grey and dim. I

⁸² Ginzburg, *Clues*, 103.

saw trees growing and changing like puffs of vapour, now brown, now green; they grew, spread, shivered, and passed away. I saw huge buildings rise up faint and fair, and pass like dreams. The whole surface of the earth seemed changed—melting and flowing under my eyes. The little hands upon the dials that registered my speed raced round faster and faster. Presently I noted that the sun belt swayed up and down, from solstice to solstice, in a minute or less, and that consequently my pace was over a year a minute; and minute by minute the white snow flashed across the world, and vanished, and was followed by the bright, brief green of spring.⁸³

Because for Scarpa drawing was a form of thinking, we must read his drawings as thoughts and not simply as solely isolated formal iterations. Every mark, thus every thought, when manifested becomes part of the field of the *certum* from which parts are discerned as both, thoughts and things. The initial lines and ideas in the black book expose the potentiality of the *certum* as a field of presages that move in time and talk about the past and the future of the building. With more than 1,500 drawings made in 9 years, the notion of the *certum* as a place of presages is one of the fertile thoughts that emerge from all the clues the architect left for us. The key drawings that Scarpa made following a 'certain idea' allowed him to make the longest and most wondrous trip, and when he finally found the door, he realized he had, certainly, already opened it a long time ago.

⁸³ H G. Wells. *The Time Machine* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1995), 16-17.

Figures Chapter 1

Fig. 1.1
Unidentified drawing
NR #55499
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Archivio di Stato di Treviso
Treviso, Italy



Fig. 1.2
Quaderno Nero (Black Book)
Page #117
NR # 23864/20
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Rome, Italy



Fig. 1.3
Design model for Brion Cemetery, San Vito di Altivole, Treviso
RIBA13223
Date: 1971
© RIBA Library Drawings Collection
London, UK
Photos by Paul Emmons

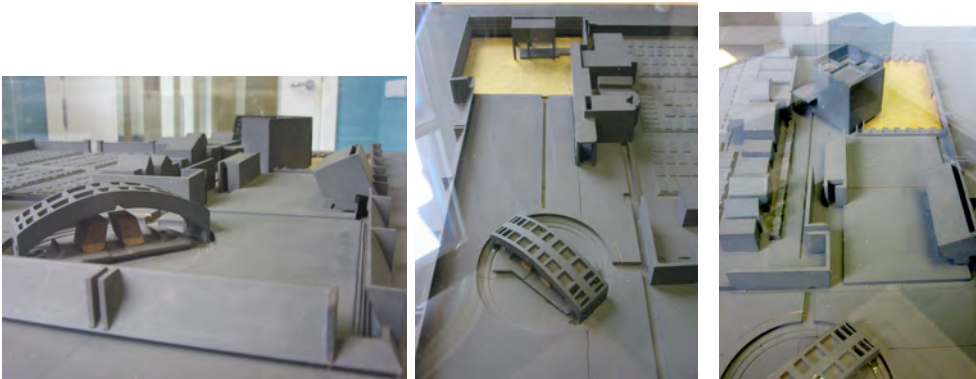


Fig. 1.4
Quaderno Nero (Black Book)
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Fig. 1.5
Quaderno Nero (Black Book) (detail)
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Fig. 1.6
Quaderno Nero (Black Book) (detail)
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Fig. 1.7
Quaderno Nero (Black Book) (detail)
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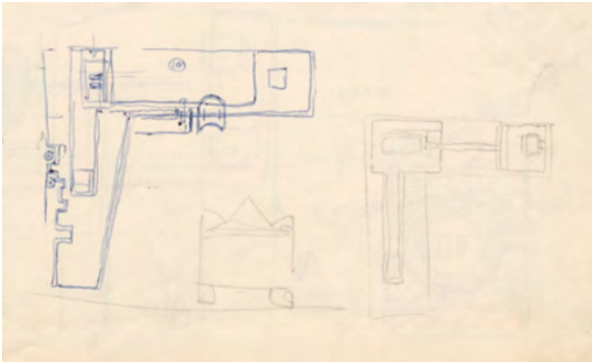


Fig. 1.8
Quaderno Nero (Black Book)
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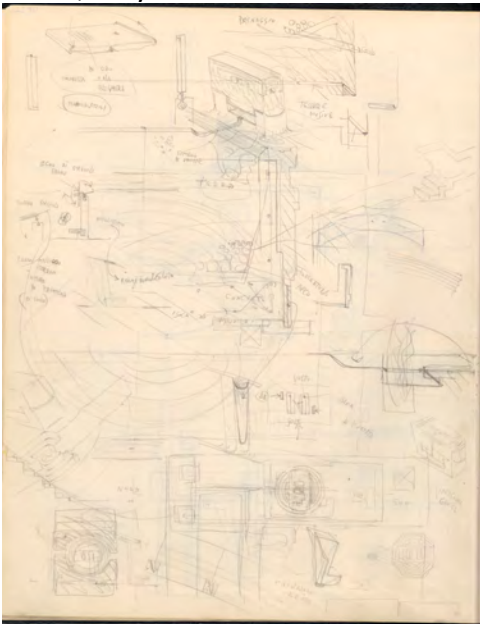


Fig. 1.9
Quaderno Nero (Black Book) (detail)
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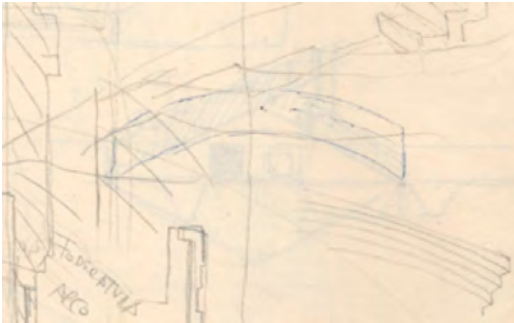


Fig. 1.10
Quaderno Nero (Black Book) (detail)
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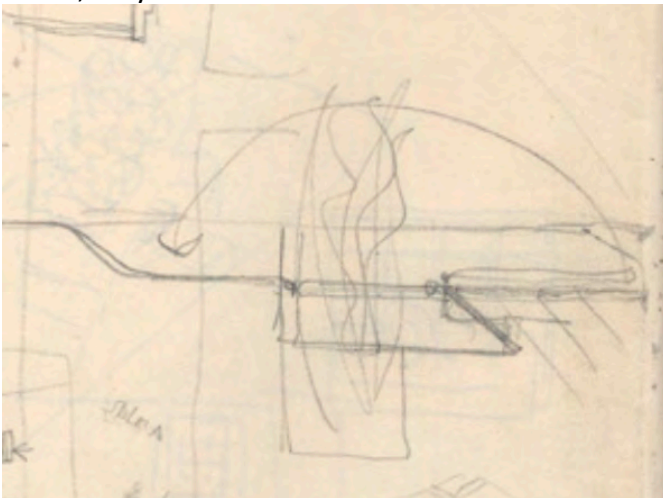


Fig. 1.11
Arcosolium drainages
Photos by Paul Emmons, diagram by author

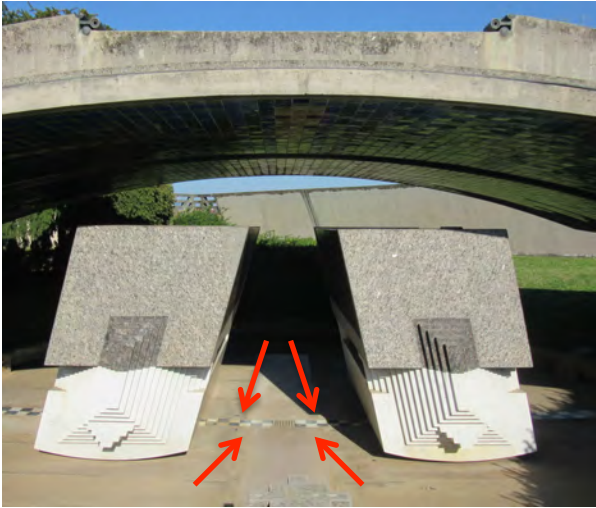


Fig. 1.12

Arcosolium drainage detail (detail)

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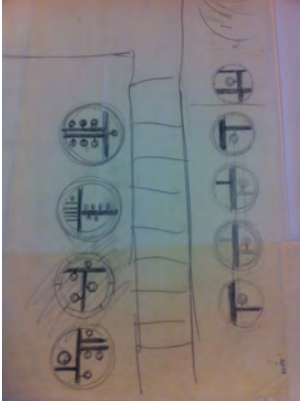


Fig. 1.13

Arcosolium drainage detail (detail)

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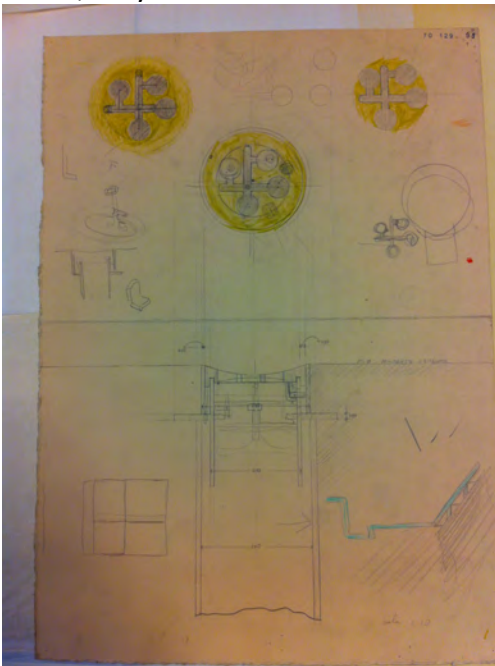


Fig. 1.14

Quaderno Nero (Black Book) (detail)

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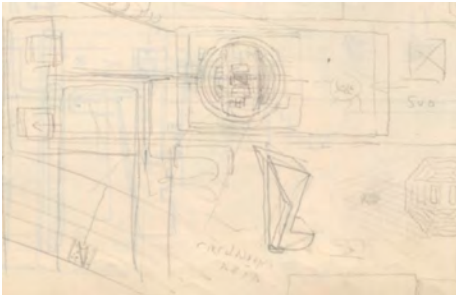


Fig. 1.15

Quaderno Nero (Black Book) (detail)

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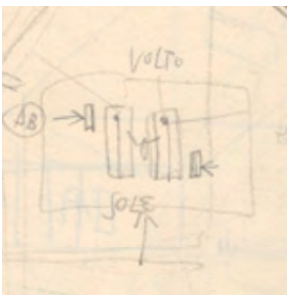


Fig. 1.16

Photo arcosolium / south facing

Photo by Paul Emmons



Fig. 1.17
Quaderno Nero (Black Book) (detail)
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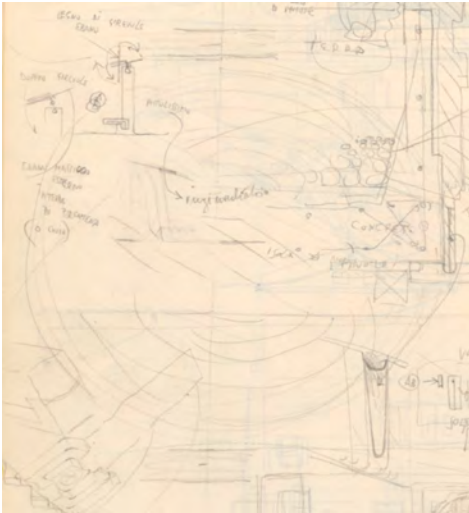


Fig. 1.18
Arcosolium floor plan (detail)
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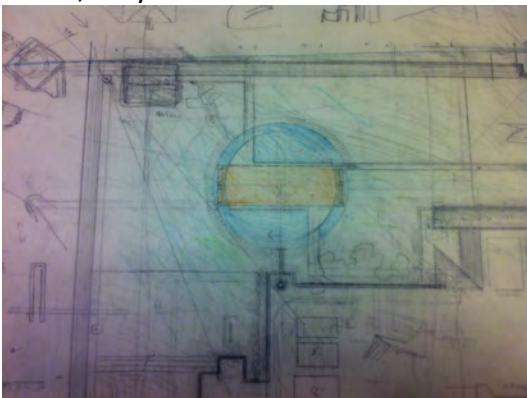


Fig. 1.19
Quaderno Nero (Black Book) (detail)
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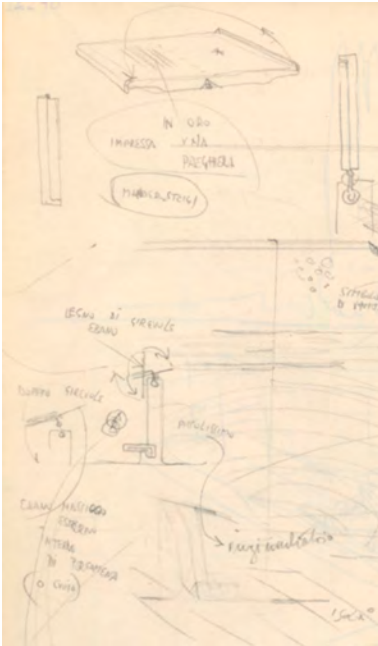


Fig. 1.20
Arcosolium ceiling
Photos by Author

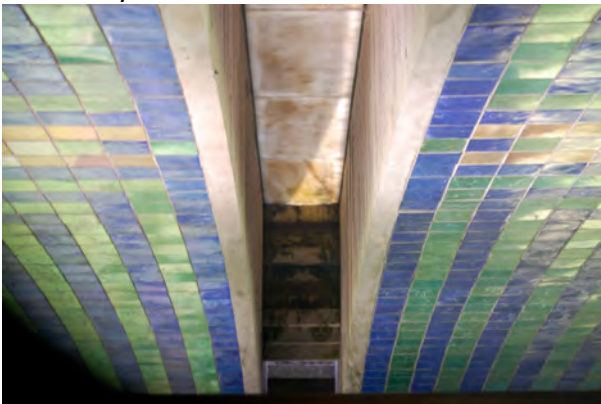


Fig. 1.21
Ceiling drawing
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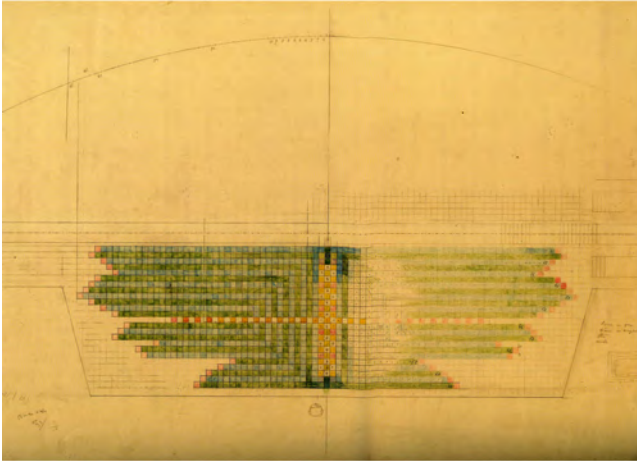


Fig. 1.22
Quaderno Nero (Black Book) (detail)
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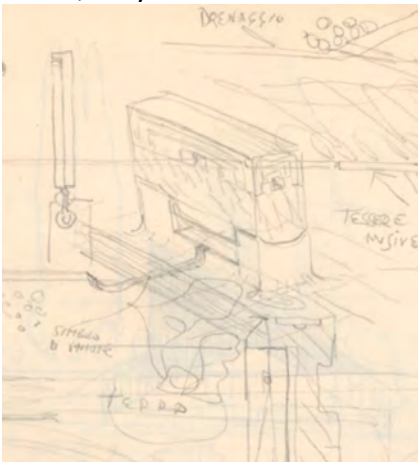


Fig. 1.23
Arcosolium floor
Photos by Paul Emmons



Fig. 1.24
Quaderno Nero
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Chapter 2

Construction Lines: second thoughts about fixity

1. Remains that remain

One thing leads to another thing.

Italian popular saying¹

The architectural design for the Brion cemetery project includes many varied kinds of drawings. From those within the black book to the *camoscio* color hard stock sheets of paper, the archived material, as stated earlier, exceeds 1,500 drawings. Some of these drawings show a very dense group of lines, themes, colors and other stains. Sometimes Scarpa would use small pieces of paper like cigarette labels or business cards from bars as drawing support [fig. 2.1 - 2.2].² These were often quick initial revelatory sketches or revisions. Common among his drawings was the use of translucent paper assuming various roles in the sequence of graphic thinking. Sometimes it was used for a very fast sketch over an existing drawing, or on occasions it laid over another drawing becoming a site for working on a much slower pace.³ For Scarpa, paper determined the mood and appetite of the architectural drawing. Once, in describing the pages of a dictionary, Scarpa

¹ “*Da cosa nasce cosa.*” Muazzo F, Zorzi and Franco Crevatin. *Raccolta De' Proverbii, Detti, Sentenze, Parole E Frasi Veneziane, Arricchita D'alcuni Esempi Ed Istoriette*. (Costabissara: A. Colla, 2008).

² Both of these types of drawings are archived at Treviso in the Centro Archivio Carlo Scarpa, and at Rome in the MAXXI.

³ In Semi's book Scarpa explains a very strict use of tracing paper. However, the explained method does not correlate with how he worked for the Brion cemetery set of drawings. This suggest that this sequence of drawings must have been oriented towards pedagogical reasons, but within his practice the method was altered as needed. “First, the tavoletta (tablet), second the cartoncini (cards), and third, the light and transparent tracing paper.” The tablet was made by using a flat surface of composite wood on which a robust sheet of photographic paper was carefully laid across. Upon drying, the paper was useful for a general reading or the overall control of the work, but since the preparation of these tablets tended to be difficult, they were substituted with smooth-surfaced thick cardboard. On the *cartoncini*, small, portable cards are made showing details at various scales which are eventually tested against the whole. The *cartoncini* have the power to disrupt the whole at the same time that they transform it. Lastly, the tracing paper was used to change things over the other two medium. Semi, *A Lezione*, 42.

stated that the paper was so beautiful and crispy that he felt like eating it!⁴ With a similar passion he would teach his students at the IUAV about the importance of paper for the architectural drawing.

In the interview explored in the previous chapter, *Un Ora con Carlo Scarpa*, the architect specifically addresses the Brion cemetery project. Making reference to the placement of the tombs, he uses the arch of his left hand to explain the arched shape of the *arcosolium*. Drawn and embodied through multiple demonstrations, the *arcosolium* was one of the first parts of the cemetery that was designed and built. Following partially the chronology of the various buildings within the project, this chapter will look at one specific drawing of the burial area where Onorina and Giuseppe Brion rest. After lingering within the field of thinking and constructing 'certain ideas' for the project, Scarpa would begin to draw, in larger and thicker sheets of paper, different parts of the cemetery.

The *arcosolium* design is recorded in around 300 drawings. A few of the versions differ greatly from the initial sketches, and many of the drawings return to some of the original designs shown in the black book [figs. 2.3 - 2.4 - 2.5]. Exercising the active practice of building and reading presages, the habit of looking at clues continues, in various forms, throughout the design of the cemetery. However, other elements begin to enter into the process as the design is discovered. In order to frame the theoretical investigation of this chapter, it is first crucial to understand, carefully, how the Venetian architect draws.

In the same interview, Scarpa reveals that his array of architectural tools is quite simple. Triangles, compasses, a parallel bar, graphite and color pencils, erasers, and good paper are his basic tools.⁵ The dexterity of the architect to operate with both hands is very important to comprehend the 'tentacular' approach to the sheet of paper when he is drawing [fig. 2.6]. His former assistant and student, architect Guido Pietropoli, has

⁴ "Per inciso, il volume della *Crusca del 1836* era stampato su carta molto bella, crocchiante: veniva voglia di mangiarla..." Transcription from the academic year's inaugural speech of the IUAV, Venice 1964-65. *Lectio Magistralis* entitled "Arredare" by Carlo Scarpa, March 18, 1964.

⁵ Transcription from interview. Cascavilla, *Un Ora*, Minute: 0:15-0:55.

remarked that “in his normal working activities he wrote with his right hand and drew with his left.”⁶ He also recalls that Scarpa would talk about his projects either by drawing fast sketches or by using his hands to touch materials, probe their qualities or point at profiles [fig. 2.7].⁷ His voice and vision were highly dependent on his skilled hands. Pietropoli remembers that ‘*il Professore*’ was very focused when working on a drawing to the point that he would not even smoke over the drawing table, a common practice among architecture offices at the time.⁸ He would usually take a break when he desired to smoke than to keep working. His drawing table while he worked on the cemetery project was positioned next to a window and it was in the horizontal position, parallel to the ground [figs. 2.8 - 2.9]. He would use triangles with the parallel bar to trace lines in various directions lifting slightly and skillfully the instrument every time a different line was drawn.

In a separate interview, his son, Tobia Scarpa, recounted his father’s obsession with the precision of lines beyond milimetric differences: “I remember he would work all night on moving a pencil line one millimeter which could only be ten centimeters on natural scale.”⁹ He explained that his father worked this way in spite of the fact that builders are generally a bit less precise than is the actual drawing.¹⁰ However, due to Scarpa’s involvement in the construction site, he could track and guide the builders in a more accurate way, closer to the way he guided his own drawings [fig. 2.10].¹¹ Drawing and writing with both hands, he would use his tools or simply sketch over the sheet of paper every time he needed to think, explain or see something.¹² Possibly learned from his

⁶ Guido Pietropoli. “Carlo Scarpa’s Hands” in Marino Barovier. *Carlo Scarpa: Venini, 1932-1947* (Milano: Skira, 2012), 79.

⁷ Ibid, 80.

⁸ Interview by author with Guido Pietropoli (Rovigo, June 2013).

⁹ Ricardo De Cal. *Hortus Conclusus: Carlo Scarpa E La Querini Stampalia*, DVD. (Venezia: Fondazione Querini Stampalia, 2009).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Pietropoli, “Scarpa’s Hands.”

father, similar characteristics can be seen in Tobia when he talks, it is as if a thought could only be pronounced while his hands are drawing.¹³

In a class given in February 1976, Carlo Scarpa spoke to his students about learning how to draw, stating that: “it is enough to have the desire to do it... It is enough to grab a block of paper and ink, or pencil without an eraser, and to exercise that which is taught to children in elementary school.”¹⁴ Franca Semi has explained that Scarpa relied on ‘analytic-synthetic’ writing methods common during his elementary education, a process that consisted in learning by tracing the types of lines that make each letter and grasping, just to name a few, ascending and descending qualities of the strokes [fig. 2.11]. After learning the traces, children would join them together, trying to make letters without deforming them, and finally, they would learn to write words by joining letters together.¹⁵ This teaching method was common in Italy before World War II, but after the war the global method was introduced in schools, a process that was faster to learn and consisted in pairing words with the things signified by them. The new method, based on relationships of words and their signifiers, did not focus on the inscribing technique itself [fig. 2.12].¹⁶

Learning and grasping the qualities and variations of traces through a heightened awareness in the act of inscribing letters, is a process akin to the approach offered by Swiss artist, Paul Klee. Scarpa, a fervent admirer of his work, kept a copy of his *Pedagogical Sketchbook* publication in his library, and very much like Klee, knew about the vital physicality of lines. As Klee wrote in his *Sketchbook*: “Line, tone value, colour: They are not free from matter; if they were, it would be impossible to ‘write’ with them” [fig.

¹³ All the time while I was talking with Tobia Scarpa in an interview I arranged with him on July, 2014 thanks to Guido Pietropoli’s help, Tobia was writing and drawing as he explained thoughts, told stories or asked questions.

¹⁴ Semi, *A lezione*, 294. All translations by author.

¹⁵ M. T. Cairo. *Pedagogie e didattica speciale per educatori e insegnanti nella scuola* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2007), 174.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

2.13].¹⁷ The Swiss artist developed lengthy studies on the inherent movements of lines, stating that, “every work, even the most succinct, moves in time, not only as it comes into being (productively), but also as it is apprehended (receptively)” [fig. 2.14].¹⁸

According to Scarpa, learning such elementary but central aspect of traces was a form of grasping the qualities and movements of lines that are naturally comprehended by children and can be greatly exercised in educational institutions [fig. 2.15].¹⁹ In his lesson, Scarpa expresses that one has to unceasingly practice, in many ways and with different kinds of geometries, so that the hand can ‘stretch’ and become acquainted with the language of drawing. He points out that one cannot play the violin with a stiff hand, nor understand the tonal qualities of it if the hand has not experienced them previously. In this way, the architect must use his pencil as the skillful violinist uses his bow.²⁰ Scarpa vigorously emphasized the training of the hand as a fundamental component for drawing. Just like the skilled hand of Apelles, whose famous motto ‘*nulla dies sine linea*’ was commonly quoted by Scarpa, the hand of the architect requires daily exercise. For the architect drawing is a “form of life.”²¹ His knowledge of drawing and traces was such that he encouraged students to use only drawing instruments of good quality. As for a good cook fresh tomatoes and tender meat are essential to prepare a good dish, he would say, the good instruments are crucial for drawing well.

This Venetian care for the quality of instruments constitutes a long tradition among architects and others. Just to name a few, the papal scribe and type designer, Ludovico

¹⁷ Paul Klee. *Paul Klee: the Thinking Eye: The Notebooks of Paul Klee*, ed. Jürg Spiller (New York: G. Wittenborn, 1961), 12.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 369.

¹⁹ John Mathews. *The Art of Childhood and Adolescence: The Construction of Meaning* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1999), 19-30.

²⁰ “*Non facciamo più acquarelli, perché altrimenti vi direi che non dovrete comprare che i pennelli Windsor & Newton. Ma voi mi direste che sono troppo cari: e allora niente acquerelli. D'altronde non si usano neanche più; si usano invece quelle macchine terribili, inventate dai tedeschi, i graphos, dove la mano è impedita a poter provvedere con il pensiero diretto a segnare una cosa. La mano deve saltare liberamente. Non avete mai visto suonare un violinista? Andando ai concerti non vi ha fatto invidia quel violinista? Ecco, dovrete provvedere a fare in modo che la vostra mano salti sulla carta come il violinista adopera il suo archetto.*” Semi, *A Lezione*, 69-70.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 41.

Vicentino degli Arrighi wrote in the XVI century a book on tempering pens that consisted on how to cut quills so the trace for each letter could be beautifully made.²² In the XVII century, Vincenzo Scamozzi wrote an entire section in his architectural treatise on the tools the architect should use, such as well-crafted pear wood triangles, ebony edges and sweet wine inks [fig. 2.16].²³ In the case of Scarpa, his awareness on this matter was such that he was even able to recognize what brand of pencil the student had used to make his/her drawing by simply looking at the lines.²⁴ In the end, however, drawing is not simply about training the hand. Rather, Scarpa states that: “once the hand is trained to draw, it must be forgotten just like one forgets the vocal cords while speaking.”²⁵ The ambiguous realm of remembering how to do things by forgetting them during the act of making or performing is key for understanding what this chapter attempts to investigate.²⁶ The aspect of forgetting does not mean that the body forgets how to do things, but on the contrary, that the body must make freely without thinking of every move, since what has been learnt has already become part of one’s body.²⁷

In Scarpa’s drawings there is an obsessive precision within the work that happens consciously by selecting, searching and drawing the right line. Simultaneously there is an element of forgetfulness as well as tacit knowledge in the habitual and skilled practice of making drawings.²⁸ A clear example of this can be grasped in the presence of auxiliary lines in his drawings, or those lines that do not belong to the building representation per

²² Ludovico Arrighi. *Il Modo De Temperare Le Penne Con Le Uarie Sorti De Littere Ordinato* (Roma: [s.n.], MDXXIII m 1523).

²³ Vincenzo Scamozzi. *Dell’idea Della Architettura Universale*. (Ridgewood, N.J: Gregg Press, 1964), 1:49-52. Translated portion in Marco Frascari. *Eleven Exercises in the Art of Architectural Drawing* (London: Routledge, 2011), 183-189.

²⁴ “Sugli strumenti del disegno esortava gli studenti ad operare oggetti di ottima qualita perche solo cosi si impara a disegnare bene e poteva persino arrivare a dare indicazioni circa la marca di matite di grafite near da adoperare.” Sem, *A Lezione*, 41.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Alberto Pérez-Gómez has pointed out that: “sensorimotor skills are not “forgotten,” once they become habitual they are pre-reflective, yet never unconscious.” (Personal correspondence, November 2014). Also found in Maurice Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by Collin Smith (New York: Routledge 1958), 107-170.

²⁷ Paul Emmons and Carolina Dayer, “Toward Performative Architectural Drawing: Paul Klee’s Enacted Lines in *Architecture as a Performing Art*,” eds. Marcia Feuerstein and Gray Read (London: Routledge 2013), 45-59.

²⁸ Micheal Polany. *The Tacit Dimension* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press; Reissue edition 2009), 3-25.

se. Auxiliary lines, for instance, are those extra lines that guide the construction of geometrical figures [fig. 2.17]. For example, after drawing a circle with a compass, Scarpa would sometimes draw a square figure departing from the circle's tangents. Sometimes he would do the opposite; he would circumscribe a circle within a previously drawn square figure. The initial field of auxiliary lines plays a distinct role within Scarpa's drawings and as we will see, it is used to elucidate parts of the design. Because these guide or 'ghost' lines do not signify the presence of a physical part of the building, Scarpa does not seem concerned with how precise they should be as long as they sufficiently aid in the construction of the overall geometry. When traced, for example, the lines are usually longer than what they need to be to define a particular shape. The sequence for drawing a square, for example, initiates in the making of lines themselves, not in the measured marking of the segment needed to draw the geometrical figure. Once the line had been made, Scarpa would measure within the segment length he wishes. Intersecting successively the rest of the lines over the measured points, he would construct the square figure leaving present the extra length of each line in the drawing. While his practice of drawing discloses a high precision where the building lines are, it simultaneously discloses a low precision where the building lines are not. The existence of these two dimensions will play an inverse role for the architect later on.

As it has been mentioned, Scarpa would often recite the old phrase – “never a day without a line:”

I think it was Leon Battista Alberti who said '*nulla dies sine linea*,' this is your categorical imperative. You have to formulate it in the morning, instead of saying prayers, or to say: 'Oh noble Carlo Marx, come to embellish my mind with the new Marxist sociological knowledge. Oh, good Lenin who have done so much for Holy Russia, etc...'. You have to

forget about all these fancies, raise all sails away from the head and just think with a pencil in hand, eraser and paper.²⁹

Erroneously assigning it to, Apelles' famous story of lines as told by Pliny the Elder (AD 23 - AD 79) is worth remembering. In his trip to Rhodes in the hundred and twelfth Olympiad, Apelles of Cos decides to visit his rival and equally skilled painter Protogenes. Upon his arrival, Protogenes' servant tells Apelles that the painter is not at home. Apelles sees in his house a large blank panel upon an easel and makes a beautiful thin line with a brush. Without disclosing his name, he asks the servant to indicate his identity to Protogenes by showing the precious line. When Protogenes returns and sees the easel, he immediately identifies the line with Apelles. As a response, Protogenes makes a finer and more beautiful line, assuming that Apelles will reappear at his house. Apelles indeed returns, and when he sees the painter has surpassed him, he eagerly takes the challenge and makes an even finer line that cannot be exceeded in beauty. When Protogenes sees the third line, he accepts his defeat.³⁰ The famous story depicting the artists' talents is supported not by their geniuses but by the quotidian and crafted practice of drawing, proclaimed and kindled by Apelles' wise words: "*nulla dies sine linea*." The story is a demonstration of artistic excellence and is a landmark in the history of art and drawing.³¹

When referring to Apelles' skills, Pliny does not use the verb 'to draw' or 'to make' to describe his actions.³² Rather, Pliny uses the verb 'to conduct'— *lineam ducendo*.³³ The understanding of lines at the time was very connected with the physical presence of

²⁹ "Mi pare che sia stato Leon Battista Alberti a dire 'Nulla dies sine linea: ecco, questo è l'imperativo categorico vostro. Dovete formularlo al mattino, invece di dire le orazioni, o di dire: 'Oh nobile Carlo Marx, vieni a infiorare la mia mente di nuove cognizioni sociologiche, marxiste. Oh, buon Lenin che hai fatto tanto per la Santa Russia, ecc., ecc.'. Dovete dimenticarvi di tutte queste ubbie, levatevele via tutte dal capo e pensate solo con la matita in mano, la gomma, la carta." Semi, A Lezione, 69-70.

³⁰ Pliny, *Natural History*, Volume XXXV, , trans. H. Rackham (Harvard University Press: 1952), 35: Artists who painted with pencil.

³¹ William Charlton and Anthony Savile "The Art of Apelles," in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Volumes, Vol. 53 (1979): 167-206.

³² Pliny, *Natural history*, Volume IX, 322.

³³ "Apelli fuit alioqui perpetua consuetudo numquam tan occupatum diem agendi, ut non **lineam ducendo**, exerceret artem, quod ab eo in proverbium venit." Ibid., 322.

threads, used for sewing, tying, marking a construction site and other practices, but also for guiding, as Ariadne's red clue (or thread) guiding Theseus through the labyrinth. If told slightly differently, Apelles' story can be interpreted as a story about conducting lines.³⁴ To conduct (*duco*) means to lead with the accessory idea of creation and construction, as well as with the idea of movement.³⁵ A ductile material for example, is one that can be flexible or can accommodate certain changes. The ductility of metals, for instance, is their capacity to be stretched into a thin linear piece, such as a wire. To conduct, in Italian, is also related to the idea of travelling and transporting something from one place to another.³⁶ Apelles' first fine line was conducted towards becoming visible, but also conducted towards being continued by Protogenes' second line. The second line exists only because there was a first one. The same occurs with the third line executed by Apelles as a response to the previous two. Just as the initial line guided Protogenes to make a better one; the second line guided Apelles to make the third and best one. The transference of qualities carried within the lines is the aspect of the story where 'conducting,' *ducendo*, is not a metaphor for one line, but quite literally, a reality of the whole story.

When "extra" or loose lines exist on the sheet of paper, an easel or any other surface, they guide each other because they are understood as remains of something that was or something that could be.³⁷ Apelles's story is one example where the artist is able to

³⁴ In fact, when describing the actual story between Apelles and Protogenes, Pliny uses also the verb *-duco-* to refer to Apelles tracing the first line: "...inquit Apelles adreptoque penicillo lineam ex colore **duxit** summae tenuitatis per tabulam." Ibid., 320.

³⁵ *Duco*: "Lucretius – 2, 258 To lead, conduct, draw, bring forward, in all senses, Very freq. passing over into the signif. of the compounds *abducere, deducere, adducer, producer*, etc, and of the synonyms *agere, trahere, movere*. To inhale. To live (spiritum – Cicero – aerem spiritu). To draw along. To take to one's self, to appropriate. To lead, to conduct (guide). With the accessory idea of creation, formation, to produce, form, construct, make, fashion, dispose. Horace, Cicero – to erect. To draw, deduce, derive. To move, incite. To draw out, prolong, extend, protract. Of time: to pass, enjoy, spend. To reckon, consider, esteem, account." Short and Lewis, *Latin Dictionary*.

³⁶ *condugi*: (XIV sec. a Venezia) *viveri per il viaggio* | *conducitura* (XIII Siena) *trasporto da un luogo all'altro e relative spesa*. Battisti, *Dizionario etimologico*, Vol2.

³⁷ A very interesting evidence of lines as remains can be found as well in the story. While Pliny uses the verb *-duco-* to conduct, also to draw, for the first two lines made, for the last one, Apelles' most beautiful line, Pliny uses the verb *-seco-* which means to cut, to cleave, to divide. The words that Pliny uses to express that after Apelles' third line there was no more room for any better traces are: *nullum relinquens. Relinquens* is

reframe his own lines within the context of previous ones. The transformational aspect of one into the other is triggered by the presence of lines acting within the same field of attention. What constituted the best line at the beginning of the story becomes the worse one towards the end. Through proximity, the traces within the drawing can assume, as the drawing is being made, different roles. Because lines are also thoughts, and thoughts can be reframed based on contextual settings, the story of Apelles and Protogenes emphasizes the transformational quality of lines in the life of a drawing.

The guiding lines Scarpa makes to construct geometrical shapes, because they are more generous than what he 'needs,' also conduct the drawing towards new relationships occurring within their proximity. A line conducting the geometrical construction of a square, for example, can subsequently conduct the design of an important part of the building. The act of conducting, understood as a flexible action able to provide change of roles within new conditions allows for animated encounters with one's work. This chapter will examine closely how remains belonging to the drawing's guide lines remain vital in conducting future building lines.

2. Leftovers are better on the second day

The most remarkable thing about my mother is that for thirty years she served the family nothing but leftovers. The original meal has never been found.

Calvin Trillin³⁸

The presence of guide lines becoming building lines is well supported by several versions of the arcosolium, particularly in the development of the circular pool of water that the

the present active participle of *relinquo*, which means to leave behind or to leave remaining. In this case it would mean: 'no other line remained more beautifully than Apelles third line.' Pliny, *Natural history*, 322.

³⁸ Calvin Trillin *Quite Enough of Calvin Trillin: Forty Years of Funny Stuff*. (New York: Random House, 2011), 42.

architect originally desired. In one drawing [fig. 2.18] constructed on a typical peach color (*camoscio*) hard stock sheet of paper, Scarpa draws a dense field of pencil sketches. From these, a set of drawings emerges distinctly at the lower center of the sheet [fig. 2.19]. These drawings show a plan and section/elevation of the *arcosolium*. The plan drawing seems to have been drawn first, as many lines from this one are used to later construct the section/elevation. The proximity of drawings in Scarpa's work will reveal, as we will see, more than simply the equivalent plan/elevation projection.

Next to this group of drawings, towards the left [fig. 2.20] a plan, drawn in a different scale, shows the entire site. On this site plan Scarpa constructs the circular plan of the *arcosolium* using a very particular set of auxiliary lines. Departing from the cemetery enclosure wall, he traces a 45° angled line with one of his commonly used triangles. This line is juxtaposed with a horizontal one extending from the entrance portion of the cemetery. These lines determine a point over which Scarpa places the needle of his compass to trace a circle whose tangencies are determined by the sides of the two enclosure walls [fig. 2.21]. Scarpa constructs several other circles as if looking, as Tobia has explained, for their proper place. Overlapping several of the circles, a square figure appears circumscribed right in between the two of them [fig. 2.22]. At first sight, it is unclear why the square figure is drawn. One of the diagonals of the square figure is used to mark the centerline of the *arcosolium* roof, even though this one could have easily been found without the construction of the square. Scarpa seems to need guiding lines to tell him more than what he already knows.

The angular figure will find a key role within the design. Two of its corners suggest the small area where the curved beams making the *arcosolium* roof will rest. The auxiliary square figure then, is the one determining the ending points of the *arcosolium* roof. Originally, the figure had been traced in between the two circles demarcating the *arcosolium* entrance. Consequently, the roof end points are intrinsically connected with the circular floor space that makes the entrance into the *arcosolium* [fig. 2.23]. In other

words, the ends of the roof structure are being determined by means of the floor beginnings. In the final built work, this relationship between the circumscribed 'invisible' square and the relationship between below and above is even more complex. By tracing a square figure from the tangent points of the *arcosolium* outer floor edge, a clear overlap is discovered between the circular floor and the beam structure that makes the roof [fig. 2.24]. The two cantilever portions of the roof, held by the arched beams, rest almost exactly at the edge of the corner portions of the embedded geometrical square figure. While this is not immediately visible in the built form, it is present nonetheless, through its invisibility, in the experience of the burial area [fig. 2.25]. Within the 'invisible' square figure, eight concrete protruding details, each having an embossed Greek cross filled with gold paint, are almost perfectly tangential to the square's edges [fig. 2.26]. The square figure, a truly invisible shape in the built edifice and seemingly unimportant one in the drawing, becomes critical for subsequent decisions that remain subtly experienced in the building.

A more obvious example is found in the drawings centered on the lower side of the same sheet [fig. 2.20]. As mentioned before, these drawings indicate the plan and section/elevation of the *arcosolium*. On the plan drawing the square figure drawn on the site plan does not appear. However, two lines crossing through the circle's center extend further beyond the circle's perimeter at 45° degrees in two opposite directions. Offsetting from both angled lines, two parallel lines appear on each of their sides. The offset dimensions depart from two points: the intersections between the angled lines and the edges of the tombs [fig. 2.27]. Despite this parallel set of lines not resulting in any clear decision within the design, they demonstrate Scarpa's practice of using the drawing itself as a measuring tool. The measure is understood as a relationship with the drawing's construction and not as an abstract numeric dimension.

Returning to the plan drawing, we observe that one of the angled lines crossing through the circle center is drawn particularly longer on the sheet of paper. Scarpa's practice of

drawing more than what he simply 'needs' allows this angled line to encroach upon the drawing constructed above the plan. On the right side of the drawing [fig. 2.28] the angled line is borrowed to become part of small retaining wall that 'hugs' the area of the *arcosolium*. The same detail is then repeated on the opposite side of the drawing. The extended piece of the line, having no specific use outside the circle, is collated within the drawing to become a line that generates new thoughts; in this case, the design of the interior side of the retaining wall. The use of the auxiliary line that leads or conducts the design can be clearly seen by the fact that the projection lines from the plan into the elevation have been left aside in this part of the design, and the new decision prevails over the previously drawn plan [fig. 2.29]. After this act, the geometrical line initially marking the center becomes a crucial part of the concrete reality of the periphery of the *arcosolium*.

Within the section/elevation drawing, several other auxiliary lines can be seen as having a central role in the design. One example is the circumscription of the *vesica piscis* diagram to establish the curved base of the marble tombs. It is perhaps a good moment to deepen into the word '*arcosolium*' to reflect upon its meaning and the decisions addressed through the circumscribed *vesica piscis* figure. According to the Oxford English Dictionary *arcosolium* is "an arched cell or niche, vaulted in semi-circular form, serving as a tomb in the Roman catacombs" [fig. 2.32]. The word is a composite of two words in medieval Latin: *arcus* which means bow or arch and *solium* which means seat or sarcophagus.³⁹ The latter derives from the Latin word *sedeo*, which, in addition to meaning 'a seat', was related to the action of sitting, waiting for auguries, and demarking a place for magical practices.⁴⁰ Another use of the word was as an "abode of the dead, a burial-place"⁴¹ or, as Ovid has called it, "the home of the soul."⁴² From the word *sedeo*, also comes the word

³⁹ *Solium (sedeo)*: A seat. Most usually of kings and gods or other distinguished persons. A tub, especially for bathing (Lucretius – 6, 800) (Pliny 19, 2, 8, 28). A stone, coffin for person of distinction, a sarcophagus. *Sedimen (sedeo)*: Settling, sediment (urinae). Lewis & Short. *Latin Dictionary*.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ovid. *Metamorphoses*, ed., trans. Frank J. Miller (London: W. Heinemann, 1916.), 15, 159.

residue, which is that which is left behind, sitting back or remaining.⁴³ The word residence originates as well in the Latin *sedeo*, which is the place in which one stays, dwells, lives and dies.⁴⁴ Denoting two types of actions, one active as a form of contemplation and one passive as a form of host, the word is a key in examining aspects of Scarpa's *arcosolium* design. Given the care with which he chose the words for each of the cemetery buildings, and his demonstrated curiosity for words, one cannot underestimate the subtle relationships existing between the meaning of the word and the careful orchestration of the experience in the building.

The multiple meanings and associations the word carries will sink into the actual design of the *arcosolium* exposing many of its qualities through the architectural experience. Returning to the *arcosolium* drawing with the *vesica piscis*, it is difficult to determine exactly how Scarpa located the tombs under the *arcosolium* roof, since in this particular drawing the correlation between the plan and the elevation differ greatly. [fig. 2.30] However, once he determined the center point, located half-way between the tombs and the ceiling, he traced two circles with his compass [fig. 2.31]. The circles are lightly traced and have been highlighted on the lower part corresponding to the tombs' base. The circumscription of the *vesica piscis* diagram not only determines the curvature of the tombs' lower part but also participates throughout their design.

Tangential to one of the circles, on the right portion of the orthographic drawing, a woman sits at the edge of the low wall demarcating the limits of the burial zone [fig. 2.33]. The woman sits and expressively, as she were crying, holds her face with her hands while her elbows lean on her legs. Scarpa draws the head of the woman as perfectly tangential to one of the circles. On the left side of the drawing, a similar situation is depicted much less noticeably [fig. 2.34]. The drawing suggests that the space outside the *vesica piscis*

⁴³ *Residuus (resideo)*: That is left behind, that remains over and above, remaining, residuary, the remainder, residue, rest. Short & Lewis. *Latin Dictionary*.

⁴⁴ *Resideo (sedi)*: To sit back, remain sitting anywhere, to remain behind, rest, linger, tarry. Resting, residing. To sit up, assume a sitting posture (*residentur mortuis*) to be kept in honor of the dead. To be or to remain behind. To be unaccounted for, in default. Ibid.

realm is a place where the living can sit, cry and mourn the dead bodies. Sitting at the edge of death, the *vesica piscis* literally and metaphorically, creates an emotional space where the living can sit.

In the built work this relationship has remained intact from this initial *arcosolium* drawing [fig. 2.35]. The symbolic and experiential embodiment of sitting and residing appears in three forms throughout the design. First, the dead couple embodies the first sitting/residing position. Their 'residues' lay horizontally in the impenetrable abode of the tombs. The relationship with the bodies is indirect. One touches them, through the 'warm ebony wood' and the presence of their names carved and filled with ivory; both organic materials.⁴⁵ The second sitting/residing position is embodied through the aforementioned act of sitting over the low wall confining the *arcosolium* area. The relationship with the tombs here is direct but distant. The living sits with precise proximity to the realm of the dead. The third sitting/residing position is the one that occurs by standing up. The experience of standing in between the tombs, as explained in the previous chapter, enhances the union with the dead by the absence of one's shadow underneath the roof. In addition, the floor sloping towards the center, the vents/drainages ingesting and exhaling water and air, and the leaning tall tombs heighten one's vertical position as residing within the dead.

Three realms of embodiment are contained within the geometrical inscription of the *vesica piscis* diagram. The laying bodies exist at the core of each circle, the sitting body exists at the edge of the circles and the standing body exists at the intersection of the two. The guiding circles for making the base of the tombs resulted in more than just the physical curved shape of the tombs. The actual experience at the *arcosolium* is subtly but largely determined by the presence of what originally were auxiliary lines. My argument holds that making visible all the auxiliary or guiding lines of a design without knowing in advance their ultimate purpose, results in a surplus that can later be transformed into

⁴⁵ Semi, *A Lezione*, 270.

something essential. In Scarpa's drawings a deep sense of complicity between what is drawn for 'real' and what is drawn for the help of it, the 'non-real,' results in ingenious ways of discovering aspects of the design. The auxiliary lines not only allow the design of that which is built, they also contribute to the design of that which is un-built but is experienced through relationships between different parts.

One last example from this drawing is found in the orthographic section/elevation. The auxiliary lines drawn this time are the ones that make the 77° angle of the internal sides of the tombs [2.36]. Scarpa once stated that he angled the tombs towards each other because he imagined the dialogue the couple would have after their death. He expressed that the inclination of the tombs was a design flirtation –*civetteria*–, “a liberty that could not have been in any other way, since there is no rational or functional need for this.”⁴⁶ He continued by saying: “I was thinking that he [Giuseppe Brion] would say to her: ‘Good day Nina, how are you?’, I mean that the two people can talk to each other. I seem to feel/hear that one says to the other: ‘Oh, when your hips finally comes to find me!, no?, And now, let’s dance!’”⁴⁷ The dialogue the architect imagines resonates not just in the shape of the tombs, but also in various other details that peripherally enhance the sense of conversation. In the drawing, the architect projects the internal edges of the tombs in making them collide and creating a point of intersection. At this exact point he offers a detail that makes room for the ‘invisible’ intersection to have a place within the physical realm of the project. The detail is a curved, carved out piece within the concrete beam, one that did not remain in the actual construction of the *arcosolium*. Nonetheless the centerline between the two concrete beams became materialized with semi-translucent alabaster tiles that mark the center of the roof, thus changing the quality of light inside the area [fig. 2.37]. The dialogue between the couple exists, not just in the leaning tombs, but also in many clues within the edifice. Scarpa himself has exemplified the intricate set of relationships that exist even in the smallest design by expressing:

⁴⁶ Ibid., 259.

⁴⁷ Ibid. Translations by author.

Even in the design of a simple cubic space minimal reasoning intervenes, an alphabet, perhaps a grammar. It is a curious faculty that which enables us to grasp the precise dimensional fact, the thickness of something, for example, is an eminent quality that belongs to the physical value of things...⁴⁸

Lines, the ones that inscribe the actual building as well as the ones that remain behind once a particular detail has been resolved are physical presences in the realm of the drawing. Remains, in general, have the potent quality of signifying two things: that which stays and that which is left.⁴⁹ As a verb, it means to stay in one place, to reside. As a noun it means leftovers, something that has been left behind. Remains or leftovers in food, for example, only become something extra once the meal has satisfied the ones eating. Something becomes leftovers only if initially was thought as being utterly indispensable. Remains depend, paradoxically, on useful things! In Italian, leftovers are called *avanzi*, the rich word also means two things: to move forward (*avanzare*) and to leave behind.⁵⁰ It implies two opposite movements and possibly to different times, past and future.

When making risotto, it is common among Italians to add into the pot an extra measure of rice for the pot itself, as if the pot would be another person dining.⁵¹ The extra measure allows an element of flexibility in the making of the meal, acknowledging the vessel that makes possible the cooking. The surplus measure also promises that each diner could a

⁴⁸ "Anche nella progettazione di un semplice spazio cubico intervengono dei piccoli ragionamenti, un alfabeto, forse una grammatica. È una facoltà curiosa quella che ci permette di intuire che un preciso fatto dimensionale, uno spessore, ad esempio, è una qualità eminente del valore fisico delle cose." Ibid.

⁴⁹ Remain: "classical Latin *remanēre* to stay behind, to stay in position, to lie untouched or undisturbed, to be left, to continue to be, to persist, endure, in post-classical Latin also to fall to a person's share (8th cent.) < re- + *manēre* to stay. To continue to belong to (also *unto, toward*) a person. *Oxford English Dictionary*. <http://www.oed.com/>, Accessed September 11, 2014. *Remaneo: (mansi)*: To stay or remain behind. To stay, remains, be left, continue, abide, endure. RE-MANO: to FLOW BACK – Lucretius 5, 269; 6, 635. Short & Lewis, *A Latin Dictionary*. Also the word 'remains' relates to the body after its death.

⁵⁰ *Avanzo: il rimanente, che ancor diciamo il, restante. Lat. reliquum. avanzare. Quello che avanza, ossia che rimane di una data quantità, di un dato numero, dopo che per uso fattone o per qualsivoglia cagione ne è estat tolta la parte maggiore. Dizionario de la Brusca.*

⁵¹ I thank Paola Frascari for teaching me this, among many other things, while she made the best shrimp risotto that I have ever eaten. I also thank her for teaching to me how to make it!

get a little bit more, a remaining extra or reserve. The surplus measure exists before the meal is ready, a gift to the dish if one wishes. However, there is a second condition to surplus material. When the meal becomes more than what the diners can eat, the extra, only then, becomes leftovers. Leftovers in cooking are interesting remains because they can make an entirely new meal, like when one has meat leftovers and out of them a stew can be made on the next day. Another quality of leftovers is that many times the food can taste better on the second day, like certain homemade pasta that absorbs the sauce better with time.

The curious temporal ambiguity of remains constitutes an essential aspect of Scarpa's way of drawing. The presence of both, the initial surplus and the recognition of afterwards leftovers, results in a nutritious combination for designing. The exceeding presence of lines, however, does not derive from an irrational process of simply drawing lines. The extra lines spring from concrete thoughts on how to build something, from a geometrical figure to a toilet flush knob [fig. 2.37]. The destiny of the drawing is bound up in these remaining lines that seem, at first sight, to just have done their job within their constructing nature, yet find, at a later time, a new and constructive vocation.

3. The hidden life of drawings

I think we are always searching for something hidden or merely potential or hypothetical following its traces whenever they appear on the surface.

Italo Calvino⁵²

In this last section of the chapter, I would like further explore the ontology of the transformational aspects of remaining lines. How can this notion be conceptualized in a frame of thinking that could be productive for different architectural drawing practices?

⁵² Italo Calvino. *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* (New York: Vintage Book, 1993), 77.

The spatial exercise of bringing things close while they appear to be the distant creates an inward and outward movement from and towards them. Within this elastic movement, things are framed into new perspectives, simultaneously allowing the sharp to be blurry and the blurry to be sharp. That which is similar is that which shares and does not share certain qualities with something else. Those qualities, for the witty architect, are not just inherent in things themselves but inherent also in the attitude by which one sees them. When making a risotto, the cook knows that there is an extra measure for the pot. In addition the cook also knows that when coming together, all the measures will be indistinguishable from each other. The measures become homogeneous within the whole, indistinguishable and similar to each other. The process of conjoining or uniting the values of different things into the same kind allows them the chance to become particular. The extra measure disappears, only to be found again, possibly, as an excess in the leftovers.

In Scarpa's drawings, as we have seen, the inward movement consists of bringing various drawings close together. In this process a movement outwards is also generated, one that is made by the lines extending beyond their necessity. These two movements, one conscious, one unconscious, encounter each other in the sheet of paper. By conjoining the two movements, Scarpa discovers later that what was drawn unconsciously once in the page has the potential to become something else, the leftover becomes, in certain moments, central to the design. As Vico points: "*Ingenium* is the capacity to unite things that are separated."⁵³ Scarpa himself seems to have discovered this notion when he says: "To obtain anything one needs to invent relationships."⁵⁴ It is clear that for the architect, the invention of relationships is not an aleatory act, but a very intricate system of parts being constantly reframed as the work is made. In reflecting upon the legacy of prehistoric drawings in caves, Scarpa explains:

⁵³ Quoted and translated by Ernesto Grassi from *Giambattista Vico. De antiquissima Italorum sapientia in Opere di Giambattista Vico*, ed. Fausto Nicolini (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1953), 295. Ernesto Grassi. "Vico versus Freud: Creativity and the Unconscious" in *Vico Past and Present*, ed. Giorgio Tagliacozzo (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1981) 147.

⁵⁴ "Per ottenere qualche cosa bisogna inventare dei rapporti," *Semi, A Lezione*, 61.

Just as one provides what is needed, it seems to me very logical to provide beauty, a fact that is inherent in men since his origins. In the beginnings, the caveman, before furnishing the caves, he adorned the grottoes: it is clear that there are no examples of furniture left by cavemen, but wonderful aesthetic forms of decoration. In the first marks, traced, blindly in the darkness, we see two features: the irrational gesture, spontaneous, instinctive, barbaric, lacking technique, and then, almost immediately after, a semblance of rationality in the diagonals marks, in the circles that contain squares, instinctive signs but traced by an ordering mind.⁵⁵

This telling passage resembles Scarpa's form of working: ambiguity lives within the purpose of his lines. Every time a drawing is made, there is a second one simultaneously emerging. That which is made continues to make. It goes beyond the object to become the subject of a next object. In the lines examined from the *arcosolium* drawings, both types of lines: the ones conducted and the ones conducting, meet at some point throughout the design opening up new possibilities. Lines that remain, apparently at rest, are awoken throughout the life of the drawing to participate again in the design.

Creating a sense of mystery, these details, born within the remaining lines of other figures, participate subliminally in the experience of the *arcosolium*, and other parts of the cemetery. This sense of mystery was highly encouraged by the work of magic realist writers and artists, which, just like Scarpa, believed that things have the power to become something else. The understanding of reality, for Massimo Bontempelli, was nothing other than relationships among disparate things. He states that the elements of reality, as well

⁵⁵ *“Così come si provvede alla necessità, mi pare molto logico provvedere alla bellezza, un fatto, questo, insito negli uomini sin dalle origini. Alle origini l'uomo delle caverne, prima di arrearle, ornò le grotte: è inequivocabile il fatto che non ci sono pervenuti esempi di arredi cavernicoli, bensì meravigliose forme estetiche di decorazione. Nei primi segni tracciati alla cieca nell'oscurità vediamo due caratteristiche: il gesto irrazionale, spontaneo, istintivo, barbarico, privo di tecnica, e poi, quasi immediatamente dopo, una parvenza di razionalità nei segni diagonali, nei cerchi che contengono quadrati, segni istintivi ma tracciati da una mente ordinatrice.”* Scarpa, “Arredare,” 1964.

as those of art, are not the things in themselves, but the relationship between them, the relationships that remain hidden.⁵⁶ He explains that just like in mathematics, single numbers or quantities are not mathematics themselves. What make mathematics are the various relationships among numbers.⁵⁷ The notion that reality is partly hidden was, as discussed in the previous chapter, characteristic of the magic-real approach to the world. Reality not as hiding things, but as hiding relationships between things, exposes a deeper sense of what the hidden could possibly be. How, then, do we make or find these relationships? Bontempelli explains that the only task of the poet or the artist is to make fables, stories and myths. For him: "Poetry is a fable, for this reason is the true."⁵⁸ Within the making of stories he makes reality more real.

A fable explains these relationships. One illuminating story, written in the XVI century by the Venetian storyteller Francesco Straparola, follows an apprentice who wanted to learn the necromancy secret practice of his master.⁵⁹ Given the secrecy of the knowledge, the apprentice had to learn the secrets of his master without his master being aware. Relying on his wits, the young apprentice eventually learns enough to express to his poor father that he now is ready to profit from his education. He immediately transforms himself into a beautiful horse and asks his father to go sell him at the fair without selling the bridle that he also makes appear. The apprentice, by becoming something else, also needs a source of contact through which he can change back. The day of the fair, the master sees an unusual and extraordinarily beautiful horse, and suspecting this to be an act of magic he turns himself into a merchant. He convinces the apprentice's father to also sell the bridle with the horse. Unable to avoid temptation, the father sells the bridle with the horse for a great sum of money. The master chains the beautiful horse, who becomes weaker and weaker each day. Simultaneously, the master's beautiful daughters, upset with his father

⁵⁶ Bontempelli, *Realismo Magico*, 52. All translations by author.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 53.

⁵⁹ Giovanni Francesco Straparola. *The facetious nights of Straparola*, trans. W. G. Waters. Chicely illustrated by Jules Garnier and E. R. Hughes. (London, Priv. print. for members of the Society of Bibliophiles, 1901), Volume 2, Night Eight, Story 5.

for his inhuman actions towards the horse, decide to take the horse for a walk and to drink water from the river. When the horse touches the water of the river, he immediately turns into a fish and starts swimming. Aware of his dangers, he swims towards the riverbank becoming a ruby ring among the pebble stones that a princess is collecting on the shoreline. The master, aware of the apprentice's transformation, turns into a physician and visits the king, who is very ill. Finding a cure for the king he asks to be compensated with a ruby ring the princess owns. The apprentice, that night, turns himself back into a human to explain to the kind princess the whole story. The following day, when the physician arrives for his ring, the princess throws the ring with all her strength into the floor. As the ring dissolves into many pieces, the fragments of the precious stone turn into pomegranate seeds, some of which remained hidden in the room. The physician, turning into a cock eats all the visible seeds. As he is eating them, the remaining seeds turn into a fox. Without hesitation, the fox eats the cock. The story ends with the apprentice marrying the princess.

In the story the transformational aspect of things in relationship to others acquire a powerful notion of availability among very common elements, a river, a ring, a pomegranate seed. Anything within the world can be enacted in relationship to something else. In the case of Scarpa's work, the transformational sequence of certain lines that were initially not supposed be part of the design are recollected and given new roles as the design story evolves. This is possible first because the lines exist on the page in a state that exceeds their needs, as leftover, offered in the hope that one day they will find a new direction. And secondly because of Scarpa's *ingenium* to discover in these lines a secret and never-ending life. His wit came directly from a profound understanding of the transmutational character of lines, and this could have only been understood through making them. The skill of knowing how to draw is augmented by letting that which is drawn to draw itself into unknown possibilities that can later be discovered and revealed.

Figures Chapter 2

Fig. 2.1

Cigarette packages

NR #55499

© Centro Carlo Scarpa

Archivio di Stato di Treviso

Italy



Fig. 2.2

Laurens Bar Card

NR #55499

© Centro Carlo Scarpa

Archivio di Stato di Treviso

Italy



Fig. 2.3
Arcosolium design
NR #3075
© MAXXI, Museo nazionale delle Arti del XXI secolo
Centro Archivi del MAXXI Architettura
Rome, Italy

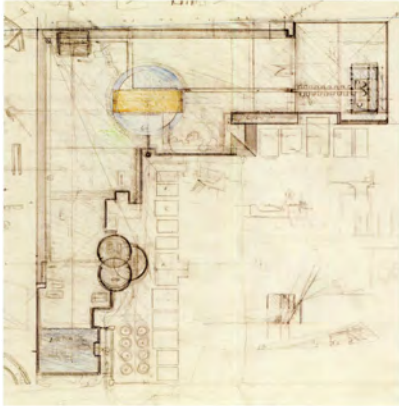


Fig. 2.4
Arcosolium design
NR #3076
© MAXXI, Museo nazionale delle Arti del XXI secolo
Centro Archivi del MAXXI Architettura
Rome, Italy

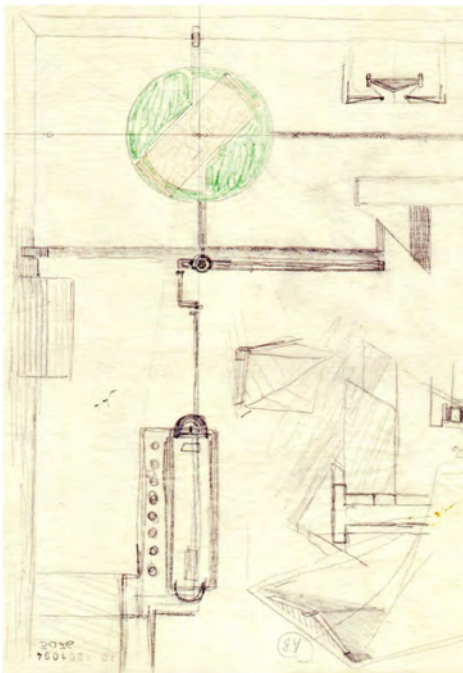


Fig. 2.5
Arcosolium design
NR #2925 R
© MAXXI, Museo nazionale delle Arti del XXI secolo
Centro Archivi del MAXXI Architettura
Rome, Italy

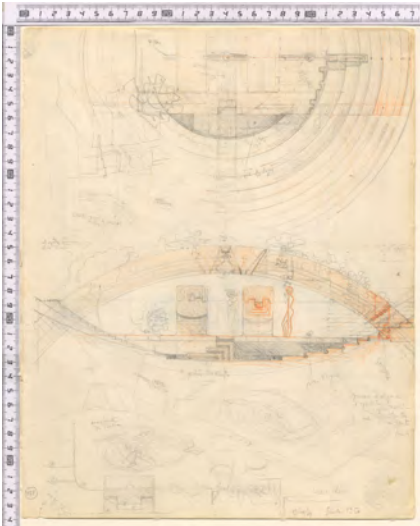


Fig. 2.6
Scarpa drawing table
Snapshot taken from *Un'ora con Carlo Scarpa* [video]
Directed by: Maurizio Cascavilla, 1971
© Rai Cultura Network



Fig. 2.7

Scarpa gesturing

Snapshot taken from *Carlo Scarpa Testimonanza* [video]

Ritratto sulla vita del designer italiano con particolare rilievo per l'esperienza alla Venini, dove Scarpa realizzò bellissimi vetri.

© Source: RAI Educational

Head Director: Maria Paola Orlandini



Fig. 2.8

Scarpa Studio

Snapshot taken from *Un'ora con Carlo Scarpa* video

Directed by: Maurizio Cascavilla, 1971

© Rai Cultura Network



Fig. 2.9
 Horizontal drawing table
 Rodericus Zamorensis, *Speculum vitae humanae*
 Augsburg, Günter Zainer, printer (1477) Fol, 73 (woodcut)
 Excerpted from Günter Binding, *Medieval building techniques*. Stroud: Tempus (2004)



Fig. 2.10
 Carlo Scarpa at construction site
 © Photo: Guido Pietropoli



Fig. 2.11
 Analytic-Synthetic writing method
 Diagram

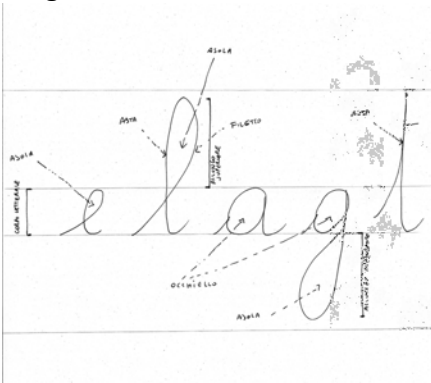


Fig. 2.12

Global writing method

From Eugène Dévaud. *Le système Delcroy et la pédagogie chrétienne*. (Fribourg, Suisse: Fragnière, 1937)



Fig. 2.13

Paul Klee

1988.7.1 Paul Klee Gemischt Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington 1927 reed pen and black ink over traces of graphite overall: 29.5 x 41.8 cm (11 5/8 x 16 7/16 in.)

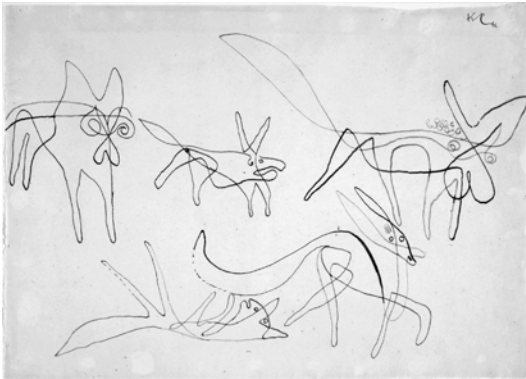


Fig. 2.14

Paul Klee

Line in motion

From Paul Klee. *Paul Klee: the Thinking Eye: The Notebooks of Paul Klee*, ed. Jürg Spiller. (New York: G. Wittenborn, 1961)

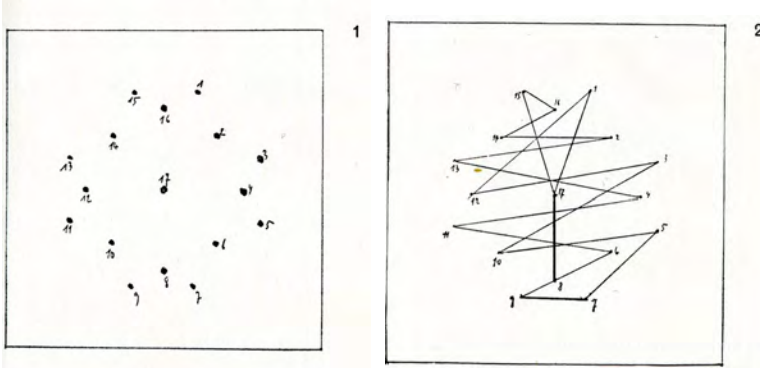


Fig. 2.15

Children lines

From John Matthews. *The art of childhood and adolescence: the construction of meaning*. (London, UK: Falmer Press, 1999)

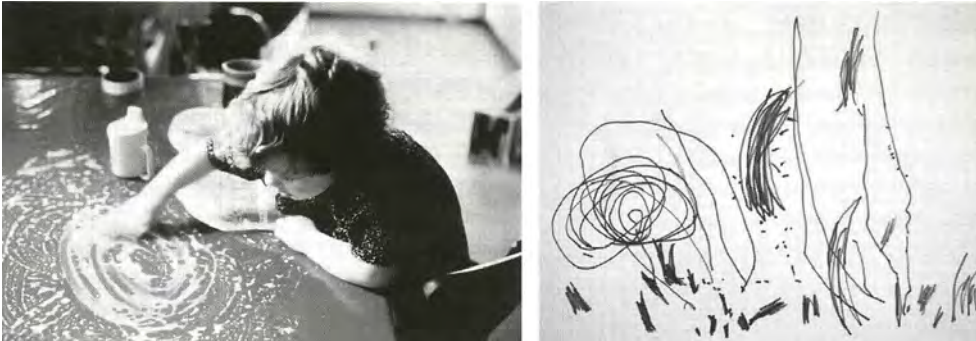


Fig. 2.16

Vincenzo Scamozzi portrait

Paolo Veronese, c. 1585, oil on canvas

Denver Art Museum Collection: Charles Bayly, Jr. Collection



Fig. 2.17
Auxiliary circle to resolve a triangular figure (TBD)
Demonstrative diagram.

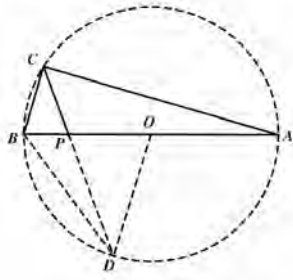


Fig. 2.18
Arcosolium design
NR #4160 R
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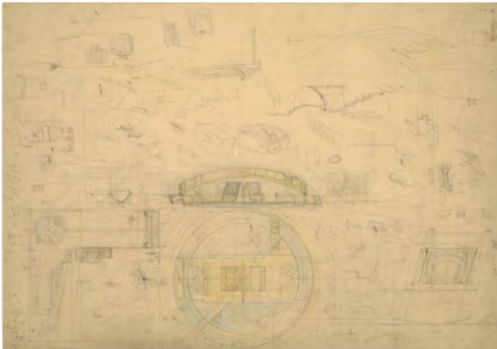


Fig. 2.19
Arcosolium design (detail)
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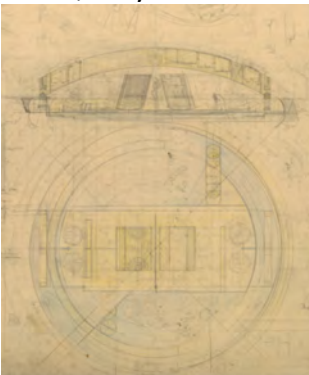


Fig. 2.20
Arcosolium design (detail)
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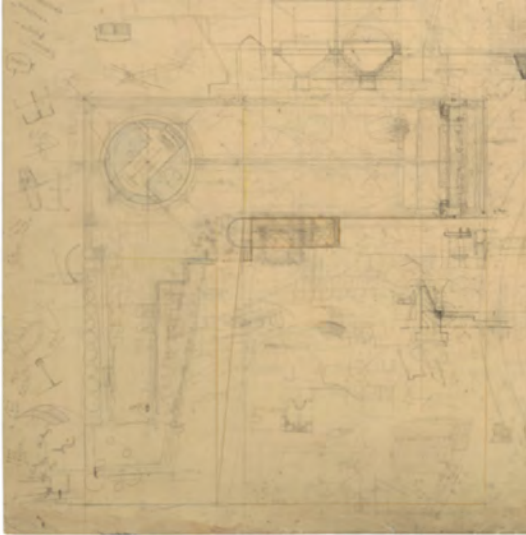


Fig. 2.21
Arcosolium design
Diagram by Author over NR#4160 R, © MAXXI

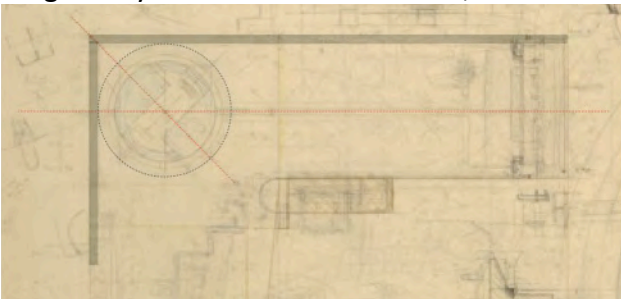


Fig. 2.22
Arcosolium design
Study by author over NR#4160 R, © MAXXI

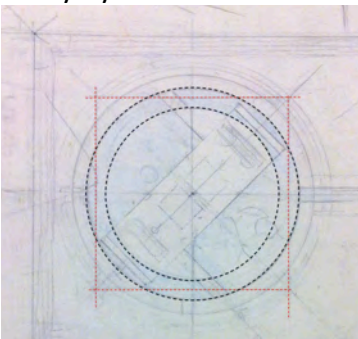


Fig. 2.23
Arcosolium design
Study by author over NR#4160 R, © MAXXI

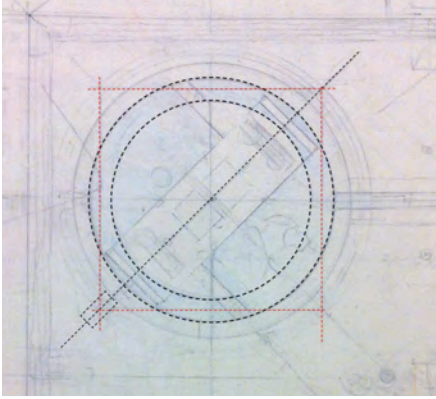


Fig. 2.24
Arcosolium design
Diagram by author

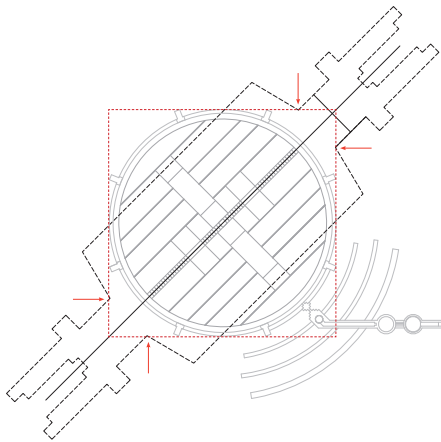


Fig. 2.25

Arcosolium overlap between end of roof and circular floor

Photo by Paul Emmons



Fig. 2.26

Arcosolium Greek cross detail

Photo by Paul Emmons



Fig. 2.27

Arcosolium design (detail)

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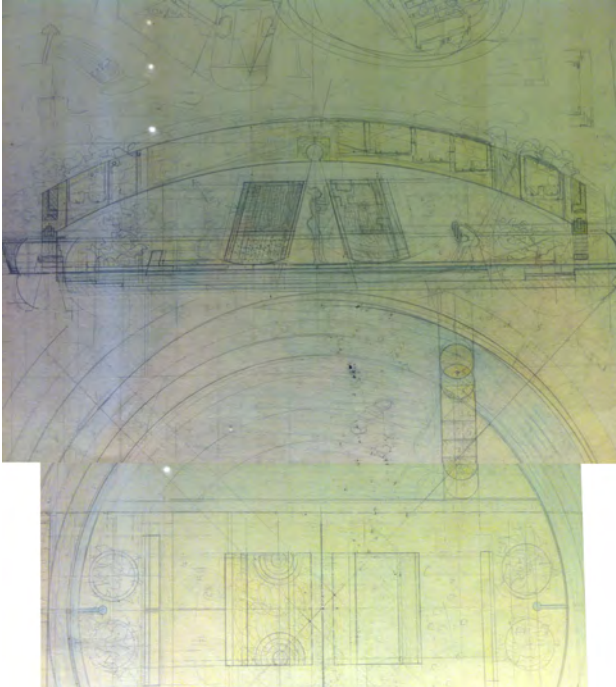


Fig. 2.28

Arcosolium design (detail)

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Fig. 2.29

Arcosolium

Diagram by author showing auxiliary line and how this one was used to make the curved inner detail of the retaining wall. Red lines indicate that detail was not yet part of the plan design

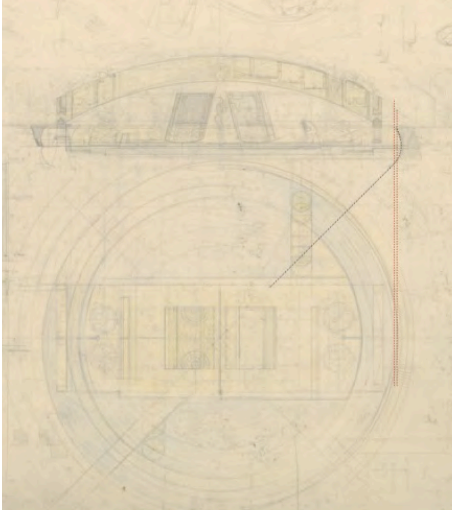


Fig. 2.30

Arcosolium design (detail)

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Fig. 2.31

Roman arcosolium

Ostia Antica, Italy

© Photo by Mary Ann Sullivan, 2007



Fig. 2.32

Arcosolium design (detail)

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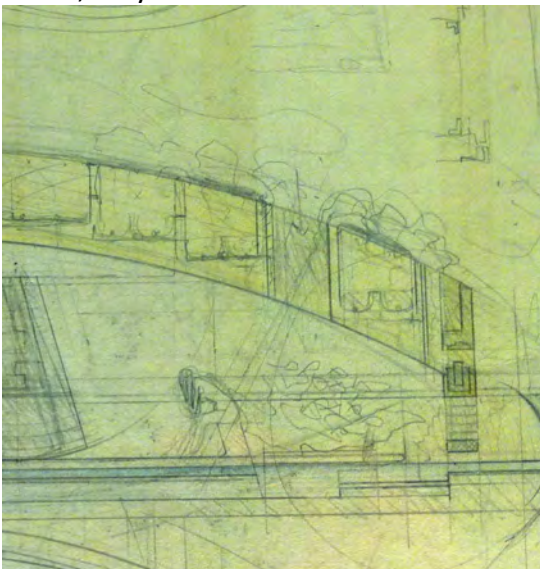


Fig. 2.33
Arcosolium design (detail)
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Rome, Italy

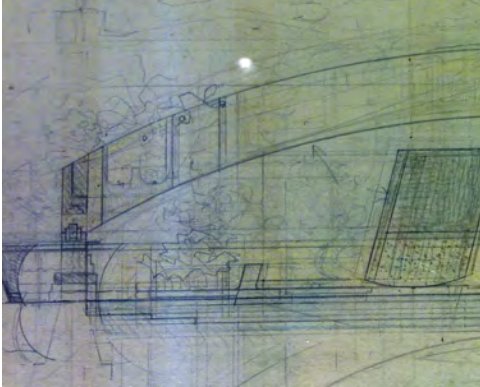


Fig. 2.34
Arcosolium and Brion tombs
Diagram by Author

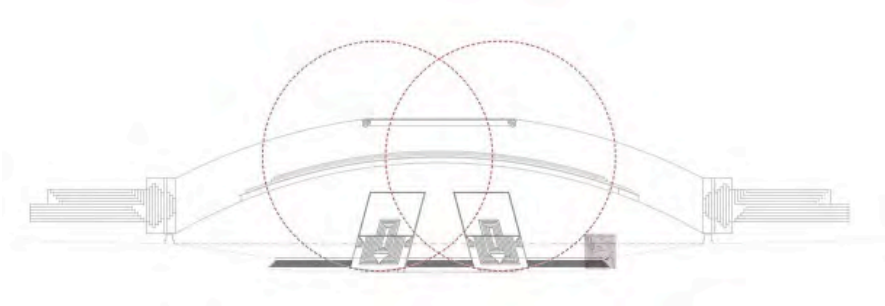


Fig. 2.35
Arcosolium design
NR #4160 R [fragment]
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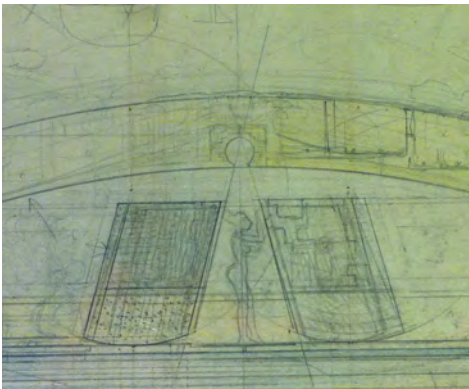


Fig. 2.36

Arcosolium gold/silver tiles crossing transversally in between the tombs
Photo by Paul Emmons



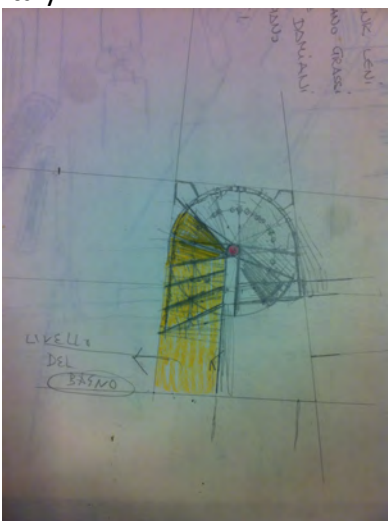
Fig. 2.37

Flush toilet design (*livello del bagno*)

© Centro Carlo Scarpa

Archivio di Stato di Treviso

Italy



Chapter 3

Erroneous Lines: the third time's the charm

Living is an uninterrupted sequence of errors, each of which supports the previous one and relies on the following. Finished the errors, finished everything.

Ennio Flaiano¹

1. Making *cense* of errors

Few children or adults have failed to play at least once the simple game of telephone.² This one consists in secretly passing a message from player to player by whispering the message in each other's ear. In the process of transferring the message, errors accumulate in the retellings. When the last player in line announces it, this one has almost nothing to do with the original message [fig. 3.1]. The game is most entertaining when enough errors have distorted the message and an entirely new thought emerges. The fascinating aspect of the simple telephone game is that its rules are constructed so a propensity towards errors is what makes the game fun. While in most games a mistake signals losing, some games make room for errors and integrate them into their structure.

Errors in childhood are often amazing reasons to laugh and find joy in the world. Among adults, errors are frequently considered faults or problems that must be solved, or covered up as quickly as possible. Within the practice of architecture, errors have also had a significant role. Leon Battista Alberti addressed the presence of errors in both, his treatise on painting and his treatise on architecture. On *De Pictura* he expressed: "There is no art which has not had its beginnings in things full of errors. Nothing is at the same time

¹ "Vivere è una serie ininterrotta di errori, ognuno dei quali sostiene il precedente e si appoggia sul seguente. Finiti gli errori, finite tutto". This book was part of Carlo Scarpa's library. Ennio Flaiano, 1910-1972. *Diario degli errori*, scelta e cura di Emma Giammattei. 1. ed. (Milano: Rizzoli, 1976), 82. Translation by author.

² In the United States and England sometimes called 'Chinese Whispers.' In Italian: *Telefono senza fili* (Telephone without wires), in Spanish: *Teléfono Descompuesto* (Sick Telephone).

both new and perfect.”³ On his treatise on architecture he compared faults of building to a sick body, where the architect, like the physician must heal them if it is within their capacity.⁴ Frank Lloyd Wright used to joke: “A doctor can bury his mistakes, but an architect can only advise his clients to plant vines.” The meaning of errors in architectural design has always had bad connotations. Errors can mean that either the client will have to pay more, or the architect will be losing money fixing them. Architects are often covered by ‘Errors & Omissions’ insurance to protect themselves against possible unforeseen errors during the project construction. However, there is an alternate side to errors that has to do, like in the telephone game, with discoveries of something that was not expected.

This chapter will examine the structure of error in the work of Carlo Scarpa, who, like all humans, erred in his everyday practice of drawing and building architecture. While for most adults errors cause shame or embarrassment, for Scarpa errors seem to have heightened his playful approach towards architecture. As Franca Semi has expressed: “There were many digressions or thoughts illuminated by the encounter of existent things, either in his work or others.”⁵ Following his work through a close examination of his drawings and a series of testimonies by his builders, disciples and own son, three approaches to errors are identified. Just like in the telephone game, traces of errors in the drawn or built work are often gathered based on testimonies of those present when such errors occurred. From this, we can already infer the volatile substance of errors, just as a pungent smell can dictate an experience while it begins to dissipate inadvertently at the same time. The secret life of errors is also what allows buildings to contain mysterious marks and information, rarely available for discovery yet the results of which are present for the experience.

³ Leon Battista Alberti. *On painting and On sculpture*, Latin and English texts, trans. by Cecil Grayson, (London: Phaidon, 1972), 98.

⁴ Leon Battista Alberti. *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. J. Rykwert, N. Leach and R. Tavernor (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1988), 320.

⁵ “*Molte erano le digressioni, o i ragionamenti che illuminavano il perche di cose esistenti, le sue o di altri.*” Semi, *A lezione*, 7. Translation by author.

1.1. The unplanned fate of buildings

...when the temple of Juno was completed, the porters, as it is said, who were entrusted with the carriage of statues, made an exchange of them; and, on religious grounds, the mistake was left uncorrected, from an impression that it had been by the intervention of the divinities themselves, that this seat of worship had been thus shared between them. Hence it is that we see in the Temple of Juno, also, the ornaments, which properly pertain to the worship of Jupiter.

Pliny the Elder⁶

Among the Navajo people there is a tradition of leaving mistakes in the weaving of their rugs.⁷ Such mistakes symbolize the access points for the spirits to enter and leave the work, providing a threshold that connects two realms [fig. 3.2].⁸ The tradition of leaving a mistake in the rug was not seen as a problem to be corrected, but rather as a portal for other realities to dwell within the work. While such a mistake within the textile is anticipated, it demonstrates an instance where an error does not act as a failure but as an opportunity to excel into other realms. The mistake, purposely crafted within the rug, acts as an exception among the continuity and coherence of the whole, becoming a distinct element for wondering.

In architecture an error is frequently seen as a failure or problem. Although negligent errors can lead to deadly failing structures or distressing problems within building systems, errors are more often minor inoffensive creatures denoting the human condition of those who labor within the world of making. Errors are ontological units of human performance. André Wogenscky, a French modernist architect and disciple of Le

⁶ Pliny, the Elder. *The Natural History of Pliny*, Volume VI, trans. John Bostock, and Henry Thomas (London: H.G. Bohn, 1857), 322.

⁷ Noël Bennett. *The Weaver's Pathway: A Clarification of the "spirit Trail" in Navajo Weaving* (Flagstaff, Arizona: Northland Press, 1974), 30.

⁸ Jill Ahlberg Yohe. "Situated Flow: A Few Thoughts on Reweaving Meaning in the Navajo Spirit Pathway" in *Museum Anthropology Review: A Peered Reviewed Journal of Museum and Material Culture Studies*. Volume 6, Number 1 (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Bloomington Libraries- Internet Resource, 2012).

Corbusier, recounts a particular story regarding the understanding of errors for the Swiss architect:⁹

...Although his architecture was completely thought out in advance, structured, seen by him in his mind before it was built, Le Corbusier loved accidents in his architecture. Sometimes he loved mistakes in the construction. I would often have to beg him not to tell the contractors. He loved accidents- that which could not be foreseen- which introduced an element of randomness in the formal order and disrupted its organization.

At Marseilles, on the roof garden, the coating covering the waterproofing on the vault of the gym started to crack. As I had been told to forbid the repair of any fault in the construction before Le Corbusier had seen it, I asked the contractor to wait for Le Corbusier to come. I was not proud of the cracking. Le Corbusier came. He was delighted. He showed me the beauty of the graphic signs drawn on the vault by the lines of the cracks. He ordered me to get a brush and bright red paint, and paint a red line following the cracks exactly. It was not a joke. The red lines were drawn and they stayed on the gym for sometime. Unfortunately, it was eventually necessary to reapply the coating!¹⁰

Thanks to Wogenscky's testimony, we inherit the otherwise lost evidence of Le Corbusier's appreciation for mistakes as unexpected gifts to the work. It remains surprising not only his recognition of mistakes, but also the reinforcement of their weak existence in the life of the building. The need to isolate the cracks and view them as having their own reality within the predetermined life of the building reminds us of the

⁹ The French architect worked with Le Corbusier from 1936 to 1956 and was highly involved in *L'unité d'habitation de Marseille* among other projects. He was also a teacher at *L'École nationale supérieure d'architecture in Brussels*.

¹⁰ André Wogenscky. *Le Corbusier's Hands* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2006), 76.

‘mistaken line’ of the Navajo people where the mistake is in charge of revealing a subliminal story. Buildings, just like the Navajo woven blankets, are animated beings whose life and construction are not completely predictable by the architect.

There are several instances within Scarpa's practice where mistakes are mentioned or remained as anecdotes. In the case of the Brion cemetery, a few remarkable stories stand out. One of the mistakes, for example, occurred due to a misunderstanding following a telephone conversation between Scarpa and the project's master mason. Next to the chapel, a deep well holds a pump and other equipment that serves the water needs of the cemetery. The lid for this well was integrated into the design of the chapel surroundings, [fig. 3.3] and within this lid Scarpa had designed a specific access point that consisted of a bronze opening/handle cast into the concrete slab [fig. 3.4]. When casting the slab, however, the masons did not have drawings of the opening placement, thus prompting a call to the architect. Scarpa told them to orient the longest portion of the cut out along the diagonal of the slab. Unfortunately the masons understood the diagonal to be the edge of the irregular shaped slab, and not the geometrical diagonal of the piece [fig. 3.5]. Scarpa, quite afflicted by the mistake, decided not to demolish the work, if anything because it was too expensive to re-build the slab, although he pointed out that if the mistake would have occurred in stone, it could have been easily fixed.¹¹ In this case the mistake is an unfortunate event that the architect accepts but allows him to reflect on other possible scenarios. When seen today, however, it is impossible to feel the opening placement as mistaken, which may suggest why the architect did not demolish the slab after all. The presence of the error was significant enough for Scarpa to recount the story to his students and to reflect upon common glitches occurring between architects and builders.

¹¹ Semi, *A lezione*, 298 . Translation by author.

Eugenio Bozzetto, master mason for the cemetery, vividly recounts another mistake that transpired during the concrete work of the chapel [fig. 3.6].¹² Scarpa had ordered the concrete work of the chapel to be a monolithic pour in order to omit formwork discrepancies [fig. 3.7]. Although the pours occurred in stages, the formwork was built entirely beforehand. Bozzetto recalls that while nearing the end of completing the formwork, he realized there was a discrepancy of 14 to 15cm more on the altar wall's height. His first reaction was not to correct it, seeing such a small discrepancy as barely noticeable.¹³ After the concrete was poured and the formwork was removed, Scarpa saw the chapel and he exclaimed: "What have I done? I have made a terrible mistake!"¹⁴ Scarpa had calculated the height of these walls so that the sun could pass exactly through a specially designed opening on Giuseppe Brion's death anniversary, joining earth and sky at noon on that specific day [fig. 3.8].¹⁵ Distressed, Bozzetto had to explain the unfortunate truth to the architect. Scarpa then, ordered Bozzetto to build a planter on the chapel roof where green leaves would inhabit the detail instead of light passing through the opening [fig. 3.9]. He not only decided to leave the mistake as it occurred, but he highlighted its presence by adding an element clearly noticeable in the chapel façade [fig. 3.10].

In this particular approach to errors, the reaction was not to patch or hide the mistake but to highlight it through a design change and showing it as if had always belonged to the project. In this way, elements that were planned to have a certain role in the building in the end acquire a different presence beyond its unplanned nature. The architect affably and consciously accepts the acts of fate the project undergoes due to the imprecise nature of its making.

¹² De, Cal R. *Memoriae Causa: Carlo Scarpa E Il Complesso Monumentale Brion, 1969-1978 (DVD)*. s.l.: s.n., 2009. Minute: 27:40.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Paraphrased from master mason words. It is important to mention Scarpa's beliefs in the craft of the builders. The fact that he immediately blames himself for the error is indicative of the trust he had in them. Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

One last example of this type of error is evident in the design and construction of the *Gipsoteca Canoviana* in Possagno, [fig. 3.11] where Scarpa encountered a design mistake while one of the windows was under construction. In a lecture given to students at the IUAV in 1976, he tells the story of the skylight window in the shape of a cube, designed to bring the sky into the room. While imagining the detail it never occurred to him that the reflection between the glass panes would offer an alternative reality that actually obscures the clarity between the transparent solidity of the glass and the various airy hues of the sky [fig. 3.12].¹⁶ After noticing this unanticipated condition Scarpa concluded:

These are the errors that one encounters while thinking, acting, and making, and when they happen you need to have a double mind, a triple one, the mind of the thief who speculates the robbery of a bank and needs to have that which I call wit, an attentive tension to understand all that is happening and all that will happen.¹⁷

Such attentive tension suggests the presence of an awareness and readiness to act upon events appearing within the architectural process. When working with materials, one must consider how they interact in the world under many conditions. Contrary to a tensed attention towards one thing, an attentive tension understands the work and the world as animated, always in a state of unexpected variations. In the case of the glass cube window, reflectivity as well as the dynamic presence of light was an ingredient to be considered when designing the detail.

1.2. Some things must go

¹⁶ Semi, *A Lezione*, 191-192.

¹⁷ "Sono errori in cui si incorre nel pensare, nell'agire, nel fare, e quindi bisogna avere la mente doppia, la mente tripla, la mente del ladro, da uomo che specula, da uomo che vorrebbe rubare in una banca, e bisogna avere quel che io chiamo arguzia, una tensione attenta per poter capire tutto quel che succede e quello che succederà." Ibid.

Only that which can change can continue: this is the principle by which infinite players live.

James p. Carse¹⁸

A different approach to errors in Scarpa's work can be found when these were not acceptable and a decision was made to remove or replace them, leading at times as far as demolishing parts of the building. Historian Giuseppe Mazzariol once stated of Scarpa's work that, "if something was mistaken in the construction he did not doubt for a second to demolish the piece whatever the cost was, both morally and economically."¹⁹ Maria Pelizzari, a client of the architect, gave a similar example while explaining the work performed on the restoration of the Pelizzari house. She recalled that, "he was always very meticulous while he was at the construction site, I give you an example: if he realized that a wall that has just been built was not 'working' with the context, immediately he would order its demolition, this is why the work took so long..."²⁰ Pietropoli, Scarpa's aforementioned assistant on the Brion cemetery among other projects, recounts another case of elimination.²¹ Inside the cemetery chapel, Scarpa wanted the altar to be cast with a very fine concrete. The builders constructed the formwork and poured the concrete as indicated. When the formwork was removed, to Scarpa's surprise, all the aggregates had sunken to the bottom where they had become grotesquely visible within the thinness of the altar. Scarpa immediately poked fun at the construction, saying that it looked like a

¹⁸ James P. Carse. *Finite and Infinite Games*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1986), 45.

¹⁹ Sandro Giordano. *Il mestiere di Carlo Scarpa : collaboratori, artigiani e committenti* / relatori: F. Dal Co, G. Mazzariol ; [laureando]: Sandro Giordano, 1 v. ; 30 cm Doctorate Thesis (IUAV: Istituto universitario di architettura di Venezia, Corso di laurea in architettura, Anno accademico 1983/1984, Sessione estiva, 1984), 213 Translation by author.

²⁰ Ibid, 107.

²¹ Thanks to Guido Pietropoli for sharing this and so many stories with me. Scarpa also makes mentions to this event in a lecture he gave in Madrid in the Summer of 1978. Transcription from audio by George Dodds. (Note that Scarpa explains that the metal he used in the altar is bronze) "*Questo è altare che è di bronzo, è un infortunio sui lavoro. Qui ci sarà il sacerdote da questa parte, qui ci sarà il Crocifisso, questo è tipico del cemento armato e infatti volevo farlo in cemento armato, pero un cemento con additivi americani che si chiamano Mc Master, ho scoperto che se si getta su una materia lucidissima, come per esempio il cristallo e il vetro, il materiale resta lucido. ...Molto povero...perfetto, pero siccome questi additivi sono di ferro quando andammo (a fare) tutto il materiale e andato a finire così, sembrava una torta, precisa ...era una cosa infame, era impossibile, e allora l'ho distrutto. Ma ormai il disegno secondo il mio parere andava bene, allora l'ho potuto fare di materiale bronzeo, abbiamo trovato la lamiera giusta al silicio e allora l'ho iniettato dentro di cemento perché non suoni. ... Cosa volevo segnare?" George Dodds. *Landscape and Garden in the Work of Carlo Scarpa* (University of Pennsylvania: PhD Dissertation, 2000), 247.*

badly cooked cake and instantaneously ordered its demolition. In this case, Scarpa re-designed the altar using a smooth and fine material that could be handled with better accuracy [fig. 3.13].²² The new design was made in Muntz metal and the points where the screws attach the metal sheets to the structure within were filled with lead, leading to an altar that is impeccably precise [fig. 3.14].²³ The re-designed altar, rather than being re-made in a cast material, was made from parts coming together in a very controlled fashion.

This different approach to mistakes offers a new horizon within the structure of errors that insinuates their great range of values for the architect. The process of judging the built work in progress as well as his drawings varies significantly depending on the nature and quality of the error. Not all mistakes are to be kept, not all mistakes are to be demolished, and not all mistakes are to be considered design opportunities. The practice of selecting and realizing the potential and reality of errors belongs to acts of intuition, which as we will see, become a form of sniffing out the world.

1.3. Acute complicity

A man of genius makes no mistakes; his errors are volitional and are the portals of discovery.

James Joyce²⁴

Another and most complex approach to mistakes in the work of Scarpa exists when the mistake is treated as a design opportunity. Instead of being concealed, accepted as such or demolished, the error is brought to attention through very specific details and distinct qualities. Just as in the case of the telephone game, this approach to errors exposes the distorted message as the site where Scarpa introduces a new element of play in the

²² Interview by author with Guido Pietropoli (Treviso, July 2014).

²³ Muntz metal is a form of alpha-beta brass with about 60% copper, 40% zinc and a trace of iron.

²⁴ James Joyce. *Ulysses*. (New York: Modern Library, 1992), 341.

project. In fact, in an interview with his son Tobia, the mention of errors in his father's work invoked an immediate response: "Yes, I agree, it is like when the client tells you that she/he is not happy with the design. I immediately feel happy when this happens, not sad or upset. If the client does not like it, it means that I have another opportunity to make it better."²⁵ Tobia immediately associated the notion of error with the possibility of a new opportunity through the client's unhappiness (which could potentially also be an error!). In his view the two realms are comparable because they prompt the architect to do better. Both situations challenge the architect's imagination and become a gift to the project, something unexpected to discover within a known set of contextual determinants. Designing from errors becomes almost the design of a project within a project in which the new site, context and needs ought to be re-framed and re-discovered after the mistake occurs. The next section of the chapter will closely examine two instances in which errors became design opportunities. While the two examples belong to different projects, both are indicative of a mode of working and thinking that demonstrate Scarpa's approach to this type of event in the life of the building. The examples will show errors that occurred while drawing and building and they expose an acute complicity between the nature of the error and how the architect responded through witty design decisions.

2. Erring charms

2.1. Error from drawing to building

It is hard to reckon with the unexpected. And yet as a leader it is always far ahead. It burst ahead in the same direction or in another direction. This very day, perhaps, it is already in a place we seldom think of.

²⁵ Interview by author with Tobia Scarpa and Guido Pietropoli (July, 2014).

In another late night at Scarpa's house and studio, the tired Guido Pietropoli is tracing the third level floor plan for the reconstruction and extension of the ex-convent of San Sebastiano for use by the Faculty of Literature and Philosophy of the University of Venice. Pietropoli is drawing *tremblottant*, making free-hand ink lines with a thin nib by tracing over the constructed lines of the drawing below. The wavy pulse of his hand transfers through the pen into the paper, expounding slightly different qualities each time a line is traced. The entire drawing is made up of these thin lines [fig. 3.15]. At first sight the line seems drawn with a ruler; however, with attention, subtle differences are discerned. Each line faintly expresses particular movements of the hand, enlivening the drawing. The technique, according to Pietropoli, requires slowness and is a bit annoying; however, thanks to the slight variations, it imparts great character to the drawing.²⁷ Scarpa had discovered that Guillermo Julian de la Fuente's Atelier in Venice was using this technique and in admiration, he asked Pietropoli to employ it also for their own drawings.²⁸

In a 1940 American manual for technical drawing, this type of line is called a "straight line for technical sketching" [fig. 3.16].²⁹ While the instructions of the manual explain the making of the line with the use of pencils, the procedure nearly mirrors the one drawn with ink. According to this manual, the making of the line must be informed by "freedom, snap and confidence," and it advocates for paying attention to the tip of the pencil or nib while making the line instead of focusing on the entire line.³⁰ In order to make this type of line, attention centers at each movement made by the hand while carefully crafting each

²⁶ Klee, *The Thinking Eye*, 69.

²⁷ Interview by author to Guido Pietropoli, July 2013. Pietropoli learned the drawing technique in the Atelier of Guillermo de la Fuente in Venice while working on the Venice Hospital project for Le Corbusier. When Scarpa heard of the technique, he asked Pietropoli to use it in the drawings for San Sebastiano.

²⁸ Pietropoli worked at Le Corbusier's studio opened in Venice for the new Venice hospital directed by Guillermo Julian de la Fuente.

²⁹ Frederick E. Giesche. *Technical Drawing*. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940) 517-520.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

mark. Contrary to what it may seem, the *tremblottant* line requires more precision, in terms of craft, time and attention, than a line constructed with a straight edge.

While carefully drawing a long line in this way, the cigarette hanging from Pietropoli's mouth kept burning and burning until finally an ember of his cigarette fell onto the drawing. Before he could brush it away, the hot ember had burned through the tracing paper [fig. 3.17]. Piercing through it, the ember left a perfectly round hole where it accidentally hit the paper [fig. 3.18].³¹ Pietropoli cursed this loss of the night's work and was contemplating starting the drawing entirely over again when Scarpa saw it and exclaimed: "... We will have a tree here!" and he drew a circle around the unexpected hole.³² On the next plan for the project, the tree is added and is thoroughly integrated into the design [fig. 3.19].

Events of this kind regularly happen during design, yet are never discussed in writings about architectural drawing. This lacuna in discussions of drawing results in the incorrect assumption that architectural design flows from rational pre-determination in the mind, only afterwards recorded on a drawing. Perhaps it is only a coincidence that Saint Sebastian was often painted tied to a tree with numerous arrows piercing his bloody body, though they did not kill him [fig. 3.20].³³ As the arrows piercing Sebastian's body did not kill him, so the ember piercing the plan did not end its life. Like the personified figure of opportunity, *Occasio*, one must seize an opportunity when it presents itself. *Occasio*, who holds a knife, has long hair at the front so one can capture an opportunity as it confronts them, but is bald at the back of the head, because once an opportunity has passed, it

³¹ Unfortunately, the original drawing depicting the burnt mark appears to be missing. It does not exist in the archives and based on Pietropoli's recollection is that the drawing was rolled together with other working drawings that are not archived at the Archivio di Stato di Treviso. However, heliographic copies were made of the drawing with the burnt mark, so we can still appreciate the trace today. Other drawings of San Sebastiano have similar marks of embers burning the paper.

³² I greatly thank Guido Pietropoli for telling me this story while we were observing Carlo Scarpa's drawings during the exhibition: *Progetti veneziani di Carlo Scarpa: le università at Archivio Progetti luav* curated by Serena Maffioletti and Archivio Progetti, with Leonardo Monaco and Mara Micol Reina in Venice on July, 2013.

³³ Bette Talvacchia, "The Double Life of St. Sebastian in Renaissance Art," in eds. Julia L Hairston and Walter Stephens, *The Body in Early Modern Italy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 226-248.

usually does not return [fig. 3.21]. Yet, the only way to be able to act quickly when the moment demands is by slow, thorough and careful preparation that proceeds the moment of fast action. Instead of errors that waste time in drawing, Scarpa's cunning mode of thought uses the opportunity to create something better. The slow making of the drawing and the fast burning of the paper staged a condition that many architects would consider a mistake, yet for the Venetian architect constituted an opportunity. A chance has an ambiguous meaning - it is an accident and it is an opportunity.³⁴

The unexpected mark created by the ember became not just a tree but a very specific one designated by Scarpa as a *fagus rubra*. *Fagus* is the Latin word for beech.³⁵ Just like the paper eaten away by the ember, the word *fagus* was usually associated with trees of consumable fruit. The qualifier of the beech, *rubra*, means red. A *fag* was also the British colloquialism for cigarette. While it is likely that Scarpa would have been aware of this play of words given his philological interests as well as his knowledge of the English language, we cannot give a precise reason as to why he chose the *fagus rubra* tree. Perhaps he utilized red in the drawing's recreation for the spilling of the blood of Saint Sebastian or perhaps for honoring the fiery color of the ember that generated the mark. What is certain is that in Scarpa's imagination the unexpected burnt mark on the drawing was translated into a red beech, known for its blazing red foliage during the fall [fig. 3.22]. Additionally, adjacent to the red/copper beech tree, the drawing shows one more additional tree: a *tilia*. Right next to it Scarpa leaves a note that says, "... perfume for when students are in exam season" [fig. 3.23].³⁶ The *tilia* or linden tree not only emits a delicious perfume when in blossoms but also holds in its leaves and flowers a charming flavor recognized as giving a calming effect when consumed in the form of tea [fig. 3.24]. From the slow, wiggly making of lines on a late night at the drawing table to the imagining of a place through olfactory vision, Scarpa's San Sebastiano plan demonstrates the design

³⁴ The etymology of the word chance has its roots in the Latin *cadentia*: falling. In addition to the two meanings, accident and opportunity, the word can also mean a space in time. *Oxford English Dictionary*, Online Dictionary, Oxford University Press, accessed in November 2014.

³⁵ *Fagus*: beech, originally a tree with edible fruit. Short and Lewis. *A Latin Dictionary*.

³⁶ The original Italian note reads: "*Il profumo al tempi degli esami.*"

possibility of chance encounters in the making of the drawing, just like errors in play can lead to deeper thoughts because they 'shake up' the presumed approach.

It is important to point out that the burnt hole occurred in the third floor plan drawing of the project, in an empty blank area within the page. This area in the actual site corresponds to a portion of the courtyard where no building exists. The place for 'nothing' in the actual project, meant 'something' for the drawing itself: an extra portion within the sheet of paper to draw more. In several studies of the plan, Scarpa sketched various thoughts within this portion of the sheet [fig. 3.25]. The act of rescuing the mistake, then, occurs at several levels of imagination. First, the similarity between the hole made by the ember and the representation of a possible tree trunk at that scale provokes the architect to make sense of the mark as such. In this way, there is a coherence between the oval mark made by the ember and the representation of a tree trunk in an architectural plan drawing, a literal correspondence among symbolic signs. Second, and simultaneously with pairing the tree with the burnt hole mark, there is a non-literal aspect of reading the mistake. Since the mistake occurred in the third floor plan, the capacity to rescue the mistake must not be taken exclusively in the literal realm, but in the fictional horizon of possibilities. Simply obeying architectural drawing conventions, a tree trunk would never be drawn in the third floor plan of a building. However, the architect is able to re-frame the reality of the third floor as a fiction, and the fiction of the tree mark as a reality, allowing in this way the entrance of a fictional character to the reality of the project. Third, as it was mentioned earlier, many other drawings of the San Sebastiano plan show quick design explorations in the exact area where the accident occurred. This 'empty' area within the paper often became the place where sketches were drawn. Scarpa had been filling that space of the project with 'other-things' before the mistake became 'a thing' for the design. Initially, making sketches in the empty area of the drawing did not signify a reality for that particular place. Only when the mark 'appears' or 'falls' in the drawing without being planned does Scarpa make sense of the space he has already been occupying throughout the process of design. Perhaps, by drawing in the place where

“nothing” happens, he allows the drawing to have a propensity for something to possibly happen. The practice of filling the space of the sheet of paper with things that belong to another dimension enters inevitably the real dimension of the floor plan, so when Scarpa sees the hole, an accident for Pietropoli, he is already used to playing within that area of the drawing and immediately accepts the new mark as being already part of the game.³⁷

The complex approach to rescuing the error and welcoming it as something potent does not simply translate in seeing trees and imagining trees. Scarpa’s arduous practice of drawing allows him to prepare a fertile ground within the possibilities of unknown events as the drawing evolves. His wise approach to mistaken marks resonates quite similarly with the notion of wisdom that Vico develops in his work *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*:

In fact, wisdom itself is nothing but the skillful care of what is fitting, which enables the wise man to speak and act in every new situation in such a way that nothing equally apt for the purpose could be derived and adapted from elsewhere.

Consequently, the wise man has a mind disciplined by such long and frequent practice upon right and useful things that he receives the impressions of new situations exactly as they are, and just as he is always ready to speak and act with dignity in all situations, so also he is brave and has a mind equally ready for all unexpected terrors. But new, surprising, and unexpected situations are not provided for by those universal genera [of the Schools]. The Schoolmen, speak neatly enough in this connection when they call genera “metaphysical matter”, but only if this is taken to mean that the mind becomes in a certain way formless through the genera, so that it can more easily take on the specific forms.

³⁷ It is part of play that the movement is not only without goal or purpose but also without effort. It happens, as it were, by itself. [...] The structure of play absorbs the player into itself, and this frees him from the burden of taking the initiative, which constitutes the actual strain of existence. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. J. Weinsheimer and D.G. Marshall. (New York: Continuum, 1989), 105.

This is quite true to be sure, for the man who possesses the genera, or simple ideas of things, perceives facts and events as they ought to be perceived more easily than the man who has equipped his mind with peculiar forms and looks at other, different forms in the light of his own odd ones; for this reason it is hazardous to makes decision on the basis of examples, since the factual circumstances of two situations never, or hardly ever, coincide.³⁸

The architect's wisdom dwells not just in seeing the potential of the hole itself and transforming it into something else. His wisdom resides also in perceiving the empty area of the paper as a place for possibility, a place where anything can happen (burnt marks, stains, so on...) and anything can be imagined as something belonging to the world of architectural drawing. This territory of the drawing belongs to a specific part of the design where fictions live and sometimes become realities. These events in the life of a drawing act as placeholders of reality that blur the borders of what *should be* until it finally *becomes*. The architect finds a fitting response to an unexpected event, not only 'solving' the immediate failure in the drawing, but elevating the design to a better place.³⁹

2.2. Error from building to drawing

The corridor wall of the Brion cemetery entrance was one of the first portions of the project that was built after the perimeter walls were completed [fig. 3.26].⁴⁰ The wall was designed to be around 20 meters long. Built in concrete, the structure hosts the iconic *vesica piscis* opening, [fig. 3.27] the glass door pulley system [fig. 3.28] and two distinct metal edge pieces that mark the entry points to the water pavilion and to the arcosolium area [fig. 3.29]. The wall holds yet one more important detail, a little bronze ornament

³⁸ Vico, *Ancient Wisdom*, 61.

³⁹ Unfortunately the courtyard design by Carlo Scarpa and other parts of the renovation were not actually built. Guido Pietropoli finished a piece of the renovation after Scarpa's death and the entry piece of San Sebastiano can be admired today in Venice.

⁴⁰ Zanchettin, *Il complesso*, 137.

placed at the top edge away from the north edge [fig. 3.30]. The mysterious piece seems to be encoding a hidden secret within the important entry piece structure. Thanks to Pietropoli's testimony we find that what it hides constitutes yet another story of mistakes in the process of construction.

The original design of the wall shows a flat and continuous top edge [fig. 3.31]. In the building process, due the inherent imprecisions of construction, a variation of 13 millimeters within the wall height from one side to the other was encountered after the concrete was poured. The difference, blind to the eye, was discovered thanks to the two metal edge pieces already made with a much higher degree of precision, that needed to be placed at the end of the wall [fig. 3.32].⁴¹ In discovering the discrepancy, which for everyone would pass as unnoticed, Scarpa noticed a place for a new creation. In contrast to the fast, imprecise and rough qualities of concrete, Scarpa designed a bronze detail to mark the error that can only be slowly built, very precisely crafted and possessing very fine skills [fig. 3.30]. Many drawings of this detail are found among his studies. The new piece, designed emphasizing the presence of number three, uses circular and semicircular shapes to mediate between one side of the wall and the other [fig. 3.33].

Several aspects of this approach to errors may again be construed. One is the communicative life existing between architect, drawings, builders and building. In the initial making of the wall drawings, Scarpa communicates to the builders how the design must be. The builders, in constructing the wall, encounter circumstances proper to materials, soil movements and discrepancies in exactitude fitting to the reality of the built work. When the building element is discovered as mistaken in comparison to the drawing, the architect reads in it information that allows him to take advantage of the erred message. Just like in the telephone game, the erred message becomes the place for finding joy in the life of the building. Philosopher Michel Serres explains that when children learn to read, every sign or mark means something to them even if they do not

⁴¹ Ibid, 143.

know the meaning. Adults, when they read, do not pay attention to errors because they can still read words even if they contain mistakes.⁴² Serres explains that even if not apparent, all errors inherently belonging to communication affect inevitably how the message is transmitted, and in fact, it is only within this human 'cacography' or 'cacophony' that communication exists.⁴³ In other words, one cannot preclude humanity from glitches, differences and errors so communication and all actions must consider them as active units for thinking. Erring qualities participate unavoidably in the process of communication and oftentimes allow for the most unexpected discoveries.

Returning to San Sebastiano, the fact that Pietropoli was making a new copy of the plan drawing allowed his own reality to merge with the drawing. Despite being a copy, the act of making cannot be isolated from the one who makes it. Errors come from those who make and are transferred from one place to another by making the 'same' message toward new variations. In the architectural built work, a similar reality may be found. Scarpa, in both cases, relies heavily on his collaborators to transfer drawings to drawings and drawings to building. However, he seems to also expect that the unanticipated aspects of this transference are pregnant with possibility. The design of the building is understood not as an isolated order from drawing to building, but as a continuous and dynamic dialogue between the two in which errors inherent to the dialogue assume a role in constructing the message.

To the architect who does not care about discovering new messages within the precipitation of architecture, errors are only to be corrected. To this architect, errors are moments in the building usually covered or patched ungracefully. Instead, Scarpa portrays a type of architect able to distinguish errors as gracious gifts to the project, acknowledged and honored as new design challenges. Almost like an apology to the drawing or the building, the error becomes a unique contribution to the project and its inhabitants.

⁴² Michel Serres. *Hermes: literature, science, philosophy*, eds. Josué V. Harari and David F. Bell. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, c1982), 65-70.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 70.

The slow and calculated precision that Scarpa's reaction to mistakes causes in the work contrasts to the rapidity in which errors usually occur. In almost all instances, Scarpa moves from having lost sight of the project to assuming complete surveillance over the future piece that enters the scene after the mistake is discovered. This adaptability, not only of the architectural detail but also of the role of the architect himself exposes the advantages of being and not being in control of the project needed for the life of a building project.

One final aspect of the potency of errors is discovered in the re-use of the bronze piece designed for the mistaken wall of the cemetery entry corridor. Scarpa's delight in the designed detail brought him to introduce a similar set of pieces within the *arcosolium* roof structure. The pieces also are located within the transition from one height of the top edge of the beam to the other [fig. 3.34]. The sense of joy and play increases even more when we realize that while the detail appears as completely intentional, it was born in a very quotidian event within the practice of building walls, drawing details and making errors.

The specific focus on errors as unique marks within the process of drawing and building, attempts to look at units of human making where imagination is fully engaged and enacted. Vico, who expressed: "God shines even in the darkness of errors," seems to suggest the notion of errors as still carrying a potential certainty.⁴⁴ The philosopher explains that because errors are still a product of God or truth, they can give access to the true despite their opposite value. He explains: "metaphysics treats of indubitable truth because it concerns a subject matter of which you can be certain even when you doubt, go astray, or are mistaken."⁴⁵ Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the word error means to

⁴⁴ Vico, *Ancient Wisdom*, 90.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 92.

wander or to seek.⁴⁶ The wandered poet was the one who by moving could frame whatever he was seeing in various ways in order to discover something otherwise unseen. The dynamic and roving aspect of wandering is the same aspect that errors provide by offering an adventurous turn to the work where the meaning of error can be shifted to that of opportunity, where the mundane becomes mysterious, where the unexpected becomes playful, where perhaps the foul becomes fragrant.

3. Intuition Sniffs out Mysteries

Listen for the single word that tells the whole story. Look for the simple gesture that reveals a complex set of relationships. It follows that the writer, like the mystic, must be peculiarly aware of these manifestations.

Harry Lavin⁴⁷

Paul Klee, an artist highly admired by Scarpa, painted a self-portrait in 1919 entitled *nach der Zeichnung (After the drawing)*⁴⁸ that has often been related to the introspection of the creative genius⁴⁹ [fig. 3.35]. The painting portrays the Swiss artist with closed eyes and mouth, without ears but with an open nose. In the essay 'Exact experiments in the realm of art,' Klee gives a defining role to intuition by noting: "We construct and construct... and yet intuition is still a good thing. A considerable amount can be done without it, but not all."⁵⁰ He considers works of genius as something that cannot be accomplished without

⁴⁶ Error: The action of roaming or wandering; hence a devious or winding course, a roving, winding. Now only *poet*. OED from Latin *errātūram*. Errator: a wanderer, meandered. Erratus: a wandering, roving about poet. Error: to go, to seek, to wander. Flying about, moving fit fully about, Meanderings of the labyrinths

⁴⁷ Harry Levin. *James Joyce, A Critical Introduction* (Norfolk, Connecticut: A New Directions Books, 1960), 29.

⁴⁸ Orietta Lanzarini. *Carlo Scarpa, L'architetto e le arti*. (Regione del Veneto: Marsilio, 2002), 32-44.

⁴⁹ O. K. Werckmeister. *The Making of Paul Klee's Career, 1914-1920*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 205-207.

⁵⁰ Klee seems to criticize a too rational approach to the arts, as well as the Bauhaus for keeping the secret of what genius conceals. He expresses that 'if this secret were to emerge from latency, it may ask illogical and foolish questions. It would stir up a revolution', he continues by saying: 'In the end we should have to call in a philosopher, a magician! Or the great dead (who are dead?). We should have to hold classes on holidays outside the school. Out under the trees, with the animals, by the side of brooks. Or on the mountains in the

intuition, explaining that genius cannot be taught since it does not operate in the realm of rules. On the contrary, he states, it exists in the world of exceptions.⁵¹ An exception is an event taken out or taken up from its regular course of being or behaving; that is, it means both to capture and to remove.⁵² An exception discloses a break in the assumed sequence and order of things, and it can exhibit a completely unknown element or re-introduce something too evident that has remained unseen. According to Klee, genius operates in this realm and for this reason it cannot be educated through a formal process. Towards the end of the essay, however, he notes that it is through a cultivation of exactitude that the foundations for a science of art can be laid.⁵³ Those foundations include the presence of unknown variables, which are dependent on intuition. Yet, while examining his portrait, the completely introverted genius-artist is not as internalized as one may think, as his nose is still open, thus suggesting that the outside world and the internal life of the artist are inevitably intertwined. Building on Klee's apparent invitation to look beyond an introverted notion of genius, an argument can be made that intuition must also be cultivated externally - smelled, perhaps - through an aperture to the world and to the materiality of everyday life, and it is likely that this form of cultivated intuition allows Scarpa to take instances like mistakes as opportunities.

Beyond rational planning, when designing the architect must use all aspects of bodily thinking since he/she designs spaces for complete inhabitation. This was understood by the renaissance architect, Phillibert de l'Orme who cautioned that, "the bad architect has

sea. We should have to give assignments such as: construction of the secret.' While he has stated that genius/intuition cannot be taught, there is yet a suggestion that by being in the world, in contact with experiencing nature, the things that are 'unexplainable', skills of intuition may be awoken. Klee, *Thinking Eye*, 69-70.

⁵¹ I thank Holger Gladys for helping me translate an article that expanded my understanding of Klee's notion of intuition by Dirk Teuber: "Intuition Und Genie: Aspekte Des Transzendenten Bei Paul Klee" in *Paul Klee, Konstruktion-Intuition* (Stuttgart: G. Hatje, 1990), 33-43.

⁵² Exception: French *excepte-r*, <Latin *except-* participial stem of *excipĕre* to take out, < *ex-* out + *capĕre* to take. The formally equivalent Latin *exceptāre* had only the sense 'to catch, take up'. *Oxford English Dictionary*, Online Dictionary, Oxford University Press, 2014.

⁵³ The "exact" on the essay makes reference to what he calls an 'exact research', that is mathematics, physics, mechanics, history, nature but also things like 'learning to look down on formalism and to avoid taking over finished products, or learning to organize movement to logical relations.' Klee, *Thinking Eye*, 69.

a little nose, for he does not have the intuition of good things”⁵⁴ [fig. 3.36]. The burned drawing at San Sebastiano and the wall detail at the Brion cemetery reveal a keen ability to profit from for the potential of exceptions and mistakes that occur in the work while drawing and building.⁵⁵ Intuition can be considered the architect’s faculty of surveying the potential of every mark, action, and accident that enters or surrounds the realm of the drawing or the building. When exceptions are seen as fruitful distractions, the making of the drawing and the building act as windows that reframe parts of work into unknown and novel horizons. The turbulence in the linearity of the work by a sudden mistake, like the ember burning the paper, allows the drawing to be concerned with two simultaneous realms: what is happening now, that is, the fire pricking through the sheet, and what will be happening later, the desire to make sense out of a senseless mark, that is, the translation of the hole into a tree.⁵⁶ As well, the meditation involved in the use of a technique such as *tremblottant* becomes a key point in opening up the architect's intuition to instances of chance encounters, where slowness allows one to rapidly apprehend possible accidents as opportunities for design.

Scarpa, who had a prominent aquiline nose, emphasized this virtuous feature of his face every time he depicted himself in drawings [fig. 3.37]. While he was a professor at the IUAV students believed that if they smelled Scarpa’s favorite drink they would acquire the professor's genius.⁵⁷ Curiously, the drink, called *Underberg*, is a particularly scented

⁵⁴ Jean-Pierre Chupin, “Hermes’ Laugh: Philibert de l’Orme’s Imagery as a Case of Analogical Edification” in *Chora, Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, volume two, edited by Alberto Perez-Gomez and Stephen Parcell (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1996), 44, translating Philibert de l’Orme, *Premier tome*, 28v. Chupin cites directly from de l’Orme manuscript: “Il n’a gueres de nez, pour n’avoir sentiment des bonnes choses.” folio 28vc. Jean-Marie Perouse de Montclos, *Philibert de l’Orme’s Traités d’architecture* (Paris: L. Laget T988). The actual depiction of the bad architect in his treatise shows no nose in the architect’s face.

⁵⁵ Magic in the sense that something external can alter or change the natural course of action of something else. As Marcel Mauss has expressed: “... magic is the art of changing”. Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic*, trans. Robert Brain. (London: Routledge, 2001), 76.

⁵⁶ Mike Linzey expresses the ambiguity of the notion of intuition as “a kind of awareness of relations that is intermediate between sensory perception and conceptual thought...” “The intuition of relations can be an object of wondrous intent and curious inquiry that sometimes only dreaming and idle mediation reveals...” Mike Linzey, “On the Secondness of Architectural Intuition” *Journal of Architectural Education* Vol. 55, No. 1 (September 2001): 43-45.

⁵⁷ I thank Guido Pietropoli for telling me this beautiful story in my quest to learn about Carlo Scarpa’s nose.

digestive bitter produced in Germany with a secret recipe that includes aromatic herbs from 43 countries. Underberg is still advertised as a drink “to feel bright” [fig. 3.38].⁵⁸ Like a magic potion, the bitter is characterized for being distributed in very small glass bottles wrapped in paper. The sense of smell, culturally and physically significant to human existence, is a mysterious sense that can trigger different associations within the brain concocting emotions, memories and desires that provoke the imagination in unpredictable ways.⁵⁹ It is also a sense that can immediately transports us back in time to other places or memories of certain events.⁶⁰

The sense of smell is closely associated with intuition.⁶¹ That intuition is often related with one’s sense of smell, as when a friend advises: “follow your nose!,” is a clue to ponder the exterior interiority and internal exteriority of intuition and the potential for its cultivation. In its etymology, for example, the word intuition expresses two opposite actions, one moving inwards, the other moving outwards. While the Latin prefix *in-* means inside, the Latin word *tuērī* means to look out as well as to look after, to watch and to protect. Intuition is structured by an interiority and exteriority that simultaneously depend upon each other. Rarely thought as a source for knowledge that can be cultivated, intuition is commonly understood as a gifted internal vision or genius that is either present or not.⁶² However, the notion of the nose as a wise device for knowing and judging is a reminder of the importance of exteriority in the understanding of intuition.

⁵⁸ Underberg website link: <https://www.underberg.com/en/home.html>

⁵⁹ Holly Dugan states the reports of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine of 2004 as key for describing the complexity of smell for research and science as well as for cultural studies. Dugan, Holly. *The Ephemeral History of Perfume: Scent and Sense in Early Modern England*. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 1-23.

⁶⁰ Marcel Proust. *In Search of Lost Time, Volume I, Swann’s Way*, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and T. Kilmartin. (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 60-64.

⁶¹ Paul Emmons: “Smell is the oldest sense in our most ancient part of the brain, removed from language centers and discursive reasoning. It is the thought as feeling.” Paul Emmons. “The place of odour in modern aerial urbanism.” *The Journal of Architecture*. Volume 19, Number 2, London: Routledge, part of the Taylor & Francis Group (March 2014).

⁶² The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term as: insight, internal vision, quick apprehension of something that is contemplated in the mind, etc. *Oxford English Dictionary*, Online Dictionary, Oxford University Press, 2014.

As was discussed in the first chapter, the word sagacious, means acuteness or to perceive keenly, and from here we obtain the word sagacity.⁶³ Sagacity is a quality denoting a form of wisdom that comes from experience. Cicero explains that witches were called *saga*, because they knew and always wanted to know more.⁶⁴ This name was commonly given to dogs for their capacity of finding very subtle traces by sniffing the world with their acute noses. In looking closer at the meaning of the word ‘nose,’ one discovers that the Latin word ‘*nasus*’ was used to describe witty or sagacious men. The nose was also the feature where contempt or disdain was expressed. The sagacious nose was also of common use to express satirical wit.⁶⁵ A fragment of Phaedrus reveals the pairing of the word nose with wit:

You who turn up your nose at my writings and censure them, you, Mr. Critic, who disdain to read jests of this kind, have patience to put up with my book a little longer, while I try to appease the stern look on your face by bringing Aesop on the stage for the first time in tragic buskins.⁶⁶

As suggested here, turning up one’s nose is a form of judging that signifies rejection for something not being good enough. The wit in the nose is also evident in the idiom: “To have a good nose,” which means to have a good instinct, intuition or skill in making something unique.

The acute wisdom tied to the nose sniffing out the world represents a form of wisdom that is key for architects who work daily within unexpected circumstances. Reflecting

⁶³ *sagittal: an arrow, shaft, bolt. Pliny – the herb arrow head (sage) – 21, 17, 68 and 111. Lewis & Short, *Latin Dictionary*.

⁶⁴ Lewis & Short. *Latin Dictionary*

⁶⁵ Nasus: (from Lewis and Short)

The nose as the seat of quick smell, and also the feature whereby anger and scorn are expressed. Of scorn, derision, satirical wit, satire, sarcasm. Nasutus: that has a large nose.

naris ‘nose; pl. nostrils, nose’ Derivatives: nasus/m, nasutus ‘having a long nose, witty’ (Lucilius – Roman satirist) 400

⁶⁶ Phaedrus, *Fabulae Aesopiae*, eds. L. Mueller (Latin), and Christopher Smart, Christopher Smart, A. M. (English) Book 4, poem 7: Phaedrus. *Tu qui, nasute, scripta destringis mea Et hoc iocorum legere fastidis*

upon these aspects of the sense of smell, parallels can be drawn for airing the notion of a cultivated intuition. In following our nose, for example, we only notice an odor when we smell an exception to the scents we have become accustomed to feel after a period of time. What we unconsciously consider the norm, that is, “to smell,” constitutes, for conscious perception, an exception within the constant act of smelling rooted in how we are in the world.⁶⁷ The exception only becomes apparent in the recognition of the notes of a scent.⁶⁸ However, what may be an exception at one instant can constitute the norm an hour later once one has become used to the notes of such scent. A clear example of this is when we enter into a house that is not ours and we smell the house's aromas, yet the ones living in it have ceased to smell them.⁶⁹ In this way, following Klee's observations, exceptions are determined by how we experience them and not by an absolute condition. Both strong and subtle odors have the potency of emerging into the extraordinary and disappearing into the ordinary. Our nose acts as an essential probe in the discovery of the unexpected, as well as in the conscious wondering of the norm. Our nose can also be educated, even if it cannot be formalized into recipes. Practices like wine tasting recommend the smelling of spices, flowers, woods, fruits and other materials to prepare the nose for the moments of savoring. Knowing the odors properties is a crucial aspect for recognizing each of the many flavors similitudes one sip of wine can have.

When making architectural drawings, the architect constantly experiences “exceptions” that distract, interact and provoke the imagination at both minimal and significant levels. From the wind entering into the room while drawing to a heated argument with a contractor, the architect's work is always ‘interrupted’ by something. Errors are very explicit signs of these exceptions. A cultivated intuition is the capacity of the imagination to find potency in instants of interruption or suspension that detour the expected and become active in the realm of the creative. What is more, these moments of interruption

⁶⁷ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C. Smith (London, 1962), 235-246.

⁶⁸ A note is the perfumer business industry is ‘any of the basic components of the fragrance of a perfume which give it its character.’ OED, 2014.

⁶⁹ Günther Ohloff. *Scent and Fragrances: The Fascination of Odors and Their Chemical Perspectives*. (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1994), 57-58.

are crucial for thinking, and we rely on our nose both metaphorically and physically to engage creatively with them. When common events are handled as exceptions or exceptional events treated as the norm, when the nose is awakened, intuition finds place for imaginative actions. Recognizing such 'instant' as a chance for an imaginative action is a quality that architects can cultivate by being willing to see what reality hides. The possibility that something hides behind reality re-positions intuition as an active trait of the imagination and not a passive gift of genius.

That which is hidden or secret is in fact the very meaning of mystery.⁷⁰ Magic-real advocate, Massimo Bontempelli, tried to re-establish the aspect of mystery in our awareness of everyday life. To him, the sense of mystery was an aspect already contained within the world that needed to be re-learnt in order to use it. He explains:

Poetry is to express mystery itself, and everyone can find his/her mystery whether by contemplating a machine or contemplating a plant. Poetry does not begin from the machine or from the plant, but from the mode with which the poet feels the machine and the plant.⁷¹

In fact, and just like Klee's painting shows, the word mystery, in its Greek origins means "the closing of the eyes and lips."⁷² The word also means initiation, or beginning. In ancient religious practices a mystery was an initiation into something, such as a different social setting or a different state along one's life. A mystery was also a truth that could not

⁷⁰ Classical Latin *mystērium*: secret, OED, 2014.

⁷¹ "Poesia è esprimere il proprio mistero, e ognuno di noi può trovare il suo proprio mistero tanto nella contemplazione d'una macchina quanto d'una pianta. La poesia non comincia dalla macchina o dalla pianta, ma dal modo col quale il poeta sente la macchina o la pianta." Bontempelli, *L'Aventura*, 71-72.

⁷² Ancient Greek *μυστήριον* mystery, secret, the base of *μύω* to close (the lips or eyes) / *μύω* initiation, beginning. *Enciclopedia Italiana Di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti*. Giovanni Treccani.

be grasped by rational means only, a knowledge whose source was not exactly determined.⁷³

Mysteries were also related to the nose. The Venetian alchemist, Giovanventura Rosetti, published in 1555 a treatise on the *Noble Secrets of the Art of Perfumes* [fig. 3.39].⁷⁴ In this treatise, he explains that his perfume recipes are made following the rules of medicine in regards to what is healthy for the body. With the same simple principles he composed “scents, waters, liquors and all those things that give mystery to the delights of the human body.”⁷⁵ Rosetti points out that the making of exquisite perfumes must be done in a city like Venice, where the air is pure and noble women can carry delicious smells.⁷⁶ To have a sense of mystery was a quality considered precious, and in Rosetti’s case, his secret and mysterious scents are concoctions that derived from very common and simple materials. For centuries or more, then, the sense of mystery has been related to the secrets that the nose can detect and enjoy. This is clear in simple scents, as when the neighbor is cooking something recognizable, or in more complex ones, as in smelling a glass of wine with many familiar yet difficult to name scents.

The theoretical structure of smell, mysteries, and intuition may thus be understood as the knowledge emerging from an ambiguous realm where decisions are made without knowing exactly why, yet are seemingly right at the moment of deciding. If literally following one’s nose is apprehending a new scent and desiring to know its source, for architecture, it is perhaps the capacity of apprehending unexpected events within the making of the drawing or the judging of the building that allow the imagination to work proactively within them. When taken into consideration, these unexpected events can be

⁷³ From a religious point of view a mystery was a supernatural truth that cannot be grasped by human intelligence. The only form of grasping it was through a divine presence. *Enciclopedia Italiana Di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti*. Giovanni Treccani (misteri)

⁷⁴ Giovanventura Rosetti. *Notandissimi secreti de l'arte profumatoria*. Venezia 1555. Commento e note di Franco Brunello e Franca Facchetti. (Vicenza, N. Pozza, 1973), 9-30.

⁷⁵ “...et si trae la salute de i corpi humani, e così da semplici, et con questo ordine si compone ogli, acque, profumi, liquori, et tutto quello che fa di misteri a le delitie de li corpi humani...” *Ibid.*, 30.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

heightened to mysterious realms through new designs capable of the concealing stories of drawing and building.

While unexpected events appear in every architectural work, they are only revelatory if there is a conscious apprehension and re-positioning of their qualities. Our everyday reality is soaked with these happenings, but it is only the imagination, through a cultivated intuition, that creatively relates with them. Exceptions, errors and other unusual instances of the everyday life can intensify the potential of the cultivated intuition to act. As well, very common and usual events can also trigger creative actions if they are perceived as participating in an unrelated context.

In architecture, the practice of “following one’s nose” also has an ethical dimension, that of caring and protecting the design. Due to the variable conditions of an architectural project, constant shifts, revisions and alterations partake in the life of the edifice. An architect needs a good nose to navigate unpredictable project circumstances, both operationally as well as in the smells of the sentient architecture. The precise and careful construction of drawings has the potential to lead to very imprecise marks that provoke the imagination. When these marks are treated as gifts and not mistakes, the imagination finds places for them and integrates them as part of the story of the drawing. Scarpa followed his nose, both literally and metaphorically. From the cologne he wore to the materials he used,⁷⁷ the sense of smell as an intuitive capacity impregnated the imagination of the Venetian architect [fig. 3.40].⁷⁸

Scarpa gives a curious definition of intuition himself. He understands undefined marks in a drawing as “surprises of the imaginative plot of signs that come, sometimes from ideas. If one has the intuition to understand everyday life, this type of intuition is equivalent to

⁷⁷ 4711 – traditional German *Eau de Cologne* by Mäurer & Wirtz, created by the Italian Johann Maria Farina. It has been produced in Cologne since at least 1799. The cologne was made using herbs from many countries; the recipe is still a secret.

⁷⁸ I thank Guido Pietropoli to share this information with me while I was asking him stories about Carlo Scarpa and the sense of smell.

that which allows one to construct many thoughts while looking at the hair of a woman.”⁷⁹ Scarpa's definition of intuition reveals his quest for an active imagination that composes possibilities from disruptions of normal events, or simply for re-framing those normal events into new ones. Attention to everyday life events and phenomena, as was demonstrated previously, can offer new encounters and trigger novel or originitive conceptions within the mind of the architect.⁸⁰

In this way, Scarpa shows that the primacy of the error, as a place able to disrupt or shake the linearity of architectural drawings, exposes the necessary presence of everyday life events participating with the imagination. Initial marks in an architectural drawing have the potential to be understood differently through unexpected happenings occurring during the act of drawing. New marks appearing in the built work can trigger new tectonic thoughts that have the potential to improve the building. The architect with a cultivated intuition is able to re-frame and re-think previous calculated design decisions into new and joyful occurrences. This is very different from attempting to explain the current state of a drawing or building through its past conditions, where the final design is understood as a the final building.⁸¹ For Scarpa, just like the initial drawings constitute the last one, the final drawings for a building, have the capacity to become the first ones, where things can still be discovered as the building is being made or as the drawing is being drawn.

For Marco Frascari, who ruminated on the virtues of architectural drawing and building, “every mark matters.”⁸² This is certainly true of Scarpa, who willingly considered the actions of everyday life as a part of the drawing or the building. When Frascari expresses, “creativity is an experience, not an abstract idea that the mind and body incessantly

⁷⁹ “e dalle sorprese dell’immaginifica trama di segni che vengono, qualche volta vengono delle idee, se uno ha intuit da capire le cose della vita, l’intuizione che permette di far tanti pensieri anche guardando la capigliatura di una donna” Semi, *A Lezione*, 225. Translation by author.

⁸⁰ Michel de Certeau. *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 125-130.

⁸¹ “We must therefore attempt to understand the past through the present, which is different from striving ceaselessly to explain the present through the past.” Gaston Bachelard. *Intuition of the Instant*, trans. Eileen Rizo-Patron (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2013), 11.

⁸² Frascari, *Eleven Exercises*, 27.

analyzes,” he suggests that creativity works within how one experiences the directness of ordinary encounters.⁸³ The architectural thinking that desires a “straight” line, like the *tremblottant*, a line full of imperfections and non-straight marks, is the same kind of architectural thinking that is required to imagine that, from an injury in the paper, the life of a tree can participate in the design. In other words, an intuitive architect is one who attends carefully to all the marks that will mark the life of the building. Likewise, an intuitive architect is one who believes that a straight line is never ‘just a straight line,’ a hole in a drawing is never ‘just a hole in a drawing’, and a concrete wall is never ‘just the specified concrete wall’, there is always something more hiding within.

⁸³ Ibid.

Figures Chapter 3

Fig. 3.1
Chinese Whispers / Telephone Game comic
© KAL, cover of The Economist, 1989



Fig. 3.2
Detail of Navajo textile
Photograph of a textile in the collections of the American Museum of Natural History
(Catalog Number 50.2/6854)
© Division of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History
Museum Anthropology Review



Fig. 3.3
Concrete slab lid
Brion cemetery
Photo by Author



Fig. 3.4
Concrete slab drawing
Original Design by Carlo Scarpa before the mistake
Drawing by Bianca Albertini showing the exact original position of the opening
(in Franca Semi – *A Lezione con Carlo Scarpa*)

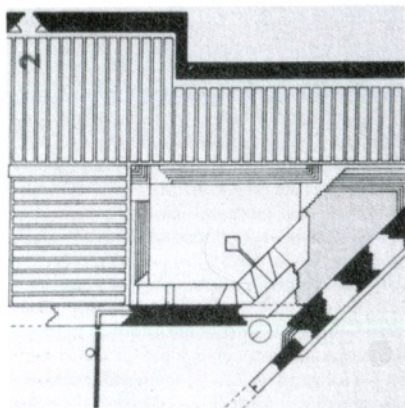


Fig. 3.5
Original Design by Carlo Scarpa before the mistake in comparison with built work

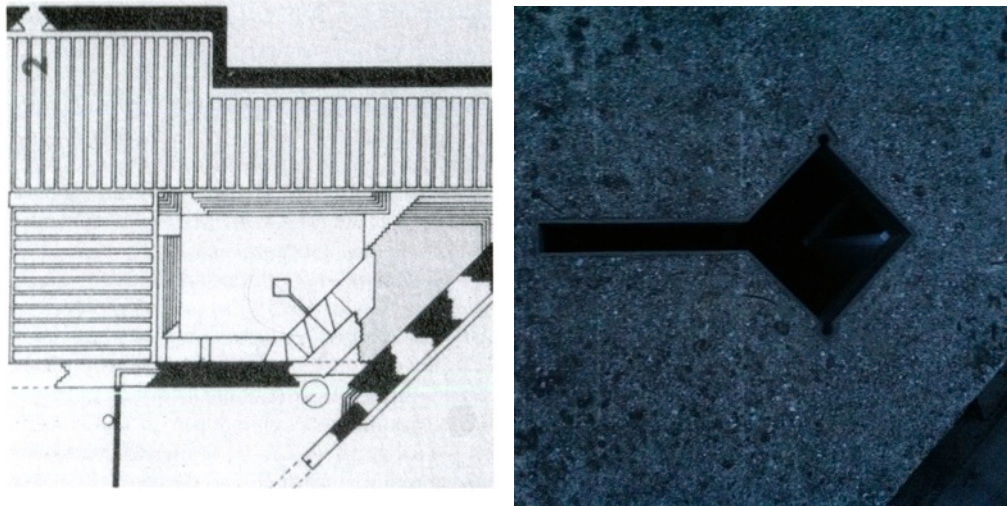


Fig. 3.6
Chapel at Brion cemetery
Photograph by author



Fig. 3.7
Chapel at Brion Cemetery
Photo by Author



Fig. 3.8
Desired path of light (dash line) crossing through square opening in concrete wall
Photo by Paul Emmons



Fig. 3.9
Chapel roof plan
NR #2777
Archivio Carlo Scarpa
© MAXXI, Museo nazionale delle Arti del XXI secolo
Centro Archivi del MAXXI Architettura
Rome, Italy

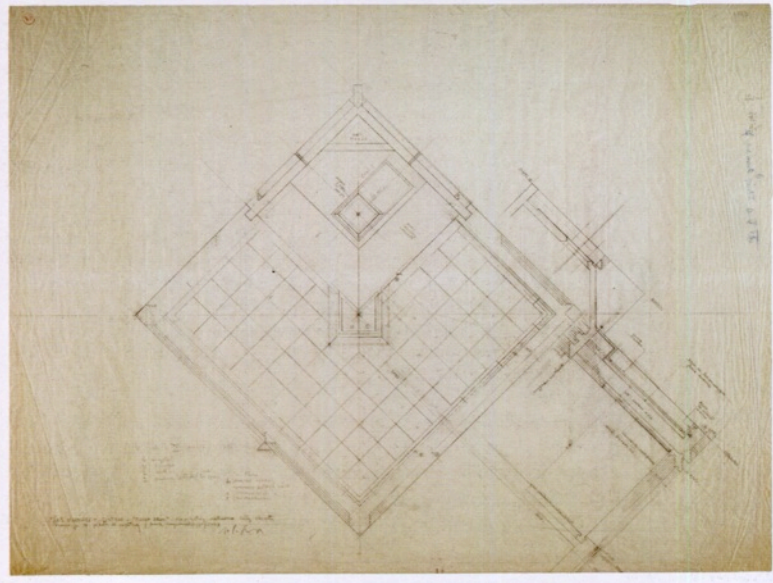


Fig. 3.10
Openings in concrete showing plans
Photo: Gianni Berengo Gardin
1972
© Gianni Berengo Gardin, CISA A. Palladio, Vicenza, Italy



Fig. 3.11

Gipsoteca di Canova

Possagno, Italy

@ www.architectsandartisans.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/robert-mcarter/



Fig. 3.12

Museo Canova, Gipsoteca

Possagno, Italy

Window detail

In Franca Semi, *A Lezione con Carlo Scarpa*



Fig. 3.13
Altar drawing
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Centro Archivi del MAXXI Architettura
Rome, Italy

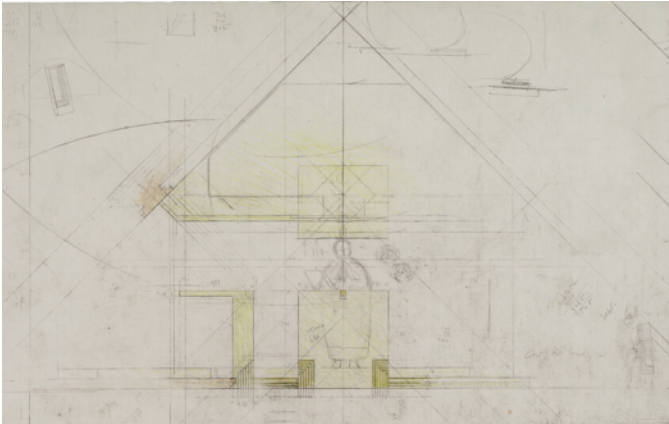


Fig. 3.14
Altar at chapel
Photos by Paul Emmons



Fig. 3.15
Tremblottant lines in San Sebastiano project
 Floor plan fragment
 NR# 41378
 © Centro Carlo Scarpa
 Archivio di Stato
 Treviso, Italy

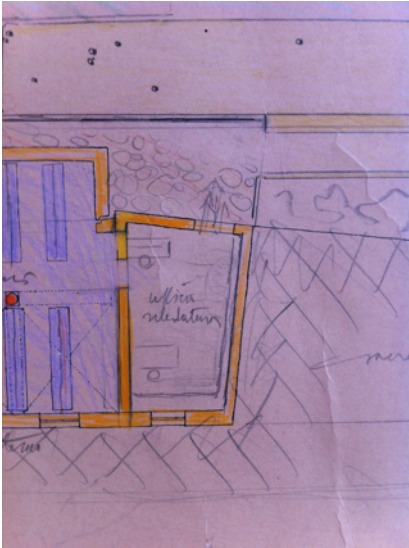


Fig. 3.16
 Technical Sketching Manual
 in Frederick E. Giesche. *Technical Drawing*. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940)

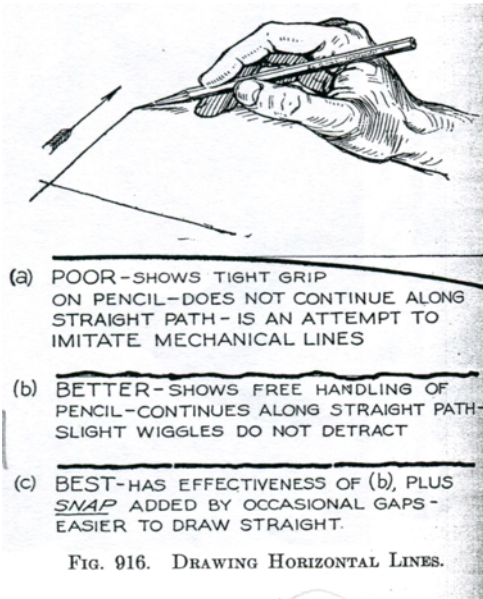


Fig. 3.17
Burnt mark
Sketch in San Sebastiano project
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Treviso, Italy



Fig. 3.18
Heliographic copy
San Sebastiano 3rd Floor plan
NR #41691
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Treviso, Italy

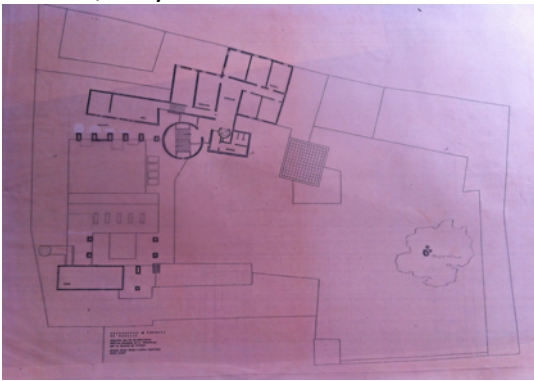


Fig. 3.19
San Sebastiano floor plan
NR #41378
© Centro Archivio Carlo Scarpa
Treviso, Italy



Fig. 3.20
Paolo Veronese
Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints
San Sebastiano, Venice, 1564–65



Fig. 3.21
Occasio depiction
In occasione by Andrea Alciato, 1540



Fig. 3.22
Fagus Rubra tree
Photograph



Fig. 3.23
San Sebastiano floor plan (detail)
NR #41378
© Centro Archivio Carlo Scarpa
Treviso, Italy

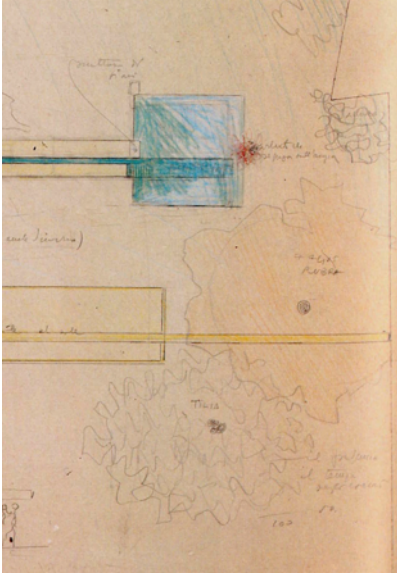


Fig. 3.24
Tilia leaves (linden)
Photograph



Fig. 3.25
San Sebastiano floor plans showing sketches in empty area
NR #41349 / NR#41342
© Centro Archivio Carlo Scarpa
Treviso, Italy

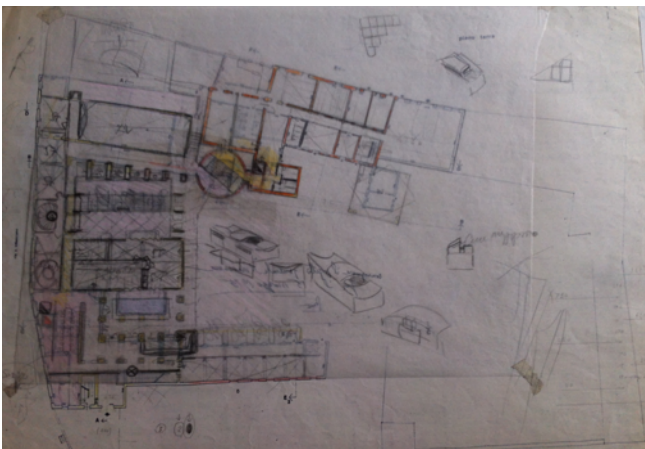
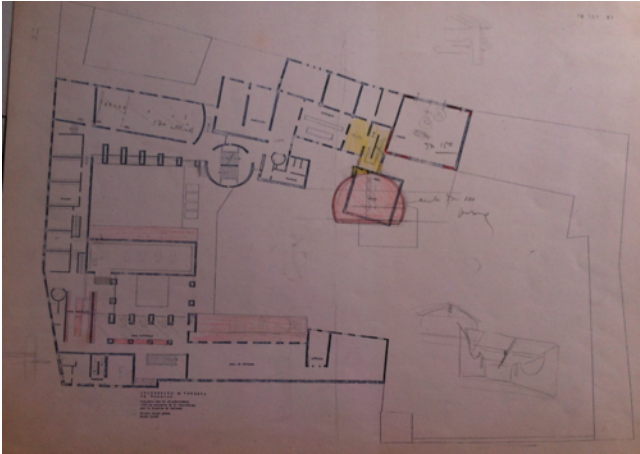


Fig. 3.26
Corridoio wall
Photo by Author



Fig. 3.27

Vesica Piscis opening on *corridoio* concrete wall

Photo by Author



Fig. 3.28

Pulley door system opening on *corridoio* concrete wall

Photo by Author



Fig. 3.29
Wall glass mosaic edges
Photo by Author



Fig. 3.30
Bronze detail for *corridoio* wall
NR #2502
Archivio Carlo Scarpa
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Rome, Italy

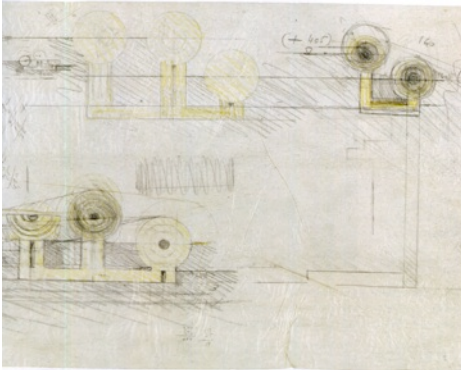


Fig. 3.31
Wall drawing
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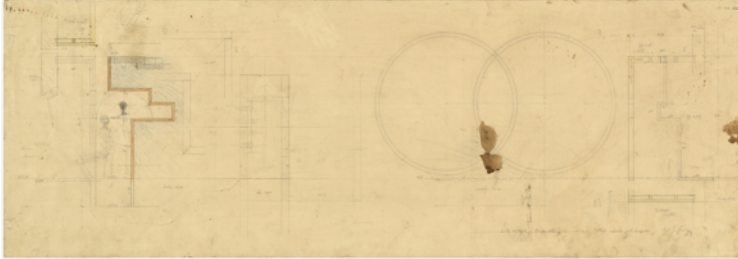


Fig. 3.32
Metal frames for *corridoio* wall ends
Photo: Fondo Officina Fabbrile Zanon
© Museo di Castelvecchio
Verona, Italy

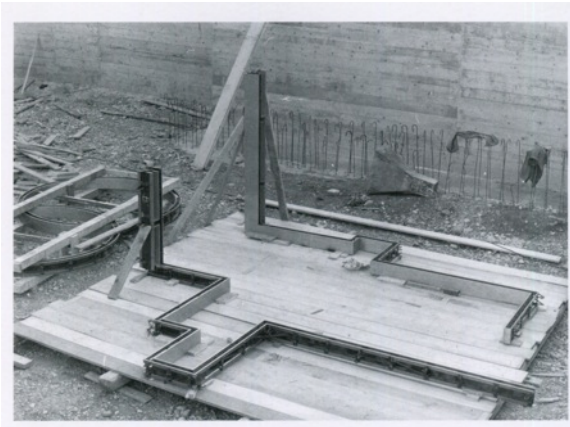


Fig. 3.33
Detail and Detail within elevation

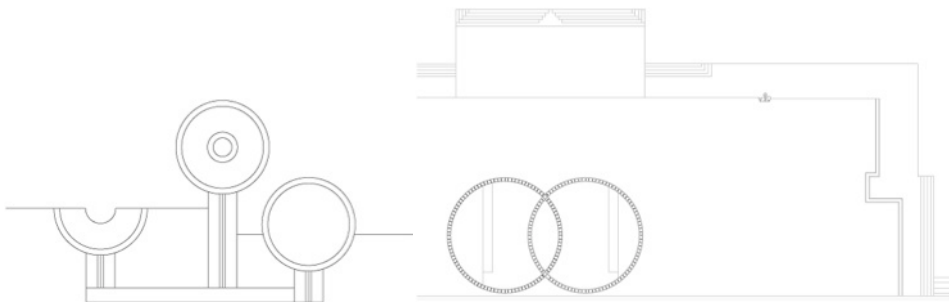


Fig. 3.34

Arcosolium bronze detail

Photo: Gianni Berengo Gardin

1972

©Archivio Gianni Berengo Gardin, A. CISA Palladio Archive, Vicenza, Italy



Fig. 3.35

Paul Klee, *nach der Zeichnung* ("After the Drawing")

19/75, 1919, 113.

© Zentrum Paul Klee

Bern, Switzerland

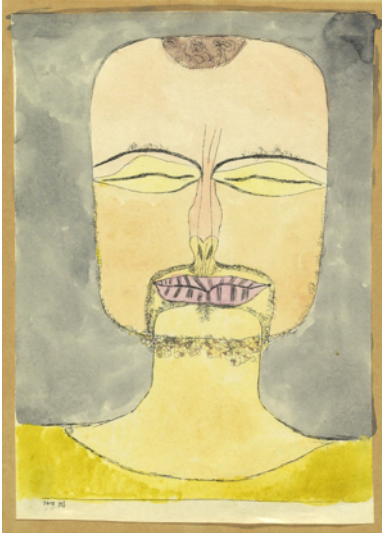


Fig. 3.36
Philibert de l'Orme
The good architect / The bad architect
In *Le premier tome de l'architecture*, 1567

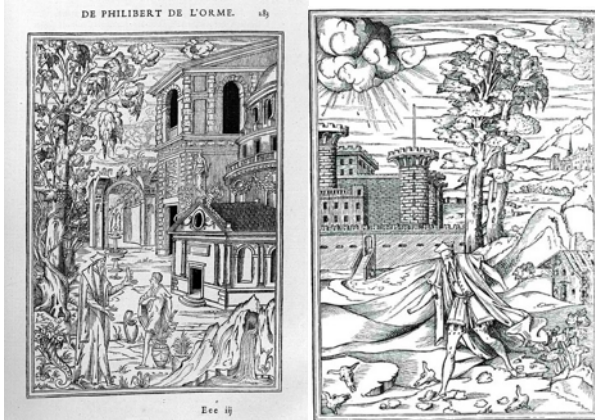


Fig. 3.37
Scarpa drawing himself in
Propylei elevation, section and floor plan
NR #4159
Archivio Carlo Scarpa
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Centro Archivi del MAXXI Architettura
Rome, Italy



Fig. 3.38
Underberg
Bitter advertisement



Fig. 3.39
Rosetti's frontispiece
Notandissimi secreti de l'arte profumatoria
Venice, 1555

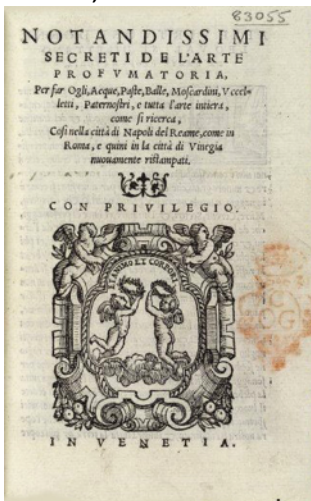


Fig. 3.40
4711 Perfume Label



Chapter 4¹

Narrative Lines: stories spoken to the four winds²

1. Finely spun threads

At the top, two doors. No one in the first room, no one in the second. The door of the salon, and then, the knife in his hand, the light from the great windows, the high back of an armchair covered in green velvet, the head of the man in the chair reading a novel.

Julio Cortázar³

Every mark that Scarpa makes means something. Slowly building the field of architectural drawing, even the seemingly insignificant doodles made for testing a pen are indicative of his practice of searching for the right line [fig. 4.1]. A latent story, fragment of a story, or a story beginning can be contained within the mark. Whether known or unknown to us, I argue that the storylines within architects' works are co-existing narratives that unfold on the architectural drawing. In Scarpa's case the marks on a given sheet are generally so abundant that they require careful eyes to pull apart the storylines.

Although Scarpa's small sketches, notes, and marginalia are visible to everyone, very scattered theories have emerged that attempt to account for the architect's practice of drawing multiple things together.⁴ In this chapter I would like to propose that marks on Scarpa's drawings operate within a continuum. A continuum must not be understood as a unidirectional sequence of facts, but as a field where multiple directions and temporalities

¹ I dedicate this chapter to my dear mentor and great storyteller Marco Frascari.

² Popular saying in various countries.

³ Julio Cortázar "A Continuity of Parks" in eds. Richard Bausch and R.V. Cassill *The Norton Anthology of Short Fiction* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 7th Edition, 2006), 365.

⁴ "Realms of reality that seem far apart (mechanics, economics, marketing, scientific organization of work) are inches apart, once flattened out onto the same surface. The accumulation of drawings in an optically consistent space is, once again, the "universal exchanger" that allows work to be planned, dispatched, realized, and responsibility to be attribute." Bruno Latour. "Visualization and Cognition: Drawing Things Together" in ed. H. Kuklick, *Knowledge and Society Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present* (Jai Press vol. 6, 1986): 25.

coexist, sometimes affecting each other, sometimes ignoring each other. In fact, the meaning of the word continuity refers to both a static condition as well as one in motion, defined as “the state or quality of being uninterrupted in extent or substance, of having no interstices or breaks; uninterrupted connection of parts; connectedness, unbrokenness.”⁵ Continuity is a place where things are held together, from *con-*: together + *tenēre*: to hold.⁶ At the same time, it refers to the action of events flowing uninterruptedly. As both spatial and temporal, the word denotes two forces within one field of events: retention and evolution, holding and releasing.

In one of the briefest stories ever written by Julio Cortázar, ‘*A Continuity of Parks*’, the author develops a plot which demonstrates the possibility of a continuous reality set within discontinuous realms. The story begins by introducing a male character who has decided to finish the novel he is currently reading. In describing the scene, Cortázar emphasizes ordinary circumstances around this moment: the man is sitting on a green velvet armchair, the room has large windows looking into a forest, and a great silence is enjoyed by the character. As he begins to read, the novel slowly absorbs him. After a few sentences, however, Cortázar shifts the focus of the story to that of the novel which the man is reading. It tells of two lovers who, tired of hiding their passion, meet secretly in the forest and determine to murder the husband of one of them. Shortly thereafter, the man walks toward the place where the husband lives, as instructed previously by his lover. Upon arrival, he finds the husband sitting on a green velvet armchair, reading a novel and facing a window that looks out over a forest. At this moment, we, the readers, discover that the original male character is the protagonist of his own reading! Temporarily disrupting our (the outside reader) nominal perception of events through the continuous flow between discontinuous realms, Cortázar presents to us a story within a story. The man in green velvet armchair, reading about another man and his lover, becomes inverted, and the story takes possession of the one that initially was containing it. What

⁵ *OED*, 2014.

⁶ Latin *continui*, parts of *contenir*, *continēre* to contain. *Ibid.*

appears to be happening becomes a revelation which collides with another simultaneous event outside of the story; the story within becomes the story outside.

The reversibility of possibilities recalls a story written by another Argentinean writer, Jorge Luis Borges. In his short fiction, *'The Garden of Forking Paths,'* Borges describes how one's life can be lived in many lives, sometimes intersecting each other. In this way the same two people could be friends in one life and enemies in another, with both lives happening simultaneously within a continuum. The inhabitants of this universe do not choose one path or another, rather they transit all of them concurrently. One's life can be many lives, and one's time can be many times. These lives sometimes meet each other, coinciding in time and place, creating a resonance among the inhabitants, which offers a new realization. The linearity of the story appears as a continuity where events ebb and flow; are held and released. The significance of this linearity, which also emerges in Scarpa's drawings, relies on the construction of a thicker and more intricate narrative than the assumption of singular episodes unfolding in a simple, temporal sequence of cause and effect.⁷ A fragment from Borges' story reveals this form of linearity:

In all fictions, each time a man meets diverse alternatives, he chooses one and eliminates the others; in the work of the virtually impossible-to-disentangle Ts'ui Pen, the character chooses simultaneously- all of them. He creates, thereby, 'several futures; several times, which themselves proliferate and fork. That is the explanation for the novel's contradictions. Fang, let us say, has a secret; a stranger knocks at his door; Fang decides to kill him. Naturally, there are various possible outcomes- Fang can kill the intruder, the intruder can kill Fang, they can both live, they can both be killed, and so on. In Ts'ui Pen's novel, all the outcomes in fact occur; each is the starting point for further bifurcations. Once in a while, the paths of that labyrinth converge: for example, you

⁷ Clifford Geertz. *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays.* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3-30.

come to this house, but in one of the possible pasts you are my enemy, in another my friend. If you can bear my incorrigible pronunciation, we shall read a few pages.⁸

In Scarpa's work, drawings are held together on the sheet of paper, and yet at the same time are released for acquiring various roles in the life of the drawing. Small sketches, notes, and numbers surrounding the 'main architectural drawing' are marks of thought that act within a continuum.⁹ In other words, the process is linear, although not understood not as a straight rigid segment. Rather, linear is understood as a flexible thread in which every thought becomes a potential force to change its course. As in Cortázar's or Borges' stories, the linearity of the plot is continuous within a discontinuous realm. In Spanish there is a saying, *hilar fino*, which translates as "to finely spin." This popular saying makes reference to anyone's capacity to join or bind events that seem unrelated at first sight but are in fact interconnected.¹⁰ The word *hilar*, to spin, or *filare* in Italian, denotes the action of drawing out and twisting the fibers of any suitable material,¹¹ such as wool or flax, so as to form a continuous thread.¹² The Spanish saying thus refers to the acute capacity of finding a common thread among various parts.

This is the kind of process we must embrace in order to discover traces of the flexible and continuous linearity of Scarpa's practice of drawing. As a thread where each mark relates to the other, even the wiggling marks done to test a pen are accessories to the story of the drawing. Each minute mark is as important in the narrative of the drawing as the walls that make the building. Every mark that enters the drawing modifies how the drawing is

⁸ Jorge Luis Borges. *Collected Fictions*, trans. Andrew Hurley (New York: Viking, 1998), 125.

⁹ I refer to the drawings of the main plan, section or elevation that the drawing may be showing.

¹⁰ This is very common saying among detective histories or situations where by looking closely at various events, there is an underlying narrative already binding the events together.

¹¹ In Italian, the word is used also when the something is coherent and follows a continuous logic. From the Latin *filum*: thread, string, filament, fiber. OED, 2014.

¹² *Ibid.*

perceived, inevitably acting upon the linear and continuous life of the design as well as the architect's imagination.

The linearity I refer may be further examined by making parallels with the type of linearity Giambattista Vico saw and understood inherent to all motions:

Because all motions are produced by air pressure from all sides, they can in no way be simple and in a straight line. Bodies that fall through the air or cross the surface of land or sea so seem to describe a straight line, but in reality that line is not straight. For "straightness" and "sameness" are metaphysical things. I seem to myself to be the same person, but from one moment to the next I am a different person because of the constant coming and going of the things that enter and leave me. So, too, the apparently straight motion is crooked at every moment.¹³

The passage exposes that motions do not happen outside oneself seemingly as a straight line, but motions because are perceived through our own bodies, they are always crooked within one's body continuous perception. Likewise, the architectural drawing constitutes an artifact that is always in motion, not only when it is being constructed, but also after it has been finished.¹⁴ Drawings are always changing, because one always can see more within the same drawing. In particular, this changing nature becomes crucial for the architect making it, since as much as Scarpa makes the drawing, the drawing also makes him in return. Marks, once visible, expose thoughts and trigger ideas, connections or memories; these in turn lead to new marks set within the story created by the previous ones. The Italian writer, Italo Calvino, explains this within the context of literature: "the author is an author insofar as he enters into a role the way an actor does and identifies

¹³ Vico, *Ancient Wisdom*, 80.

¹⁴ Paul Emmons and Carolina Dayer. "Toward Performative Architectural Drawing: Paul Klee's Enacted Lines" in eds. Marcia Feuerstein and Gray Read *Architecture as a Performing Art* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 45-59.

himself with that projection of himself at the moment of writing.”¹⁵ Thus, Scarpa must project himself into the building in order to draw the building. He not only ‘draws to see’ as he often mentions, but, because he sees in the first place, he can draw. In other words, once marks are visible, they are always in an inkling state of revelation.¹⁶ It is perhaps not a coincidence that one of the exercises the architect would ask of his students at the *IUAV (Università IUAV di Venezia)* consisted in drawing something from the existing reality before beginning a new project. Scarpa’s former student and assistant Franca Semi once stated that Scarpa often prompted students to make drawings of the city or of existing buildings on a sheet of paper before beginning the design, as he believed it was important begin somewhere, to have something familiar from which to depart.¹⁷ Actively combating the terrifying emptiness of the page but also knowing that once visible, drawings begin to speak, Scarpa understood drawings to be in continuous motion.

The power of drawing things together relies on the observation that seemingly unrelated events inevitably relate to each other when placed on the sheet of paper, allowing a field of possible new thoughts to continually emerge.¹⁸ This encounter with marks is resonant with Calvino’s thought that “in a work of literature, various levels of reality may meet while remaining distinct and separate, or else they may melt and mingle and knit together, achieving a harmony among their contradictions or else forming an explosive mixture.”¹⁹ In a similar mode, Scarpa’s drawings hold and release stories within the sheet of paper, constituting distinct yet related levels of narrative within the architectural project.

In this chapter several conditions of narrative will be closely examined through three approaches common to the Venetian architect’s way of working. In spite of certain

¹⁵ Italo Calvino. “Levels of Reality in Literature” *The Uses of Literature: Essays*. (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), 111.

¹⁶ See chapter 1.

¹⁷ Interview to Franca Semi in Venice, June 2013.

¹⁸ Latour, *Visualization*, 1-40.

¹⁹ Calvino, *Levels of Reality*, 101.

apparent contradictions, in each example there is crossover between time and events that demonstrate the potential approaching the architectural project as a continuity and not as an addition of layers or separated events. Perhaps Scarpa believed, like one of the main characters in Borges' *'Forking Paths'*, "...in an infinite series of times, a growing, dizzying web of divergent, convergent, and parallel times. That fabric of times that approach one another, fork, are snipped off, or are simply unknown for centuries, contains all possibilities."²⁰

2. Discontinuous Continuity

2.1. From drawing to building: an amorous encounter

Life's got to be nude, Signorina – stark naked.
Ciro Colli in Luigi Pirandello's in *The Naked Truth*²¹

The first example focuses on the life of certain characters inhabiting one of Scarpa's drawings and how aspects of their lives transpire into the actual reality of the built edifice. In this drawing made during an early phase of the chapel design [fig. 4.2], I will discuss the mysterious appearance of an amorous couple embracing along the north/south centerline of the Brion cemetery chapel, below the south corner, and near the bottom of the sheet.

It is evident from close observation that the drawing was constructed in a highly specific way. To begin, a series of straight lines were laid down to guide the construction of the square floor plan.²² These lines, constituting the primary making of the geometrical shape,

²⁰ Borges, *Collected Fictions*, 127.

²¹ Luigi Pirandello. *The naked truth and eleven other stories*; trans. Arthur and Henrie Mayne. [1st ed.] (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. c.1934), 82.

²² The dimension of the sheet of paper is 66x50cm. The standard dimension of this type of paper was 100cm x 70cm, denoting that the sheet of paper was cut twice in the two directions. The drawings in the page

are rendered lightly in the suede color sheet of paper. After constructing the square figure, the middle points of each side are marked, dividing the square into four [fig. 4.3]. The vertical diagonal, perpendicular to the widest side of the sheet of paper, is darker than the rest of the guiding lines [fig.4.4]. Its darker stroke invites the eye of the examiner to move up and down the sheet, thus encountering a detailed drawing of the chapel's south corner rendered in the lower area of the sheet of paper. This corner is adjacent to the planned access path to the cemetery [fig. 4.5].

At a distance of 2mm apart on the drawing,²³ eleven parallel lines form the thickness of the chapel walls at this particular corner.²⁴ A common drafting practice among architects, the wall lines are first constructed continuously, delaying the decision of locating the openings within the wall. Because when drawing with a triangle the awareness of the beginning is greater than where the line ends, the lightly traced parallel lines probably begin on the east corner of the chapel and proceed toward the south corner [fig. 4.6].²⁵ Scarpa draws the next wall, now ascending from the south to the west corner, by relying on the previously drawn lines that have intersected the vertical line of the square's axis [fig. 4.7]. This form of referencing the drawing by meeting the line allows architects to draw with agility without the need to dimension every new mark.

Scarpa's drawings contain a full range of these types of guiding lines.²⁶ Their role however, is not only to guide the desired construction of a geometrical figure. When guiding lines are more generous than needed, when they proceed beyond their endpoint, they become lines that can guide the architect to more than one place. The south corner chapel

indicate two opposite orientations on the wider sides of the sheet, implying that the architect shifted the position of the piece of paper to make the various drawings.

²³ The scale of the floor plan drawings as well as of the elevation is 1 meter = 1:30, meaning that one meter is equal to 3,33cm. This is a rare scale for the architect to employ. Most of the drawings are drawn to the scales 1:25, 1:50 and 1:100.

²⁴ The actual wall thickness is 55cm.

²⁵ See chapter 2 for a full analysis of this type of lines.

²⁶ A guide is a person, agent or element that knows the way and is able to take you there. A guide is also used in drawings and the construction site in order to guide the architect and the builder to go into the right direction.

location, for example, coincides with the center point of one of the tombs in the old cemetery [fig. 4.8], possibly a result of a guide line connecting the center of the old tomb with one of the chapel's axis. As guides, they constitute an escorting element for Scarpa's imagination. In other words, lines in the drawing can guide the architect instead of being fully guided by him. This can also be observed along the vertical centerline between the center of the plan, the south corner, and the scene drawn right below it. Departing from the south corner and loosely following the center guiding line that had helped in the construction of the square, Scarpa draws a naked couple embracing each other [fig. 4.9]. Such connection shows the corner as an eventful place and even one of uncertainty or perhaps transgression.²⁷ In Scarpa's drawing, making the corner through the joining of lines will reveal an acute awareness of its presence for the architectural experience.

The drawing shows us that a corner element may be understood as the coupling of two walls or two sets of 11 lines, and from this the architect discovers that the center guiding line previously drawn with no specific purpose beyond its endpoint could be suddenly activated. In the spirit of such coupling, Scarpa follows the corner and draws the naked couple. Right below the couple a sketch appears exploring the joint of two walls through a linear element [fig. 4.10]. Four realities - the center, the corner, the naked couple and a joint detail, are in fact interlaced as one.

The corner, an age-old place for meeting, is manifest in the actual project through an indentation inside the wall, an absence of material that makes room for a new reality which is manifest through a covering of gold paint [figs. 4.11 - 4.12]. While linear planks of wood compose the formwork construction of the concrete wall, precisely aligned and nailed, the addition of the gold paint requires a very intimate and caressing treatment of

²⁷ Alberti described a corner as half of a building, since it links two walls and essential to maintain uprightiness. He states that its stones should be an elbow that links around the corner into the walls like claws. Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. J. Rykwert, N. Leach, R. Tavernor (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1988), III. 7. I owe all my knowledge and curiosity about corners to Paul Emmons who has examined, researched and lectured on the topic of corners in architecture. Paul Emmons, *The Mirror of Design* (London: Ashgate, Forthcoming 2016).

the corner. In this way, how the drawing was drawn flowed into how the building was built where the same kind of relationships are mirrored.²⁸ If in the walls of the chapel precise architectural drawing instruments were needed; the drawing of the couple asked for curvilinear loose lines that were vital and freehand. The gold indentation detail can be understood as a detail that both separates the two walls as well as a place that joins the corner by creating a new one. While a place for meeting, the corner is also a place for separation, recalling the commemoration of the joined separation and the separated joining of the Brion couple.

Vertically, the indented corner detail consists of three parts. First, a small square indentation is located right below the height of a human head. In a related drawing, one can clearly the corner details in relationship to the body [fig. 4.13]. The second part of the detail is a linear indentation that follows the edge of the wall until it arrives to the third part. This last part occurs at the upper termination of the wall, where the linear indentation becomes a larger square cavity with stepping edges [fig. 4.14].

The two concurrent realities of meeting and separating are implied not just along the vertical edge detail of the corner but also at the horizontal levels of the floor and the ceiling. On the outside, unlike the other corners of the chapel, the floor that is underwater raises through small, L shaped steps meeting the corner from both sides of the wall [fig. 4.15]. The stepping angles have the same proportions that the stepping angles at the chapel openings. The corner of the chapel serves as the middle point between one side and the other side of the floor detail, becoming a horizontal corner that fully relates to the vertical one [fig. 4.16]. Moving to the inside, and also to the chapel ceiling, a structure of *stucco lucido* suspended panels is held away from the corner, creating a square opening that reveals the concrete structure above [fig. 4.17]. Here at the corner, Scarpa shows that

²⁸ While a place for meeting, the corner is also, a place for separation. This happens in how the making of the wall itself is done. Scarpa wanted one monolithic formwork to cast the chapel concrete. This monolithic approach was counterbalanced by the fact that he wanted the chapter to look 'light,' by making several interventions in the wall through various openings and details. The layer of – concrete = formwork – then is separated.

the ceiling, a horizontal architectural element, should be conscious of the verticality of the wall [fig. 4.18]. In a reflected ceiling plan for the chapel, Scarpa demonstrates this relationship by finding the dimensions of the ceiling opening through tracing an arc between two points within the wall openings [fig. 4.19].

This dual realm in the imagining of the wall and ceiling simultaneously translates later in the built edifice through the presence of these inside out, upside down relationships. In yet another chapel drawing, Scarpa wrote: "*Questa chiesetta è dedicata a sognare in memorie*" ("This chapel is dedicated to dream in memories"). In writing the phrase he inverts the letters of the word *sognare* (dream) into *sognaer*. In addition he inverts the letters of the word *chiesetta* (chapel) into *chiehstta* [fig. 4.20]. A common practice in his writing, flipping the letters of a word into a reality that still accepts the word as such, yet becoming a different one, is a phonetic act of opening up a world through continuity. The dreams and the *draems* of this chapel can be appreciated in the realities that a simple detail exhibits: the corner, which also is the floor, the ceiling, and the invisible couple. Italo Calvino, in his essay on *Lightness* recalls a very common aspect of folk tales that consists of the flight of signifiers into other worlds.²⁹ Quoting Vladimir Propp, who explains the "transference of the hero" into different realms, Calvino emphasizes the linear aspect of stories, in which linear does not mean homogenous, but rather that it travels in and out, visiting many places and bringing forth the kind of hyper-reality of a seemingly discontinuous continuity.³⁰ Inside out, upside down, and downside up, several realities of joining and separation coexist at this acute corner of the Brion cemetery. The corner stands harmonically as one character living, like in Cortázar or Borges stories, in a reality that is actually many.

²⁹ Italo Calvino. *Six Memos for the Next Millenium* (New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House, Inc., 1988), 3-29.

³⁰ "First, oral literature: in folk tales a flight to another world is a common occurrence. Among the "functions" catalogued by Vladimir Propp in his *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968), it is one of the methods of "transference of the hero," defined as follows: 'Usually the object sought is in 'another' or 'different' realm that may be situated far away horizontally, or else at a great vertical depth or height.'" Propp then goes on to list a great number of examples of the hero flying through the air: on horseback or on the back of a bird, disguised as a bird, in a flying boat, on a flying carpet, on the shoulders of a giant or a spirit, in the devil's wagon. *Ibid.*, 27.

2.2. From drawing to building: silence resonance

But the arts of which we speak [Architecture and Music] should, on the contrary, by means of numbers and relations of numbers, engender in us not a fable, but that hidden power which makes all fables. They raise the soul to the creative pitch, and make it sonorous and fertile.

Socrates in 'Eupalinos, or the Architect'

Paul Valery³¹

In spite of the architect having declared himself as “ignorant of music,” copious notes on Scarpa’s drawings invoking Beethoven, Mozart and others offer clues how his passion for music was incorporated into the daily realm [fig. 4.21].³² In a set of marks adjacent to the embracing couple previously examined, he makes several references to a Beethoven piece called “three *Equali* for four trombones” [fig. 4.22]. The *Equale* is a musical score in which voices or instruments of the same type play the various parts.³³ It was common in Austria during the 18th and 19th centuries to play a short piece with four trombones at funeral services.³⁴ Beethoven composed one for funerary purposes in 1812 on All Soul’s Day, and this same piece was played at Beethoven’s funeral in 1827.³⁵ Perhaps not a coincidence, Scarpa references this musical piece in the funerary chapel drawing.³⁶ Immediately next to his notation, an elevation sketch emphasizes three vertical parts that coincide with the long vertical windows of the chapel. Inside one of these three windows, the architect makes three small marks, as well as three crosses for each of the openings. Clearly

³¹ Paul Valery. *Eupalinos or The Architect*, trans. and preface William McCausland Stewart (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 39.

³² Semi, *A Lezione*, 252.

³³ Jane Bellingham. *The Oxford Companion to Music*, ed. Alison Latham. (*Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, Web. 14 Oct. 2014)

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Scarpa owned several books on music, particularly on the works Beethoven and Mozart.

counting and delineating various appearances of the number 3, Scarpa seems to be playing with the structure of the *Equale*.

As has already been observed, things that might be happening outside the drawing, in this case the likelihood of music playing, or the memory of the musical piece's sounds, affect how the architect imagines. Music, in particular, seems to provoke such realizations, as Scarpa once suggested:

One can say that space is relative, and one can only define it by that which delimits it: that is, it takes the rhythms, the intervals, the relationship between the parts. The relationship between the parts are the same that those in the face of a person, whereas a tenth of a thousandth of disproportion between the space that intercedes between the eyelash and the tip of the nose, can make it excellent or monstrous, like mine present here.

What are ultimately the vibrations, if not the smallest rapports? Those tiny relationships that make some beautiful profiles or shapes made by architects of Greece, the Italian Renaissance and, perhaps, also of French Gothic and Romanesque. We should get used to distinguishing, to have a musical ear. I confess I am ignorant from the musical point of view.³⁷

The smallest relationships, whether in music or the field of architecture drawing, mattered to the architect, where the 'vibrations' that Scarpa invokes follow a similar reality as his drawn lines. Both require a sensibility toward the 'smallest rapports.'

To what extent Beethoven's musical piece enabled him to discover aspects of the chapel it is impossible to tell. However, my argument has been that these stories coexist in the architectural drawing without having an apparent or knowable role, but they are in

³⁷ Semi, *A Lezione*, 252.

motion and acting upon each other nevertheless. It is not simply that one musical piece allows the Venetian architect to make a design; rather these stories that flow within the sheet of paper find subtle resonance in various aspects of the project. The dimensions of the chapel walls, for instance, alternate between intervals of 33cm for the openings and 88cm for the blind portions of concrete wall [fig. 4.23]. There is clearly a resonance between the tripartite structure of the Equale played with 4 instruments and the numbers 33 and 88. However, this type of resonance must not be understood as a cause-effect relationship but as a 'sound' that is in motion within the continuum of the drawing. It thus becomes intertwined with other 'sounds' of the drawing, creating subtle vibrations, as Scarpa would say, in the making of the design.

Scarpa offers yet another story that builds into the narrative of the chapel. He explains that one of the difficulties with the design was that he wanted very thick, 55cm concrete walls.³⁸ At the same time, he wanted the chapel to feel light, like cartilage.³⁹ In order to achieve this, he designed two main details. The first is the stepping profile of the window openings, where, because of their irregular shape, create shadows that distort the perception of their actual thickness [fig. 4.24]. The second detail involves the location of the window glass within the wall. He realized ahead of time that if the glass would had been placed on the exterior side of the wall, it would have created a continuous surface between the wall and what is being reflected, portraying the chapel as a solid and heavy volume. Instead, he placed the glass toward the inner edge of the wall, hiding it within its thickness, in order for the wall to cast a shadow over the glass panes. By creating a shadow and avoiding reflection, Scarpa offers a more airy perception of the solid reality of the chapel [fig. 4.25]. He describes such achievement by saying:

Even if looking at the wall, one cannot read in perspective any of the thickness values where the glass is. Isn't this true? *You flirted with naïve*

³⁸ Note that 55cm is the difference between 88 and 33, which are the dimensions for the openings and wall portions of the chapel.

³⁹ Semi, *A Lezione*, 289.

endearments and wanted me to like you Miss', do you remember? Have you ever read Guido Gozzano? He is a poet for romantic girls and instead, what do you read now?⁴⁰

Scarpa brags about this quite refined detail by invoking the Italian poet, Guido Gozzano. He quotes from a poem called *Miss Felicity or Happiness* that was written, curiously, in 434 verses that are grouped in 8 sections, the same play of numbers that Scarpa noted in his chapel's drawing. The poem recounts quotidian details from a girl's life in a small Canavese town in the Northwest of Italy. Scarpa's quotes is referenced from the following stanza:

You did love me. In your beautiful gaze
Shone an all-feminine enchantment.
You flirted with naïve endearments
And wanted me to like you, Miss:
And more than any city conquest
How your wanting to please me flattered me!⁴¹

When referring to the chapel wall's dimensions, Scarpa states that the walls are constructed through the numbers 33 and 88. From these measures, he expresses, one can draw the building from memory, as so often becomes necessary in the process of designing and building [fig. 4.26].⁴² He explains that this approach corresponds somewhat to that of the classical poets, where there is "rhythm, cadence, then number and then transference."⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ned Conini. *An Anthology of Modern Italian Poetry in English Translation, with Italian Text*. (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009), 117-153.

⁴² Semi, *A Lezione*, 289.

⁴³ Ibid.

What seems key about these stories, Beethoven's musical piece, Gozzano's poem, classical references to proportions, and the play between heavy and light, reflection and opacity; is the resonance that flows between them and the actual design in a harmonic continuity despite their dissociated appearance in the drawing. Such resonance can be constructed only if stories flow in and out of the design without being determined solely through a cause-effect relationship. In other words, all stories, like all marks in the architectural drawing, matter, because they can participate in its making without determining it completely. Rather, they create a continuous field, a continuum, that makes available the potential to construct unanticipated relationships. The design then, becomes a place where many stories converge and where many stories emerge. The resonance existing between the number 3, 4 and 8, it is found in Beethoven's piece, in Gozzano's poem, and in the sigma value between them, which is 11, a number that Scarpa used through the chapel's design and cemetery.⁴⁴ These elements converge in the drawing, emerge from it, and have a coherent and continuous impact in the built work.

2.3. From architect to drawing

There are not two without three

Italian popular saying⁴⁵

The awareness that life is a continuous whole allows the architect to blur the assumed borders between what is happening in the drawing with what is happening outside of it. Events flow from the reality of the architect into the reality of the architecture. Intentionally and unintentionally, the emotional life of the architect directly affects the emotional life of the drawing and consequently the architectural design. This is not simply an anecdotic interpretation of how emotions operate at the creative level, but has been

⁴⁴ Marco Frascari. "Architectural Traces of an Admirable Cipher: Eleven in the Opus of Carlo Scarpa" (Nexus Network Journal, Volume 1, Issue 1-2, June 1999): 7-22.

⁴⁵ *Non c'è due senza tre*. The saying is synonym with "the third time is the charm" but slightly different since emphasizes the duality of number two as incapable of resolving into a final decision.

confirmed by neurological research. The neuroscientist Antonio Damasio has studied this relationship, and he notes:

The fabric of our minds and of our behavior is woven around continuous cycles of emotions followed by feelings that become known and beget new emotions, a running polyphony that underscores and punctuates specific thoughts in our minds and actions in our behaviors.⁴⁶

Building on Damasio's research, Marco Frascari has argued that, for architects, "thinking well' is based on cognitive processes combined with the feeling of emotions, intuitions and sensations."⁴⁷ For this reason he explains that good architects think 'within' architecture, instead of 'thinking about architecture,' an act of immersion within the materials of architectural invention.⁴⁸ This fundamental difference will be demonstrated in the symbiotic roles of Scarpa's everyday life events within the drawing, where the polyphony of emotions in everyday life resonates with the 'ears' of his receptive drawings.

To illustrate how emotions in everyday life events constitute an inevitable part of the architect's world, one can observe a drawing from an unidentified project that depicts a quotidian scene involving Scarpa, his wife Onorina, and Tobia, his son [fig. 4.27]. On the left side of the sheet, a section drawing of a room shows a column supporting a roof structure [fig.4.28]. The cross-shaped joint detail between the column and the wall is drawn as having four steel pieces that meet at each corner, leaving an empty space at the center [fig. 4.29]. The four pieces are angled towards the outside 11 degrees to meet the roof structure [fig. 4.30].

⁴⁶ Antonio R. Damasio. *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999), 43.

⁴⁷ Frascari, *Eleven Exercises*, 67.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

Next we see a strange scene, an event shaped by the nature of every human condition: an argument between Scarpa and his wife, Onorina, known as Nini. Scarpa carefully draws in pencil both of their bodies in profile. In addition he draws his son's figure looking directly towards us, the spectators of the drawing, or towards Scarpa himself as he was making the drawing. Both parents are stepping forward each with their left foot. [fig. 4.31] Scarpa's hands are inside his pockets while Nini is armless with no breasts, and her back has been drawn as if she was wearing a translucent dress. Tobia, their son, stands in the middle, right behind them with a blushed face. Three speech bubbles are telling the story in-between the family. The couple is arguing; Nini shouts: *Stupido*, Scarpa yells: *Macacca* (commonly used in the Veneto, this word derives from the Spanish *macaco*, or monkey; when used among humans, it means 'idiot'). Finally, Tobia says in exasperation: *Tutti Due*, 'You two'!⁴⁹

After depicting the quarrel's scene, Scarpa draws over Nini's body a new version of the just discussed detail between the column and the roof, but this time the detail shows a new element in between the steel pieces [fig. 4.32]. The new piece joins the four parts together at a precise point just before the plates bend eleven degrees. Structurally, the new element would tie together and strengthen the separate parts that before were working in isolation or only slightly touching each other at their corner edges. In the new design, the middle plate engages fully with the parts making the joint, thus transforming it into a single piece. Just like the three figures inhabiting the section, the detail purposely drawn in section emphasizes the presence of the number three. While the two pairs of steel plates make possible the transference of loads, the one singular element is in charge of joining and strengthening the two pairs.

Looking closely at the space of family interaction offers more clues about the continuous linear practice by which Scarpa intertwined drawings and his everyday life events. If we picture the three family members' positions in plan view, plus Scarpa himself drawing, the

⁴⁹ Scarpa actually colors his son's face with a red pencil signaling perhaps his frustration or embarrassment.

diagram of the conversation is, like the detail, a cross [fig. 4.33]. One line of the cross marks the positions of the couple, and its perpendicular one, marks the visual connection between Tobia and Scarpa himself drawing. The center point of this cross is the space where the quarrel occurs, suggesting that it was the presence of the quarrel that brought the idea to the drawing in the first place. Without the quarrel, this arrangement would not exist. And yet, there is a strange aspect to how the three characters are positioned that reverses the story of the quarrel into a story of concurrence. The similarity of the organization with the positions of a bride, a groom and priest in the ritual of marriage, which also centers in a dialogue and exchange of three parts, plus the presence of God, is particularly close to the positions that Scarpa drew in this section. The couple facing each other; the bride on the left, the groom on the right and the priest at the center at a higher position suggests that again, two contradictory realities, a fight and a reconciliation, co-exist as a coherent possibility.

The story of the three characters not only entered into the life of the column capital detail, it also percolated into a revised design of the column [fig. 4.34]. In a new iteration, placed on the drawing parallel to the initial one, Scarpa revises the order of stone veneers so that, instead of being sized in two kinds of proportions, they are now sized in three different ways, allowing the column to emphasize the presence of the number three.

The drawing becomes a space for the argument and the space of the argument becomes the design, a crossing that cunningly reverses the values of the argument into an affable architectural detail. The process is once again, linear. The beginning of this line departs from the initial section drawing; later, it leaves the drawing to enter into the events of the architect's everyday life, and then returns to disclose what has happened. By the time the quarrel is told in the drawing, the parts have already converged into one reality from two

apparently distinct situations; intermingling family and architecture in such a way that they become one.⁵⁰

Events are dynamic experiences in which one is fully immersed with one's surroundings.⁵¹ They are dynamic because of their temporal conditions of being presented in the passing of time while concurrently holding the expectation of what might happen. Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo argues that in our world events are dynamic since they are experiences which are constantly open to reinterpretation, rewriting, and remaking.⁵² In this way one could argue that events are dynamic structures with no clear beginning or end, ongoing processes having different emotional values that intensify or weaken our perceptions.⁵³ In the context of events as stories, Michel de Certeau has claimed: "the story does not express a practice. It does not limit itself to telling about a movement. It makes it. One understands it, then, if one enters into this movement oneself."⁵⁴ Scarpa not only constructs events from the drawings, but he also allows the events of his everyday life to become part of them, thus blurring the often assumed distinction between the field of drawing and the field of life.

Marco Frascari observes that "stories not only help us make sense of the actions of others, they serve to shape our own identities."⁵⁵ Perhaps it could be implied from this that

⁵⁰ The space of the speech bubble is the breath or *pneuma* that is the physical presence of the spirit. In this case, the 'breathing room' to cool off from a fight becomes in the detail a light reveal of space where normally one finds the densest structure.

⁵¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes: "I cannot understand the function of the living body except by enacting it myself, and except in so far as I am a body which rises toward the world." Maurice Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Collin Smith (New York: Routledge, 1962), 75.

⁵² Jon R. Snyder. "Introduction to The End of Modernity" in Gianni Vattimo. *The end of modernity: nihilism and hermeneutics in postmodern culture*, trans. Jon R. Snyder (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), xx.

⁵³ Daniel Dennet explains: "One of the most striking features about consciousness is its discontinuity – as revealed in the blind spot, and saccadic gaps, to take the simplest examples. The discontinuity of consciousness is striking because of the apparent continuity of consciousness. Evan Thompson. *Mind in Life: biology, phenomenology, and the sciences of mind* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 275- 276.

⁵⁴ Certeau, *The practice*, 81.

⁵⁵ "Stories not only help us make sense of the actions of others, they serve to shape our own identities. The fundamental implication is that architectural sense-making and the construction of identity are powerful

drawings and stories help us make sense of our own lines in the drawing. When they do that, they serve the identity of the design itself. The story makes the design and the design tells the story. A joint, a cross, a quarrel, a love story and the presence of the son constitute the events of the story and the events of the project, emphasizing the good ears of drawings if the architect is willing to share his or her tales.

3. Acute Confabulations

Our life is the unfolding of an infinitely mutable melody, on the basis of a few chords.

Massimo Bontempelli⁵⁶

Architects and storytellers share a certain common ground in the activity of world-making.⁵⁷ Both are craftsmen who guide the viewer and listener's imagination into another realm. The storyteller's architecture is primarily spoken or written language, while the architect's primary storytelling medium is drawing. Through drawing, an architect guides the viewer's imagination into another not-yet-real world that is projected much like divinatory practices of reading palms or tarot cards. Since the makers of drawings are generally not present to recount their story, we must rely on reading clues to discover their hidden stories.

One of the dimensions of storytelling that Frascari has explored is the notion of confabulation [fig. 4.35]. In the field of neurology, a confabulation is a condition that accepts both, facts and fictions, as one reality. A mental patient's confabulation may be when he convinces himself that he is in Venice, although he also admits that the town he

narrative constructions. Marco Frascari, "An architectural good-life can be built, explained and taught only through storytelling," in *Reading Architecture and Culture*, ed. Adam Sharr (London: Routledge, 2012), 228.

⁵⁶ Bontempelli, *Realismo Magico*, 67.

⁵⁷ Frascari, *An architectural good-life*, 224-234.

is seeing through the window is Alexandria.⁵⁸ He knows both places, he feels both places and, despite the contradiction, both places constitute his reality.

To illustrate this through Scarpa's work, Frascari constructed a small drawing that he named '*Scarpa Confabulation*', where he argues that architectural thinking is embedded simultaneously within a fictional and factual realm [fig. 4.36]. Framed with red ink, the drawing made on a very thick water color small sheet of paper, reveals three fragments of Scarpa's architectural passions drawn on a sheet of paper that has been 'pinned' to the actual textured watercolor paper: a plan detail of a window from the Brion chapel, the two overlapping circles of the *vesica piscis* symbol, and a stepping stair-like ziggurat line frequently found in the Venetian architect's work. A different arrangement of the same elements is shown in Scarpa's head. The architectural elements are drawn first in a gray ink line, like the gray matter of Scarpa's brain, and then they are overdrawn with red, a possible reference to traditional artist's red chalk, which in Italian is literally called 'blood'.⁵⁹ The architect's gray thoughts and the bleeding hand-made drawings are thus closely interlinked.

The often cited duality between hand and mind is subtly questioned and tricked here by Frascari. The red line, like Ariadne's clue, which appears to join head to hand is actually discontinuous [fig.4.37]. The gap dividing the line near the edge of the 'paper' is clearly a conscious decision as the dot of ink ending the line on each side of the gap indicates a thoughtful pause. Rather than assuming that prior mental ideas simply determine what the hand later traces, the two lines and the gap connecting the head with the hand offer a double directionality. Following Frascari's dictum that "the storyteller does not know, but knows by making," the gapped lines are more correctly read as indicating a cyclical

⁵⁸ Armin Schneider. *The Confabulating Mind: How the Brain Creates Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 32-34.

⁵⁹ *sanguine*

exchange between the head and hand both from the inside out and the outside in.⁶⁰ When Frascari expresses that “the tale is not to know, but to produce a facture,” the facture or the making of the drawing has the condition of being both – factual and fictional.⁶¹ It is a concrete mark and also an unknown mark never made before. In order for the tale to exist it must be made without knowing, yet knowing that it has been made constitutes the access to knowing.

The gap is a blind spot where fiction and fact interchange through proximity.⁶² British philosopher, Evan Thompson, points out that because we are phenomenological bodies, “our experience seems continuous and gapless when it is really gappy and discontinuous...”⁶³ As we have seen in literature, discontinued continuity is often evoked as a way to overlap realities and reveal new meanings as the story develops, a key notion for Massimo Bontempelli and the understanding of magic-realism. Bontempelli addressed that “the supreme ideal for a writer is to be able to approach the duality of the word as what the word is and what the word evokes, that which is and that which represents.”⁶⁴ A good writer, in his view, is the one that can allow the ambiguous realm of words to exist within the work.⁶⁵ The same seems evident for architectural drawings, where the values of lines intertwine ambiguous and seemingly disconnected narratives as the design develops.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Marco Frascari, *Zibaldino. An elegant collation of architectural delights* (Lexington: Self-Published, 2010), 24.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² It is not a coincidence that the gap is located closest to the nose and mouth, the parts of the body that reach out and absorb the world through inhaling, digesting and speaking. In fact, while the hand is entirely ‘in’ the drawing, the only part of Scarpa’s head that is shown overlapping with the drawing is the tip of his prominent nose.

⁶³ Thompson, *Mind in Life*, 275.

⁶⁴ Bontempelli, *L’Avventura*, 297.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Scarpa Confabulation, just like Scarpa’s own drawings, brings together both fact and fiction through *fāri*, a Fable, meaning ‘to speak’. In Italian, the verb *parlare*, to speak, comes from the Latin *parabola*. A parabola is a comparison between things; also a form of speech. To speak, also, derives from the Latin *fatum* which means that which is said. *Fatum* was also understood as fate, since fate was considered to be the voice of the Gods. It was something spoken without the necessity of hearing a voice, a silent speech if one wishes.

Frascardi shows Scarpa drawing three elements on the sheet of paper and while the same three elements are inverted and slightly different inside his head, he seems to happily acknowledge both realities as one. Implied in this apparent contradiction is that the confabulation allows for a thicker notion of reality to emerge due to the linear and simultaneous relationships between multiple realities. Confabulations are continuous and linear, but they are not like the simplistic linearity of a straight line. Just as in the telling lines of the Romanian-born American illustrator Saul Steinberg a story line does not necessarily mean a straight line of narration of cause and effect; it has twists, turns and disruptions [fig. 4.38]. As in such stories, an architectural confabulation is a thicker reality where events, memories, everyday life and the making of the drawing live through a continuous ductal line that wanders and wonders throughout.

As in Cortázar's or Borges' stories, the drawing can be a place that is also two places but for the confabulator constitutes a single reality which juggles multiple facts and fictions simultaneously. Vico calls these creations of facts and fictions, imaginary figments. A figment is a product of invention manifested in the world that belongs to poets:

The poet...because his business is with the majority of men, induces persuasion by giving plastic portrayals of exalted actions and characters; he works, as it were with 'invented examples'. As a result, he may depart from the daily semblances of truth, in order to be able to frame a loftier semblance of reality. ... He creates imaginary figments which, in a way are more real than the physical reality itself.⁶⁷

Through the contingency of the *factum* (made), Vico oscillates between *fingere* (fiction), and *verum* (truth). This suggests that in the idea of making there is always both the idea of falsification and the idea of 'truth' that is higher than other truths, 'truth' and not just that

⁶⁷ Vico, *Ancient Wisdom*, 43.

which is true.⁶⁸ In the English translation of the section from which this fragment is taken, the word 'figment' appears four times. In the Latin version of the text, Vico uses the words *mendacia*⁶⁹ and *effingant*.⁷⁰ The first one, *mendacia*, means a mistake or error and it was habitually used to describe the errors made when writing books, as in a 'slip of the pen'.⁷¹ The word also means a fable, a fiction or a lie. With a *mendacia*, there is an unintentional fault or change that disrupts the course of something, as well as an intentional disruption or creation of an imaginary narrative. The second word, *effingant* means to represent, portray or form, but it also means to falsify something. Again, the word denotes two realms, a positive aspect in the unintentional fault leading to a creation and a negative aspect, a lie and a misrepresentation.⁷² Even within the false, Vico finds evidence of the divine, as we saw in the previous chapter; God is even in the mistakes.

The imaginary figment, for Vico, creates a space outside of a simple retelling of events, where multiple realities coexist, leading to a confabulation. These concurrent worlds are not seen as contradictory, rather, they are sensed as a coherent whole, reinforcing the aspect of togetherness that the word confabulation carries with it.⁷³ Architectural drawings intensify reality through dissolving the distinction between facts and fictions. For example, if an architect draws something in plan that would not be possible in section, it becomes a contested realm where an invention would allow both to coexist in some as

⁶⁸ Donald Kunze, "Architecture as Reading; Virtuality, Secrecy, Monstrosity," *Journal of Architectural Education*, 41- 4 (1988): 28-37.

⁶⁹ Giambattista Vico, *De Nostris Temporis Studiorum Ratione [sul Metodo Degli Studi Del Nostro Tempo]* (Pisa: ETS, 2010).

⁷⁰ *Effingo*: to form to fashion. Also to express, to represent. To represent by imitation. Short and Lewis. *Latin Dictionary*.

⁷¹ *Menda*: a fault, defect, blemish of the body. A mistake, error, blunder. Ibid.

⁷² The words that Vico uses are demonstrative of the very thing he sees as an 'instrument' for the work of the poets, that is, the creation or discovery of an ambiguous realm to work with in order to find the true within it. Vico begins the section VIII of the Methods by expressing that no-one can determine or prescribe the instruments for the poet. However, he seems to go around this but creating an 'instrument' that it really is a way of working, a 'practicing tool' perhaps that allows the creation, invention and discoveries of things 'as if' were true but that within that process of 'as if' the true is discovered beyond itself. Giambattista Vico. *On the Study Methods of Our Time*. Translated by Elio Gianturco. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

⁷³ William Hirstein, *Brain Fiction: Self-Deception and the Riddle of Confabulation* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 20), 177-211.

yet unforeseen way. A confabulation is not a fault or a negative element, but an invitation for architects to discover and make new stories within their drawings.⁷⁴ The architect tells stories to the drawing and the drawing tells stories to the architect. The construction is a confabulation, a fabulous talk between two architects, the one doing the drawing and one the drawing is making.

Scarpa, a storyteller par excellence, exercised, as we have seen, the power of confabulations throughout his work. My argument rests on the rope of an acrobat, where many realities are juggled in order to perform. All constitute one reality, one line that varies in intensities, enters and exits the drawing, moves and stays still. It is a linear process, not understood as a straight or predictable line, but a linearity that is closely related to how stories are made, connecting parts, spinning threads, despite the apparent contradictions. One could argue that Scarpa has in fact only done one drawing in his life, one extremely long drawing, and that one drawing has made him.

⁷⁴ See chapter 3.

Figures Chapter 4

Fig. 4.1
Non-identified project drawing
Archivio Carlo Scarpa
© Archivio di Stato, Treviso, Italy



Fig. 4.2
Chapel floor plan and entrance elevation
NR #2437
Archivio Carlo Scarpa
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Rome, Italy

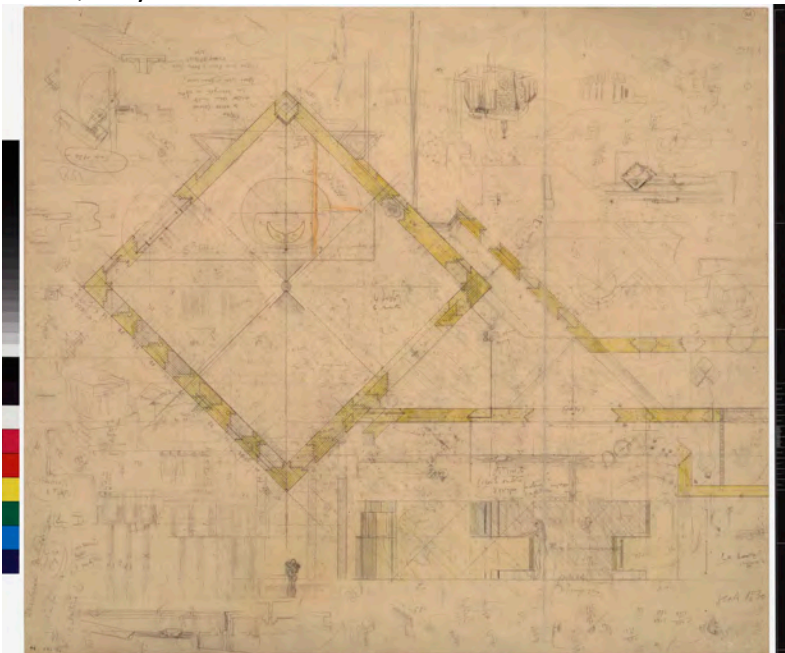


Fig. 4.3
Chapel floor plan and entrance elevation (detail)
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Archivio Carlo Scarpa
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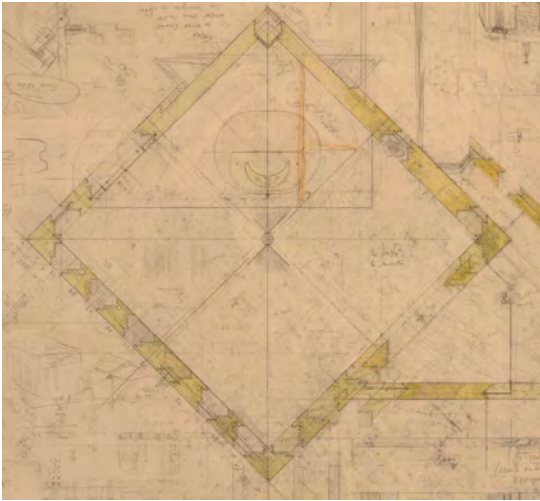


Fig. 4.4
Chapel floor plan and entrance elevation (diagram by author on existing drawing)
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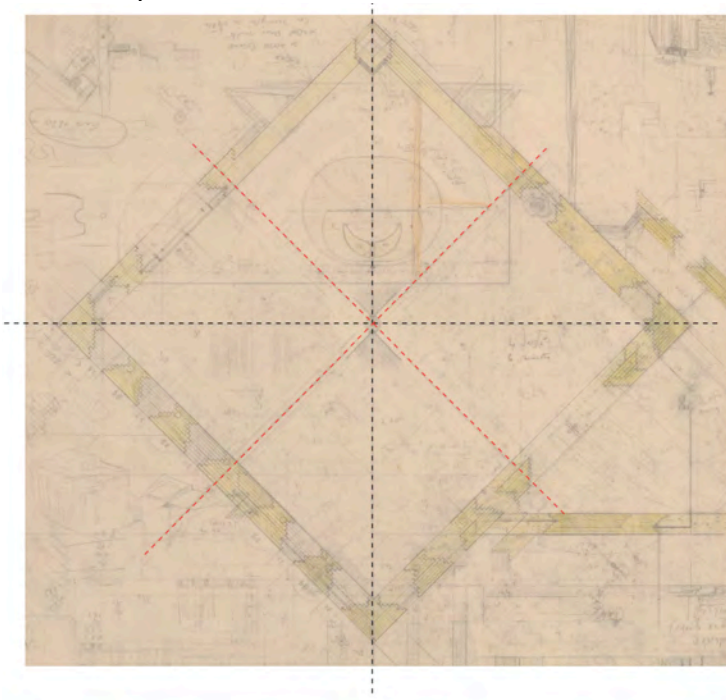


Fig. 4.5
Chapel floor plan and entrance elevation (vertical plan axis line detail)
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Fig. 4.6
Chapel floor plan and entrance elevation (detail)
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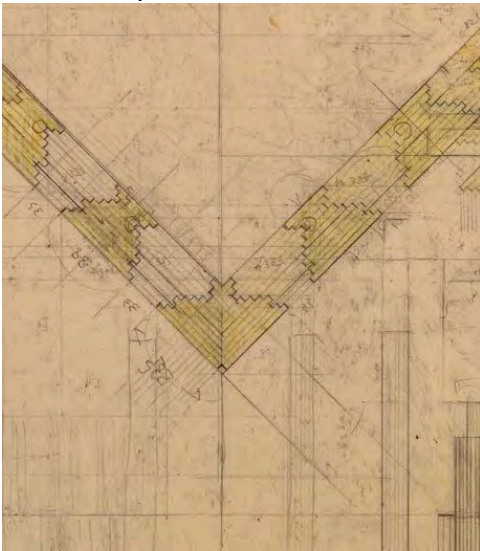


Fig. 4.7
Chapel floor plan and entrance elevation (diagram by author on existing drawing)
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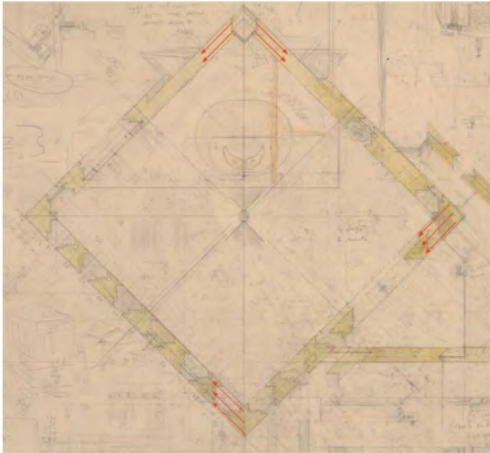


Fig. 4.8
Chapel floor plan (diagram by author on existing drawing)
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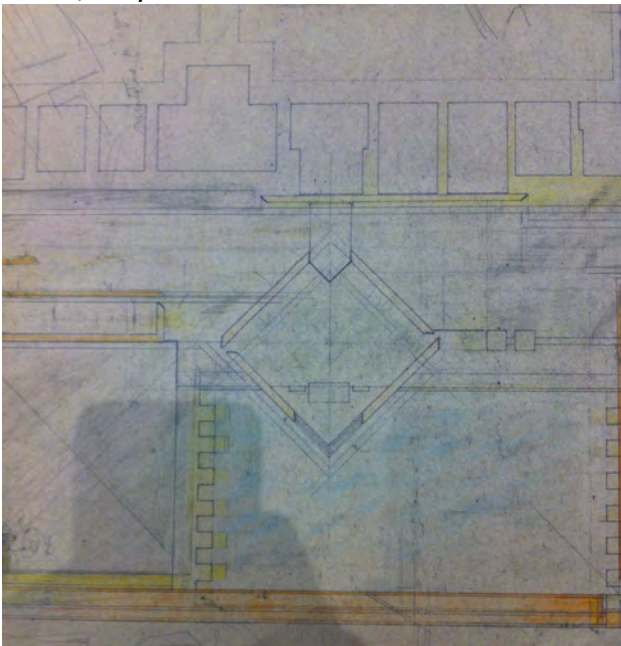


Fig. 4.9
Chapel floor plan and entrance elevation (detail)
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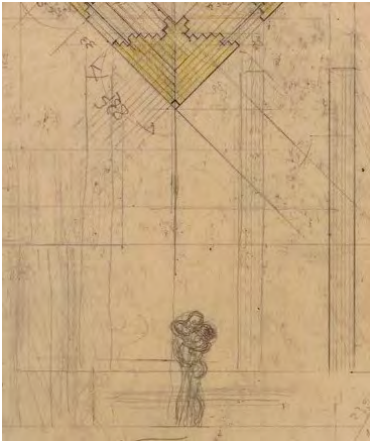


Fig. 4.10
Chapel floor plan and entrance elevation (detail)
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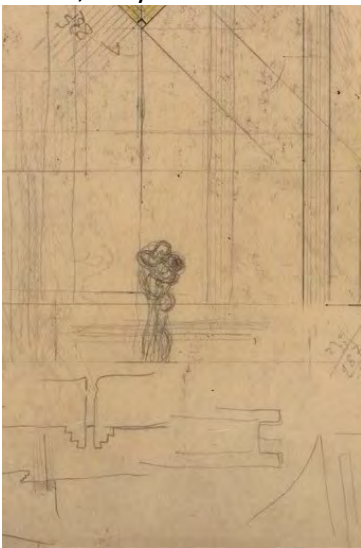


Fig. 4.11
Corner indentation filled with gold paint
Photo by Author



Fig. 4.12
Corner indentation filled with gold paint - zoom
Photos by Paul Emmons



Fig. 4.13
Chapel elevation
NR #2596
Archivio Carlo Scarpa
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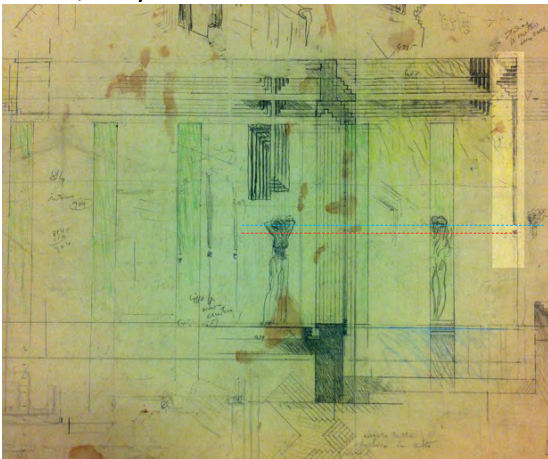


Fig. 4.14
Corner indentation filled with gold paint - zoom
Photo by Paul Emmons

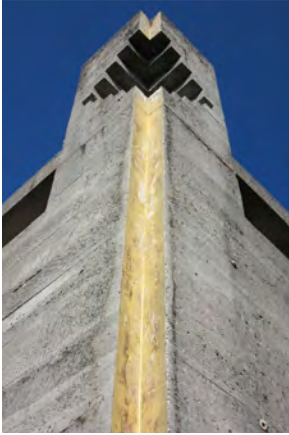


Fig. 4.15
Floor plan drawing

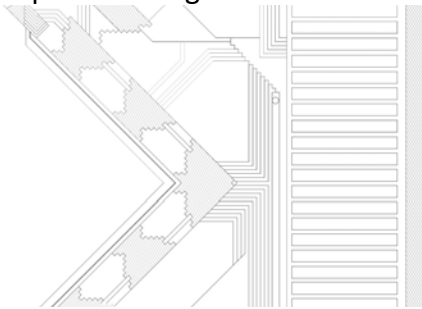


Fig. 4.16
Chapel corner and floor detail
Photos by Paul Emmons

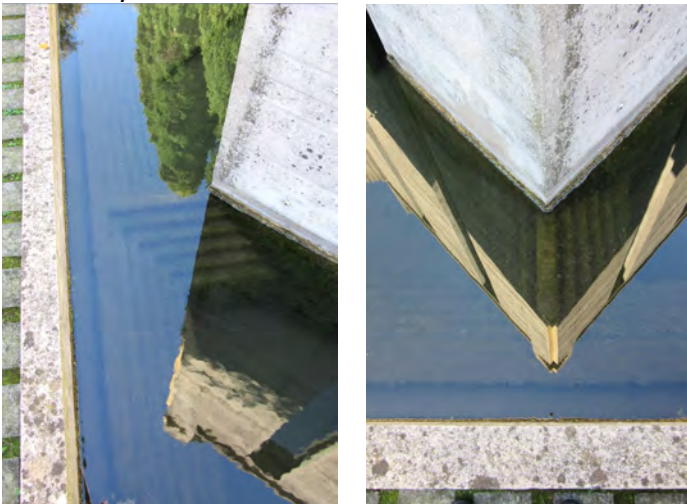


Fig. 4.17
Chapel ceiling at corner
Photo by Author



Fig. 4.18
Chapel reflected ceiling plan
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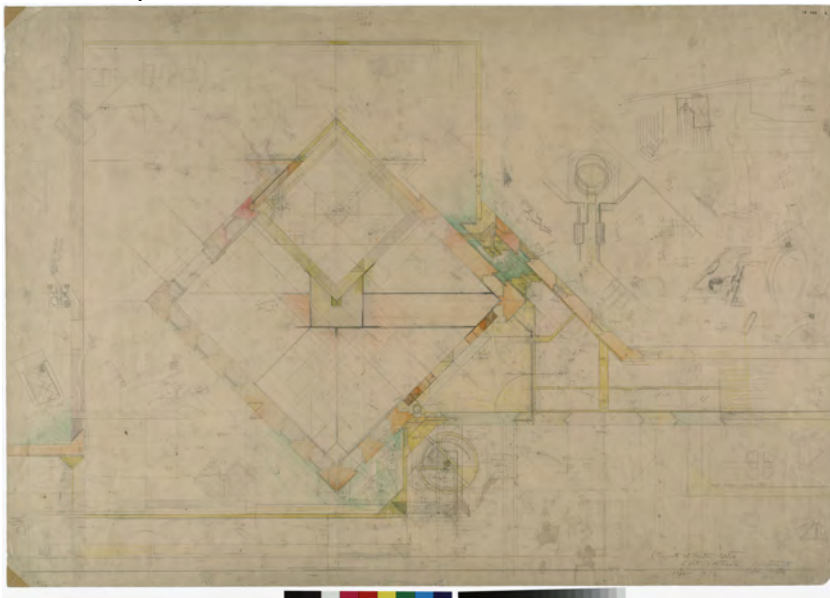


Fig. 4.19
Chapel reflected ceiling plan (diagram of corner detail by author over existing drawing)
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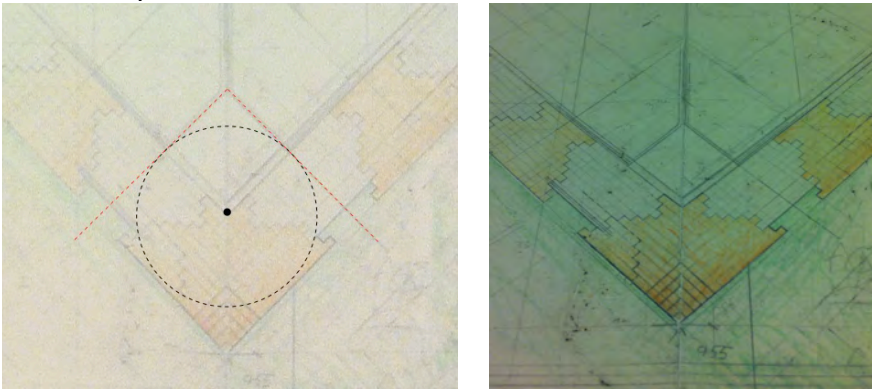


Fig. 4.20
Chapel elevation (diagram of corner detail by author over existing drawing)
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(zoomed image)



Fig. 4.21
 Selection of drawings showing music references
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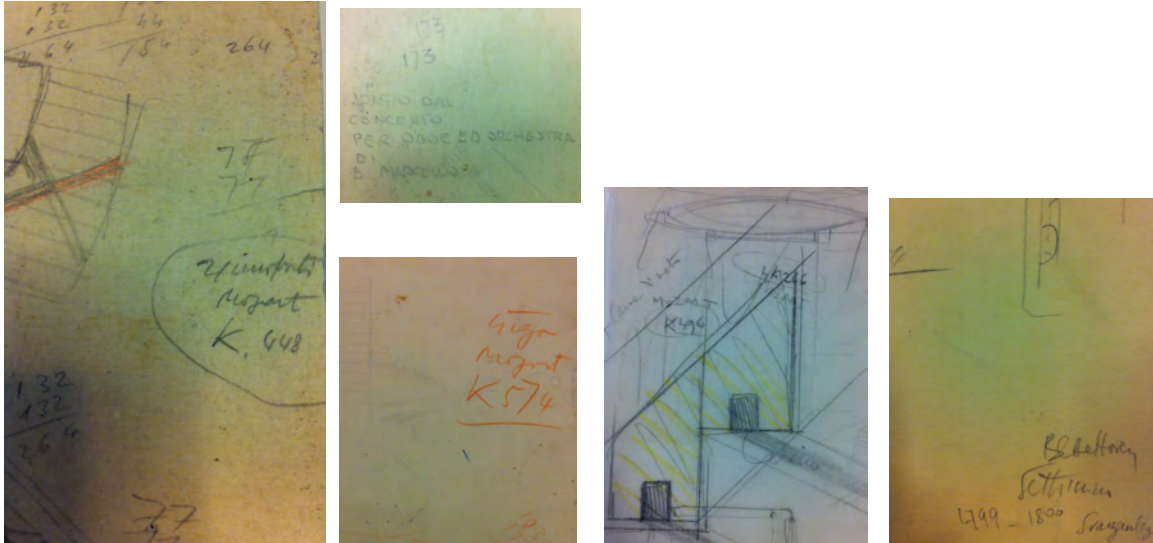


Fig. 4.22
 Chapel floor plan and entrance elevation (detail)
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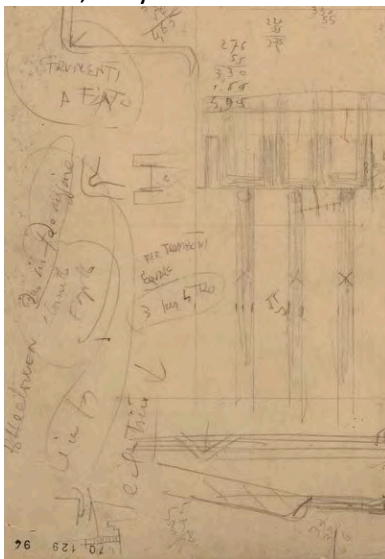


Fig. 4.23
Chapel floor plan and entrance elevation (detail)
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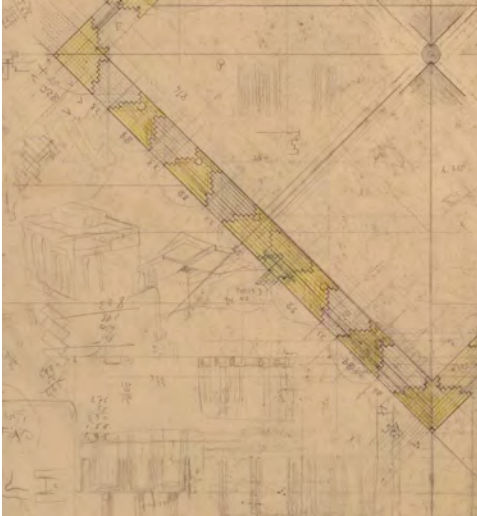


Fig. 4.24
Chapel windows
Photo by Author



Fig. 4.25
Chapel windows
Photo by Author



Fig. 4.26
Chapel floor plan (detail)
NR #2647 (verso)
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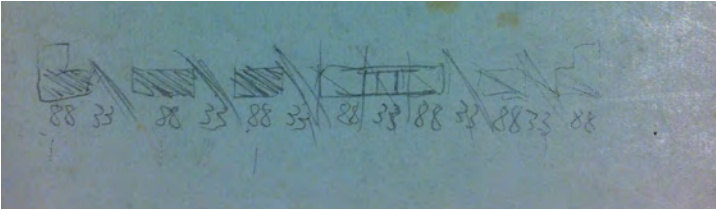


Fig. 4.27
Room section – Non-identified project
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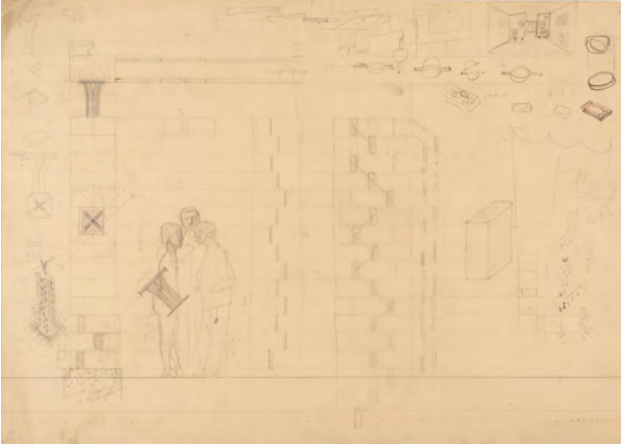


Fig. 4.28
Room section – Non-identified project (detail)
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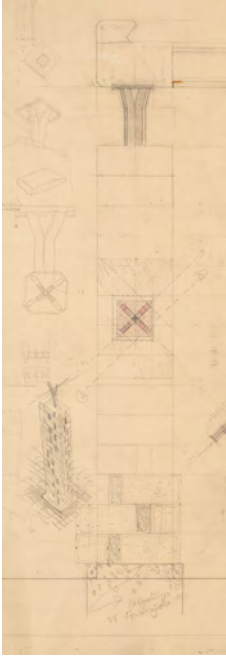


Fig. 4.29
Room section – Non-identified project (detail)
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Fig. 4.30
Room section – Non-identified project (detail)
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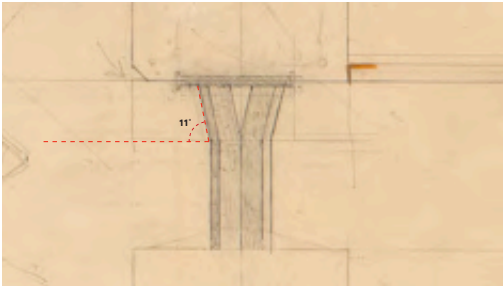


Fig. 4.31
Room section – Non-identified project (detail)
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Fig. 4.32
Room section – Non-identified project (detail)
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Fig. 4.33
Dialogue diagram by author

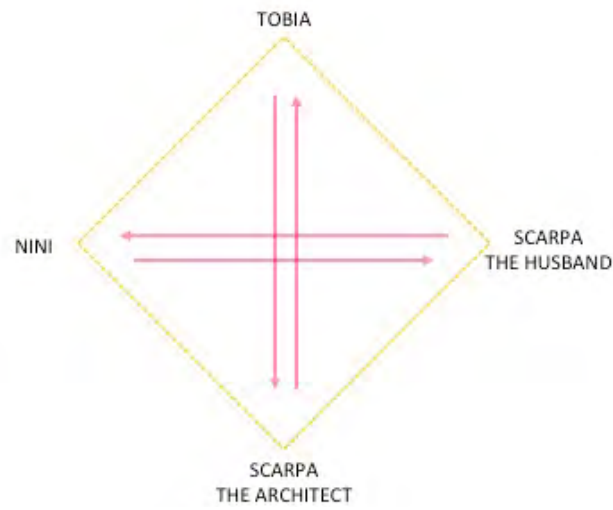


Fig. 4.34
Room section – Non-identified project (detail)
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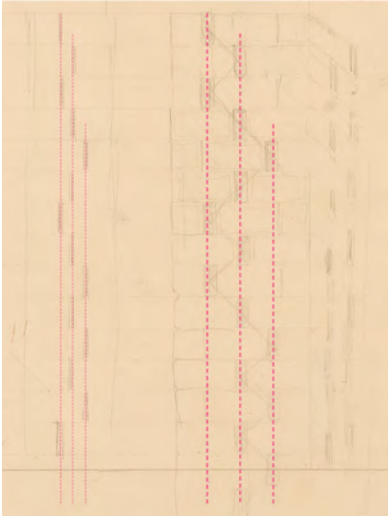


Fig. 4.35
Marco Frascari drawing
© Paola Frascari



Fig. 4.36
Marco Frascari
'Scarpa Confabulation'
© Paola Frascari

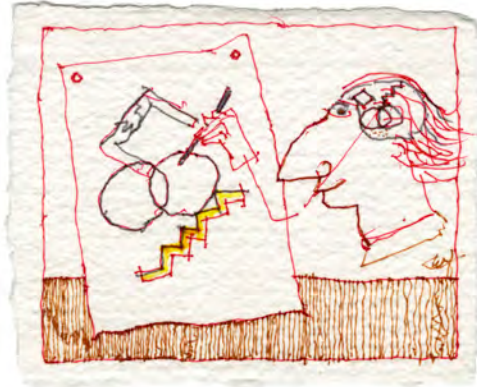


Fig. 4.37
Marco Frascari
'Scarpa Confabulation' (detail)
© Paola Frascari

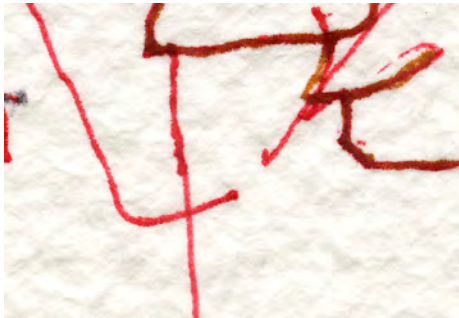
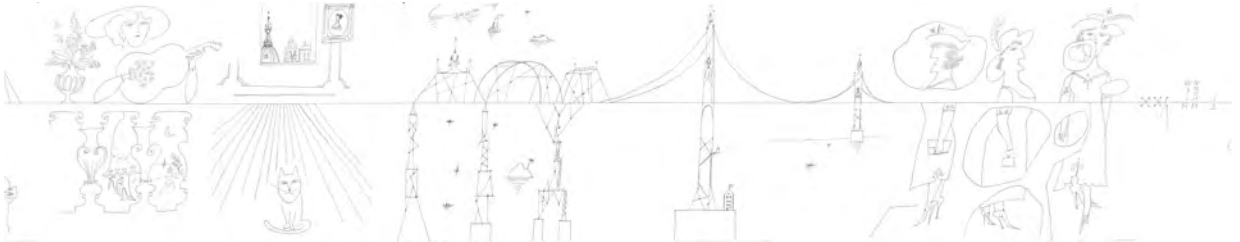


Fig. 4.38
'The Line' (fragment)
Saul Steinberg
© Saul Steinberg Archive



Chapter 5

Latent lines: quintessential occultation

1. Un-drawing the Drawing

Appetite comes by eating

Italian popular saying¹

A frequently unnoticed aspect of Scarpa's drawings is the common presence of subtle erasure marks, difficult to observe in photographs, but easily seen in person through the residue of charcoal or graphite pencils, and paper indentions [figs. 5.1 - 5.2]. Oftentimes constructed on his characteristic suede color sheets, these marks appear on drawings where the architect spent time working and re-working the design of various parts of the cemetery [fig. 5.3]. When I asked Guido Pietropoli how Scarpa commonly erased marks in his drawings, he presented a version of Scarpa's erasing tool, a simple Faber-Castel white kneadable eraser [fig. 5.4]. Pietropoli recalled that Scarpa used to say the eraser "digests the lines," just like a stomach digests food.² This simple glimpse into erasure offers a window into another aspect of the magic-real practice of architectural drawings, where marks are both present and absent at the same time. Focusing particularly on the erasure marks that leave indentations on the sheet of paper, but also acknowledging other forms of erasure, this chapter brings to light an aspect of making architectural drawings that is based on un-drawing them.

1.1. Hide and Seek

¹ *L'appetito viene mangiando.*

² Interview 2013 with Guido Pietropoli in Rovigo, Italy. In Italian the 'kneading erasure' is called *gommapane*, because originally bread was used for erasing graphite or charcoal marks.

Digestion, of all the bodily functions, is the one which exercises the greatest influence on the mental state of an individual.

Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin³

A good beginning is to note the differences between the English verb ‘to erase’ and the Italian equivalent *cancellare*, a verb that comes back into English as the cognate, ‘to cancel.’ The English word *erase* has its roots in the Latin *erode*, which means “to scratch out, to abolish, to eradicate and to forget,” implying an elimination of something through a physical removal or emotional oblivion.⁴ Instead, the Italian verb *cancellare* implies something very different, having its roots in the Latin *cancelli*, meaning “to make lattice-wise, to put behind bars or to enclose.”⁵ The practice of crossing out words among Latin jurists, for example, did not consist in eliminating a word, but rather to imprison the word so it could not escape.⁶ The idea of ‘cancelling’ words is still common today [fig. 5.5]. A similar approach also occurs with images. In architecture offices these forms of ‘cancelling’ are usually depicted with red ink. ‘Redlining’ is a common practice of capturing something in the drawing that the architect needs to remember. With red ink, architects employ these marks to imprison a mistake, a change, or a correction without eliminating that which the red mark highlights [fig. 5.6]. To cancel something represents an active deed of imprisonment that changes the nature of the thing enclosed. The word *cancellarius*, in fact, meant a gatekeeper, the one taking care of whatever or whomever was behind the gate. This form of enclosure by defining boundaries was an additive process - that of adding bars or expanding the space around something in order to enclose it. When we think of erasing something today, however, we associate it exclusively with its removal or elimination. Although the notion of removal is also present in the modern day Italian use of *cancellare*, the word contains an ambiguity that opens up an unnoticed field

³ Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin. *The Physiology of Taste: Or, Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy*, trans. M F. K. Fisher (New York: Knopf, 1971)

⁴ Short and Lewis. *Latin Dictionary*.

⁵ Also: “the fixing of boundaries, the measuring of land,” Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

to speculate on erasure in Scarpa's drawings as well as in architectural drawings in general.

Scarpa's name for his eraser, "the stomach," is perhaps not simply a metaphor. The architect, as has been noted, had a trained palate and eating well infiltrated his everyday life. In fact, not just food would trigger his appetite. At the inaugural speech of the academic year 1964-65 at the IUAV, Scarpa made reference to the pages of an old etymological dictionary: "Incidentally, the Crusca volume of 1836 was printed on very beautiful paper, crunchy: I felt like eating it..."⁷ Eating, of course, makes an immediate association with digestion, and eating well goes together with digesting well.⁸ If the erasure is the stomach, then each line that is imprisoned, or 'eaten,' becomes the meal. The architect embodies this form of eating and digesting architectural thoughts through the materiality of the drawing.⁹ The leftover residues on the paper or 'plate' constitute a memory guide that nurtures Scarpa's imagination in making the next line or 'meal.'

Departing from this internalized awareness of digestion, Scarpa externalizes it into the object he uses for erasing. The eraser, precisely as a stomach, enables digestion in such a way that a part of the line is 'digested' by the kneading eraser and a part of the line remains present in the memory of the drawing in the form of paper indentations or smears. The entire process propitiates a form of latency in both realms, in the seeking tool that imprisons or 'eats' the lines, and in the field of marks hidden within the sheet of paper where the memory of erased lines remains.

1.2. Latent Constructions

⁷ "Per inciso il volume della Crusca del 1836 era stampato bella, crocchiante: veniva voglia di magiarla..." *Trascrizione del discorso inaugurale dell'anno accademico 1964-65 della IUAV di Venezia Lectio Magistralis intitolata 'Arredare' tenuta da Carlo Scarpa 18 Marzo 1964.*

⁸ The word digestion comes from the Latin *digero*, which means to force apart, separate or divide and in a medical context means to dissolve or to dissipate. Short and Lewis, *Latin Dictionary*.

⁹ For more relationships between architecture and food in Carlo Scarpa see: Frascari, Marco. "Architects, never eat your maccheroni without a proper sauce! A macaronic meditation on the anti Cartesian nature of architectural imagination." *Nordisk Arkitekturforskning* (2003): 2:41.

The very same impressions that we have forgotten have nonetheless left the deepest traces upon our minds and have had a determining effect upon the whole of our later development.

Sigmund Freud¹⁰

In a lecture at the IUAV, Scarpa described the relationship of erased marks in architectural drawings. It is worth quoting at length:

So, transpose on very strong paper, strong just to make those ten thousand erasures, which means that you can draw many times those pencil marks on this paper and you will have all your ideas preserved and by erasing slightly the marks there remains a track of your thoughts; you cannot draw [*disegnare*] on tracing paper because when one erases nothing remains. Instead, I have to perceive the old sign that I have forgotten; perceiving in it new ideas that are in relation with those other marks that I have made so closely together, that I have neglected, that I have erased because I did not like them. And from the surprise of this magnificent fabric of signs, at some given moment the ideas come if one has the intuition to understand everyday life, and this type of intuition is equivalent to that which allows one to have many thoughts while looking at the hair of a woman.¹¹

¹⁰ Sigmund Freud. *Three essays on the theory of sexuality*. Authorized translation by James Strachey (London, Imago Pub. Co., 1949), 53.

¹¹ "Allora, trasposizione su carta molto forte, forte proprio per fare quelle diecimila cancellature, il che vuol dire che si può disegnare molte volte con segni di matita su questa carta e si hanno tutte le proprie idee conservate e cancellando lievemente rimane una traccia dei vostri pensieri; la carta da lucido non si può disegnare perché cancellando non resta più niente. Invece io devo percepirlo quel vecchio segno ho dimenticato, percependolo mi viene una nuova idea in rapporto ad altri segni, che ho fatto vicini, che ho trascurato, che cancello perché non mi piacciono; e dalle sorprese dell'imaginifica trama di segni vengono, qualche volta vengono delle idee, se uno ha un intuito di capire le cose della vita, l'intuizione che permette di far tanti pensieri anche guardando la capigliatura di una donna." *Semi, A Lezione*, 225.

This illustrates Scarpa's awareness of the role of erasure in exhibiting marks that are both remembered and forgotten, considered and neglected. For Scarpa erasure signifies a process of occultation instead of elimination, creating a field of latent marks hidden from total view but not expunged from the sheet. A latent element holds the potential to emerge at any given time, or to be discovered, all the while remaining dormant or concealed.¹²

Latent lines operate within a dual condition of being and becoming, an active and passive realm created by the architect on the sheet of paper as well as in his imagination. In magic realism the notion of latency lies in the fact that reality, at any given moment, can reveal something never seen before, because there is always something hidden within it.¹³ Bontempelli suggests that reality must be told as a dream, and the dream as reality, in order to open up the potentiality of both as already being part of the other.¹⁴ The word latency has its origins in the Greek *lanthanein* which means "to lie unseen, to escape notice, or to make one forget a thing."¹⁵ In the era of early photography, it was discovered that an invisible image could be formed by a short exposure of light to a photosensitive material coated on glass or film, only to become visible through the contact of specific chemicals. Although the process was still largely unknown, it was understood by early pioneers in the art as a 'latent image.'¹⁶ The early photographer William Henry Fox Talbot, referring to the developing process, wrote of this mystery as, "...a little bit of magic realized:—of natural magic. You make the powers of nature work for you, and no wonder

¹² New Latin, from Greek *lanthanein* to lie unseen. Middle English, from Latin *latent-*, *latens*, from present participle of *latēre* to lie hidden; akin to Greek *lanthanein* to escape notice. OED, 2014.

¹³ Roh, *New Objects*, 17.

¹⁴ Bontempelli, *Realismo Magico*, 51.

¹⁵ λανθάνω: Henry G. Liddell, Scott Robert, Henry S. Jones, and Roderick McKenzie. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

¹⁶ In 1840 William Henry Fox Talbot noticed that "coating his photogenic drawing paper with a mixture of silver nitrate and gallic acid made it very sensitive..." "Talbot discovered that half a minute of exposure in the camera was sufficient to register an invisible image – latent image – that established the groundwork for the photograph." Larry J. Schaaf. *The photographic art of William Henry Fox Talbot* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 21.

your work is well and quickly done” [fig. 5.7 – fig. 5.8].¹⁷ Talbot recognized that a latent image could be awakened through an understanding of the potential and actuality of materials.

The psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud explored the notion of latency as it related to the psychosexual stages of humans, arguing that the latent stage of life occurred in children from 3 years old until puberty. This period signifies a repression of sexual desire that is channeled through other activities or feelings.¹⁸ Freud also referred to latent content in relationship to dreams, where the latent content shows the true content behind the imagery of the dream.¹⁹ In both cases, latency has the power of not only remaining hidden, but also remaining active.

In the practice of architectural drawing, latency also has a role to play. As with Talbot or Freud, where latency signified a concealing of something quite significant, in Scarpa the act of erasing is also a process of occultation that emerges from *un-drawing* the drawing. This deliberate effort of un-drawing by leaving erasure marks allows him to discover something previously hidden within his already presagious marks. In other words, by concealing information Scarpa finds a way to reveal key aspects of the design.

In opposition to concealment, the notion of unconcealment was investigated by Martin Heidegger in *The Origin of a Work of Art*, who called it *Unverborgenheit* and related it closely with the Greek notion of *aletheia*, normally translated as ‘truth.’ The word *aletheia* is the opposite of *letheia*, from where we arrive at the word latent, implying that truth, in the Greek sense, was a kind of non- or un-latency. In Karsten Harries’ commentary on

¹⁷ Henry Talbot, letter to editor, dated 30 January 1839; published in *The Literary Gazette*, no. 1150 (2 February 1839): 74 (Document 03782)

¹⁸ ‘Thus the activity of those impulses [infantile sexual impulses] does not cease even during this period of latency, though their energy is diverted, wholly or in great part from their sexual use and directed to other ends. This process of diversion Freud called it ‘sublimation’ Freud, *Three essays*, 56.

¹⁹ Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. A.A. Brill (London: George Allen & Co., 1913), 48-81.

Heidegger's use of *aletheia*, he explains that *aletheia* was in fact a concealed notion of unconcealment, writing:

For the Greeks, for example, the experience of *aletheia*, as that which is inaccessible in what manifest, is effectively translated in a nonconceptual and indirect way via language itself. Particularly in the use of the verb *lanthanein*, to be hidden, and its derivative *lethe*, forgetting. We say 'I have forgotten.' In Greek, however, the middle voice of the verb *lanthonomai* means 'something escapes me, remains hidden from myself.'²⁰

In Heidegger's view, the essence of truth is the struggle between concealment and unconcealment.²¹ Somewhat differently, I propose that in the work of Scarpa the process of occulting things is a method of revelation in its own right. In other words, the intentional act of occultation, as a practice of forgetting or as the Greeks would express, 'allowing something to escape me,' becomes a form of revealing a forever-occulted and unfinished endeavor. In this way, by allowing for something to escape from me, I am always longing for an element that leaves me. In this longing or desire, the work remains always open to a new possible shift or direction.

²⁰ Karsten Harries. *Art Matters: A Critical Commentary on Heidegger's 'the Origin of the Work of Art.'* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 151.

²¹ "We believe we are at home in the immediate circle of beings. That which is, is familiar, reliable, ordinary. Nevertheless, the clearing is pervaded by constant concealment in the double form of refusal and dissembling. At bottom, the ordinary is not ordinary; it is extra-ordinary, uncanny. The nature of truth, that is of unconcealedness, is dominated throughout by a denial. Yet this denial is not a defect or fault, as though truth were an unalloyed unconcealedness that has rid itself of everything concealed. If truth could accomplish this, it would no longer be itself. This denial, in the form of a double concealment, belongs to the nature of truth as unconcealedness. Truth in its nature is un-truth. We put this matter this way in order to serve notice with a possibly surprising trenchancy, that denial in the manner of concealment belongs to unconcealedness as clearing. The proposition, 'the nature of truth is untruth', is not, however, intended to state that truth is at bottom falsehood. Nor does it mean that truth is never itself but, viewed dialectically, is always opposite." "The essence of truth is to be understood as the *Urstreit*, the Heraclitean *polemos*, the primordial struggle, between concealment and unconcealing, that Nietzsche understood as the struggle between Apollo and Dionysus." (GA5, 41/54-55) Ibid., 134-136

In consequence, when something is occulted it loses its quality of appearing finished and finite, thus remaining unfinished and infinite. In this context one could argue that Scarpa endeavored as much as he could to 'unfinish' his projects. Testimony of this has been offered by Onorina Brion herself, who explained that the Scarpa would sometimes avoid talking on the phone with her regarding the project progress by pretending he was not at home or by changing his voice when he picked up.²² She also told the story about how she once visited him unannounced, and when Scarpa saw her, he ran and hid inside a bathroom. It was only afterwards that they would talk about the issues surrounding the delays in the cemetery advancements.²³ Scarpa delayed the project even for the most pragmatic unsolved elements, as on this particular occasion when he was trying to solve the impermeability of the water pond at the meditation pavilion. Luckily, Brion always recognized the excellence of the project as being connected with excessive number of years required to complete it.²⁴ In a way, Scarpa resisted finishing the project, and this resistance became a way of working, as when he commonly developed building elements and details that were not actually built because the design changed.

In the case of the erasure marks there is a clear proof of this intention. The lines that he erased could only have left visible indentations within the sheet of paper if the pressure with which the lines were made was strong enough to mark the paper [fig. 5.9]. Scarpa's assistant, Franca Semi, explained that the architect would only make strong lines with his pencil when he was sure of the design.²⁵ Surprisingly then, by virtue of the copious presence of indented paper in his drawings, Scarpa must have been erasing lines that at one time he considered final. By avoiding a fixed and definite answer he allowed the infinite to remain latent in the drawn and the built work. By creating latent fields within the drawing, the project reveals itself by occultation through the presence of numerous details in both the drawing and the experienced building.

²² Giordano, *Il Mestiere*, 245.

²³ *Ibid.*, 246

²⁴ Michele Dzieduszycki. "Era un abusivo, come tutti i geni." *L'Europeo*. Settimanale, Number 25 (Milan: Rizzoli Editore, June, 23 1984)

²⁵ Interview by Author with Franca Semi. July, 2013.

1.3. Forgotten Reminiscences

As the soul is immortal, has been born often and has seen all things here and in the underworld, there is nothing which it has not learned; so it is in no way surprising that it can recollect the things it knew before.

Socrates²⁶

By allowing previous marks to go dormant or latent, Scarpa places them into an idle state, potent for triggering memories or new associations. Within this field of latent marks, he creates the drawing anew by both forgetting and remembering at the same time. The new drawing, of course, belongs to the previous one and yet is also different. In the act of recalling the architect creates a new memory, something that will perhaps be occulted again later in the process. What seems clear is that latent marks, while dormant, are activated through memory.

Plato has argued on several occasions, most poignantly in *Meno*, that knowing is remembering.²⁷ To demonstrate the immortality of the soul, Plato contends that we do not possess a genuine knowledge of experience, but rather our experience is an act of recollection between the 'Ideas' our soul lived in the world of the 'Ideas' before incarnating our bodies.²⁸ Because the soul exists before the body, the soul remembers the things that it learned before being incarnated.²⁹ The faint marks of a previous design allow Scarpa to first remember making the lines, an embodied memory through habit, and second to recall aspects of what those lines meant for the design, an embodied reminiscence. Aristotle pointed out the difference between memory and reminiscence

²⁶ Plato. *Laches ; Protagoras ; Meno ; Euthydemus*, ed. W R. M. Lamb, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University, 1977).

²⁷ Plato. *Meno*

²⁸ Farrel David Krell. *Of Memory, Reminiscence, and Writing: On the Verge* (Indiana University Press: Indianapolis, IN, 1990), 13-50.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

when he described reminiscences as active recollection and memories as passive, something that just appears without looking for it.³⁰ Both Plato and Aristotle describe memories as a kind of mental inscription that the soul perceives. This inscription, called *zographema*, is described as incised lines on a piece of wax, marks that have materially modified a surface forever.³¹ In the dialogue *Theatetus*, Socrates describes memory as “a good thick slab of wax.”³²

Just as the stomach has been exteriorized in the form of a kneading erasure, memory has been exteriorized onto the sheet of paper as a thickened slab of wax. Scarpa, who carefully chose the type of paper for his drawings, once lectured: “...I say [choose your paper well] because I have practiced it, because I am convinced that working in this way you will be able to proceed with the solid white paper, strong, where you can erase; whereas tracing paper instead is disgusting, invented by the Germans and I do not love it.”³³ Obviously, tracing paper does not allow erasing marks to remain present or perceptible since its fragility and thinness prevents the erasure marks from having a significant role within the life of the drawing. To generate a true palimpsest of erased marks was key for Scarpa’s working method, since within the construction of this latent field he was able to forget, remember, recollect and invent new thoughts. In a lecture to his students Scarpa elucidates the importance of exercised, repetitive actions in order to internalize and understand what one is drawing:

If you were or wanted to be a model student, which could mean a model future architect, you will reproduce drawings from a sheet of paper by pricking it with a needle, perhaps like children in school do. Mistakes are made like this, it is true, one can confuse one point for another and

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid

³² Plato. *Theatetus: Sophist*, ed. Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1967).

³³ Questo ve lo dico però per practica, perché sono convinto che lavorando in un modo si riesce a proceder, con la carta solida bianca, forte, volte si può cancellare, mentre la carte da lucido è uno schifo, inventato dai tedeschi, che io non amo. Semi, *A Lezione*, 225.

notice that the line goes wrong, that it does not turn with what is there, that there is a mistake, but then you can correct them.

By re-drawing one is able to know the argument that he is treating. All this mental fatigue is of great help to comprehend the thing itself: it is like the cook who burns the eggs and now he understands that he must turn off the flame otherwise he will end up eating coal... In my opinion this is the right method to use, but the paper must be solid: a beautiful Bristol sheet of paper of great thickness, at least one millimeter. If you do not know the paper, it is difficult to understand it. You learn a little bit with this too! But there are papers, even Fabriano, with which you can bungle. Now, the transference has notorious significance: just like to repeat the verses in calligraphy. One can learn a verse by memory much faster re-writing it than reading it ten times like a stupid. It remains more impressed.³⁴

At this point we will turn to the drawings themselves to further our understanding of latency in Scarpa's work. Through latency, digestion, and the acts of forgetting and remembering, I will attempt to unfold the richness of several types of erasure marks and speculate on their necessity in the architectural drawing. Three types of erasure will be examined, how erased lines become present again, how erased lines are marks in their own right, and how the superimposition or covering up of lines, also a form of erasure, becomes a productive tool in Scarpa's drawings.

2. Altered Recollections

2.1. The absence of presence

³⁴ Ibid., 274.

*Every mark in a picture is also a sign: every brushstroke, pencil line, smudge, and erasure
must function as a sign and have meaning.*

Charles Peirce³⁵

We begin examining Scarpa's erasing practices with a drawing of the chapel elevation and covered passage wall that connects the site of the Brion tombs with the chapel entrance [fig. 5.10 - fig.5.11]. From the scanned reproduction, some erasure marks may be noted, however, when confronted with the actual drawing, many more are revealed. The first instance of visible erased lines occurs in the upper part of the chapel elevation [fig. 5.12]. A field of horizontal and vertical parallel lines was drawn as part of the façade and then afterwards gently erased, leaving a ghostly presence within the drawing that propitiates a sense of depth beyond the external surface of the wall. Interestingly, a pair of round marks within the upper part of the elevation suggests that Scarpa was exploring where to locate the water drains for the chapel roof, which can be seen by the two options he draws within the same elevation [fig. 5.13]. The sense of depth beyond the field of erased lines immediately appears in connection with what happens on the other side of the wall. By placing the drains on the outside face of the wall, the sense of the other side is increased even more. Although none of these drains remained in the actual construction, the sense of water falling invoked by the drawn drains did not disappear in the actual building [fig. 5.14 - fig. 5.15]. The erased lines in the drawing may have allowed the architect to occult a design so another could emerge, and a similar play of lines remains in the built work through how the wall was made. The formwork, for example, which could be thought of as a built form of erasure since it makes visible a removal, exposes a vertical presence in the exterior of this corner, while in the interior it maintains the horizontality of the rest of the chapel walls [fig. 5.16]. The decision to rotate the formwork from horizontal to vertical wood boards at this portion of the chapel is not shown in any other drawings of the chapel. In fact, several other drawings show horizontal lines at this corner, following the rest of the chapel walls [fig. 5.17].

³⁵ Charles Sanders Peirce. *Elements of Logic*, in *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, eds. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, 6 vols. (Cambridge, MA: 1931, 1974), 2:135.

In the lower part of the same chapel drawing, a series of linear horizontal openings have been drawn in the concrete wall [fig. 5.18]. Behind the horizontal windows at least two human figures, emphasized by their eyes, faintly peek through. Underneath the drawn lines, we encounter a rich field of erased marks that have left indentations in the sheet of paper without any graphite excess. When Scarpa uses colored pencil over these marks, the pencil passes over the indentations, rendering in consequence a clearer line within the tinted surface. Amazingly, the design of the horizontal openings resembles the very same process of erasure, where there is an alternating rhythm of thinly rendered colored and white lines. Concealing the previous drawing through erasure, he discovers an architectural element that offers the play of appearance and disappearance that the erased marks suggest. Although formally different, the final design and built work is experientially very similar, where small square windows when opened, frame and expose fragments of the body in the inside, as well as fragments of the views in the outside [fig. 5.19]. In fact, Scarpa carefully proportions the square openings to consider the eyes and face of a person centered within [fig. 5.20]. When the windows are closed, the sense of a faint presence on the other side from the interior of the chapel is accentuated through the use of thin alabaster sheets placed over the openings, while from the outside the alabaster conceals all views of the inside [fig. 5.21].

This drawing shows that erasure marks heighten aspects of the reality beyond the subject that is being explored. As has been seen, they communicate with the unseen, interior side of the wall, raising issues of drainages, water, views, presence and absence, and the two sides of the wall. Among other cases, this also happens in one the chapel reflected ceiling plans, where erasure lines connect the drawing with the plane beyond and above the floor. While Scarpa draws and erases elements that belong to the ceiling, certain erased lines begin to resonate with the floor design [fig. 5.22]. The erased lines do not abstractly or conceptually offer another realm for the drawing; rather they concretely and precisely expand into the realm the drawing is exploring.

By erasing lines and making them present as absences, Scarpa allows them to exist in an ambiguous realm. In other words, he sees them through glimpses of their previous existence and interprets them in multiple and novel ways. Recalling the presence of previous marks constitutes a creative act in its own right since he infuses new thoughts into the drawing while in the process of re-collection. It is not just active, but creatively active. Neurologist Emir Zeki elaborates a definition of ambiguity for neurobiology that relates well to Scarpa's ambiguous approach to erasure. He explains that ambiguity is not uncertainty for the brain, but rather, "the certainty of many, equally plausible interpretations, each one of which is sovereign when it occupies the conscious stage."³⁶ Because it is an active participant in the construction of what we see, the brain is locked in a process of trying to finish what is unfinished, and that 'finishing' is already a creative act.³⁷ In a similar way, Scarpa engages degrees of occultation that allow him to find various meanings within his unfinished marks. Even when a design seems to be 'finished,' the architect might still erase parts of it in order to find through such erasure something firmer for the design. The drawings are permitted through this process to remain always open or unfinished. By allowing the absence of previous lines to remain active, Scarpa enables the infinitesimal values of the line to act in latency.

2.2. The presence of absence

When you work you may have second thoughts, but it only takes a gesture to remove a sign, although a small trace always remains.

Carlo Scarpa³⁸

³⁶ Semir Zeki. *The Neurology of Ambiguity in The artful mind: cognitive science and the riddle of human creativity*, ed. Mark Turner (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 244.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 253.

³⁸ *Semi, A lezione*, 248.

In the previous example a close scrutiny of erased lines exposed the potency of absence that erasing discloses. In this section the potency of presence that erasing reveals will be examined; that is, when erasing itself becomes a mark in its own right.

Shuffling and moving drawing tools on a sheet of paper often creates a homogenous field of rubbed, gray residue from the various drawing materials, very commonly observed in drawings that have been created over a long period of time [fig. 5.23]. When Scarpa uses his 'stomach' or kneading erasure on these types of drawings, the architect inevitably rubs out more than what he intends, a product of the blunt, soft eraser edge. It may remove an undesired line, but it will also add an inevitable clearer area around it, making the whole area even more noticeable than before [fig. 5.24]. Every architect who has made pencil hand drawings knows about this problem. For Scarpa this issue did not go unnoticed, as he often turned this very simple gesture into productive architectural thoughts.

In a study for the family pavilion, Scarpa draws transverse and longitudinal sections among various other sketches [fig. 5.25]. In the process of drawing, some of the lines have been smeared, creating a very homogenous gray shade throughout the sheet of paper. On the longitudinal section, towards the left of the drawing, a woman stands with her back turned toward us [fig. 5.26]. She is leaning slightly to her left, as if peering around something to more clearly see or hear from where she is standing, in a typical gesture of curiosity [fig. 5.27]. Around her and emphasizing her leftward movement, traces of smudged marks recall the application of the soft kneading erasure. It is clear from the drawing that the erasure marks appeared before the drawing of the woman. Her particular position following the directionality of the erasure marks adds a new dimension to the drawing that makes us wonder what is she looking at and why is she leaning like that. It does not seem a coincidence that the side of the pavilion where she is peering into is the place where Scarpa designed a complex sequence of details that related to water dripping after a rain.³⁹ While it is not certain that the woman is curiously peering upon this

³⁹ This actual detail will be examined in chapter 6.

phenomenon, it seems plausible especially since she is looking almost exactly towards this detail. More important than why she is leaning out, however, is the presence of erasure lines, heightening the sense of the lady's movement across the drawing. It seems clear that the erased lines become part of the drawing beyond the utilitarian purpose of simply removing a few lines.

Another example on the same drawing occurs in the transverse section of the family pavilion, where erasure marks seem to be utilized to study the quality of light entering through the roof structure [fig. 5.28]. By deliberately removing parts of the smudged grey surface, I argue that the erasure marks become a method for understanding how light could enter certain openings left in the concrete [fig. 5.29]. In this way, the presence of light is imagined by activating the drawing residue, normally mute, through its perceived absence. To emphasize the shadowed luminosity of the room, the internal sides of the concrete roof are eventually covered with a dark *stucco lucido*, its only appearance in the cemetery (the rest of the applications of *stucco lucido* are white).⁴⁰ Scarpa explains the reason, stating that "in the shadow and under the shadow of the roof the white would not appear white because it would look dirty."⁴¹ The dark color, applied in the exact location of the erasure lines, entices an interesting reversal, where the making white of a 'dirty' drawing leads to the possibility of using a dark or 'dirty' color to emphasize the whiteness of the light [fig. 5.30].

These instances demonstrate Scarpa's acute dexterity with the materiality of erasing. The presence of erasure marks through the absence they create plays a significant role in how the architect imagines and discovers aspects of the design as he draws and un-draws it. Even when erasing he is simultaneously drawing something else that has meaning for the architectural project.

⁴⁰ There is one exception to this statement where further investigation is needed. One fragment of the perimeter wall of the cemetery was finished with dark *stucco lucido*. The rest of the wall throughout the cemetery was finished with white *stucco lucido*. I believe this one dark portion was realized as a test.

⁴¹ Semi, *A lezione*, 248.

2.3. Presence over presence

I need to produce great ideas, and I believe that if I were commissioned to design a new universe, I would be mad enough to undertake it.

Giovanni Battista Piranesi⁴²

One last form of erasure in Scarpa's practice of drawing appears through the superimposition of marks on top of other marks. In this way, erasure as cancellation emerges through a process of accumulation. Recalling the notion of the *cancello* introduced earlier, these marks act like the 'bars' of a gate that enclose or incarcerate each other. A plan drawing of the west portion of the cemetery that includes the chapel and family pavilion plans will provide a starting point from which to discuss these lines [fig. 5.31]. As was already discussed, Scarpa had the tendency to make lines stronger or darker when he was sure of the design. If he decided to change the design, a very common event, sometimes he would draw on top the old version the new design using the same tool slightly stronger than the previous lines. This can be seen in the re-configuration of steps that exist between the family pavilion corridor and the chapel garden area [fig. 5.32]. Scarpa re-draws the new design slightly darker and to emphasize it he hatches across the new area. The process shows a form of erasure by accumulation of lines. Another example of cancellation occurs by using different media to add lines that cancel others. Similar to the practice of 'redlining,' in the same drawing we can see how Scarpa seconds thoughts about the floor area that connects the chapel with the cypresses garden [fig. 5.33]. In this case he uses a reddish colored pencil to mark a different floor configuration, which became the actual configuration in the built work. Scarpa instead of erasing the previous drawn lines, he adds new distinct line as if urging for the need to see the two realities at once. Lastly, a third form of cancellation through addition can be seen

⁴² Wendy Thompson. "Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778)" in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000) http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pira/hd_pira.htm (February 2015).

in a plan drawing of the cemetery entrance corridor and water pavilion [fig. 5.34]. Because this drawing is a heliographic copy of the original, Scarpa could not actually erase the lines. Guided by the use of colored pencils, he covers with marks the passage between the garden and the water pavilion originally drawn on the water pool area. Using a light-blue colored pencil to signify water, Scarpa erases the passage by 'sinking' it in the pool. The new passage, proposed to be in between the walls, is drawn with graphite pencil. On the garden area, he covers with green colored pencil the old lines belonging to the previous design, emphasizing in the drawing the presence of the garden. Through the highlights in color Scarpa not only cancels the old lines but adds a new dimension to the character of the drawing that expresses its materiality.

Erasing by superposition becomes a rich form of cancelling because it simultaneously adds a new character to the drawing in addition to becoming a mnemonic field of various instances of the design. Scholar Teresa Stoppani, who has investigated the practice of erasure in Piranesi's work, writes that "erasure allows the architect to reinvent architecture not from scratch but from a designed partial amnesia," where it, "is to be understood as practice that, far from removing a given, provides the time of the project-process from which a form emerges."⁴³ Similar observations may be made of Scarpa, who has already stated that having traces of previous marks in the drawing helps him remember but also to discover new thoughts.

Either through erasure with the kneading eraser or through accumulation, Scarpa creates fields of latency in his work that allow him to digest his own ideas through cycles of concealment. After drawing copiously for every project, Scarpa proves that erasure as a process of occultation, either through removal, smearing or addition, allows him to work in a constant search for what has been and what will be. The architect builds bridges that permit the past of the drawing to speak secretly to its future.

⁴³ Teresa Stoppani. "Critical lines: Piranesi's erasures" in ed. Ivana Wingham, *Mobility of the line: art, architecture, design* (Birkhäuser Verlag GmbH, Basel, Switzerland, 2013), 238 and 244.

3. The Beginning of the End

The 'originary past' is a matter not of possession but of 'opacity.'

Maurice Merleau-Ponty⁴⁴

Scarpa once confessed to Guido Pietropoli that perhaps he was not a good architect since he liked food so much, unlike other good architects, like Le Corbusier, who were not interested in this aspect of life.⁴⁵ Eating was one Scarpa's greatest pleasures, so much so that he extrapolated the realms of eating and digesting to the realm of drawing and erasing. Additionally, as we have seen, Scarpa related aspects of memory to this gastrological approach to drawings. What does it mean to digest a line? And what does it mean for memory to engage the erasure marks on a drawing?

We could begin with Vico, who asserts that memory stands as the mother of the muses.⁴⁶ In his work *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*, Vico looks at the Latin and Greek origins of the word memory and what it meant in each case:

The Latins called the faculty that stores sense perceptions 'memory'; when it recalls perceptions they called it 'reminiscence'. But memory also signified the faculty that fashions images (which the Greeks call phantasy and the Italians call imaginative). For, in ordinary Italian, *immaginare* is equivalent to the *memorare* of the Latins.⁴⁷

If for Vico memory has the capacity to feign images that we remember, he assigns it a productive power capable of not just remembering but also of apprehending and

⁴⁴ Quoted in David Farrell Krell . *Of Memory, Reminiscence, and Writing: On the Verge* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), 95.

⁴⁵ Interview to Guido Pietropoli, Rovigo, Italy 2013.

⁴⁶ "If there is a past for us, it is only as an 'ambiguous presence'; we experience its overture precisely as an opening upon 'this opaque mass.'" Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 418.

⁴⁷ Vico, *Ancient Wisdom*, 95-95.

magnifying the things people experience. Aristotle, who, as we have seen, also developed the difference between memory and reminiscence, pairs memory and imagination as both originating in sense perception. Vico's understanding is resonant with Aristotle's but expands memory into a three-fold structure:

In that human indigence, the peoples, who were almost all body and almost no reflection, must have been all vivid with sensation in perceiving particular, strong imagination in apprehending and magnifying them, sharp wit in referring them to their imaginative genera and robust memory in retaining them. It is true that these faculties appertain to the mind, but they have their roots in the body and draw their strength from it. Hence memory is the same as imagination, which for that reason is called *memoria* in Latin. Imagination is likewise taken for wit or ingenuity. Memory thus has three different aspects: memory when it remembers things, imagination when it alters or imitates them and invention when it gives them a new turn or puts them into proper arrangement and relationship. For these reasons the theological poets called Memory the mother of the Muses.⁴⁸

As philosopher Jurgen Trabant explains, Vico's definition surpasses the simple reading of memory as retaining and recalling of discrete events that occurred in the past.⁴⁹ Rather, Vico places the origin of the three-fold structure of 'Memory' in the body itself.⁵⁰ In other words, we can only remember that which has been sensed, and in turn that which has been sensed is what has given us the power to think.⁵¹ In addition to 'memory' [*memoria*]

⁴⁸ Vico, *New Science*, 280.

⁴⁹ Jürgenn Trabant and Sean Ward. *Vico's New Science of Ancient Signs: A Study of Sematology* (London: Routledge, 2004), 110.

⁵⁰ 'Memory' with capital 'M' and quotation marks will refer to the total concept of 'Memory' according to Vico, whereas 'memory' with lower case 'm' and quotation marks will refer to the portion of inside 'Memory' that constitutes it.

⁵¹ Vico says: "All three [memory, imagination and invention] appertain to the primary operation of the mind, whose regulating art is topics, just as the regulating art of the second operation of the mind is criticism; and

and imagination [*fantasia*], offered also by Aristotle, Vico adds the critical need for invention [*ingegno*] as “the faculty that connects disparate and diverse things.”⁵² ‘Memory’ is thus a structure capable of re-finding meaning in what is recalled through invention [*ingenium*]. While the first aspect of ‘memory,’ *memoria*, is capable of recalling a sensation and in this recalling the sensation becomes a thought, imagination, or *fantasia*, it is the capacity to re-feel in this thought the primordial sensation that allowed that something to be recollected in the first place. Vico scholar Donald Verene explains: “in Vico’s view ‘Memory’ is more than a decaying sense because it has the power to take the knower back toward the level of sensation, to place the mind back in touch with the original formative powers of sensation.”⁵³ Such re-embodiment of ‘Memory’ as an event will be completed by *ingenium*, which is the power to transform, as Verne explains, “all of sensation into a world of meaning.”⁵⁴ Thus, for Vico, “ingenuity or invention is nothing but the working over of what is remembered.”⁵⁵

All three aspects of ‘Memory’, *memoria*, *fantasia* and *ingegno*, occur at once in the act of remembering. Verene has re-named this structure of memory as “recollective *fantasia*,” suggesting that this type of recollection or remembering has its basis in images and not in concepts.⁵⁶ “‘Memory’ is the result of basing reflective thought on the image,” writes Verene, “rather than beginning with some notion of the concept and then working towards its concreteness.” In other words, the beginning of the ‘Memory’ structure is concrete and not abstract.

as the later is the art of judging, so the former is the art of inventing. And since naturally the discovery or invention of things comes before criticism of them, it was fitting that the infancy of the world should concern itself with the first operation of the mind.” Donald Verene. *Vico’s Science of Imagination* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 98.

⁵² Vico explains that the Latins used to call *ingegno* acute or obtuse. Derived from geometry, the former means a wit that penetrates faster and joins diverse things and the latter a wit that penetrates things slower and leaves diverse things to be far apart. Vico, *Ancient Wisdom*, 97.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 103.

⁵⁴ Verene, *Vico’s Science*, 105.

⁵⁵ Vico, *New Science*, §699.

⁵⁶ Verene, *Vico’s Science*, 102

In order to remember, imagine, and invent something, the thing in itself must have had ended, belonging to a past that is brought forth in the present. According to Verene, Vico's "primary context for the comprehension of any human event is the principle of origin-end."⁵⁷ He continues to explain that for Vico:

Truth is born through illusion. Human action in one direction gives birth to its opposite and the reality of providence is asserted once again. ...all action on the part of 'progress' in our current age of men will not result in progress.⁵⁸

This would support the original argument of this chapter that in order to remember, one must forget; in order to understand, one must be confused, and in order to re-arrange one must disarrange, and that in order for things to emerge they remain in latency. It is through opposite actions or illusions that truth is inevitably born. Perhaps this explains the fact that often when we try to remember something specific we cannot immediately recall it, and when we forget what we are trying to remember, we all of a sudden remember it. It is as if in things ending, beginnings appear that connect us back to the origin of the very thing that ended. This inverted form of grasping the past already constitutes a creative act. If events can be considered as sharing the structure of memory itself through their origin-end reality, it is because in remembering we must proceed from the ended event to the necessity of bringing it back to a beginning. In this cycling of the past into the present, the new cycle not only will differ from the initial one but the end of one will meet the beginning of the other.⁵⁹ In this way one relies on the theory of opposites for actually generating the desired thing, i.e. in order to remember one must forget. As Verene explains: "to emphasize that every end is a new beginning is to act as if there is more

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 112.

⁵⁹ "The genius of Vico's view of the human worlds lies not in the fact that each *ricorso* differs from the previous *corse*. It lies in Vico's awareness that any real origin in human affairs meets with a read end. Ibid., 111.

reality in the origin than in the end.”⁶⁰ But the only form of having origins is by generating ends. And, following Verene’s thought: “the perception of the ends against the origin gives us access to ourselves as humans.”⁶¹ This is because the origin of that which ends is none other than something that has been felt and embodied.

Vico’s notion of memory offers an important key to understand Scarpa’s unique way of externalizing the act of recalling or remembering. For Scarpa, memory is explicitly bodily. The fact that he refers to the kneading eraser as a stomach and treats the sheet of paper as a place to record drawn lines that sometimes he feels like eating, is not just a metaphor but actually constitutes a reality in its own right, as if these parts that nurture the human body were integral for the life of the drawing. The stomach is the organ that receives and processes food, the organ in charge of giving nutrients to the body and eliminating what the body does not need. The kneading actions required to handle the eraser are also telling. In Italian, the word for ‘kneading’ is *impastare*, from the word *pastare*, which means to ruminate. It also refers to food⁶² and, even more interestingly, the act of preparing the soil of a vineyard by digging and trenching.⁶³ Somewhat related, *impastus* in Latin means to be hungry.⁶⁴ *Impastare* then, the action of kneading, is to stimulate something so it becomes hungry. To be hungry is to have appetite, which is a form of desire where one longs or reaches after for something. Scarpa’s gastrological erasure, then, not only digests lines, but it generates an appetite for others to come. These opposite actions allow the drawing to be in a constant process of transformation, where, just like in Vico’s notion of ‘Memory’ as an art of invention, Scarpa discovers new meanings in the process of working and re-working what has been drawn.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Verene explains that Vico’s cycles, *corsi and recorsi*, not necessarily mean that after the decline of one cycle which will result in a new beginning, such re-birth will proportionate meaning within the cycle. Verene explain that the only form of meaningful human action is through “heroism.” He explains: “heroism creates a point of meaning but does not actually solve the problem of dissolution.” Ibid., 117.

⁶² *Pastus, pasture*: food.

⁶³ Pastination, *pastinātiō*: preparation of ground by digging. OED, 2014.

⁶⁴ *Impastus*: hungry, appetite. Origin of antipasto, in English appetizer, that which entices the stomach before the meal.

By erasing the lines that he feels are 'definitive,' Scarpa allows two, intimately intertwined events: first, to grasp an increased certainty for the design, and second, to let that certainty to go away, to put an end to it. Following Vico again, when Scarpa makes lines that 'end,' he prepares the ground for new beginnings. Erasure for Scarpa is not about keeping the sheet of paper 'clean' from marks, but is about making it dirty; to give it a lot of stuff to ingest and digest as the drawing is underway.

In order to forget he must erase; in order to remember, he must perceive the erased marks. By exteriorizing the parts of his body onto the sheet of paper, the architect fully embodies his memory. Seen from the three-folded Vichean structure of memory, Scarpa's initial sensation of making lines and erasing them is transformed into a thought that can be recollected through making new lines. This thought already carries with it a birth-death essence [*memoria*]. In this recollection, the sensation that through its recollection was transformed into a thought is then re-sensed as a new line is made [*fantasia*]. Finally, in the new lines, he makes new variations or alterations, and new meanings emerge that can be judged or criticized [*ingegno*].⁶⁵

To conclude, I recall an anecdote that I myself experienced. It is common among Italians that when they gather to eat, a recurrent topic during the meal is food itself. It is as if in the process of ingesting there is a nostalgia for what was gone that needs to be

⁶⁵ Regarding this last aspect, Vico warns us that: "...since naturally the discovery or invention of things comes before criticism of them, it was fitting that the infancy of the world should concern itself with the first operation of the human mind, for the world then had need of all inventions for the necessities and utilities of life, all of which had been provided before the philosophers appeared..." Vico, *New Science*, §699. Vico advocates for the necessity of first discovering or inventing things before we can actually learn the capacity to judge them. This is not only in reference to the origin of humanity but more generally in reference to any kind of human endeavor. In *On the Study Methods of Our Time* Vico advocates for the 'art of inventing arguments' as prior and necessary before any capacity of judging can be exercised.⁶⁵ In other words, in order to judge an argument, one must first need to have the capacity to form an argument beyond its validity. The invention of something is already the way by which we can relate meaningfully to that something. Memory as a form of invention that cycles between acts that end and begin re-working and re-discovering new things within the same thing allows differences to emerge. Within these differences we find meanings that are products of our own embodied memories.

supplanted by the thought of remembering other possible dishes.⁶⁶ In a strangely similar fashion, when Scarpa draws he also un-draws by erasing, and in the making of the end of one drawing he is already beginning a new one. The new drawing departs from a resistance to end another drawing and this resistance signifies the very dissolution of that drawing. In other words, in order not to end the drawing, he partially ends the drawing. Because the ended drawing is not-ended, he continues on making new drawings that are closely related to the 'ended not-ended' ones. Scarpa exercises a way of working where the cycle of drawing creates ends and origins.⁶⁷ Within these cycles the architect eventually finds the design that even at the last minute still has the openness to be 'erased.'

Just like talking about other dishes, Scarpa is always tracing another drawing while he is digesting previous ones. Latent within each line is the potential of another line, and latent within their memory is the potential of the design to keep appearing through ingenious inventions that cycle within the life of the drawing.

⁶⁶ I again thank Paola Frascari in addition to Claudio Sgarbi for the meal we shared together in November of 2013 where this same revelation was gifted to me while we were eating shrimp risotto and talking about all the kinds of *risotto* that exist in Italy!

⁶⁷ "Memory produces contact with an origin through which the signs of an end can be read. "Verene, *Vico's Science*, 120.

Figure Chapter 5

Fig. 5.1
Chapel floor plan (detail)
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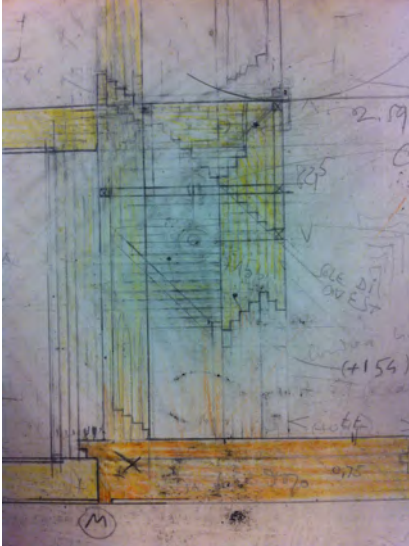


Fig.5.2
Chapel main door detail (detail)
NR (vecchia segnatura: 70 129 58)
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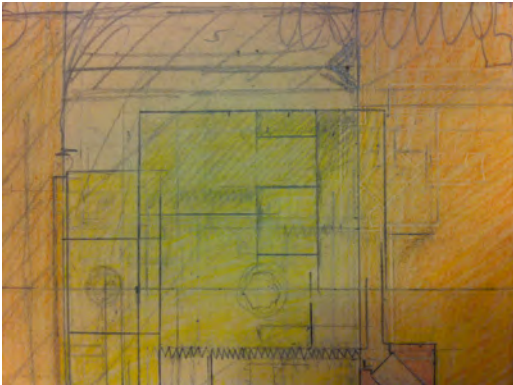


Fig. 5.3
 Chapel floor plan (detail)
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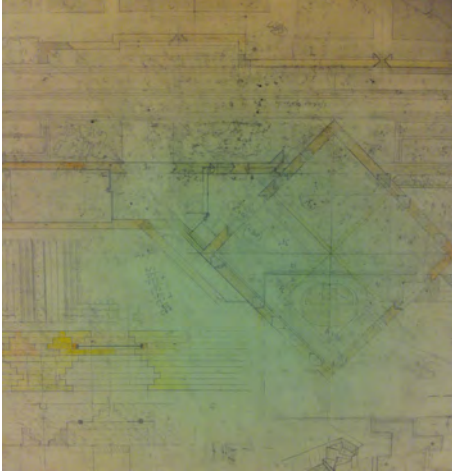


Fig. 5.4
 Faber Castel kneadable erasure



Fig. 5.5
 Massimo Bontempelli original manuscript on magic studies (crossed out words)

vocazione dei demoni malefici per nuocere agli uomini con mag-
 gioro efficacia. I ministri di questa arte (sic) si vantava-
 no di far uscire le ombre dalle loro misteriose sinere. Essi
 esercitavano i loro talenti durante la notte oscura, nei luo-
 ghi remoti ai quali erano legati spaventosi ricordi, o nella
 caverna in prossimità delle tombe. Essi sacrificavano ~~molte~~ vit-
 time pure ed erettevano ~~dei~~ ~~templi~~ e ~~dei~~ ~~geniti~~. Violavano le
 mepature e cercavano nei cadaveri diversi ingredienti che en-
 travano nella composizione dei loro filizi. E s'impiegavano del-
 le erbe rare, delle sostanze singolarissime, e qualche volta
 arrivavano anche a spondere i fanciulli. ~~Si facevano loro il~~
~~pericolo di cadere in preda ai demoni e agli animali e de-~~
~~serivano di malizia e di arte, di inventare i nomi della ma-~~
~~gìa, di spiegare agli ignoranti, di spiegare le visioni, di fa-~~
~~re apparire le ombre, di spiegare di spiegare i frutti ecc.~~
 Nella magia bianca, al contrario, non s'invocavano che gli
 dei benefici per procurare ~~beni~~ bene agli uomini.
 Tutti i magi si attribuivano l'invocazione dei morti. Per que-

Fig. 5.6

Redlines in architectural drawing

Source: Compulink International Ltd. (<http://www.compulinkbd.com/>)

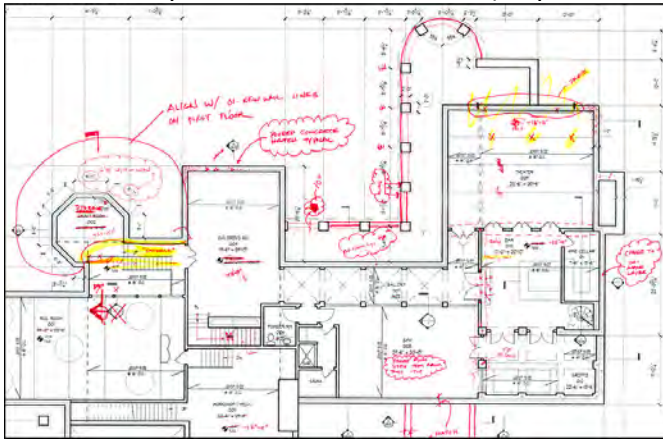


Fig. 5.7

The Oriel Window, South Gallery, Lacock Abbey, 1835 or 1839

William Henry Fox Talbot (British, 1800–1877)

Photogenic drawing negative; 3 1/4 x 4 3/16 in. (8.3 x 10.7 cm), irregular

The Rubel Collection, Purchase, Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee and Anonymous Gifts, 1997 (1997.382.1)

© The Metropolitan Museum of Art

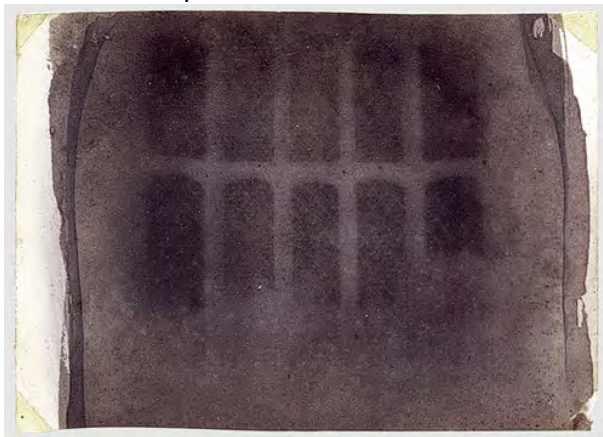


Fig. 5.8

Dandelion Seeds, 1858 or later

William Henry Fox Talbot (British, 1800–1877)

Photogravure (photoglyphic engraving from a copper plate); Sheet: 5 15/16 x 4 7/16 in. (15.1 x 11.3 cm); plate: 4 15/16 x 3 11/16 in. (12.5 x 9.4 cm); image: 4 1/8 x 3 in. (10.5 x 7.6 cm) Rogers Fund, 2004 (2004.111)

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Fig. 5.9

Chapel Floor Plan (detail)

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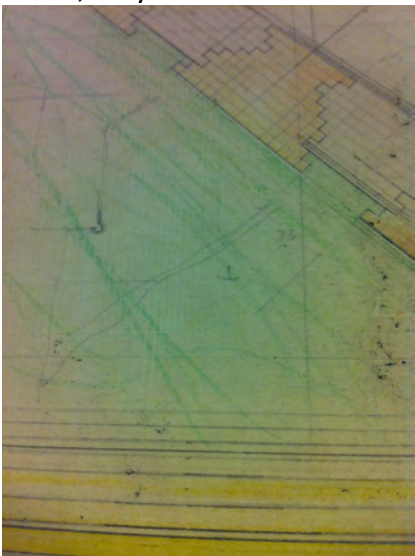


Fig. 5.10
Chapel elevation
NR #2573 recto
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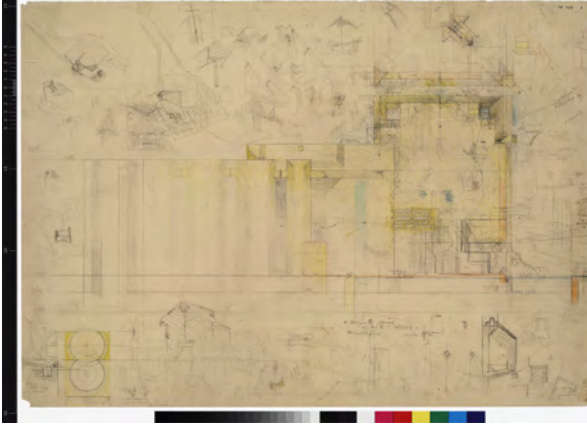


Fig. 5.11
Passage to chapel entrance
Photo taken under Carlo Scarpa's directions
For Memoria Causa Book
1972

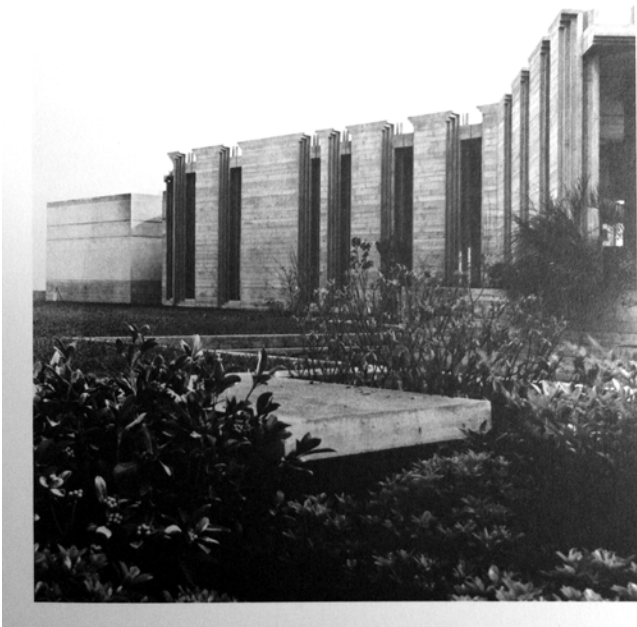


Fig. 5.12
Chapel elevation (detail)
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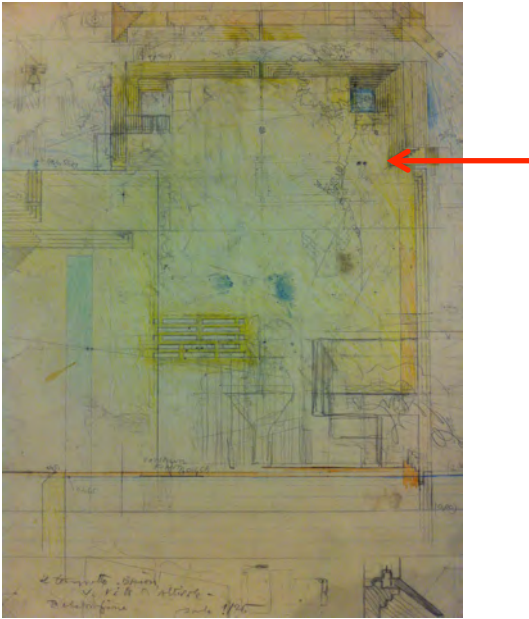


Fig. 5.13
Chapel elevation (detail drainage design)
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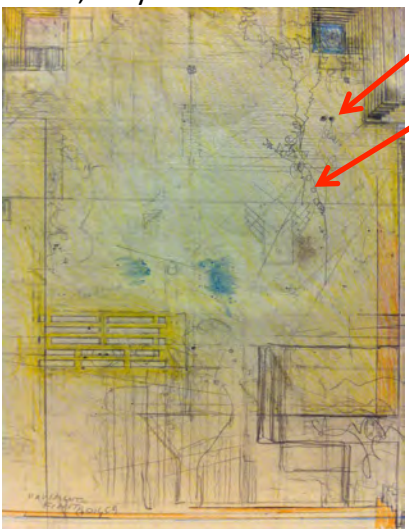


Fig. 5.14
Chapel northeast façade photo
Photo by Author



Fig. 5.15
Chapel Altar corner
Vertical concrete formwork detail
Photo by Author



Fig. 5.16
Chapel Altar corner
Interior horizontal formwork
Photo by Author



Figs. 5.17
Chapel elevation
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Chapel elevation and section

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Fig. 5.18

Chapel elevation (detail erased lines)

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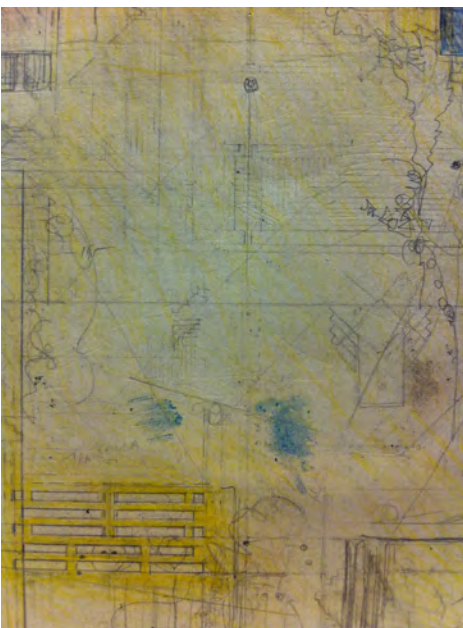


Fig. 5.19
Chapel exterior elevation
Photo by Author

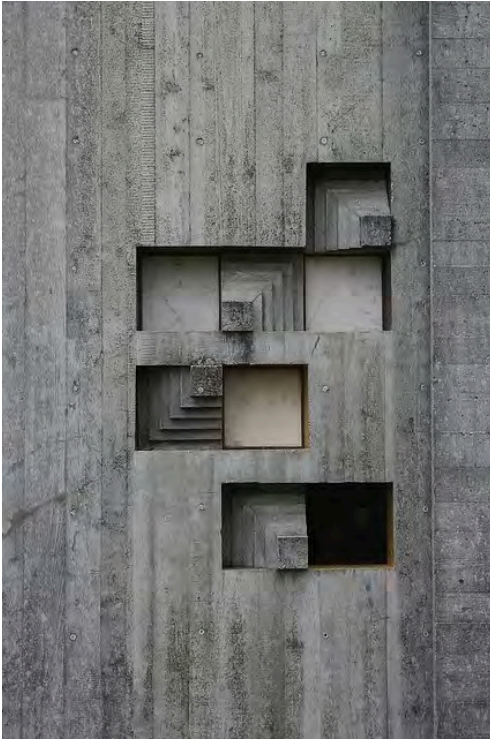


Fig. 5.20
Chapel elevation windows detail
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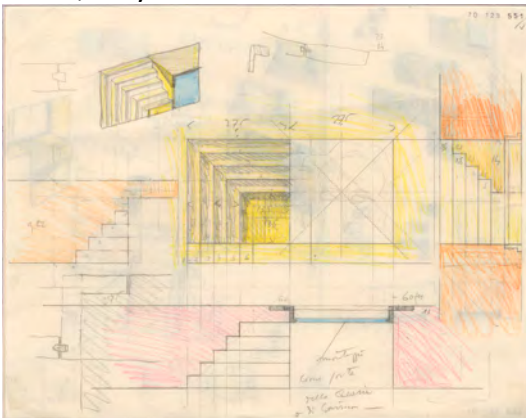


Fig. 5.21
Chapel elevation
Photos by Author



Fig. 5.22
Chapel floor plan (2 details)
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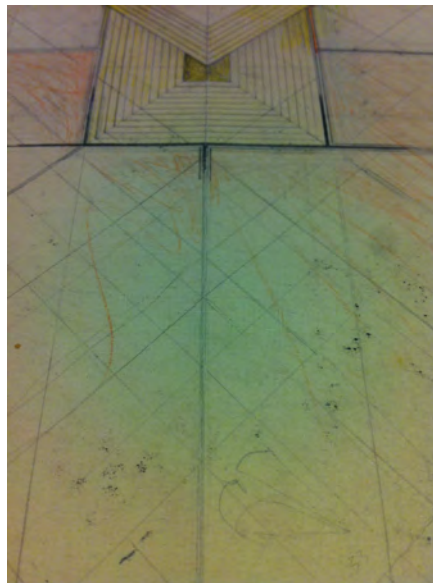
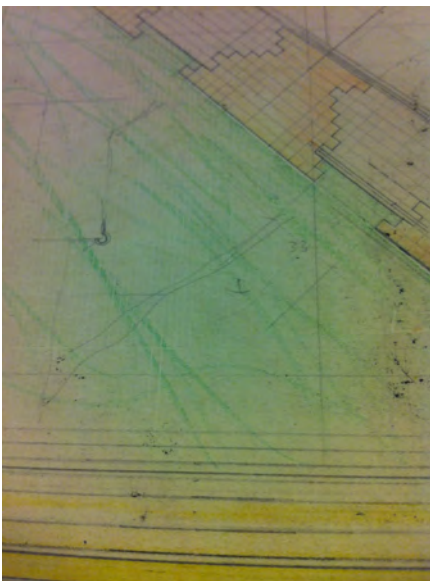


Fig. 5.23

Chapel floor plan (detail)

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Fig. 5.24

Family pavilion section (detail)

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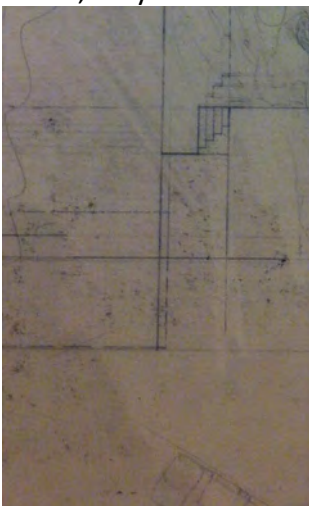


Fig. 5.25
Family Pavilion Section (detail)
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Fig. 5.26
Family pavilion section (detail)
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Fig. 5.27
Sam Cobean comic in The New Yorker
1950



Fig. 5.28
Family Pavilion Section (detail)
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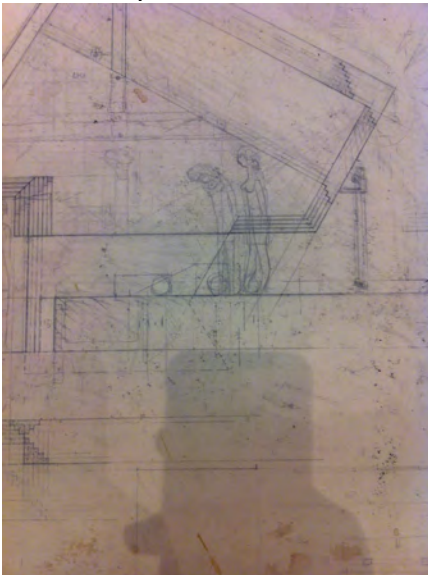


Fig. 5.29
Family Pavilion Section (detail)
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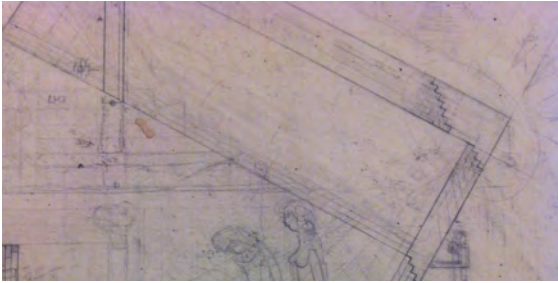


Fig. 5.30
Family Pavilion Interior
Photo by Author



Fig. 5.31
Brion complex west wing plan and elevations
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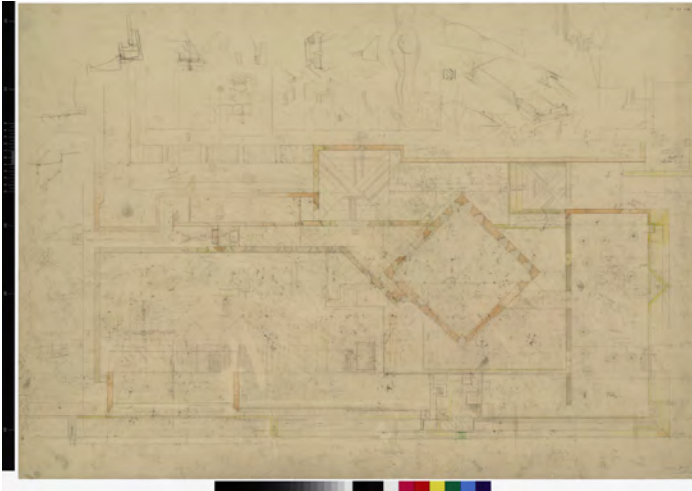


Fig. 5.32
Brion complex west wing plan and elevations (detail)
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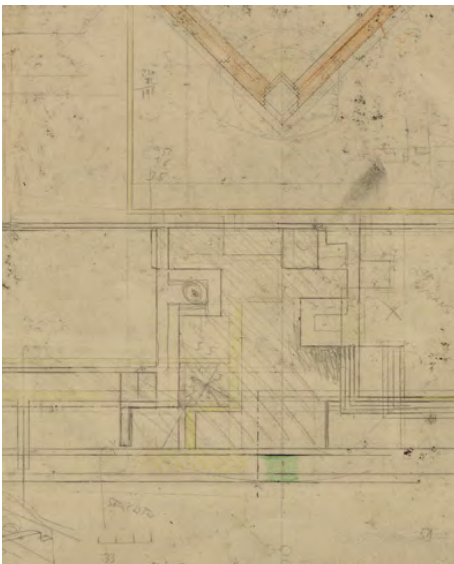


Fig. 5.33
Brion complex west wing plan and elevations (detail)
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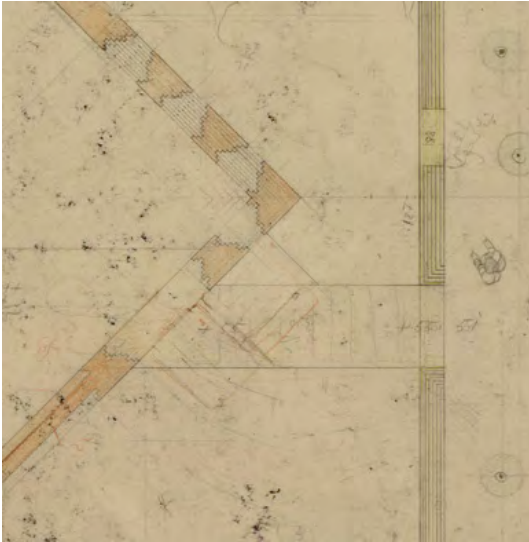
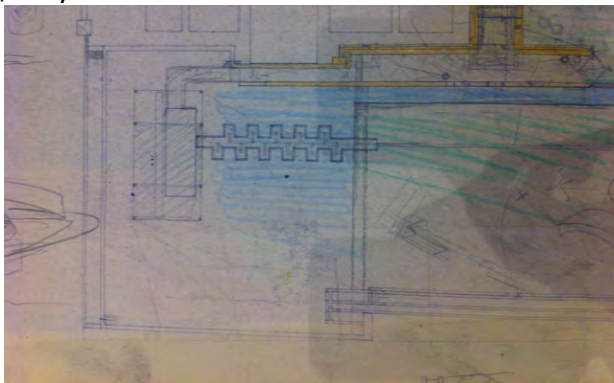


Fig. 5.34
Brion complex west wing plan and elevations (detail)
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Chapter 6

Delayed Lines: six seconds later

1. Magical Factures

We can't overcome magical thinking. It is part of our evolved psychology. Our minds may fool us into thinking we are immune to magical thoughts. But we are only fooling ourselves. That's the neatest trick of all.

C. Nathan DeWall¹

In the short story “*Qual Buon Vento*,” published in Madrid in 1926, Massimo Bontempelli addressed the topic of magical factures.² The story begins with a first person narrator recounting his life-long search for a substance that could exist between the physical and spiritual world and the moment in his life when he discovers it. The substance was found to be materially immaterial, neither cold, nor hot, without color and yet visible.³ The narrator describes his feeling in the presence of the found substance as a state of being suspended between amazement and idleness; a kind of stupor, which is a condition of being in between, of being by not being, a suspension between two realms.⁴ While the narrator feels the power of the discovered substance, he cannot yet comprehend what to do with it. After much contemplation, he decides to sell it to a wealthy man in town, although in the meantime he discovers that the substance is able to turn words into facts, a feat of magic.⁵ As he comes to realize, not all words work, but only those that portray an image that refers to something specific. When the narrator meets Bartolo, a wealthy man, in a bar he explains to the narrator that he has recently lost all of his money, exclaiming that his “heart is bleeding.” Immediately, unseen by Bartolo, the narrator observes drops

¹ C. Nathan DeWall, “*Magic May Lurk Inside Us All*,” in *The New York Times*, Oct., 17 2014.

² Massimo Bontempelli “*Qual Buon Vento*,” in *Revista de Occidente* Volume 2 (Madrid: Fundación José Ortega y Gasset, 1926), 368-377.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Bontempelli. *Realismo Magico*, 31-40.

⁵ The substance is depicted in the story as a powder that is both visible and invisible.

of blood on the wealthy man's shirt. Bartolo explains that he owes his poverty to his wife and daughter since the former, being too fat, wanted an expensive treatment to lose weight, and the latter, being too skinny, wanted another expensive treatment to become heavier. The results of the investment turned into a total failure, and Bartolo expresses: "my wife is still a barrel and my daughter an anchovy." Sad, and with no more words to say, Bartolo decides to leave the bar. As the narrator turns his head to look over the area where Bartolo's wife and daughter were previously sitting, he sees a barrel and an anchovy sitting on the floor. Stunned by the power of the magic substance, the narrator practices its powers, realizing that every time someone creates an image to signify something else, this image overtakes reality. The story is filled with events that demonstrate the power of the substance: a preoccupied man that has his head "like a volcano" begins to emanate smoke; a person who cannot remember a name expresses that he has it "on the tip of his tongue," and the forgotten word is seen in his mouth; and finally, after many of these magical word transformations, the narrator asks a man: "what good wind has brought you here?," and the man is lifted by a gentle wind, disappearing into the sky. Reality is transformed in the story through a series of very strange events and while the narrator takes these events with surprise he nevertheless accepts them as a matter of fact. The transformation of something seemingly impossible becoming possible is a key characteristic among magic real narratives. By using common expressions of everyday language Bontempelli exposes intrinsic magic real aspects embedded within.

Bontempelli's story narrates the potency of magical factures, exposing the richness of images with which we understand and express events of our everyday life. The word 'facture' comes from the Latin *factura*, which signifies a thing produced or created. *Factura* is closely related to the Latin *facere*, which means in general sense "to make" or "to do."⁶ The ancient Roman scholar and writer, Marcus Terentius Varro, equates the word *factus* with building.⁷ A facture, then, is anything that is made, from a line on a drawing to an actual building. A magical facture, however, is an orchestrated group of

⁶ Short and Lewis. *Latin Dictionary*.

⁷ Ibid.

factures that aims at making something beyond its grouping through the careful conjoining of their potencies. Marco Frascari writes that: “A *fattura* can progress from attempting to influence the behavior of the unknowing victim to the intentional making of special objects.”⁸ The *fattucchiere*, Frascari explains, were the sorcerers that performed the *fatture*.⁹ Art historian David Summers pairs the words ‘fact’ and ‘facture’ and states, “to consider an artifact in terms of its facture is to consider it as a record of it having been made.”¹⁰ Summers understands a facture in semiotic terms as an indexical sign, where it implies an “immediate relation to a prior case, as a footprint implies the former immediate presence of a foot.”¹¹ Magical factures not only relate to their immediate past, they also act upon an immediate future, always at a distance, and bifold. In this way, an initial facture would be made in a part of a body or artifact that indexes the actual, distant body or artifact where the magical facture will occur, creating a related facture upon it that bridges between time and distance.

Undated and archived at the Getty Research Institute, an unpublished manuscript typewritten by Bontempelli reveals the author’s interest in early magical practices.¹² Beginning with early notions of magic by Ficino and Paracelsus, he divides the document into different types of magical acts, with a heading on the topic of magical factures. In this section, Bontempelli explains that a magical facture is an action that is performed at a distance, although it can only occur through an initial process of closeness.¹³ In other words, the facture acting upon something else at a distance must begin with an initial facture acting in closeness with a part of the thing to be transformed.¹⁴ To investigate this, Bontempelli observes the common magical factures of love and hate. A love magic facture

⁸ Frascari, *Eleven Exercises*, 10.

⁹ Frascari sees an immediate connection between the actions of the *fattucchiere* and the philosophy of Vico through the philosopher’s foundation of human knowledge in the *verum-factum* principle. *Ibid.*

¹⁰ David Summers. *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism* (London: Phaidon Press, 2003), 74.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Massimo Bontempelli. Box 27, Folder 21: Book on magic and superstition, undated (80 typewritten pp., with notes). The Getty Research Institute, Special Collections.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

would be performed when a lover's love is not corresponded by his/her beloved one. To reverse this, the magician may employ a magical facture that utilizes close, bodily residue of the desired one, like hair, nail or saliva, to enact specific rituals that cause the beloved to reciprocate such love. Bontempelli also gives an example of a classical magical facture using the story by the Italian writer, Gabriele D'Annunzio, "*The Dream of an Autumn Sunset*." In the story a female character tries to recover her beloved one by killing the young girl he has fallen in love with. In order to perform the facture, the magician requires a lock from the girl's beautiful golden hair, a prize that is promptly stolen from her by the spurned woman's servants. A magical facture recognizes the subject as spatially indivisible, i.e., one body can be here and there at the same time through a sharing of a body part. A part of one's body, then, is already the body. By enacting specific changes to the part, the whole, located at a distance, is also compelled to change. The magical facture takes place between the two entities simultaneously, both spatially and temporally.

Sociologist Marcel Mauss in his short book *A Theory of Magic* explains that "magic is the art of changing" and is the action by which a given state is modified.¹⁵ Mauss expounds:

All magical acts are represented producing one of two effects: either the objects or beings involved are placed in a state so that certain movement, accident or phenomena will inevitably occur, or they are brought out of a dangerous state.¹⁶

Magical factures thus involve a dislocation of the subject to re-contextualize it within a new setting, an act that creates a modified environment for the change to occur. Mauss divides the magic principles into three main laws: contiguity, similarity and opposition. The law of contiguity relies in the "identification of the part with the whole," where the personality of the subject is indivisible.¹⁷ In this way a lock of hair does not merely

¹⁵ Marcel Mauss. *A General Theory of Magic*. Translation by Robert Brain. (London: Routledge, 2001), 76.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 79-80.

represents that person, but rather, **is** the person. Within this law the aspect of physical contagion is also capable of transferring the subject, when for example, a drawing stands for the actual person who drew it. Mauss also explains that imaginary contagion is possible when “a fusion of images is produced in exactly the same way as we found in sacrifice.”¹⁸ For example, if one person draws like another one, following exactly all the details, the drawing then can invoke the absent person. These forms of contiguity are governed by the law of “sympathetic transmission,” where the parts of the subject in question act like a chain, with each part transmitting qualities through inherent sympathies linked through their relation to the whole.¹⁹

The law of similarity, Mauss explains, consists in two principal clauses: “like produces like” and “like acts upon like.”²⁰ The first clause, where like produces like, works by assigning through images or objects the power of representing another thing. For example, a knot can be a representation of love. The convention by which one represents the other is in the hands of the magician who looks for “mimetic sympathy’ between the image or object and the subject of the magical facture.”²¹ Mauss explains that the law of similarity “can be applied not only to persons and their souls but also to objects and modes of objects, in their possible and real aspects and their moral and material one. The idea of the image assumes the nature of the symbol.”²² The second clause of the law of similarity dictates that “like acts upon like,” a condition that plays out during the magical rite itself. Returning to the knot example, the person doing the knot would fall in love with the person he/she is thinking about as he/she ties the bond.²³ Finally, Mauss explains that the law of opposition operates like the law of similarity but inverting the values of the signifier

¹⁸ Ibid., 82.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 84.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 85

²³ Mauss explains: “This second formula of the law of similarity – that like acts on like – differs from the first in that, even in its expression, the actors take into account those phenomena of abstraction and attention which always condition, as we pointed out, the application of the other rites. While the first type deals only with general evocation, these rites involve an effect being produced in a well-defined direction.” Ibid., 85-87

and the signified. For example, in order to see a drawing the architect erases it, as we saw in the previous chapter.

This short introduction of magical factures is also an introduction to the notion of magical factures embedded in construction drawings, a relationship that will be explored in this chapter. As Frascari writes:

Construction drawings must not be understood as mere visualizations but as factures because they are things made and done. Construction drawings are magic representations that captivate their makers and readers. As factures, they transform the state of understanding in a construction and its construing through certain non-trivial kinds of media events with dense causal transaction.²⁴

For architects, because their work consists in making visible something not yet present, either through drawings or at the construction site directly, magic has been long embedded within architectural factures.²⁵ Magically speaking, construction drawings act as wax dolls where that which happens in the drawing projects into the making of the building. To expose the notion of this particular relationship in Scarpa's work, I have identified three instances where magical factures have a special role in determining the fate of the building.

1.1. Trick or Treat?

Any engineer can expose my tricks if he wants to.

Harry Houdini²⁶

²⁴ Frascari, *Eleven Exercises*, 123.

²⁵ Recent scientific evidence has emerged that proves the efficacy of magical thinking, and it has even emerged into mainstream press. DeWall, "Magic May...", 2014.

²⁶ Harry Houdini interview in *The New York Times*, May 19, 1926, Page 26, Column 2.

The first instance of magical facture in the Brion cemetery will study Scarpa's practice of constructing details to perform certain tricks. This section will look at the family burial pavilion of the Brion cemetery [fig. 6.1]. Like all magic tricks, such performances make present the unexpected. I call these kinds of tricks 'treats' because, like a treat, they carry an element of surprise and wonder, a simultaneous form of revelation and concealment. Once the trick's secret is unconcealed, it is never wondrous again. When certain conditions are propitious, as will be shown in Scarpa's work, specific tricks are put in action that result in treats for our experience.

1.2. *C'est la vie!*

In drawing there is intention, but there is also 'un-intention' that happens and that the one who is drawing may not be conscious of.

Marco Frascari²⁷

Following the contagion aspect of the law of contiguity, the section will examine how once the drawing has been made, it remains in a state of drawing itself. Often a result of everyday life events, mishaps, and other circumstances, Scarpa exploits these 'un-intentional' factures by discovering something in them or simply by integrating them into the narrative of the drawing. In their fragile condition on paper, drawings are exposed to inadvertent extra marks that in turn affect how the architect reads his own factures.

1.3. Endless ending

In alchemy the process is more important than its products, because the world of nature is in perpetual motion and change, never fully objectified and stable. The alchemist/architect

²⁷ Marco Frascari, "Forms of Representations and Architectural Education: Conversation with Marco Frascari" *Mobility of the line: art, architecture, design*, ed. Ivana Wingham (Basel, Switzerland: Birkhäuser Verlag GmbH, 2013), 58.

must strive to find primordial unity yet understands that the end is never fully attainable.

Architecture is a verb rather than a noun.

Alberto Pérez-Gómez²⁸

The third and final instance of magical factures in Scarpa's work will focus on the building itself. Just as his drawings continue to 'draw themselves' through unintentional marks, the cemetery itself continues to 'build itself' through time. Although all buildings at various levels age and change, Scarpa stated openly that he was conscious of the aspects of aging in the Brion cemetery, knowing that the building would only become better with time.²⁹ In this way the factures enacted while constructing the building continue to act on it even after the building has been technically finished.³⁰

2. Magic Wand-erings

2.1. Waiting for the rain

At Cyzicus too there survives a temple; and here a small gold tube was inserted into every vertical joint of the dressed stonework by the architect, who was to place within the shrine an ivory statue of Jupiter with a marble Apollo crowning him. Consequently very fine filaments of light shine through the interstices and a gentle refreshing breeze plays on the statues. Apart from the ingenuity of the architect, the very material of his device, hidden though it may be, is appreciated as enhancing the value of the whole work.

Pliny the Elder³¹

²⁸ Alberto Pérez-Gómez. *Polyphilo or The Dark Forest: An Erotic Epiphany of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994), (Introduction) xvi.

²⁹ Mohsen Mostafavi and David Leatherbarrow. *On Weathering: The Life of Buildings in Time* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1993).

³⁰ Recently, the Brion family has commissioned Guido Pietropoli to restore the cemetery since the very poor maintenance throughout the years has generated severe damage in some of the concrete and *stucco lucido* work. Nevertheless in almost 50 years the cemetery has stood well showing signs of a well-spelled structure.

³¹ Pliny, *Natural History*, Volume XXXVI, trans. H. Rackham (Harvard University Press: 1962), XXII.

When Onorina Brion originally commissioned the family tomb, the lot size was only 68 square meters. After some negotiations to expand the area, the Brion family acquired the present lot, which has 2,400 squared-meters [fig. 6.2].³² With the enlarged lot, the scope of the work increased to include a family burial pavilion, or *edicola familiari* [fig. 6.3 - fig. 6.4].³³ The word *edicola* signifies a small construction or room, often referring to a small temple or a dwelling for the dead and their urns or tombs [fig. 6.5].³⁴ In the burial pavilion Scarpa gave special attention to a rainwater detail that unfortunately was never built as he initially designed it, although it remains magical in its own right even today [fig. 6.6].³⁵

To understand how Scarpa conceived the potential of rainwater, it will first help to describe a few aspects of the pavilion's roof construction. The building structure has two distinct slopes, with the north side following the 60° angle of the external perimeter wall and the south side forming a perpendicular that creates the principal covering structure for the burial area underneath [fig. 6.7]. This great sloping roof area would be the principal element in charge of partially keeping the rainwater out from the area below [fig. 6.8]. In order to protect the concrete roof slab, Scarpa utilized the same waterproof system that he had used over the chapel and arcosolium roof, a resistant concrete mix containing metallic micro particles [fig. 6.9].³⁶ Without compromising the waterproofing, he omits the material in certain areas to expose the concrete below, creating a rhythm of lines that accentuates the directionality of water falling [fig. 6. 10].

Scarpa's original desire for the drainage detail is resonant with a memory he recounts from the days when he visited Japan and stayed at a small house there. He detailed the story in a lecture to his students:

³² Zanchettin, *Il Complesso*, 51-63.

³³ Guido Pietropoli interview.

³⁴ Short and Lewis. *A Latin Dictionary*.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Zanchettin, *Il complesso*, 167.

In Kyoto, where I lived in a small cottage, a door would open and one could see that three drops were falling in a very small lot. There was, in the silence of the garden, a musical note which I could not describe. It was the water that entered inside a bamboo cane and created a certain sound: the timing to make this happen was well calculated so that anybody at various temporal distances would feel such sound: tam, tam, it was not casual.³⁷

This very specific memory appears to have made a strong impact, as Scarpa evidently uses it as a design inspiration for the drainage detail on the pavilion. When describing the effect of the detail to his students, he called it a *civetteria*, which, as has been discussed, means a flirtation or a certain action that lies in between the logical and the fantastic:

If you want I can describe some of the mental *civetterie* that I have had: here will be a small golden ball that can go 'tic', like this, and that goes back and forth and one can have fun playing around with it because in life one needs to play (*giocare*), at every hour of the day and that's it, because at night one plays in another way!³⁸

For Scarpa, a *civetteria* is a place for playing (*giocare*), perhaps close to a magical trick, or *trucco*, a word that Scarpa would sometimes use to refer to witty details.³⁹ So when he

³⁷ "A Kyoto [...] dove ho abitato io, in una piccola casetta, si apriva la porticina e si vedeva che cadevano tre gocce in un terreno molto piccolo"; 'C'era, nel silenzio del giardino, una nota Sonora, non saprei dire che nota fosse. Era dell'acqua che entrava dentro una canna di bambù e faceva un certo suono: il tempo per realizzare questo fatto era ben calcolato, in maniera che ognuno, a diversa distanza temporale, sentiva questo suono: tam, tam, che non era casuale." Translation by author in Semi, *A Lezione*, 103.

³⁸ Ibid., 269.

³⁹ When talking about Violet Le Duc's architecture. Ibid., 243. Also in the conference he gave in Madrid, he describes as tricks the play 5,5cm that he created in the Brion chapel: "[Nella tomba Brion] ho adottato dei trucchi. Avevo bisogno di una certa luce e ho pensato tutto secondo un modulo di 5,5 centimetri." Ibid., 273. "Gli inglesi hanno mattoni fatti a macchina precisi, uguali a quelli fatti a mano di una volta, come superficie. Ecco perché la casa inglese moderna, in mattoni, non disturba affatto vicino alle case vecchie. È da queste osservazioni che nascono i problemi che devono essere risolti di volta in volta, anche con accorgimenti, piccolo trucchi." Ibid., 269.

sought a solution for the dripping water, he looked toward the play of water as the site for his flirtations:

...I thought to let a water drop fall and in between one drop and another five or six seconds would pass. One can find commercially a small device to decrease the normal water pressure and then one can use it to become aware of the water falling. Because if you close a tap, to the maximum that you can close it, a driblet comes out, but that driblet always comes at the same speed. However, there must be here a deeper relationship (*un rapporto più lungo*), I must feel the drop, otherwise it is a drip from a faucet poorly made. I will have to ensure that there is, in the fall of the drop, a drop collector so wide that I can make a fat drop like this; and then it can be done.⁴⁰

The presence of play exists in the small variations that allow the performance of the detail not to be monotonous or mechanized. For Scarpa, this small variance amounts to about one second, desiring that a big drop will fall every 5 or 6 seconds. This very small gap of time in between one falling drop and the other seems to keep the spirit of play in a way that a manufactured solution could not provide.

When Scarpa notes above that there “must be a deeper relationship,” the word he uses is “lungo,” a word generally translated into English as ‘long.’ In Latin, *longus* was used not only to express length in terms of quantity, but also length in terms of space and

⁴⁰ “Se volete vi descrivo alcune civetterie mentali che avvengono: ecco che lì ci sarà una piccola palla dorata che può fare tic, così, e va avanti e poi torna indietro e uno può anche divertirsi a giocherellare, perché nella vita bisogna anche giocare a tutte le ore del giorno e basta, perché di notte si gioca in altro modo! Poi ho pensato di far cadere una goccia d’acqua che avrà un tempo di cinque-sei secondi fra una goccia e l’altra: si trova in commercio un piccolo apparecchio per diminuire la pressione dell’acqua normale e allora ci si può accorgere dell’acqua che cade. Perché se chiudete un rubinetto, al massimo che lo chiudiate, viene fuori una gocciolina, ma quella gocciolina è sempre della stessa velocità; invece qui dev’essere un rapporto più lungo; cioè devo sentire la goccia, allora mi volto, sennò è un gocciolio di un rubinetto mal fatto. Dovrò provvedere a fare in modo che ci sia, nella caduta della goccia, un raccogliatore di goccia talmente ampio che posso fare un goccione così; e si può fare.” Ibid.

duration.⁴¹ In the context of thinking, the Italian use of the word has an association with something profound or meaningful. In Italian one can say both expressions, ‘to think a lot’ (*pensare molto*) and ‘to think in length’ (*pensare a lungo*).⁴² As embodied in the word *lungo*, length is understood to be both spatial and temporal, a nuance that Scarpa seeks in the playfulness of this magical detail. On one hand, exposing a temporal awareness, he wants to delay the water falling from the roof by retaining it. And on the other, he exposes the detail to a spatial awareness of falling water by creating a collector that will receive the water drops. Scarpa desires to re-shape the time and space of rain as it passes over and through the building, as if rainwater, once in touch with the architecture needs to become architecture in its own right.

One of the aspects of magical factures is that even the most insignificant components must be set in and prepared the right way, where the specificity of how and when the ingredients are combined and collected is crucial for the magical trick to perform the desired effect.⁴³ Scarpa made a drawing that illustrates this well, showing a long downspout on one side of the pavilion where ‘the drop’ will fall through the scupper and finally splash on a special piece of marble, the tomb of Giuseppe Brion’s dear aunt, Maria Toso [fig. 6.11].⁴⁴ Her tomb, still visible today, was shaped with a carved out, circular corner to receive the thick drops of the architect’s original design [fig. 6.12]. Francesco Zanon, one of the metal workers involved in making the final drainage artifacts, recalls Scarpa’s desire to allow each fat drop to fall on this part of the stone as if the drops would have made the curved subtraction in the marble.⁴⁵

Although the downspout detail was never fabricated according to his initial sketches, the detail as constructed still delayed the falling of rainwater. In examining what was actually

⁴¹ Short and Lewis. *Latin Dictionary*.

⁴² I thank my Italian friend Enrico Varagnolo for his clarifying comments on the matter.

⁴³ Mauss, *A Theory*, 56-62.

⁴⁴ Testimony by Guido Pietropoli. Interview by author, 2013.

⁴⁵ In the same sketch Scarpa writes a note: *Lord god, how much stuff still!* as if realizing that this minor detail is one of the many things he still needs to think about the project, and yet, he has spent so much time thinking about it. *Memoria Causa*: Min. 21:20.

built, one discovers several curious elements. The first is a channel cast into the edge of the concrete roof, running the entire length of the pavilion, which creates a gap that allows water to partially enter the building right before leaving it [fig. 6.13]. One of the reasons for this was that he did not want the dripping of the entire roof length to stain the concrete.⁴⁶ Interestingly, this part of the pavilion remains as one of the best kept exposed concrete areas in the entire cemetery [fig. 6.14]. Another reason may perhaps have been a continuation of the desire to interrupt the rhythm of rainwater. A waterproof panel that has a series of Z-shaped openings cast along its length later covered the channel in the concrete roof [fig. 6.15]. These openings allow only a certain amount of water into the channel, with most of the water passing over the panel freely falling off the roof. The Z-shaped openings captured enough water to create a delay where a few seconds later it is finally expelled through two bronze gargoyles that the architect carefully designed [fig. 6.16 – fig. 6.17].⁴⁷

Although originally envisioned as thick drops splashing rhythmically onto carved marble, the sense of delaying the rainwater through its slow recollection and expulsion still remains in the final built project. The delay or dislocation of mundane elements, such as falling rainwater, thus becomes a key aspect of Scarpa's ability to orchestrate magical factures.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Semi, *A Lezione*, 269.

⁴⁷ According to Franca Semi's testimony, the gargoyles were compared by Scarpa with the a lion's palate. Indeed the upper part of the bronze gargoyles present at the family burial pavilion has a round indentation that resembles a mouth palate. *Ibid.*, 20. Scarpa also explains that the design of these gargoyles took him a lot of time, and a model was first made using ebony wood. *Ibid.*, 274.

⁴⁸ One of them already described in previous chapters was the chapel detail to allow the sun to pass through an opening to commemorate Giuseppe's Brion death anniversary. Another occurs at two water containers located as an extension of the entrance corridor. The long and skinny pool of water, as it comes closer to the couple's tombs, ends in two circular ponds of water. These two concrete cylinders have a particularity the one connected directly with the linear water pool has an internal mechanism that makes water to be turbulent. There is no clear or visible connection between one and the other circular ponds. However, they have been inadvertently connected from underneath, so the turbulent water of one, passes and fills quietly the other one from a hidden connection below. In one the drawings Scarpa makes a note pointing at the calm water vessel that says: *orologio solare*, sun clock. On the other vessel, the architect wanted to include a golden copper serpentine that would play with the moving water.

2.2. Spilled spirits

Scarpa's drawings are not 'clean' drawings, especially those drawings in which he invested many hours, as we have seen in previous chapters. In this section the notion of magical factures is considered from the standpoint of unintended marks that record quotidian residue of making and using drawings.⁴⁹ Here, one particular drawing of the chapel, apparently stained with wine, will be considered [fig. 6.18]. Already mentioned in chapter 3 in relationship to errors, 'foreign' substances such as cigarette burns modified the life of the drawing, often affecting the life of the architecture as well. Not only were drawings periodically exposed to 'foreign' substances as they were being drawn, but they were also exposed to external factors, such as when the architect would carry drawings to the construction site for discussion with the builders [fig. 6.19].⁵⁰ But is it fair to say that these unintended marks are actually 'foreign' to architectural drawings? Why does this aspect of drawings matter?

Every mark means something, not metaphorically, but in how we perceive the reality of the things we make, draw or write. We see marks in their bare materiality even before we understand their larger significance. In this way, an architect in tune with such condition actually uses this microscopic delay between seeing and understanding to possibly discover new ideas lingering within the drawing. In an important study on this difference, Semir Zeki argues that seeing and understanding actually operate in different areas of the brain and should not be seen as synonymous terms. When an artist paints, for example, he may be guided by activities of the brain that are concerned with seeing a color rather than understanding what that color initially is.⁵¹ Color is not a given fact but a construction

⁴⁹ While this section overlaps the agency of unexpected marks discussed in chapter 3 through the aspect of errors, in this chapter section I want to emphasize that these types of marks, in addition and more generally, are an instance of magical facture in the life of the drawing.

⁵⁰ Many drawings show folds indicating that the drawing was perhaps transported. Also water splashes that resembles rain. While mostly copies were made for the builders, some original drawings were moved back and forth between the drawing table and the construction site.

⁵¹ Semir Zeki. *Inner Vision: An Exploration of Art and the Brain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 74.

that the mind makes through a series of associations and comparisons. Zeki goes on to state:

Color, as painters have for long known and as I describe in detail below, is the result of a comparison, undertaken by the brain, of the wavelength composition of the light reflected from surrounding surfaces. That comparison is a property of the brain, not of the world outside, because nothing except the logic of the brain dictates that such a comparison should be undertaken. In undertaking it, the brain is going beyond the information given, by collating information from relatively large parts of the field of view.⁵²

Seeing is a creative act in its own right, even before the brain understands what it sees.⁵³ Extended into the context of unintentional marks on a drawing, this suggests that when Scarpa observes a wine stain in his drawing, for example, he sees it as fully integrated with the other marks that constitute the drawing. Rather than seeing a drawing that has been stained, or a drawing and a stain, the wine is instantly recognized as just another mark participating within the sheet of paper. In seeing both the intentional and unintentional marks on the same drawing, the brain apprehends the marks simultaneously, and this perception speaks back inevitably to mental interpretative functions.⁵⁴ The architect's sensibility toward the presence of these unplanned additions, occurring due to common events like having a glass of wine, keeps him from repressing what he sees even if they immediately may not make sense [fig. 6.20]. As James Elkins has stated in his studies on marks:

⁵² Ibid.,76.

⁵³ Zeki further explains that, although seeing and understanding operate through different processes in the brain, neither one is ruling the other. These studies were performed in patients that have a certain anomaly within their brains, in other words, patients which brains have been damage and through the damage the studies could reveal aspects of how the brain works. Ibid, 80.

⁵⁴ The important point here is that such patients are able to see and understand certain very crude types of visual motion, and are conscious of having seen motion. This adds to the evidence that there areas are autonomous and not dependent upon a central area, and that activity in them can lead to both seeing and understanding. Ibid., 79.

To speak only of what must exist in spite of the marks against which it struggles –only of the figure, or the represented things– is to capitulate to a concept of pictures that imagines there is a gap between marks and signs and that believes the way to come to terms with it is to omit both the gap and everything that comes before it. To elide the crucial moment of darkness, when the picture, in all its incomprehensible, nonlinguistic opacity, confronts us as something illegible, is to hope that picture can deliquesce into sense.⁵⁵

Returning more directly to the chapel drawing, it is difficult to easily tell the sequence of stains and marks.⁵⁶ Some, due to their shape, provide clues for their spontaneous apparition, like a splash [fig. 6.21]. Others seem to have been modified with a brush after the sheet was stained [fig. 6.22]. One of the wine stains seems to closely relate to the square opening on the chapel roof, clearly activating a space between the chapel section, drawn with pencil, and the wine stain, perhaps subtly manipulated with a brush [fig. 6.23]. It is as if the ‘spirit’ of the chapel, quite literally, is ascending from its sacred interior.⁵⁷ In this way the unplanned wine deposits seem to have activated the architect’s awareness of its materiality and potential for highlighting certain qualities of the building. Despite his awareness of their presence, the architect lets the stains to remain loose throughout the sheet of paper, understanding them as a site for play rather than a stain to be removed. This drawing, in addition, contains several erasure marks [fig. 6.24], an indicator of the amount of time the architect spent with this particular sheet of paper.

⁵⁵ James Elkins. “Marks, Traces, “Traits,” Contours, “Orli,” and “Splendores:” Nonsemiotic Elements in Pictures.” In *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 21, No. 4, The University Press of Chicago (Summer, 1995): 834.

⁵⁶ My hypotheses is that the stains are made with wine due to its color and consistency, however I have not performed a scientific paper test to verify the properties of the material in the drawing.

⁵⁷ Alcohol = spirit gaseous substance that elevates one’s senses and soul. OED, 2014.

Interestingly, Scarpa's apparent acceptance of the unplanned stands in opposition to his often stated emphasis on carefully preparing his drawing tools. In reference to how to use a basic and common tool like a pencil, for example, Scarpa tells his students:

I am convinced that one of the first principles is that of "pointing the pencil:" in fact, ironically many call professor Scarpa "the one of the pencil point." To me this means a title of honor, to be declared crazy because I speak of pointing the pencil. To prepare one's own instrument so they can perfectly function is very important.

There is no one man in the world that can make his violin sound well with a bow that does not work, whether it is coarse or old or with broken string. In the same way the engraver that must loose two or three minutes to sharpen well his chisel, otherwise it does not cut, otherwise he will not get to do something of refinement which is the way by which the object he is making becomes meaningful.⁵⁸

In a similar way Scarpa prepared himself and was very particular about the environmental conditions at the time of drawing. Pietropoli has stated that every morning Scarpa would make a single line on a thick sheet of paper, testing to see if he was going to have a good or bad drawing day by the day's humidity conditions.⁵⁹ With an acute sensibility toward both the materiality of the drawing and the supporting medium, the Venetian architect was well aware of the power of each substance participating in his drawings, both planned and unplanned. The specificity and insistence toward his students about preparing the drawing tools and finding the right time to draw in many ways enlightens the poignancy of

⁵⁸ *"Sono sicuro che uno dei primi principi è quello di fare la punta al lapis: infatti molti per ironia chiamano il professor Scarpa "quello della punta al lapis". Per me sarebbe un titolo d'onore sentirmi dichiarar pazzo perché parlo di punta del lapis: preparare il proprio strumento a funzione perfetta è importantissimo. Non c'è uomo al mondo che possa suonare bene il violino con un archetto che non funziona, che sia grossolano o vecchio o con la corda spezzata, e così l'intagliatore che deve perdere due o tre minuti per arrotare bene il filo del suo scalpello, perché altrimenti non taglia, altrimenti non arriva a fare quel quid di finezza per cui l'oggetto che sta facendo diventi espressivo."* Semi, *A Lezione*, 72.

⁵⁹ Author interview with Guido Pietropoli. June, 2013.

the unexpected mark. By emphasizing what can be planned, he makes a space for the unplanned. And by allowing certain unplanned marks, stains and traces to linger and delay the process of design, he finds also, unplanned occurrences. Allowing the drawing to be drawn through the medium of everyday life events exposes another instance of magical factures, where through contiguity, as long as the architect draws the drawing, the drawing remains in a state of drawing itself.

2.3. Concrete emanations

On November 16th, 1976, Scarpa gave a lecture at the *Akademie der bildenden Künste* in Vienna. Upon beginning his remarks on the Brion cemetery project, he announced:

I consider this work, if you permit me, to be rather good and which will even get better over time. I have tried to put some poetic imagination⁶⁰ into it, though not in order to create poetic architecture but to make a certain kind of architecture that could emanate a sense of formal poetry. I mean an expressed form that can become poetry, though, as I said before, you cannot intentionally make poetry.⁶¹

The paragraph elucidates three aspects that are important for understanding the notion of magical factures in architecture. One is the aspect of time; another is the aspect of emanation and lastly the impossibility of making poetry through intentional actions. After several years of intense work, rather than considering the work final, he reveals that what he has done is to set the right conditions for the poetry of the building to emerge.⁶² In other words, by setting up the conditions for everyday reality to work within the building,

⁶⁰ The word that Scarpa uses during the conference that has been translated as imagination is *fantasia*

⁶¹ Scarpa, Carlo. *The Other City: The Architect's Working Method As Shown by the Brion Cemetery in San Vito D'altivole = Die Andere Stadt: Die Arbeitsweise Des Architekten Am Beispiel Der Grabanlage Brion in San Vito D'altivole* (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1989), 17.

⁶² Scarpa worked on the Brion cemetery until his death, so even he said this in 1976, he kept working on some minor unfinished elements.

the edifice becomes exposed to a poetic propensity. Scarpa's awareness that the building was going to improve by aging and that it could emanate a sense of poetry is an awareness that relies also on the actions of time.

The climate in San Vito D'Altivole in the province of Treviso consists of very marked seasons. During the humid summer, temperatures can reach more than 30°C, while in the winter temperatures may even fall below 0°C. In the fall, frequent rains arrive. Scarpa lived all his life in the Veneto region and was certainly well aware of the environmental qualities of the area. It is not a coincidence, then, that the Brion cemetery was built mainly with exposed reinforced concrete, a material that records quite well the passing of time in such a context. Using concrete as a base material, Scarpa strengthened certain actions of the materials among each other, such as the presence of water pools, the specification of certain plants, and how certain materials were combined and shaped.

In order to plan for the aging of the building, Scarpa had to know well the nature of the materials he had chosen. One clue is found in his knowledge as well as his observations about concrete. For example, Scarpa was not fond of metallic formwork structures, nor of coated wood panels, because the homogeneity of the material and lack of texture could not transmit any expression to the concrete as a once liquid material. In a lecture to his students Scarpa stated:

For many years now, in America and England, they have used plywood coated with resin to make the concrete formworks of 24 millimeters thick and two by two meters large. Using that resin makes the wood waterproof and very heavy, a bit like marine plywood in a certain sense, and they can reuse it up to fourteen times. Naturally, the concrete

surface becomes less expressive since it is much more plain, but it is always better than using metallic formwork.⁶³

Unlike any other materials, concrete depends highly upon its mold, and this one is what allows the material to acquire character. Scarpa compares the casting of concrete elements to making cakes:

I compare the use of this material a little bit to the art of a pastry chef, who makes a dough and then throws it inside something. In nature, things are not like that: wood you need to cut it, a slice of food you need to cut it, iron melts, it becomes a block, then you sharpen it. Concrete... it is like making a cake, upon throwing it in, you cook it, you pull away the mold and serve the cake on the table.⁶⁴

Considering concrete a “terrible,” “beautiful” and “suggestive” material, Scarpa carefully instructed his builders during the construction of the cemetery how the formwork wood boards should be placed.⁶⁵ The effects of these decisions can be seen throughout the cemetery. In the entrance corridor, for example, a very different type of wood board was

⁶³ *“Adesso in America e in Inghilterra da moltissimi anni vengono adoperati dei compensati, per fare dei getti in cemento, da ventiquattro millimetri di spessore, di metri due per due di grandezza e resinati. Usano quelle resine che rendono il legno impermeabilizzato e molto pesante, un po’ come il compensato marino in un certo senso, e lo adoperano fino a quattordici volte; naturalmente la superficie del cemento armato viene meno espressiva, viene più liscia, però sempre meglio che usando la cassaforma metallica...”*

Semi, *A Lezione*, 92. Translation by author.

⁶⁴ *“Questo materiale un po’ all’arte del pasticciare, che fa un impasto e poi lo butta dentro. In natura le cose non sono così: il legno bisogna tagliarlo, la fetta bisogna tagliarla, il ferro si fonde, diventa un blocco, si trafila. Il cemento...è come fare una torta, su butta dentro, si cuoce, si tira via la cassaforma e si serve in tavola la torta.”* Ibid., 91.

⁶⁵ He considers it a difficult material: *“Il cemento armato lo sapete meglio di me di che cosa è fatto, ha molta acqua. L’ideale del cemento armato sarebbe poterlo detrarre senza una goccia d’acqua. La sabbia umida insieme al cemento formerebbe da sola..., ma allora bisognerebbe pressare e invece il ferro ce lo impedisce. Ecco perché si fa liquido, no? Ma liquido porta poi a diversi gravi difetti: le screpolature per la dilatazione. Ma, essendo, liquido, riesce a penetrare in tutte diremmo le porosità, al punto che poi riceve l’impronta abbastanza bene. Ora, il legno assorbe tutta l’umidità e se è fatto bene mantiene la superficie del cemento nel suo piano esatto o, almeno, ogni assicella ha il suo piano esatto; mentre una grande piastra d’acciaio, come sono fatte adesso le casseforme, non assorbe l’acqua. Allora in questo materiale terribile, bello e suggestivo il plus d’acqua forma qui delle pozze, degli schiacciamenti.”* Ibid.

used at the base of the wall [fig. 6.25]. In the same area, a detail of hammered concrete makes a distinct presence in the walls forming the corridor [fig. 6.26 - fig. 6.27]. Scarpa had learned of the practice of hammering concrete through the work of the American architect, Paul Rudolph [fig. 6.28].⁶⁶ Another instance of this can be seen in the arcosolium concrete structure, where a series of hammered concrete lines are also exposed, alternating, this time, between each regular concrete portion [fig. 6.29]. In the chapel, the exterior of the altar wall has been cast with a formwork of vertical wood boards, whereas in the rest of the chapel the formwork used was built placing the wood boards horizontally [fig. 6.30 - fig. 6.31]. Scarpa admits to have been inspired by the way the Japanese built their formworks and explained to his students:

I saw the formworks: they are large, made of boards of certain scale that were burned at a point to make them waterproof, resistant; then from the outside they are formed with neighboring large size trunks and then there are men who beat the formwork making a sound like: bang, bang and wonderful walls result from this.

... Because one can cast in layers, one can create a thin layer that forms a small break which turns out very elegant, that is very expressive, a little bit like the layers of sediment in stone; and this is why I have done this work with textured wood, nothing has been planed. These marks are the wood fingerprints...⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Ibid., 275.

⁶⁷ *"Ho visto le casseforme: sono grosse, sono tavole di una certa portata e sono bruciate in un punto per renderle più impermeabili, resistenti; poi sono armate di fuori da tronchi vicini di grossa dimensione e dopo ci sono uomini che li pestano e fanno, pum, pum e vengono fuori dei muri meravigliosi, soltanto che è argilla che si indurisce per un certo tempo, poi dopo, non so se dopo centocinquanta o settant'anni, comincia a fare così [screpolarsi?] e sono i punti dove gli uomini si sono fermati a lavorare; qui è un po' quel discorso del cemento che dico io di farlo....perché si potrebbe gettare a strati, allora in un punto, avviene uno straterello, si formano piccole insenature di rottura e diventa elegantissimo, cioè molto espressivo, un po' come sedimentano degli strati di pietra; ed è per questo che io ho fatto questo lavoro con il legno scolpito, niente piallato; ci sono le impronte digitali, diremo, del legno."* Ibid.

In addition to the architect's awareness of the immediate imprint and design of the formwork, he was also sentient towards the symbiotic relationship between casting the wall and exposing certain parts to external conditions in order for them to morph into a yet more wonderful state [fig. 6.32]. In other words, the fact that he states that the building will be better with time, as it ages, is a concrete clue to his expectancy that the building will continue to build itself. In this way, for example, Scarpa's intensified the materiality of the 'living,' such as plants, by placing them inside or next to the 'dead' concrete [fig. 6.33].⁶⁸ The various textures, indentations and exposures of the concrete elements to the natural conditions of the site have interacted for more than 40 years to the point where significant change may be observed from the initial construction photos.

One of the crucial skills that the architect saw as essential in educating architects was the experience of making. While Scarpa did not build anything with his own hands, not even fixing the toilet of his house!, he knew well how materials work.⁶⁹ The architect learnt this from his own builders. By spending time at the construction site, in addition to being a faithful observant of the architecture of the Veneto, Scarpa trained himself in the practical knowledge of architecture. He thought that architecture schools should not be universities in the traditional sense of the word. For him, architecture needs also the knowledge of the practical order, "to touch with the hands" as he expressed. With conviction Scarpa told his students: "one will never learn to be a good architect if one does not practice."⁷⁰ The architect can only be a good architect if he can profoundly understand not just what materials are, but what materials can become.

Because he understood materials, the sense of poetic emanation that Scarpa mentions may relate to this capacity of the building to be able to speak on its own through the

⁶⁸ Scarpa called the concrete work right after it was finished 'cold.' The notion that something looks cold has associations with the dead. Ibid.

⁶⁹ Interview by author with Tobia Scarpa, July, 2014.

⁷⁰ "*...io insisto che la Scuola d'Architettura non doveva essere universitaria nel senso tradizionale della parola, perché è una scuola che ha bisogno di conoscenze di ordine pratico: deve anche toccare con mano. La nozione delle materie è anche una conoscenza tattile. Bisogna fare, ecco il discorso: non si imparerà mai a fare l'architetto bene se non si opera.*" Semi, *A Lezione*, 93.

years, i.e., the capacity of the building to ‘become.’ In fact, the word emanation, from the Latin *emano*, not only means ‘to flow’ or ‘to spring out’, but also ‘to become known,’ precisely the kind of revealing that Scarpa was hoping for this project.⁷¹ The building has designed itself through various factures that the architect orchestrated to act throughout the years. These factures, I argue, act like magical ones through contiguity in the sense that once the building has been built, it continues to build itself forever. Scarpa, like a good magician, imagined and designed the cemetery so these factures would reveal the edifice’s true self in time.

Although shortly after casting the concrete had a rather homogenous quality, today, due to its transformations, it exhibits a range of many different types of concrete. Some examples include the transformation of mostly all exposed horizontal surfaces, where lichens, sometimes mosses and other plants resins have populated the surfaces [fig. 6.34]. The exposure to water in other cases make very drastic contrasts between purposely protected and unprotected areas, like in the northeast facade of the chapel [fig. 6.35]. The playful stepping details that the architect repeats in various parts of the project have also played an interesting game with the environmental conditions. In the case of the concrete feet that hold the arcosolium, because the outer stepping profiles have protected the internal ones, there is a gradient of exposure that decreases towards the internal part of concrete structure [fig. 6.36]. Many more examples can be found throughout the work exhibiting the potential of this type of factures acting upon the building. Scarpa not only designs to make visible a building, but he designs by making a series of decisions that will keep making visible a yet new building in time. In other words, the architect’s awareness of the potentiality of weathering acts as a magical facture from the very beginning of the design. Because the architects knows the trick’s secrets, he also knows and even states, that the cemetery will be a better building as times passes.

3. Diachronic Factures

⁷¹ Short and Lewis. *Latin Dictionary*.

Consistent among these examples is the presence of time and how Scarpa utilizes the space of delay in preparation of the magical facture. Delay acts as a suspension of time which lets the detail, the drawing, and the building find within a temporal dilatation an element of wonder. In the case of the detail, as was explored in the family pavilion, the building delays the fall of water so the moment of falling becomes more expressive. In the wine stained drawing, because the architect has delayed the arrival of a final decision about the design, he propitiates an environment for the drawing to presence unplanned marks tied to everyday life events that may inadvertently become part of the design. And in the case of the building, the materials that will perform in time purposely delay the true appearance and construction of the poetic edifice. The apparent waste of time in all these cases signifies in the end a gain of effects that defines the a-temporality of the building.

In a conference that Scarpa gave in Madrid in 1978, he actually mentioned the aspects of delay with which he works. One of the questions from the audience asked about what type of method or procedure the architect employed to design, after which Scarpa responded that he tries to think for a very long time. He subsequently clarifies his thought by stating, "I am not saying that I think today and then I never think again."⁷² Reinforcing the subtle difference between thinking a lot and thinking in length accentuates the need for time in the act of thinking, he recounts. In the case of another project, the Olivetti store in Venice, Scarpa reiterates the aspect of slowness in his work by saying: "Things come to me slowly."⁷³ Expressed in his own words, as well as in the close examination of his work, from clients' testimonies to the buildings themselves; the delaying of the work as a place that expands time and waits for the 'right' thing to come, to emerge or to reveal itself, was masterly exercised by Scarpa. In addition, my argument poses 'delay' as a crucial place for the magical facture to occur. As we have seen, magical factures are able to expand the reality of something at a distance and also in time. In the work of magic-realist artists the notion of delay relates also to a suspension of belief. This suspension

⁷² *Pensare a lungo vs Pensare molto.*

⁷³ George Dodds. Madrid Conference Transcription from original recording. P. 247

does not suspend experience but intensifies it by not completely rendering itself apparent. In this sense, magical instances are not extraordinary events but are part of our everyday life. Bontempelli gives the example of a common situation like going to the theater:

When we are at the theater, whether we believe or not that the person in front of us suffers the misfortunes of the drama, let's say that we believe, why don't we get up and run to help her? And let's say we do not believe, why do we cry with her, we cry real tears? Like that is all art: a magic interpretation of common things, performed in this way and with such an air that continually opens the doubt whether the author gives his interpretations as he fully believed them, authentic in the strict sense, or as symbols of an interpretation not magical, but purely spiritual.⁷⁴

If the way by which we live our everyday lives relies in magical thinking, magic must inevitably be part of the practice of architecture. Although Scarpa's builders and friends used to call him in jest, "*il Mago*," it is really his work that demonstrates magical thinking. This capacity to think in the productive remoteness between the thing's present and the thing's future is a knowledge that allows distance and delay to be ingredients of the design.

⁷⁴ "Quando siamo a teatro, crediamo o non crediamo che quella persona che è là davanti ai nostri pacchi soffra delle sventure rappresentate nel dramma; e se crediamo, perchè non ci alziamo dalla nostra poltrona e non corriamo a soccorrerla? E se non crediamo, perchè piangiamo con lei, piangiamo vere lacrime? Tale è tutta l'arte: una interpretazione magica di cose comuni, eseguita in tal modo, con un tale piglio, che lasci continuamente in dubbio se l'autore le dà come interpretazioni pienamente credute da lui e autentiche in stretto senso, o come simboli di una interpretazione non già magica, ma puramente spirituale." Bontempelli, *La Mia Magia*, 5-6.

Figures Chapter 6

Fig. 6.1
Family pavilion (on the back)
© Photo by Guido Pietropoli



Fig. 6.2
Aerial image cemetery lot
© Photo by Poloniato, 2005



Fig. 6.3
Family pavilion
Photo by Author



Fig. 6.4
Family pavilion
Photo Author



Fig. 6.5
Edicola with an antique copy of the Madonna di Antonio Rossellino.
Calle della Pietà, Venice



Fig. 6.6
Family Pavilion Roof
Photo by Author



Fig. 6.7
Diagram of pavilion roof geometry by Author

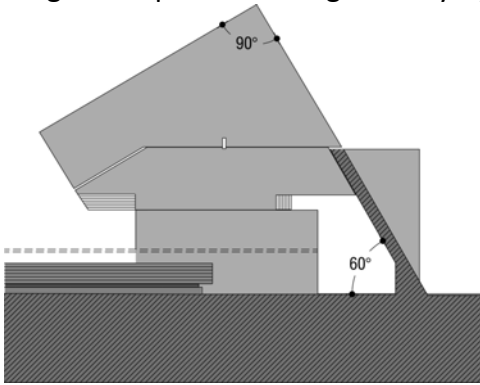


Fig. 6.8
Family pavilion inside
Photo by Author



Fig. 6.9
Family pavilion roof material
Photo by Author



Fig. 6.10
Family pavilion roof lines
Photo by Paul Emmons



Fig. 6.11
Downspout detail for Family Pavilion
NR #3186
Archivio Carlo Scarpa
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Fig. 6.12
Maria Toso tomb
Image captions from *Memoria Causa* documentary



Fig. 6.13

Family pavilion in construction

Photo by Gianni Berengo Gardin (1972)

© Gianni Berengo Gardin – CISA A. Palladio, Vicenza, Italy

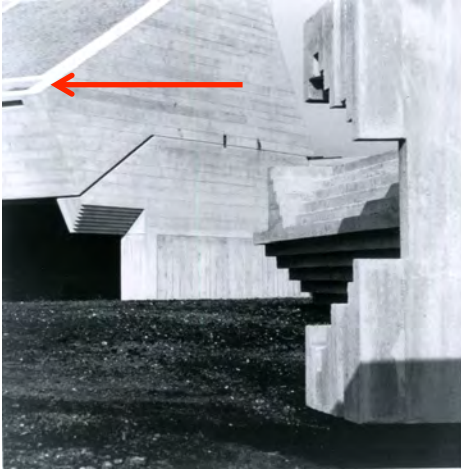


Fig. 6.14

Photo of recently poured concrete

Photo by Gianni Berengo Gardin (1972)

© Gianni Berengo Gardin – CISA A. Palladio, Vicenza, Italy



Fig. 6.15

Z shaped rood openings

Photo by Author



Fig. 6.16
Bronze gargoyle
Photo by Author



Fig. 6.17
Family pavilion roof drawing and gargoyle studies
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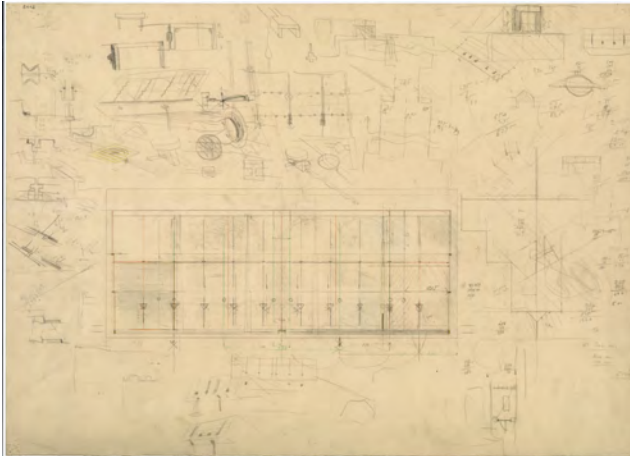


Fig. 6.18
Chapel plan (detail)
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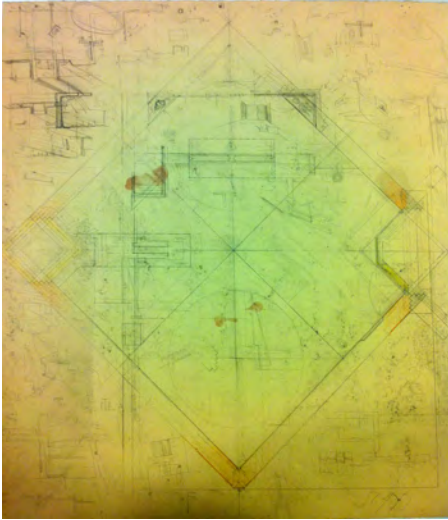


Fig. 6.19
Chapel plan (detail)
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Fig. 6.20
Chapel plan
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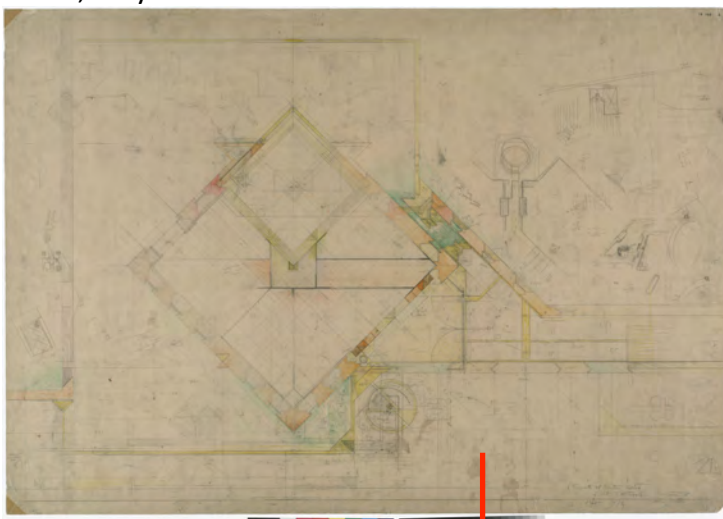


Fig. 6.21
Chapel section (detail)
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Fig. 6.22
Chapel section (detail)
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Fig. 6.23
Chapel section (detail)
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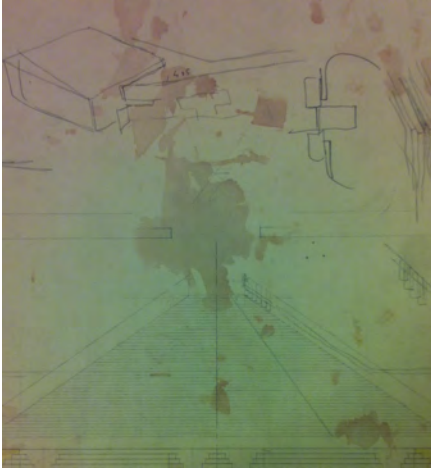


Fig. 6.24
Chapel section (detail)
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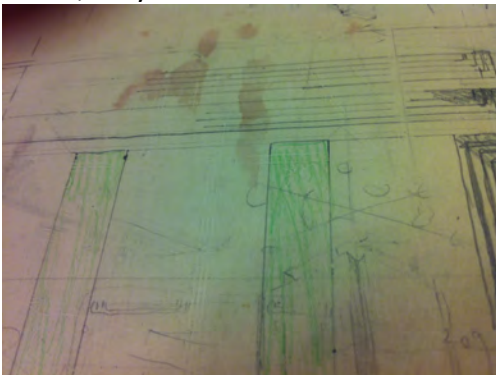


Fig. 6.25
Corridoio wall detail
Photo by Author



Fig. 6.26
Hammered concrete detail at *corridoio*
Photo by Author



Fig. 6.27
Hammered concrete detail at *corridoio*
Photo by Author



Fig. 6.28

Paul Rudolph hammered concrete at Yale Architecture School



Fig. 6.29

Arcosolium concrete

Photo by Author



Fig. 6.30

Chapel altar corner, northeast facade

Photo by Author



Fig. 6.31
Chapel southwest facade
Photo by Author



Fig. 6.32
Wood texture imprinted in concrete
Photo by Author



Fig. 6.33
Plants and concrete interaction
Photo by Author



Fig. 6.34
Concrete with lichens
Photo by Author



Fig. 6.35
Chapel northeast side façade
Photo by Author



Fig. 6.36
Arcosolium feet
Photo by Author



Chapter 7

Reflective Lines: six sides and one mirror

1. The World Inside a Mirror

From mirror to mirror — this is what I happen to dream of — the totality of things, the whole, the entire universe, divine wisdom could concentrate their luminous rays into a single mirror. Or perhaps the knowledge of everything is buried in the soul, and a system of mirrors that would multiply my image would then reveal to me the soul of the universe, which is hidden in mine.

Italo Calvino¹

Through literature and art, magic-realism attempted to construct a reflection of reality. This reflection however, was not striving to mimic reality but to render its invisibility by heightening its most apparent qualities. In the act of closely and meticulously observing everyday life events or objects, a sort of ‘strangeness’ would emerge that constituted the gate into the magic-real [fig. 7.1].² Massimo Bontempelli defines such strangeness as an “exasperated reality,” where a close observation of the world consists in shifting “the angle from the surface of reality in order to glimpse reality in its depth.”³ This shift allows artists to discover a sense of mystery embedded within the real, and its reflection, through words or images, always shows more than what was assumed to be real. For Bontempelli, this sense of mystery consisted in a balance between the earth and the sky.⁴ The balance between two seemingly opposites realms was not quantitative but it presupposed a play of reflections in which one realm is mirrored into the other one and

¹ Italo Calvino. *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler*, ed. William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981)

² Roh explained this obsessive precision as an “art produced by attempting to locate infinity in small things.” “Magic Realism: Post-Expressionism” in Zamora, *Magical Realism*, 27.

³ “Quello che chiamate stramberia e realta esasperata; e spostare un angolo della superficie della realta, per farvi intravedere la realta piu profonda.” Bontempelli, *L’Aventura*, 351.

⁴ “Vorra dire ritrovare il senso del misterio, e l’equilibrio tra il cielo e la terra.” Ibid.

vice versa.⁵ In magic-realism these mirror images of reality were capable of always reflecting something more. Only through a precise and detailed reflection could the hidden realm emerge [fig. 7.2].⁶

Mirrors have a long history of being magical devices and have, for centuries, been an element of wonder and thinking.⁷ From early practices of divination to current works of art, magic mirrors have had an immortal life in the life of humanity. Henry Cornelius Agrippa, in his *Three Books on Occult Philosophy* of 1531, described how mirrors were thought to capture spiritual forces of the heavens and its celestial bodies, and, by this principle, mirrored surfaces in buildings were able to receive influence from the stars and radiate them into the life of the edifice.⁸ He also explains how mirrors were tools that would hide a world within them, usually a world concerning the future.⁹ In many cultures mirrors were the objects capable of showing one's soul, where the reflected image would make visible something otherwise invisible.¹⁰ Even today, when mirrors are rarely understood beyond their empirical capacity to reflect an image, they are still the subject of magical associations in art, film and literature. In general the most fascinating aspect of mirrors in current times is their faculty to enable bilocation, or the rendering of the same thing in two places at a time. This remains in service even today to the most wondrous occurrences.

⁵ Bontempelli's notion of telling reality as if it was a dream and the dream as it was reality. In another publication he wrote: "This is pure 'Novecentismo,' that rejects both reality for the sake of reality as well as fantasy for the sake of fantasy, and lives on the basis of the sense of magic discovered in the everyday life of man and things." Seymour Menton, ed. *Magic Realism Rediscovered* (Philadelphia: Art Alliance Press, 1983), 52.

⁶ Roh, "Magic-Realism," 27-29.

⁷ Sabine Melchior-Bonnet. *The Mirror: A History* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

⁸ N. H. C. von Agrippa. *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, eds. Donald Tyson and James Freake (St. Paul, MN, U.S.A: Llewellyn, 1993), 373.

⁹ Bonnet-Melchior, *The Mirror*, 18-34.

¹⁰ James George Frazer. *The Golden Bough* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1995), 159.

Such an element of wonder did not pass inadvertently in the work of Massimo Bontempelli, and much less in the work of the Venetian Carlo Scarpa.¹¹ In 1922, before publishing on the notion of magic-realism in literature, Bontempelli wrote a short fiction novel called *The Chess Set in the Mirror*.¹² The story is about a boy, who, bored and alone in his bedroom, finds himself with nothing else than a chess set and an old mirror. Looking into the mirror, the boy realizes that the chess pieces, as reflected on the glassy surface, are alive, at which point the White King invites the boy to enter inside of the mirror, a temptation he is compelled to accept. Upon entering, the boy realizes that the world on the other side is organized around a very different kind of rules, where, for example, one can have a seemingly normal conversation with a chess piece. Also on the inside, one can meet anybody who has ever looked at the mirror before. As the story develops, however, the boy begins to wonder whether the world with the chess pieces is more real than the one in his bedroom becoming fearful that he may not be able to return to his previous world. The story concludes with the boy's mother waking him up in his bedroom after the boy had fallen asleep supposedly inside the mirror. In the end, we are confronted with the question of whether the inside of the mirror was a dream or if the dream is the actual experience of the boy in his bedroom. The simple story raises complex issues of reflections and reality that can also be examined in the practice of architectural drawing and in the experience of a building.

When making architectural drawings, the architect must have a reflective imagination, but what does this mean? The word reflection has two key meanings: the first is the physical action of a surface to rebound that which is radiating towards it. From sounds to light, a reflection is a phenomenon that re-creates itself upon contact with a reflective surface. A reflection is also a mental process of looking back on oneself, shaped by past experiences

¹¹ The making of mirrors has a long history in Venice through the skilled workers of Murano. In fact, Venice is considered one of the first places that was able to produce clear mirrors. Scarpa, who dedicated many years of his life to the study and design of glassmaking, was well aware of the powerful qualities of glass and mirrors. Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror*, .18-34. Also Venice is a city of mirrors through the presence of water.

¹² Massimo Bontempelli. *The Chess Set in the Mirror*, trans. Estelle Gilson (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2007).

and future expectations.¹³ The two part meaning also resides in the word origin, coming from the Latin *re-*, which means back or again, and the word *flexus*, which means a bending, turning or winding.¹⁴ The word *flexus* implies a physical or mental act of moving or turning around. It referred to the walking of labyrinths, for example, and the careful executions of the turns in order to achieve a successful entrance or exit.¹⁵ From the Latin word *flex* we understand the notion of flexibility as being both a physical condition of certain materials but also a mental state that allows a certain latitude toward accepting the changing nature of events. From this family of words, then, one can understand that a reflective imagination is that which operates with flexibility throughout the process of design, but also acknowledges the re-bounding between parts in the drawing and the building.

In Scarpa's work the aspects of reflection occur precisely in both territories, in the making of the drawing and the experiencing of the building. Just like in magic mirrors, reflections for Scarpa are opportunities to see differently, discover something else, or experience something unexpected. The process of architectural drawing is inherently reflective since the architect must imagine elements of the elevation in the floor plan, elements of the floor plan in the section, and elements of the section in the elevation. The various drawing types must reflect each other through a coordination of their inward and outward projections.

A clear example of these reflective aspects can be seen in a drawing discussed previously depicting a reflected ceiling plan of the *arcosolium* [fig. 7.3]. Here, Scarpa makes a detailed study of the tiles of the *arcosolium* ceiling, elements which are themselves already reflective surfaces.¹⁶ The drawing, however, has a portrayal of Scarpa himself looking down at the ceiling as if he were standing and the ceiling was upside down, belonging to the floor level. This curious situation recalls the popular idiom among many cultures of

¹³ OED, 2014.

¹⁴ Short and Lewis. *Latin Dictionary*.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ See chapter #1.

“having one’s head in the clouds,” an expression of daydreaming that joins the experience of being on earth with that of being in some other imagined place.¹⁷ Scarpa’s posture below and above the *arcosolium* ceiling seems to have been drawn to blur the line between earth and sky through a reflective and reflecting experience that would recreate a state of daydreaming. This is certainly embodied in the materials of the built ceiling, which is constructed with transparent color glass tiles that hold a thin layer of gold leaf in between two glass modules [fig. 7.4].¹⁸ A dreamy and reflective assembly of materials and light, this exquisite construction generates a play in one’s vision when staring at the ceiling.¹⁹

This example serves well to introduce the idea of reflection which will be explored through the drawing, the building, and the relationship between the two. In order to examine their reflective aspects, a three-fold structure will be employed which considers above and below, right and left, and front and back. Using the main entrance to the cemetery as the main vehicle for this inquiry, this complex edifice standing in between two worlds, life and death, yields a number of important points in the discussion on reflection. Referred to by Scarpa as the *propylei*, a probable reference to the entrance of the Greek acropolis, the old and new areas of the cemetery are spatially and structurally, harmonically intertwined [fig. 7.5-7.7]²⁰ Each section begins with a discussion of drawings and then closes with an investigation of the experience of the building.

2. Ambiguous Places

There are relationships that one needs to invent in order to make something vivid

¹⁷ This is also a common saying in Italian: *vivere con la testa fra le nuvole; avere la testa nelle nuvole* *Corriere della Sera Dizionario Italiano*. Entry date: November, 14, 2014.

¹⁸ I thank Guido Pietropoli for the detailed information of the tiles construction, and for showing me one sample of the tiles in order to tell me its story.

¹⁹ Scarpa and Pietropoli

²⁰ Pietropoli, Guido. *La Tomba Brion*

2.1. Walking on Water: Above and Below

Fantasy is a place where it rains.

Italo Calvino²²

Above and below are two realms always present in the making of architectural drawings. Because Scarpa drew on a horizontal, non-tilted drawing table, he was continuously reconciling his vertical sitting position posture with the horizontal realm of the sheet of paper. In his investigation on the role of posture in making architectural drawings, Paul Emmons has remarked:

The horizontal table promotes approaching the drawing and the design as a construction and through the architect's saturnine upright posture, invites imaginative inhabitation of the drawing.²³

Above and below in architectural drawings appears in relation to the drawing types. For example, when the drawing is in plan view, the above and the below realms are perceived through the architect's embodiment of the space.²⁴ As Emmons has remarked, we embody the drawing as if we were inside the plan, the section or the elevation.²⁵ In the case of sections and elevations, a notion of front and back is added to the below and above dimensions of the physicality of the drawing.

In addition to the actual above and below realm of the body inhabiting the drawing, there is also a discrete above and below dimension that belongs to the internal physicality of the

²¹ 'Ci sono dei rapporti che bisogna inventare per fare qualche cosa di vivido.' Semi, Franca. P.61

²² Calvino, *Six Memos*, 81.

²³ Paul Emmons. *Back to the Drawing Board: Embodiment in architectural drawing practices*, Virginia Tech, Washington-Alexandria Center.

²⁴ Paul Emmons. *Iconographia* theory lectures at WAAC- Paul Emmons, *Mirror of Design* (London: Ashgate: forthcoming book 2016).

²⁵ Paul Emmons. Theory lectures at WAAC - Ibid.

drawing itself, i.e. the order in which lines are made and how we perceive them as external to us. The two forms of above and below perceptions of the drawing are intermingled in the making and reading of the design. Architects inhabit the drawings and simultaneously they read them as artifacts.

In the order of the actual inhabitation of the drawing, above and below will be explored in a section drawing of the Brion entrance corridor [fig. 7.8]. Scarpa draws himself embodying the corridor. The above and below realms are determined by where his head and feet are in relationship to the vertical dimension of the section, i.e., above is the corridor's ceiling, and below is the floor and the water pool underneath. Scarpa creates a series of diagonal lines signifying rays of sunlight entering from an opening above, on the roof structure. The rays of light in this location correspond with the sun's position in the early afternoon. Since the entrance is oriented toward the east, the area where Scarpa stands in the drawing remains cool and in shadow for most of the day after the morning hours. Aware of this, Scarpa notes in the drawing: "Here it will be very cool in the Summer. This is where I will go" [fig. 7.9].²⁶ The reflective dimension of the drawing appears in the fact that the above realm, where the light is rendered, is in contrast with the below realm, where the shadow is. The reflection does not reproduce an image but it depicts the presence of light through the inhabitation of shade. Being in the shade while the sun is still present above is how Scarpa embodies the drawing, allowing for the two opposites qualities to be perceived in the experience by enhancing the aspects of above and below.

In the order of the physicality of the drawing itself, the above and below realms appear through a superposition of lines and their pictorial values as well as our perception of them. When an architect draws on top of an existing line, a condition of below and above emerges, activating the drawing and allowing depth to appear within the two-dimensional representation. While both of the lines are constructed on the same flat sheet of paper,

²⁶ "Qui sarà molto fresco a l'estate. Ci andrò io." Translation by author.

our brain understands them is as if some lines are below and others are above. Neuroscientist Semir Zeki, acknowledges the brain's capacity of "binding" things together but he explains that no one has really explained neurologically how this works. He gives the example of a painting by the Russian artist Kazimir Malevich [fig. 7.10]. In the painting a black line seems to cross over a red one. The brain understands the two red fragments as belonging to each other, i.e. a continuous red line below a black one. In architectural drawing this happens all the time since architects construct two-dimensional drawings that express the depth of the body's experience. Scarpa, in particular, selectively intensifies the potential of above and below marks by frequently drawing several lines and sketches on top of each other.

In one of the most published drawings of the *propylei*, Scarpa employs an interesting array of techniques relying on the simultaneous perception of above and below [fig. 7.11]. The first indication occurs in the fact that the sheet of paper exhibits the fainted lines of a general outline of the *propylei*, made by a heliographic copy produced by Scarpa's assistants. In preparation for a new drawing, Scarpa would often ask his assistants to make copies of certain parts of the building previously studied so he could continue working on them.²⁷ His assistants' drawings would usually consist of very careful and measured constructions, while Scarpa's additions would be very expressive and exploratory [fig. 7.12].

At first glance, the depth of the subsequent layers of lines may be perceived according to the intensity with which have been traced. Lighter lines seem to be below, stronger ones above. However, Scarpa often plays with inverting these realms. As may be observed in the diagonal repetition of lines depicting light coming into the corridor, where many lighter lines together are perceived with a highlighted level of strength, i.e., things are perceived in context and not in isolation [fig. 7.13]. Certainly one of the most noticeable type of lines is the one rendered by colored pencils. To 'high-light' certain elements in the

²⁷ This practice has been confirmed by Guido Pietropoli's testimony, who was one of Scarpa's assistants. Interview by author, June 2013.

drawing with color was a very common practice for Scarpa. The understanding of color, as mentioned in previous chapters, works through comparative actions of the brain and as neuroscientist Semir Zeki further explains:

Color is the result of the operation that the brain undertakes on the information that it receives; it is in a real sense, a property of the brain and not of the world outside, even if dependent upon the physical reality in that world.²⁸

Because the brain must perform an operation of comparison, the things around a color have a determinant role in our understanding and appreciation of it. For Scarpa, ‘high-lighting’ something in the drawing through the use of color was precisely intended to do that: to illuminate from above a part of the design that perhaps required more light. In that act of ‘high-lighting’ Scarpa brings above the sheet of paper, closer to himself, some areas of the drawing that need more work and development. This is performed in spite of the normative rules of representation where things further away are drawn lighter than the ones closer to us. This can be clearly seen in the section drawing where only certain elements in section have been ‘high-lighted’ [fig. 7.13]. Drawing his head in profile and looking toward a portion of concrete above his head, he is highlighted in the drawing as if daydreaming with the experience of the detail. Due to its design, the detail allows Scarpa’s vision to be guided by a diagonal line created by the subsequent stepping profiles [fig. 7.14 – 7.15]. In this particular drawing, the use of orange color focuses one’s attention toward the portions of the building drawn in section, mainly at the concrete parts of the entrance where intricate concrete volumes form the massive structure of the *propylei’s* roof and ceiling. These ‘high-lighted’ areas are also the parts of the drawing that Scarpa is re-working. In contrast, the color orange is used much lighter in the floor area of the steps and floor of the corridor. Even if the entire section cutline passes through one space, Scarpa brings forth only certain parts of it, creating a reflective reading of the drawing.

²⁸ Zeki, *Inner Vision*, 185-186.

Another example appears when we look at the elevation drawing [fig. 7.16]. We notice that in spite of the use of color that corresponds to the front of the elevation, and what is also closer to us, a strong use of color has also been employed to depict two plants located very far back in the elevation. However, we perceive these two plants as being very close to us. This offers a double reading of the lines, where the marks that are above and closer to us in the sheet of paper are placed in a part of the drawing that because of how we embody it, should be perceived as far, thus light. Reflections between above and below lines, both in inhabiting the drawing and in perceiving it as an artifact, are enhanced in Scarpa's work due to the practice of 'high-lighting' his thoughts and making them visible in the drawing through the use of color, repetitive lines, words or body parts.

In relationship to the inhabitation of the building itself, above and below aspects observed in the drawing will also participate in the experience. Starting with the *propylei* structure, the main gateway into the cemetery appears quite low upon approach, with the opening up not more than 2.5 meters high. The branches of a fir tree planted above in a concrete planter fall reach down into the opening area, slightly touching one's head and shoulders upon entering [fig. 7.5]. Stepping onto a gravel area and underneath the concrete structure, we are confronted with a series of steps.²⁹ The first concrete floor belonging to the new cemetery is confirmed by a step that is followed by three smaller ones, slightly positioned towards the left side of the structure. One final step provides access to the floor of the corridor itself [fig. 7.17]. In this journey upwards, the sense of ascension is emphasized in the afternoon by light entering through the concrete structure above, a small amount of water when it is raining, the greenish reflection of plants that hang down, and a cool air current [fig. 7.18]. Various openings in the concrete structure allow direct beams of light to enter, usually appearing as isolated lines or areas that distinctly highlight a portion of the entrance. Indirect light provides an otherwise constant glow among the reflective surfaces of white stucco *lucido* present in the internal sides of the walls.

²⁹ Scarpa had maintained the raw continuous surface from the old cemetery path into the new cemetery entrance. The concrete block new path was added later and went all the way to the edge of the Brion cemetery first step. Today, to make a distinction, the area that belongs to the cemetery is covered with gravel.

Once one has arrived at the top of the stair, above and below continue to play a distinct role at the corridor. Two aspects of the corridor will create the experience of chiral reflections, one visible and the other invisible.³⁰ Looking down, a series of large concrete tiles encased in steel frames make the floor [fig. 7.19]. Because the tiles are simply cradled by the structure below, when one walks a slight wobble in some of the tiles creates a rhythm of sounds that encompasses each step.³¹ In fact, Scarpa in one of the drawings notes, “Attention, Tolerance!,” emphasizing his desire to let the tiles to remain loose.³² The wobbling sounds are greater if one chooses to take the right side of the path [fig. 7.20]. When Scarpa designed the water pool that surrounds the *padiglioncino*, or meditation pavilion, the depth of the pool, almost 3 meters deep, was extended also to the edge of the cemetery outer wall, allowing the right hand portion of the corridor path to sit under water [fig. 7.21]. The sound of the wobbling tiles resonates distinctly here because the two parallel walls create a tunnel effect, first of 159.5cm and then of 88cm wide towards the meditation pavilion access. In addition to the sounding rhythm created here, a visual rhythm emerges through the joints between each tile, marking a sense of directionality [fig. 7.19]. Along this part of the floor, two concrete bars cross the width to the corridor with holes cast in them for drainage [fig. 7.22]. Finally, before entering into the realm of the meditation pavilion, a glass door of 1.55 meters high must be opened. This door opens by sinking into the floor, which is actually the water pool, existing invisibly underneath [fig. 7.23]. A system of pulleys on the other side of the wall controls its movement and acts as a counterbalance [fig. 7.24].

The visible part of what is reflected above, that is, the path’s ceiling, is made with concrete and ebony wood planks cast into it.³³ Interestingly, the wood exhibits a rare texture that is achieved only when fed through the saw blade in the wrong direction, a process usually performed with an old saw machine since the procedure damages the

³⁰ Of a crystal or three-dimensional form: not superposable on its mirror image. *OED*, 2014.

³¹ The structure is held in place by the two parallel concrete walls, not incidentally 88cm apart.

³² “*Attenzione, Tolleranza!*”

³³ The wood Scarpa used is ebony, which is a very hard and expensive wood.

equipment.³⁴ Due to the shiny treatment of the wood, the texture creates a dynamic set of dark reflections [fig. 7.25]. This heavily tooled condition reminds us of the double meaning of the Latin root of ceiling, *caelum*, which signifies both the heavens as well as the sculptor's chisel.³⁵

In a drawing of the reflected ceiling plan a curious set of dimension lines participate in the representation. Such measurements do not dictate the position of the wood words of the ceiling [fig. 7.26]. They actually derive from the rhythm of floor, demonstrating that while Scarpa was designing the ceiling he was thinking of the floor, and vice versa [fig. 7.27].³⁶ Without repeating any of the formal elements of the floor, yet intimately relating their spacing and rhythm, he places the above and below realms into a harmonious reflection. Among the rhythm of the wood boards, we encounter two linear openings that are in correspondence with the drain holes placed in the linear concrete pieces of the floor [fig. 7.28]. Turning to the roof section, the drains' design becomes revealed [7.29]. The architect was not simply trying to drain the roof as quickly as possible, rather the roof slope has been carefully crafted so that each of the gaps would receive rain water, creating two rain-activated 'water gates' inside the corridor. What is more, in the case of rain, the water inside the corridor would drain into the pond below possibly affecting the general water level. This would alter the nature of the acoustic void created in the corridor, and, in the end, affect the character of the sounds when walking over the loose concrete panels. The inverse actions between the floor and all what resides below with the ceiling and all what resides above are shown to be in a critical, reflective role with each other. These reflections do not mimic the other as a polished surface might, but instead they reveal and enhance hidden qualities within themselves.

³⁴ This process was explained to me by Guido Pietropoli in an interview in 2013

³⁵ Latin *caelum* means both 'the heavens' (from the same root as 'celestial'), and 'sculptor's chisel', or burin; an engraving tool for metals. It is this instrument that *La Caille* had in mind when he named this constellation. Short and Lewis. *Latin Dictionary*.

³⁶ In Scarpa's drawing of the reflected ceiling plan, wood boards mark a rhythm of 55cm center to center along the length of the corridor.

One more chiral reflection can be seen in the way in which both the floor and the ceiling have been 'erroneously' built. With a floor that 'wobbles' and a ceiling that shows the imperfections of a wrongly used machine, the two realms have been made in reflection of the other through a way of building that is not normally accepted. This coincidence shows that both the floor and ceiling are present in two different places at once through our experience of the building. In lifting the floor and bringing down the sky, the two realms join in a magic-real act.

2.2. Double Vision: Left and Right

There are two sides to every question.

Protagoras³⁷

It was known by those working closely with Scarpa that he was ambidextrous: he wrote with his left hand and drew with his right one. This would create a constant fluctuation, generating a field of what is visible or not as he changed hands back and forth across the drawing. In this way, when the right hand was in use, a large area on the left side of the sheet of paper remains more visible, and, conversely, when he was writing with his left hand, the right side of the page became apparent. He would also often write backwards, mirroring right and left sides of written words [fig. 7.30]. As has been noted by Pietropoli, left and right would sometimes be confusing dimensions for Scarpa, a condition that probably led to an opening up of the normal bifurcation between right and left.³⁸ A note by Scarpa near the steps for the *propylei*, for example, states, "*Move to the right. Everyone goes to the right,*" although what he apparently meant was that everybody goes to the left [fig. 7.31].³⁹ A common slip in Scarpa, he sometimes confused and

³⁷ Diogenes Laertius. *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. R.D. Hicks. Volume II (London: William Heinemann, 1925), 462.

³⁸ He also notes the two very different rings that Scarpa used to carry in his left and right hands. Pietropoli has pointed at the role of Scarpa's hands as the female and male dimensions of the architect's work. Pietropoli, "Scarpa's Hands."

³⁹ "*Spostare a destra. Tutti vanno a destra.*" In this drawing the steps have been moved from the center to the left side of the entrance. Guido Pietropoli was the first person to notice and write about such event.

inadvertently switched left and right when writing or speaking. The left and the right will assume an important role in revealing the reflective nature of the entrance and corridor through both the drawings and the experience of the building.

The play between left and right enhances the architect's imagination while drawing. This play of mirrors is a reflection that enables the architect to see more than what can be seen on the thing itself. Left and right sides in architectural drawings have a double reality. On one hand, left and right can pertain to the physical side of the sheet of paper; on the other, there is a right and left belonging to the representation of the building. This simple and common duality among architectural drawings offers a place for Scarpa's imagination to discover and see anew his drawings as he is making them. It is known, for example, that he would sometimes turn the drawing upside down so left would become right and vice versa.⁴⁰ But does it actually matter whether the drawing marks are placed on the right or left side?

Studies of visual cognition have suggested that a viewer typically enters a picture at the left foreground and then moves his or her glance across the visual field toward the right.⁴¹ In his studies on the role of left and right in art, psychologist Charles Gross explains that, "movement from left to right in a painting is easier and faster, while movement from right to left is slower and perceived as having to overcome resistance."⁴² While architectural drawings are very different from paintings, the study seems relevant to the general reading of the architectural drawing as an artifact, since in the West one tends to read drawings the way we read sentences, i.e., beginning from the left side and moving progressively to the right.

Guido Pietropoli, Enrico Renai and Camilla Zanarotti. *La Tomba Brion* (Pieve di Soglio, Treviso: Grafiche Vincenzo Bernardi, 2009).

⁴⁰ An example of this can be seen on chapter 4 on fig. 4...

⁴¹ Charles G. Gross and Marc H. Bornstein. "Left and Right in Science and Art," *Leonardo*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Winter, 1978): 29-38

⁴² *Ibid.*

From this one may observe how Scarpa engages the right and left sides as a mode of investigating architectural qualities. Returning to his studies of the *propylei* [fig. 7.32], the elevation placed on the left side of the sheet of paper depicts an asymmetrical condition in which the left side wall is thicker than the one on the right side, where its thickness is emphasized by the careful play of shadows with a graphite pencil. The right side of the *propylei* is distinct from the left one due to an opening on the upper part of the structure. The thick vertical wall on the left and the horizontal opening on the right balance each other through very opposite formal qualities. On the right side of the sheet, Scarpa draws a longitudinal section of the *propylei* in which both sides, left and right, are emphasized as having distinct elements that frame, as the elevation does, the experience of entering. The framing elements of the *propylei* in the architectural drawing occur in the left and right side of the elevation, and in the left and right sides of the section.

As one experiences the building itself, the *propylei* heightens the differences between right and left by harmonically presenting itself as an asymmetrical figure. In this way the left side is emphasized through an intricate concrete wall, and the right side is presented through a hanging fir that hovers over the entrance [fig. 7.5].⁴³ Moving inside, the leftward steps dislocate one's body from the otherwise centered relationship between the opening and the two rings of the *vesica piscis*, an indication that, while mirrored, the left and right sides of the rings are not exactly identical [fig. 7.33]. The chirality of the *vesica piscis* is heightened by two distinct color mosaics within the rings – red on the left and blue on the right – and, even if one crosses this threshold and turns around, the red and blue maintain their right/left relationship to the body [fig. 7.34]. The reflection is thus made apparent through the disassociation of mirroring the body with mirroring right and left.

Once in the corridor, one's experience is highly conditioned based on the direction of travel. When turning left, the placement of the smooth and shiny stucco *lucido* on the left side reflects the light and offers a partial glimpse of the cemetery beyond [fig. 7.35]. The

⁴³ Pietropoli explains that the original plant died so it was later on replaced by another one. Interview by author, 2014.

opening frames a view of the right side of the arcosolium burial area, and towards the left, San Vito d'Altivole's parish church can be distinguished at the distance. During the summer and spring, various layers of green vegetation participate in the view, with the Dolomites Mountains in the horizon [fig. 7.36]. The luminosity of the stucco *lucido* creates a kind of a ghost image of the right side, enhancing both the aspect of vision as well as touch. On the left side, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, a series of six lines at head height have been cast differently than the rest of the wall, coinciding with the yellow mosaic detail that ends the wall on the outside [fig. 7.37]. While the first impression through touch and vision was the soft and smooth stucco *lucido* on the left side, the second is of roughness and unevenness in these hammered, cast lines on the right one [fig. 7.38]. The play between reflected opposites, rough-smooth, visible-tactile, inside-outside is experienced through one's left and right sides while passing leftward through the corridor.

Contrarily, the walk to the right generates a much different atmosphere and experience [fig. 7.39]. After passing the two rainwater details discussed earlier, the corridor narrows enough so only one person can continue. Arriving at the glass door, one can glimpse backwards through inkling reflections that experientially collapse physical distance [fig. 7.40]. After lowering the vertical glass door, the stucco *lucido*, now on the right, reflects portions of the meditation pavilion ahead and to the left [fig. 7.39]. As one exits the corridor, the path stands surrounded by water on both the left and right sides. On the right side a limiting wall continues throughout while on the left side one is confronted with the openness of the water garden [fig. 7.41]. Again, front and back find each other through opposite qualities that coexist in a reflective condition.

It seems clear through the drawings and the experience of the building and its materials that Scarpa relied on a keen sense of right and left to heighten everyday realizations of light, vision, the body, and touch. Right and left are present as an active mirror whose purpose is not to multiply visible experiences but rather to reveal hidden ones.

2.3. Leaving things Behind: Back and Front

*Everything we see hides another thing,
we always want to see what is hidden by what we see.*

Rene Magritte⁴⁴

Last to explore in this chapter is how perceptions of front and back contribute to the making of the drawing and the experiences of the building. In terms of the drawing, front and back will be examined in three ways. The first lies in relationship to the sheet of paper, which has two sides, a recto and a verso. Scarpa was usually aware of this condition and in fact, would many times use the other side of the paper to draw or note something [fig. 7.42]. Secondly, front and back, as mentioned in part 1, have a key role in section and elevation architectural drawings where architects embody the building as if they were standing up. And finally, front and back have a distinct role in the use of tracing paper added to existing drawings. This was a recurrent practice in the work of Scarpa and as we will see, it also translated into the experience of the building.

Since in our bodily relations we normally relate visibility with what is in front of us, the mirror between front and back has a strong potential to heighten our perception of hidden and revealed. In this way the back side of something is usually understood as the occulted dimension. While the back of our bodies is inaccessible to our eyes, it is nonetheless a place of visual speculation, although, as has been pointed out by Merleau-Ponty, the body always 'sees' beyond its eyes.⁴⁵ In any object as well, front and back can never coincide visually, we either look at one side or the other. Unlike the realms of above

⁴⁴ Cited in Harry Torczyner. *Magritte: Ideas and Images* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.; First edition, 1979), 172.

⁴⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 4-16.

and below, or left and right, there is always an invisible side that characterizes the front and back conditions of things.⁴⁶

Such an occulted state is not irrelevant for architectural drawings, which also have a visible and a hidden side. Although rare today, in early practices the use of both sides of sheet was common due somewhat to the expense of the material, but also because the medium itself was considered an artifact in its own right and not simply a support for the drawing.⁴⁷ In the work of Scarpa, as it was mentioned, it is not rare to find that he would draw on both sides of the sheet of paper. Most of the time a quick note or fast sketch is present on the back, less often one finds fully developed drawings on both sides. In general, however, I could testify that the architect mainly drew on one side of the sheet of paper.⁴⁸ So how does front and back are considered and perhaps highlighted in the work of the Venetian architect? While it becomes much easier to answer the question by examining the building, I would like to suggest that an awareness of the occulted dimension of front and back exists in his actual drawings as we will see.

As we have seen, architects connect with the above and below dimensions of their plan drawings through acts of embodiment in conjunction with perceiving the marks of the drawing as an artifact. At the same time, elevations and sections rely on the body and its front and back dimensions as if one were standing upright. In architectural drawings, the often hidden, rear conditions of a building are exposed through making a section in the opposite direction through the occulted view, a situation that is exemplified the elevation and section studies of the *propylei* structure [fig. 7.32]. The necessity for constantly changing views in the design is, perhaps, a necessity that relates to the back of things, in

⁴⁶ Embodying the conditions of above and below also offers an invisible dimension. At a distance, however, below and above can be visible, not like front and back, which can never be seen simultaneously.

⁴⁷ Marco Frascari. "The Drafting Knife and Pen," in ed. Robert Miller. *Implementing Architecture* (Atlanta: Nexus Press, 1988). Marco Frascari. "A reflection on paper and its virtues within the material and invisible factures of architecture" in: *From Models to drawings: Imagination and Representation in Architecture*, eds. Marco Frascari, Jonathan Hale and Bradley Starkey (London: Routledge 2010): 23-33.

⁴⁸ In three years of research and extensive visits to the archives I have seen more than 1,000 drawings of the architect. While I have examined recto-verso drawings, the majority of the work exists on one side of the sheet of paper.

other words, that which is occulted. This desire to expose the invisible potential of the back side is, for Scarpa, deeply intertwined with the drawing's sense of embodiment, something that may be observed through the presence of human figures in his drawings.

In architectural drawings, when figures are more than simply gray silhouettes, they are usually drawn in profile or in front view, as if they were looking at us or we at them.⁴⁹ Scarpa, however, often draws human figures with their backs toward the observer of the drawing. In reading architectural drawings, when we see a human figure looking at us, we embody this condition not by thinking that the human figure is looking beyond the drawing, behind us, but we understand that the figure is looking at the same thing we are. In other words, the person reading or making the drawing mirrors his/her own experience in the human figure in the drawing. Consequently, we imagine we are in the building, just like the figure is, but we look at the building instead of away from it. When a human figure is drawn with his/her back toward us, however, we become aware of our backs, speculating about what is behind. In an elevation drawing for the *propylei*, Scarpa does exactly this with a female naked body [fig. 7.43]. He draws the woman's back, immediately connecting the drawing with the old cemetery behind and with the backside of the *propylei* entrance. When seeing the woman's back, we inevitably embody her back by becoming aware of our own, as in Rene Magritte's painting, *Not to Be Reproduced*, where the drawing reflects back that which we are seeing and becomes part of our own bodies [fig. 7.44]. In Magritte's impossible reflection we encounter the contradiction of sensing our backs by seeing a back that is not ours. Just like when we often sympathize with the emotional state of figures in a drawing, we also internalize body postures and how they present themselves to us. Perhaps Scarpa's drawing reveals his attempt to bring together two impossible coincidental sides for vision, where through this impossibility an awareness of the double-sidedness condition of the front and back realms is acutely present.

⁴⁹ Frascari, *Eleven Exercises*, 80-83.

Another instance where the back and front dimensions are recognized occurs through the use of fragments of tracing paper layered over existing drawings. In a drawing of one of the corridor walls, for example, where Scarpa is working on the pulley system for the corridor's internal glass door, the fact that the overlap of drawings occurs through physical fragments of paper allows the back and front dimensions of the wall to physically interact with the life of the drawing [fig. 7.45]. Over the pulley system portion of the drawing he places a piece of tracing paper and arrives at an alternative design for the detail. Tracing paper, a translucent material, has two sides in which whatever occurs on one is evident on the other. The use of tracing paper in the work of Scarpa is quite varied, although in this case he uses it indicate how the back and front dimensions are intertwined. The layering of tracing paper over a drawing not only creates a physical relationship between two sheets of paper, one at the back, another at the front, but it simultaneously reverses the front and back conceptual conditions of the drawing problem. The piece of tracing paper attempts to uncover what still remains occulted, while that which occupies the physical realm of the back is what in its front and open condition needs to be occulted in order to reconsider the design. The unfolding of the back dimension, the wall, occurs, paradoxically, on the front side of the paper. In other words, Scarpa certainly imagines the back of the wall while drawing the front. The trace paper is actually tracing over both the front and the back of the wall, even though physically it is simply on top of the elevation drawing.

Recognition of our front and back bodily conditions are addressed throughout the cemetery. However, the initial sequence of experiences when accessing the *propylei* and corridor is exceptional, relying not only on front and back conditions but also on the interrelation between above and below. After walking the linear path of the old cemetery and leaving behind the homogenous landscape of marble tombs, one encounters a series of two gates: the first, created by the *propylei* concrete structure, and beyond, a bounded view of the *vesica piscis* which opens out onto the lawn [fig. 7.46]. Due to the difference in elevation between the two gates (77 cm), one tends to look slightly upwards while

entering [fig. 7.17]. At the same time, one is confronted with the need to look slightly down in order to go up the steps. Arriving at the corridor level, what seemed distant and incomplete a second ago is now very close due to the size of the *vesica piscis* opening, a situation that Scarpa imagined quite clearly. Frascari has noted that at this arrival point one confronts one's own front head in the cold metal intersection of the *vesica piscis* opening.⁵⁰ The shiny color tiles, built with a layer of gold leaf in between, slightly reflect the backside of the entrance. In turning back towards the old cemetery, one encounters a world above previously unnoticed. [fig.7.47] Now, in order to glimpse at the old cemetery, one needs to look slightly downwards. Once again actions are mirrored through opposite actions instead of identical ones, enriching and re-framing that which is bonded with its opposite side.

There are many more details where front and back are found reflecting the other in the *propylei* and *corridor* edifices, as well as in the rest of the cemetery. I have tried to illustrate here perhaps the most significant examples. In the Brion cemetery, leaving things behind often means that they magically reappear in front of us as the apparition of something previously thought gone.

3. Reflective Reflections

He waited till he had seen her enter the fourth garden of the terrace. She did not turn her head to see if he was watching but he was not cast down because he knew she had a trick of seeing things without using her eyes frankly.

James Joyce in *Stephen Hero*⁵¹

⁵⁰ Marco Frascari. "A New Corporeality of Architecture" *Journal of Architectural Education*, Vol. 40, No. 2, Jubilee Issue (Winter, 1987): 22-23.

⁵¹ James Joyce. *Stephen Hero*. (Norfolk, Conn: New Directions, 1963).

The frontispiece of the second *New Science* by Giambattista Vico holds an important clue on the topic of reflection that has been developed in this chapter [fig. 7.48].⁵² Observing the ray of light emanating from the eye of divine providence, situated amidst parting clouds, the light is reflected from the chest of Metaphysic, carefully balanced on an orb of the world, to a statue of Homer, who represents the first poet. Vico explains that at the point where the ray touches Metaphysic, she wears a glassy, convex jewel which acts as a mirror:

Furthermore it [the convex jewel] indicates that the knowledge of God does not have its end in metaphysics taking private illumination from intellectual things and thence regulating merely her own moral conduct, as hitherto the philosophers have done. For this would have been signified by a flat jewel, whereas the jewel is convex, thus reflecting and scattering the ray abroad, to show that metaphysics should know God's providence in public morals or civil customs, by which the nations have to come into being and maintain themselves in the world.⁵³

The ray of light from Metaphysic does not merely fall over Homer, who is blind, but it falls on his back, which constitutes a second place of invisibility for us, the readers. This invisibility is heightened in the contrast between Metaphysic, illuminated in the front, and the poet, who receives light on his back. The ray over Homer signifying Metaphysic's descent into the "crude minds of the first founders among the gentile nations, all robust sense and vast imagination," is one that occurs through an occulted reflection.⁵⁴ In other words, Metaphysic sees the divine light of God reflected in the activities of men, yet she

⁵² Many scholars and thinkers have analyzed this frontispiece at length. For full interpretations see the work of Donald Kunze and Donald Verene. Scholar Margherita Frankel has argued that the entire frontispiece itself acts as mirror of the structure of the theory of history that Vico develops since he uses images first to explain the work, just like the first language of man used hieroglyphs. Frankel, Margherita. "The "Dipintura" and the Structure of Vico's *New Science* as a Mirror of the World," in *Vico, past and present*, ed. Giorgio Tagliacozzo (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1981), 49.

⁵³ Vico, *New Science*, 5: §5.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

sees this divine light from man's hidden side.⁵⁵ The light that the jewel in her chest spreads over Homer is the same light, reflected, that she sees in the poetic wisdom of men. The occulted location of the ray over Homer can be understood through this passage:

And they [philosopher and philologists] should have begun with metaphysics, which seeks its proofs not in the external world but within the modifications of the mind of him who meditates it. For, as we have said above, since this world of nations has certainly been made by men, it is within these modifications that its principles should have been sought. And human nature, so far as it is like that of animals, carries with it this property, that the senses are its sole way of knowing things.⁵⁶

Metaphysic seeks to grasp the reflection of the divine light in such modifications of the human mind. This apprehension, Verene suggests, cannot be made through a rational method:

...Metaphysic requires a positive connection with the poets, with the power of *fantasia* (imagination) to bring forth its truth. Metaphysic can make its truths or intelligibilities only if it makes them through a transformation of the original form in which they are made by the poets in their practice of *sapientia poetica* (poetic wisdom).

No convertibility of the true and the made is possible by a method of doubt or rational reasoning though supposition.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Donald Verene has stated that: "Through metaphysic the divine order is reflected into the world of civil things" Thora Bayer and Donald P. Verene, *Giambattista Vico: Keys to the New Science: Translations, Commentaries, and Essays* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 155.

⁵⁶ Vico, *New Science*, §374

⁵⁷ Ibid.

If Metaphysic is able to see the reflection of the divine light in the poetic wisdom of men through a convertibility of the true and the made, that is, through a form of invisibility; how can men seek to see such divine light? Because men have created the civil world, they can know its truth through their own minds. However, since men did not create their own minds or nature, they cannot know them from within, but they can see them from the outside, as reflections. This reflection, Vico explains, occurs through one's body:

The human mind is naturally inclined by the senses to see itself externally in the body, and only with great difficulty does it come to attend to itself by means of reflection.⁵⁸

Because the human mind cannot see itself directly, it finds through poetic wisdom a reflection of itself in things outside itself. In depicting the poetic wisdom of men through a blind person, Homer, Vico appears to confirm that the divine light, just like the mind, cannot be seen with human eyes, that is, it is invisible. However, the poet does not deny such invisibility; on the contrary, as Donald Kunze has stated:

Unlike those with sight, Homer cannot see the difference between the helmet and the other objects in the *dipintura*. That is, "poetry cannot distinguish invisibility as such and must present it candidly, directly."⁵⁹

Reflections, it can be said, constitute the poetic construct of how we see ourselves internally by means of the external world. Architecture can enhance the poetic nature of the mind by addressing aspects of invisibility that are manifested through reflections. In the case of the Brion cemetery, it is through the project's own invisibility that the full sense of architecture comes to be experienced. Because every time we move there is something meaningfully behind, unseen or hidden, the sense of that which is invisible, as acting upon how we understand the visible, consciously participates in how we inhabit the

⁵⁸ Vico, *New Science*, §236

⁵⁹ Donald Kunze. Unpublished manuscript, Vico #3: "The Actual Beginning," 2014.

building. Scarpa places the body of the inhabitant outside, but in the building, in order to allow the body of the inhabitant to feel the building inside. The same occurs in Scarpa's practice of drawing, where a space of invisibility is opened up by a rich intensification of marks, formats and media, as well as the architect's embodiment of the drawing. As they become visible, fragments of the multiplicity of reflections simultaneously become invisible. This reflective practice of drawing transpires in a reflective experience of the building, that, like a magic mirror, shows more about the building and of ourselves than what we can fully understand.

Figures Chapter 7

Fig. 7.1

'Lavandaia'

Artist: Antonio Donghi

1922

Oil painting



Fig. 7.2

'La Canzonettista'

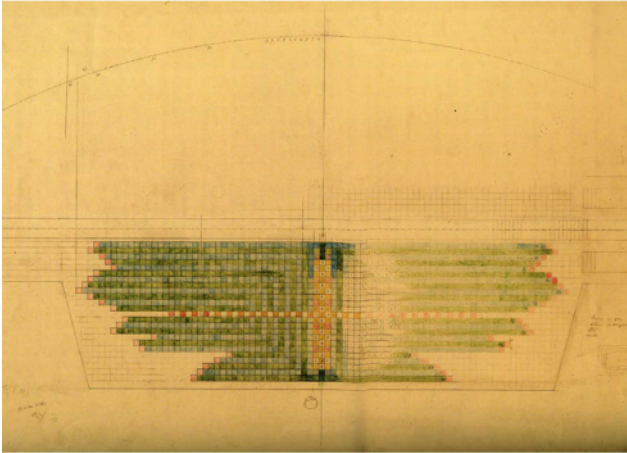
Artist: Antonio Donghi

1925

Oil painting



Fig. 7.3
Arcosolium reflected ceiling plan
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(zoomed image)

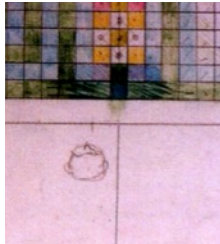


Fig.7.4
Arcosolium ceiling
Photo by Author

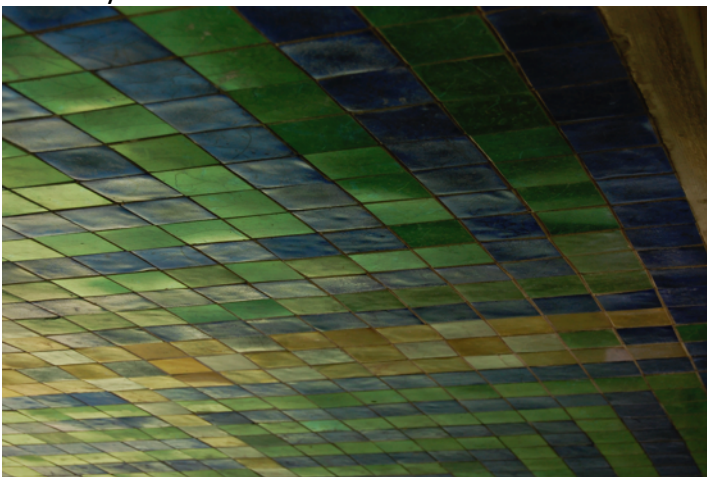


Fig. 7.5
Cemetery entrance - *propylei*
Photo by Paul Emmons



Fig. 7.6
Propylea Acropolis
Athens, Greece



Fig. 7.7
Entrance Brion cemetery through the old cemetery of San Vito



Fig. 7.8
Propylei section (detail)
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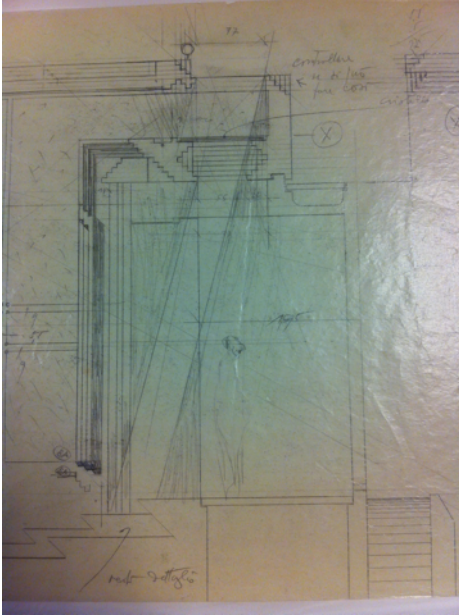


Fig. 7.9
Propylei section (detail)
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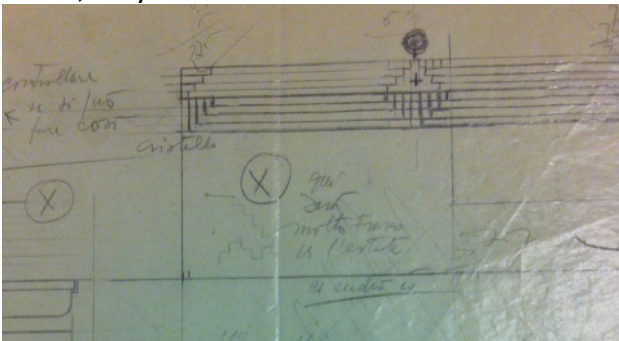


Fig. 7.10
"Hieratic Suprematist Cross"
Kazimir Malevich
(large cross in black over red on white)
1920-1921.
© Collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam



Fig. 7.11
Propylei elevation, section and floor plan
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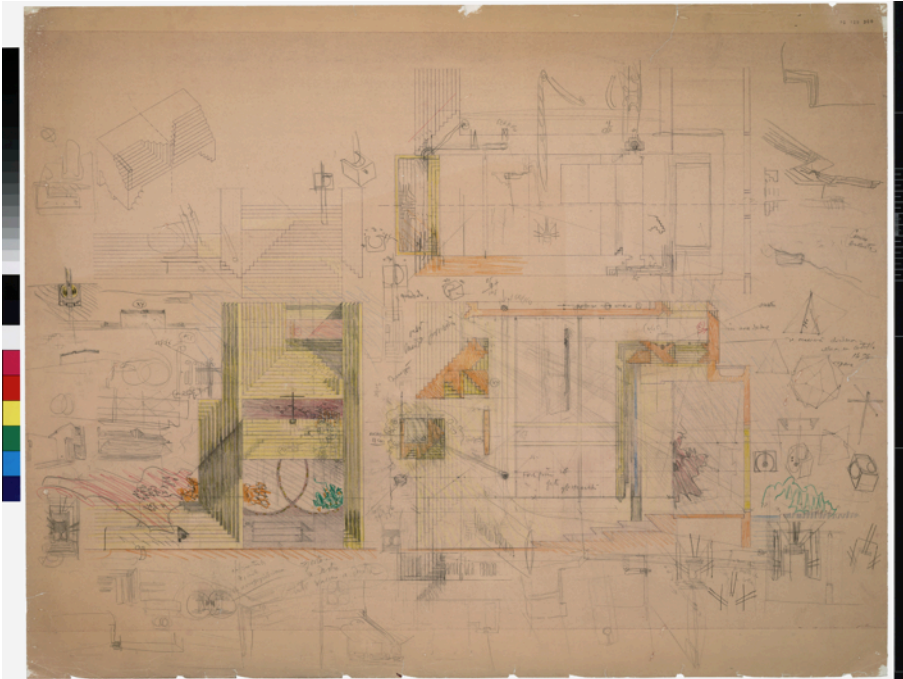


Fig. 7.12

Propylei elevation, section and floor plan (detail of copied base drawing)

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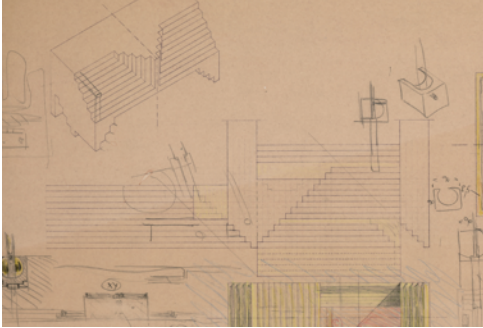


Fig. 7.13

Propylei elevation, section and floor plan (detail diagonal lines)

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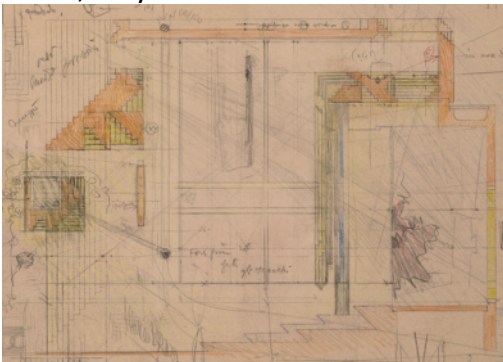


Fig. 7.14

Propylei elevation, section and floor plan (detail Scarpa sight and head)

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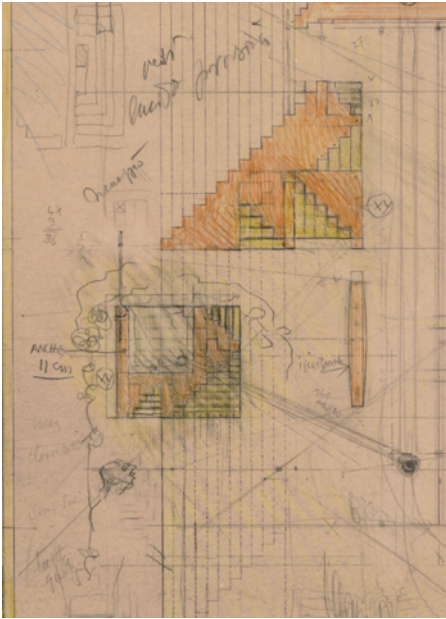


Fig. 7.15

Propylei elevation, section and floor plan (detail Scarpa sight)

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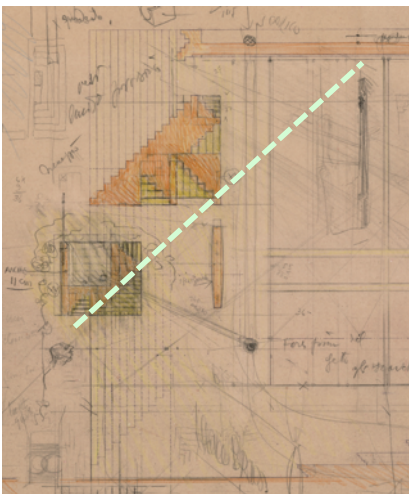


Fig. 7.16
Propylei elevation, section and floor plan (detail horizons)
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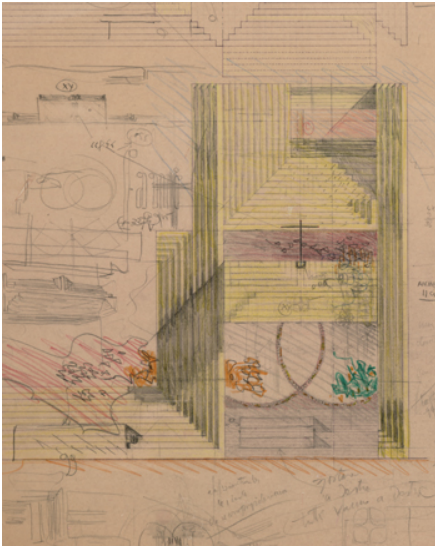


Fig. 7.17
Propylei inside
Photo by author



Fig. 7.18
Propylei inside
Photo by author



Fig. 7.19
Corridoio floor
Photo by author



Fig. 7.20
Corridoio floor right side
Photo by author



Fig. 7.21
Corridoio and pool underneath construction
Photo by Gianni Berengo Gardin
1972
© Gianni Berengo Gardin , CISA A. Palladio, Vicenza, Italy

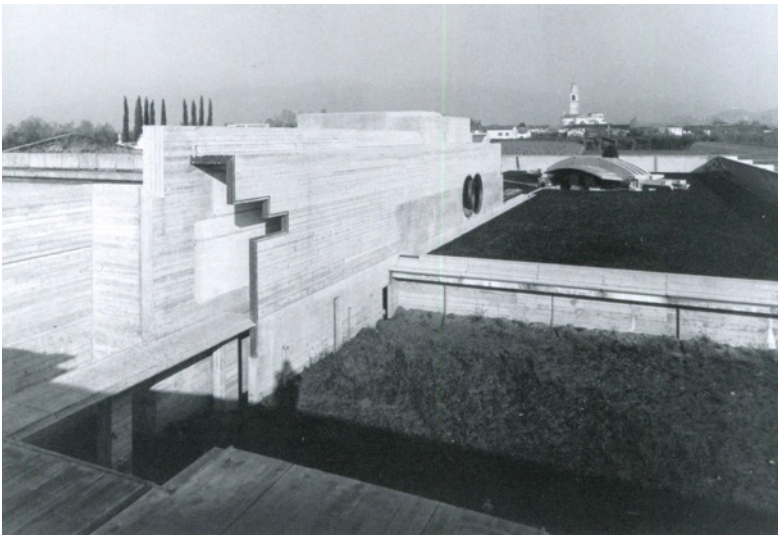


Fig. 7.22
Corridoio floor drainage detail
Photo by author



Fig. 7.23
Glass door at *corridoio* (detail)
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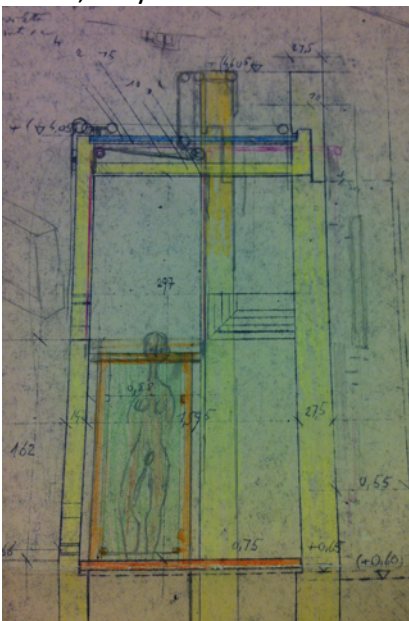


Fig. 7.24
Corridoio floor drainage detail
Photo by author



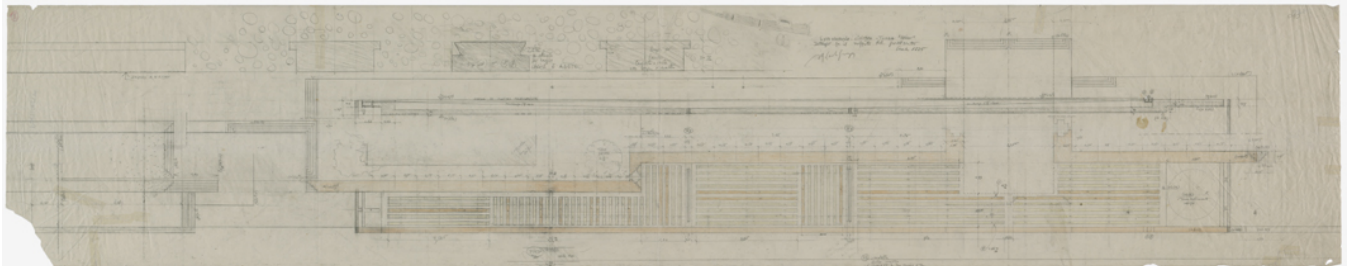
Fig. 7.24
Corridoio ceiling
Photo by Author



Fig.7.25
Corridoio ceiling
Photo by Paul Emmons



Fig. 7.26
Corridoio reflected ceiling plan
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zoomed area

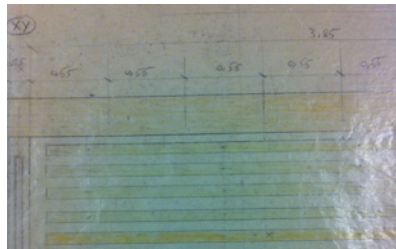
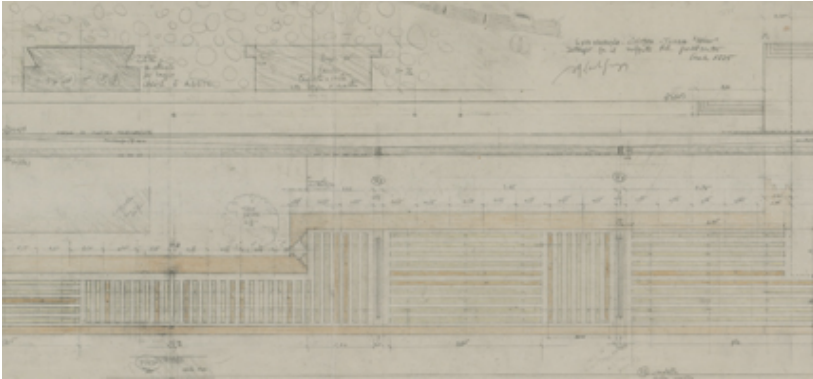


Fig. 7.27

Corridoio floor plan

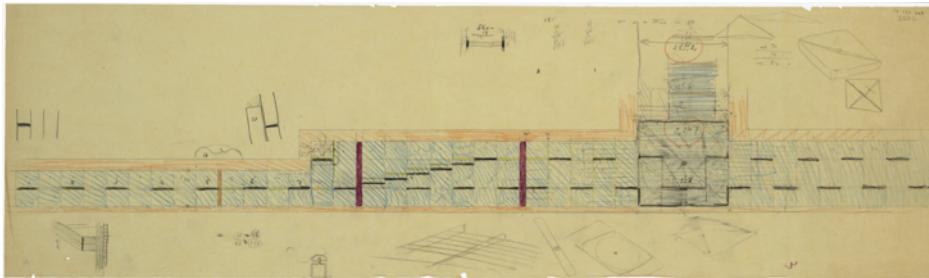
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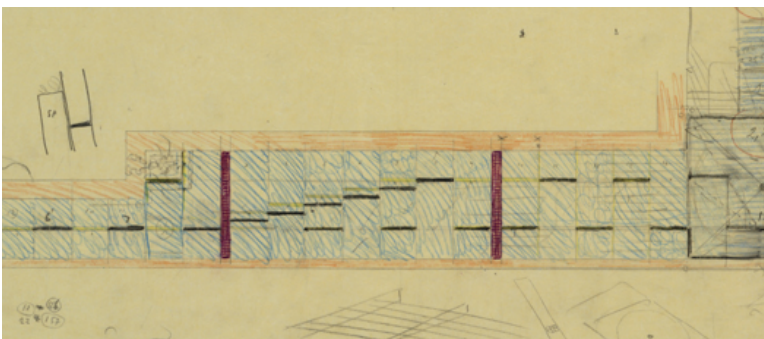


Fig. 7.28
Roof drainage on *corridoio* ceiling
Photo by Paul Emmons



Fig. 7.29
Corridoio roof drainage diagram (turn page to see section)

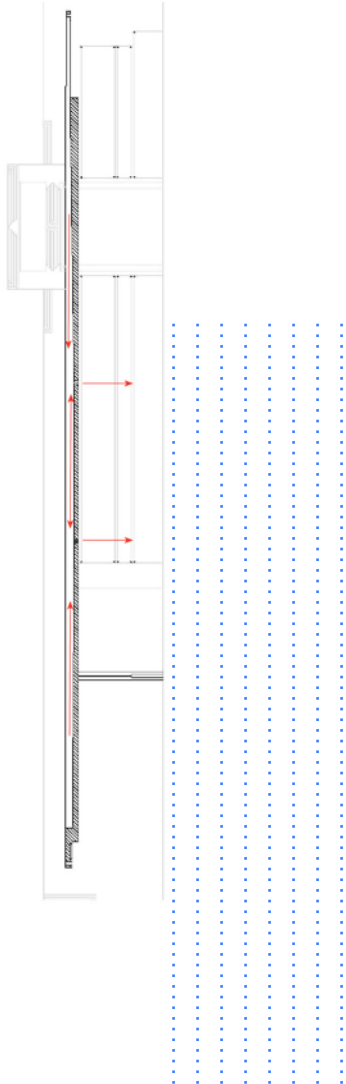


Fig. 7.30

Chapel wood door sketches (lower left, last sentence is written backwards and it reads: "teatro olimpico")

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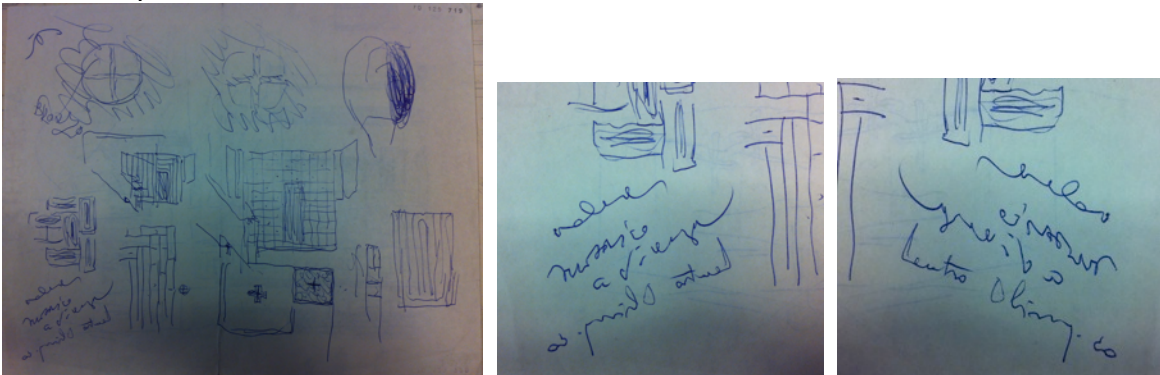


Fig. 7.31

Propylei elevation, section and plan (detail)

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Fig. 7.32

Propylei elevation, section and plan (detail)

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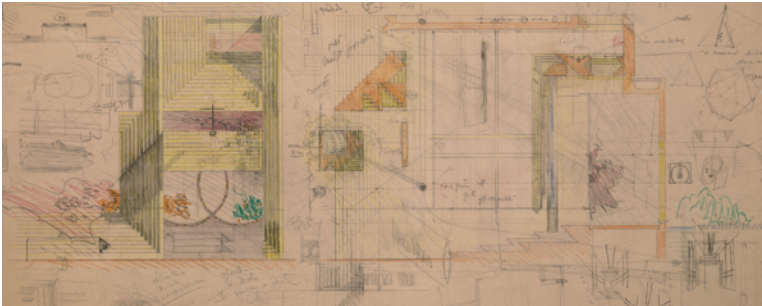


Fig. 7.33

Vesica Piscis opening on *corridoio* wall (interior)

Photo by author



Fig. 7.34
Vesica Piscis opening on *corridoio* wall (exterior)
Photo by author



Fig. 7.35
Corridoio
Photo by author

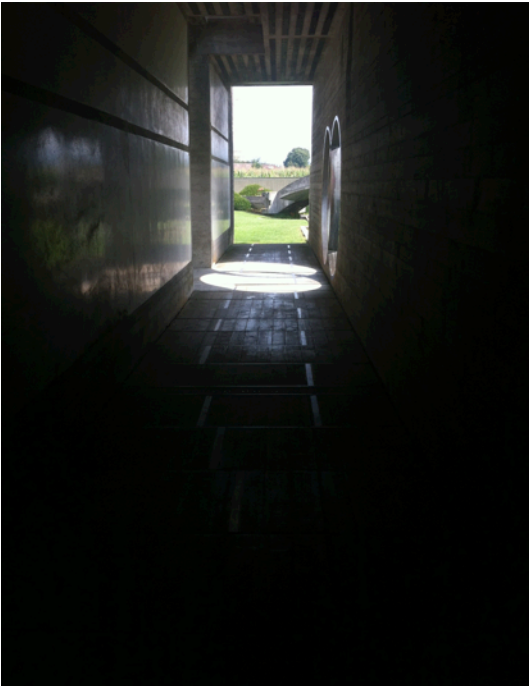


Fig. 7.36

View from *corridoio* towards Dolomite Mountains

Photo by Author



Fig. 7.37

Corridoio wall with glass mosaic edge (exterior view)

Photo by author

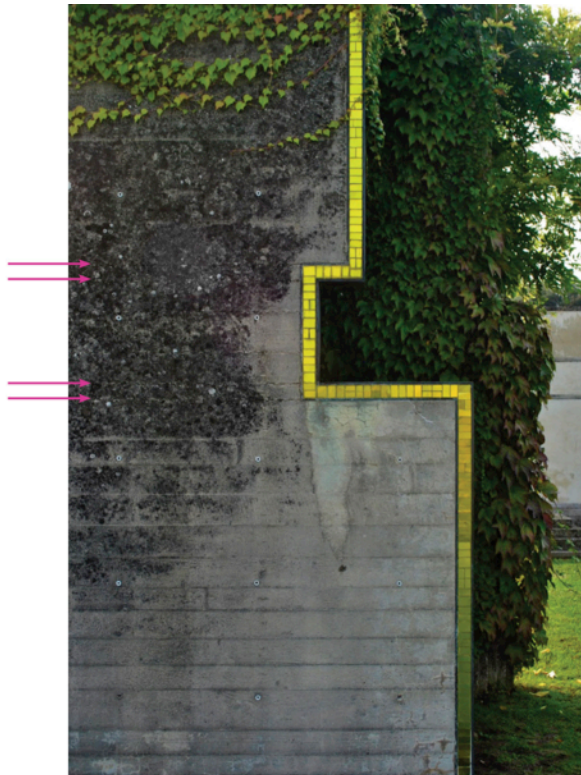


Fig. 7.38
Left and right side of corridoio interior walls' details
Photo by author



Fig. 7.39
Corridoio area towards the *Padiglioncino* (water pavilion)
Photo by author



Fig. 7.40
Glass door
Photo by Author



Fig. 7.41
End of *corridoio* area / path to *padiglione*
Photo by author



Fig. 7.42
Section and plan of *arcosolium* and Brion tombs
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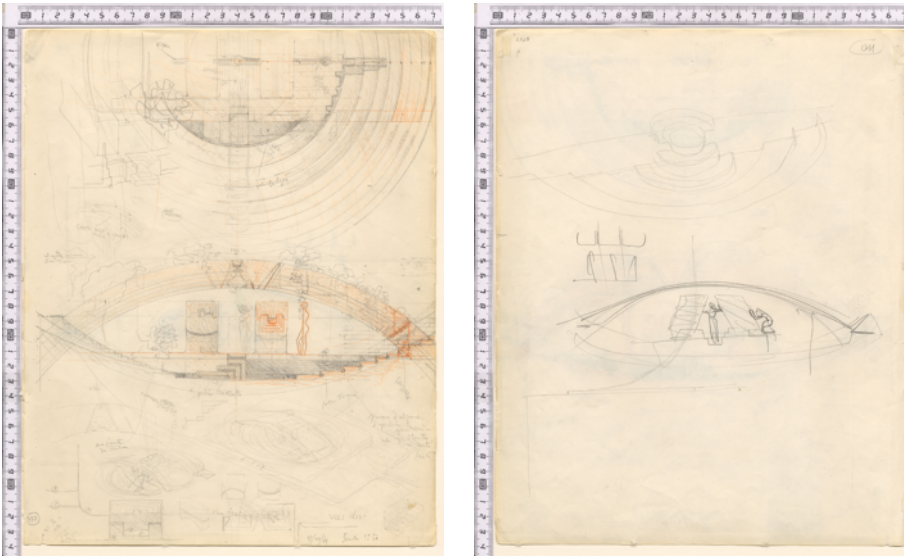


Fig. 7.43
Propylei elevation (detail)
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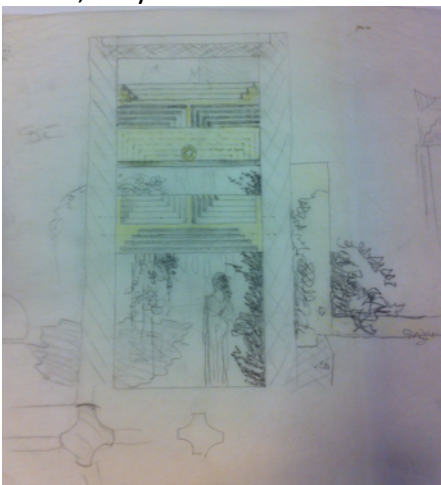


Fig. 7.44

'Not to be Reproduced'

Rene Magritte

1937

© Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen



Fig. 7.45

Corridoio external wall elevation

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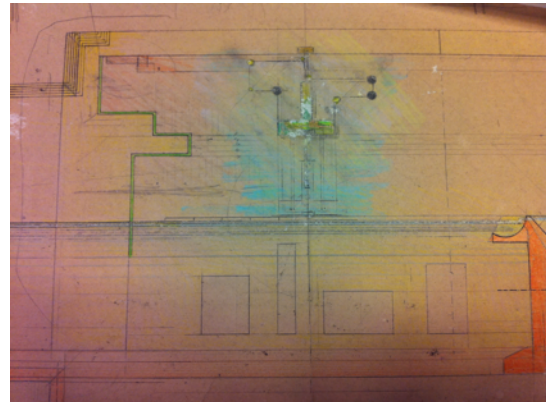
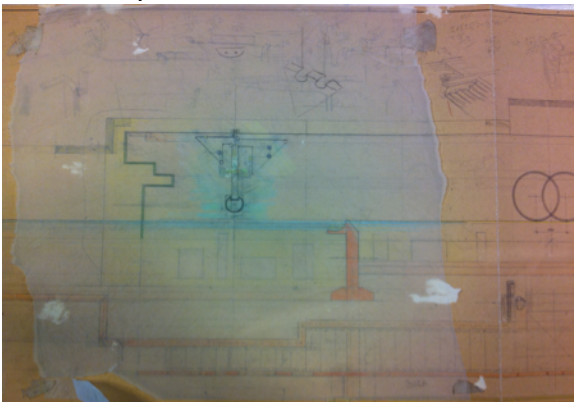


Fig.7.46

Vesica Piscis at corridoio elevation

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Fig. 7.47

View from *propylei* towards old cemetery

Photo by Author



Fig. 7.48
The New Science of Giambattista Vico frontispiece



Chapter 8

Appearing Lines: an epiphany in the octave

1. Enlightening Window

I was gazing out of the window, he answered, looking at the sky and the Green. Lord God! I felt so full of despair. Sometimes I am taken that way: I live such a strange life – without help of sympathy from anyone. Sometimes I am afraid of myself. I call those people in the college not men but vegetables... Then while I was cursing my own character I saw you.

Stephen Hero by James Joyce¹

Stephen Hero, a novel written by Irish writer James Joyce and a book owned by Carlo Scarpa, illuminates the theoretical framework of this chapter. An early version of Joyce's well-known novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, published in 1916, *Stephen Hero* concerns the life of the young Stephen Daedalus and his rejection and resistance towards academic and religious institutions, family and country. As a young poet, Stephen questions society's norms and cultivates an independent way of thinking that investigates accepted social customs. Throughout the novel Stephen wonders about the true spirit of emotions and reflects upon the arts, literature and youth. The novel weaves everyday life events of Stephen's existence and his friends with profound reflections that continuously lead to new questions. In one instance during a conversation with his friend Cranly, Stephen considers the nature of beauty by stating:

I don't believe that beauty is fortuitous. A man might think for seven years at intervals and all at once write a quatrain which would immortalize him seemingly without thought or care - seemingly. Then the

¹ Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, 197.

groundling will say: "O, he could write poetry": and if I ask "How was that?" the groundling will answer "Well, he just wrote it, that's all."²

Stephen suggests in this paragraph that beauty cannot arrive from nothing; rather the work of the artist entails constant work and exercise. Only through a perpetual search does the artist create conditions that offer a propensity toward making something beautiful in an instant. Although the actions by which beauty manifests may not be evident beforehand, it does not mean those actions at play in the final emergence of the beautiful had not already existed. Such an observation by Stephen recalls the great story told by Italo Calvino in his *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* from his memo on *Quickness*.³ He tells the story of a Chinese king who commissions an expert craftsman, Chuang-tzu', to make a perfect drawing of a crab. To this request the craftsman solicits from the king five years of time, a country house, and twelve servants. After five years pass, the artist, not yet having performed the drawing, asks the king for five more years. After ten years, Chuang-tzu' one day takes up his brush and immediately draws the most perfect crab.⁴ The story illustrates a form of working that involves an aspect of slow gestation as crucial for making, even when the final action is performed spontaneously and seemingly 'as coming from nowhere.' The story does not tell us what the craftsman does during the ten years, but it does expose the idea that these years play an essential role in the precipitation of beauty.

Returning to Stephen's thought that beauty is not fortuitous opens up the question: how exactly is this moment of beauty constructed through a sudden action that in fact has been gestated over time? Joyce gives as a clue later in the novel when Stephen quotes Aquinas' notion of beauty. He explains:

² Ibid., 185.

³ Calvino, *Six Memos*, 31-54.

⁴ Ibid, 54.

The three things requisite for beauty are, integrity, a wholeness, symmetry and radiance. [...] Consider the performance of your own mind when confronted with any object, hypothetically beautiful. Your mind to apprehend that object divides the entire universe into two parts, the object, and the void which is not the object. To apprehend it you must lift it away from everything else: and then you perceive that it is one integral thing that is *a* thing. You recognize its integrity.⁵

Stephen continues explaining to his friend Cranly:

That is the first quality of beauty: it is declared in a simple sudden synthesis of the faculty which apprehends. What then? Analysis then. The mind considers the object in whole and in part, in relation to itself and to other objects, examines the balance of its parts, contemplates the form of the object, traverses every cranny of the structure. So the mind receives the impression of the symmetry of the object. The mind recognizes that the object is in the strict sense of the word, *a thing*, a definitely constituted entity. You see?

Continuing and concluding with the third quality, the young man tells his friend:

Now for the third quality. For a long time I couldn't make out what Aquinas meant. He uses a figurative word (a very unusual thing for him) but I have solved it. *Claritas is quidditas*. After the analysis which discovers the second quality the mind makes the only logically possible synthesis and discovers the third quality. This is the moment which I call epiphany. First we recognize that the object is *one* integral thing, then we recognize that it is an organized composite structure, *a* thing in fact:

⁵ Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, 212.

finally, when the relation of the parts is exquisite, when the parts are adjusted to the special point, we recognize that is *that* thing which it is. Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object, the structure which is so adjusted, seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany.⁶

Stephen's realization of the third requisite for beauty, where the quiddity of something is suddenly grasped, is only present to him after experiencing an epiphany.⁷ In other words, what Stephen calls the "soul of the object" must be *presenced* and does not flourish from *a priori* rational equations or methods. The last requisite of beauty relies, then, on a spiritual connection between oneself and "the soul of the object." Epiphanies are, according to Stephen, the "most delicate and evanescent of moments."⁸ They seem to briefly open a window that allows us to see reality in its heightened state. An epiphany is a way of grasping something's essence so that the whole thing appears to oneself anew. In a strange way, an epiphany manifests a re-appearing of something that has always been there. However, the re-appearance becomes the appearance of something one has never been seen, thus, the re-appearance lingers in the realm of being two things: that which has always been and that which has never been to me and only now it can no longer be that which once was.

The word epiphany comes from the late Greek *epiphainein* which means 'to manifest.' It is formed by the prefix *epi-*, meaning 'on,' or 'to,' and the word *phan*, which relates to the Greek *phaino*, *phanos*, *phaneros*, meaning 'illuminating, splendid and clear.'⁹ The verb *phantázein* also meant 'to make visible, present to (or as to) the eye, or to bring to light.'¹⁰

⁶ Ibid., 213.

⁷ 'He was passing through Eccles' St one evening, one misty evening, with all these thoughts dancing the dance of unrest in his brain when a trivial incident set him composing some ardent verses which he entitled a "Vilanelle of the Temptress.'" Ibid., 211.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ This comes into classical Latin as *phantasma*, meaning 'appearance, vision, dream, ghost, apparition.' OED, 2014.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Not surprisingly, the Latin word *fenestra* (in Italian, *finestra*) derives from this same Greek root and meant ‘an opening in the wall to allow light to come in.’¹¹ For Cicero, *fenestra* was also related to the senses and could mean a ‘window for intelligence,’ or, in related contexts, could even signify an ‘entrance, admission, opportunity and occasion.’¹² A window was thus understood as a place for enlightenment as well as a place that enlightens, and it is within all these words circumvolving the meaning of epiphany that an opening to an essential aspect of reality is revealed. In the case of Joyce and his character Stephen Daedalus, it occurs through writing; and in the case of Carlo Scarpa, as we will see, it happens through drawing.

Joyce, an active participant of the “900,” *Cahiers d'Italie et d'Europe* Italian international magazine that Bontempelli directed, was already questioning notions of reality that resonate with Bontempelli’s 1926 manifesto on magic realism [fig. 8.1].¹³ While Bontempelli did not use the notion of ‘epiphany’ per se, he did use a similar concept to define a key aspect of the magic real through the word *stupore*, or stupor:

Art was given to men to create in him the pleasure for miracles and marvels. Men can obtain a marvel by two ways: discovering the law of things (the child who discovers that from trees flowers bloom or that his feet walk), or when with the imagination he can mix and subvert the discovered laws: to walk the trees.¹⁴

¹¹ Short and Lewis. *Latin Dictionary*.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ In the same year that Bontempelli introduced magic realism in literature, he edited and directed, the journal ‘900’ *Cahiers d'Italie et d'Europe* together with Cruzio Malaparte, where surrealist and magic realist artists and writers could be published. The idea was to expose this new form of literature throughout Europe. The journal was published in French and in Italian. Bontempelli translated for the first time the work of Joyce in Italian. Bontempelli thought that a new art form could emerge out of the intimacy between reality and fantasy practiced through the imagination. He proposed that the imagination could be “the instrument to liberate ourselves from the repetition of the old and create an atmosphere that favors the new.” Bontempelli, *Realismo Magico*, 72.

¹⁴ “L’arte fu data all’uomo per creargli il piacere del miracolo e della meraviglia. –L’uomo può ottenere la meraviglia per due vie: - scoprendo le leggi delle cose (il bambino quando scopre che dagli alberi spuntano i fiori; che i suoi piedi camminare) – oppure quando con l’immaginazione si riesce a mescolare e sovvertire le leggi scoperte: far camminare gli alberi.” Ibid.

In either case comes into play the stupor (*stupore*), from there is born the enchantment that we call art, poetry. In other words, that which is reality, nature, must, in order to acquire an art value be dominated by the imagination. The art of dominating nature, used to be called once <<magic>>.¹⁵

To be in a state of stupor is to be in awe or wonder while at the same time having a realization of something that was not expected. In a similar way, an epiphany provides a sudden suspension of sensibility through a mental stupefaction that reveals something never seen before. Magic real writers and artists invited the possibility of stupor through a very close reading of everyday life phenomena and objects. In the re-telling or re-construction the everyday life, new and enchanting realizations would emerge simply because unseen events were already there. In Bontempelli's 1926 manifesto he emphasizes, in addition to previously mentioned points, the fundamental importance of construction or making and the value of architecture as a paradigm for art since each art is a construction of form.¹⁶ In addition, Bontempelli suggests that tradition must not be a mechanical inheritance of facts but a continuous re-encountering that offers the possibility of re-discovery.¹⁷ Within such re-discovery, the known thing presents itself to the artist as unknown and it is within such an unknown realm that a new reality emerges which provides novel insights into the previous one. An epiphany is, precisely, the realization that something which has always been there suddenly appears and presents itself as something never seen before.

Because epiphanies linger in the realm of experiencing and making, their potency is not foreign to the construction of architectural drawings. As a form of juggling between

¹⁵ *"Nell'uno e nell'altro entra in gioco lo stupore, da cui nasce l'incanto che chiamiamo arte, poesia. In altre parole, ciò che è realtà, natura, deve, per acquistare un valore d'arte, essere dominato dall'immaginazione. L'arte di dominare la natura, s'è chiamata un tempo <<magia>>."* Ibid, 72-73.

¹⁶ Ibid., 129.

¹⁷ Ibid.

elements that are known as well as unknown, the propensity for epiphanies to happen as the architect draws is exceptionally high. Rarely are these realizations captured or recorded in the history of architectural drawings because their sudden apparition while working generally remains occulted within the memory of the architect. In a strange way it could be said that an epiphany is a form of 'not-making' while the drawing is being made. In other words, the drawing has the potential to present itself as a separate entity from that which the architect is making. If an epiphany occurs between these two realms, that which was not-made enters into the realm of something that needs to be made. Is there a way of drawing, then, that would facilitate the emergence of epiphanies? A close examination of a drawing of the main access door to the Brion chapel will help to untangle the existence, role, and propensity of epiphanies in architectural drawings.

2. Facing the Facts

It surprised him to see that the play which he had known at rehearsals for a disjointed lifeless thing had suddenly assumed a life of its own. It seemed now to play itself, he and his fellow actors aiding it with their parts.

James Joyce in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*¹⁸

We have already seen that, for Scarpa, architectural elements are not simply taken at face value, but they are something which reveals their own and unique quiddity. The design for the main entry door to the Brion chapel is no exception: it is not just one door but a door contained within a larger door, an assembly that acts also as a wall in certain cases. It consists of a metal frame structure of 60 x 30 mm steel modules filled with white cement cast in glass shuttering, and it is hung from a single pivoting steel column of 60 x 60 millimeters.¹⁹ The pivot, located on the left side as seen from the exterior, allows the entire panel to rotate towards the interior, creating a large opening [fig. 8.2]. Scarpa

¹⁸ James Joyce. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1994), 59.

¹⁹ Marco Frascari. "The Body and Architecture in the Drawings of Carlo Scarpa." *Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 14 (Autumn, 1987): 132.

wanted to decorate this element of the chapel as if with a 'ribbon', in a unique shape.²⁰ The entire door-wall is subdivided in a playful array of horizontal and vertical lines, emphasizing the number eight [fig. 8.3]. Placed within this structure, a small door opening is emphasized by a perimeter of small crosses cast into the white cement, creating an 'aura' that frames the upper portion of the alternative entry point [fig. 8.4]. When the large door is shut, the smaller wood door allows access to the chapel [fig. 8.5].

Scarpa seems to have been particularly concerned with the double-sided aspects common to doors. This not only refers to the two physical sides of the door, but also to the double-sided experience of entering and exiting, particularly in a place like a chapel, where the contrast between the external everyday world and the internal religious event are considerably distinct. Perhaps this duality is what allows the architect to conceive the process of entering and exiting as an embodiment of the Roman god, Janus, who has two faces looking at opposite directions [fig. 8.6].²¹ For this reason, as will be shown, the drawings of the door frequently exhibit clear differences between its two opposite sides, primarily in the detailing and location of the ebony woodwork. On the exterior face, a smooth and continuous piece of ebony is placed on the upper portion of the door, and, on the lower portion, a grid of ebony wood planks completes the remaining door area [fig. 8.7]. Seen from the interior, a similar play occurs, only that the order of the two wood portions has been inverted, where the smooth piece of wood that constituted the upper part of the exterior face is placed on the lower part of the door [fig. 8.8]. The division between the lower and upper portions is not centered within the door height, although a skinny long window appears centered on the upper portion of the door that relates exactly the area of two columns of the grid below [fig. 8.9 – 8.10].

The drawings of the door within a door is the place where the imagination of the architect provides an opening into an epiphany revealed through his way of working. To begin, in

²⁰ "Sono riuscito a decorare gli elementi da porta principale come un nastro, come un'unica sagoma." Semi, *A Lezione*, 300.

²¹ Marco Frascari also makes the argument on the Janusian aspect of this door in his article: *The Body and Architecture in the Drawings of Carlo Scarpa*, 132.

examining one of the door's most complete and clear drawings, on both sides of the door elevations appears the figure of a woman [fig. 8.11 - 8.12]. In both cases, the woman face is rendered 'on the other side' of the door, where what we see of her is what the window reveals through its opening and transparency. To contrast this frontal view, it is important to mention that the wood door is antagonized with yet a third door-gate into the chapel [fig. 8.13]. Parallel in plan to the Brion couple tombs, one of the sides that forms the quadrangular plan of the chapel holds a gateway shaped as the Greek letter Ω , the last letter of the alphabet that is sometimes associated with the end of life, or the end of things [fig. 8.14].²² Curiously, Scarpa called this opening "the moon" in one of the drawings, and in another one he depicts the opening and the gracious presence of the full body of a woman facing us naked and with her back [fig. 8.15 - 8.16]. If the door within a door is the face of the Janusian entry way into the chapel, the omega opening constitutes its back and opposite face towards the ultimate interior of the sacred shrine.

Returning to the ebony wood door, both sides of the door seem to be understood by the architect through a feminine presence that inhabits the opposite side, or perhaps a presence that actually lives inside the window. The limit where the door detail changes from solid wood to the square grid composition would coincide with the female figure lower waist if the figure was drawn proportionately [fig. 8.17].

An unapparent distortion changes the course of the true body of this mysterious figure, however, whose visibility appears through very distinct features. In the interior and exterior of the door elevation we see three body parts that assures her presence on the other side. First, we see her face, which on the exterior appears from the left side of the window, and from the interior appears from the right. They mirror each other with the only difference being that the woman on the interior side is portrayed as being a few

²² OED, 2014.

centimeters shorter [fig. 8.18]. While drawing the interior elevation of the door, Scarpa does not maintain the position of the woman in relationship to the exterior elevation; that is, he does not draw the woman's back. Instead, when Scarpa shows the interior elevation, he mirrors the woman's apparition through the window. This results in a potent activation of the two sides based on the subtle dislocation of the viewer from normative drawing conventions.

The next body part we see in the elevations is the woman's neck. Compared to a standard female figure, the neck of Scarpa's muse is much more elongated than a female body's average proportions [fig. 8.19]. The elongated neck allows the architect to draw the third body part, the woman's breasts, which as seen in the interior elevation would be much lower than usual for a woman with the face as initially drawn [8.20]. On the exterior elevation, Scarpa does not draw her breast, but we notice a curious detail that resembles the sensual curvature. The detail, colored and carefully measured with a compass, sits at the bottom edge of the glass window frame. The curvature, first drawn in pencil, was subsequently highlighted with yellow color pencil, with the window frame around it emphasized in red tones. The wood for the window frame, Scarpa specifies in other drawings, is rose wood, or *bois de rose* as he called it [fig. 8.21]. This type of wood, clearly associated with femininity, has an exquisite odor.²³ Scarpa, aware of smells in general and particularly the smells of architectural materials, was certainly sentient of the odiferous associations with the use of rosewood in this detail.²⁴ The deliberate change of proportions in the woman's body seem to indicate a desire to play between the curvature of the wood frame and the sensual curvature of the woman's breast. On the interior elevation, the curvature disappears altogether even though the woman's breasts have been clearly marked, emphasizing the crease that is created between the robustness of her features [fig. 8.20].

²³ Rosewood belongs to the family of the *Dalbergia*, and it is commonly used for the making of instruments.

²⁴ The use of rosewood elsewhere in the cemetery can be found on a detail on the Brion tombs.

In the various drawings of the door exterior, the rectilinear window inside is depicted as containing two elements: one is a wooden curved piece on the window frame lower end, sometimes both, lower and upper ends; and the other one is the presence of a possibly brass cross inside the double glazed narrow window [fig. 8.22 - 8.23]. In spite of Scarpa's efforts to draw and carefully design these elements even in plan, [fig. 8.24] the curved wood pieces and the brass cross do not appear in the built door, which simply exhibits a rectangular elongated window. What happened, then, did these elements really disappear from the design?

A closer look at the female figure, who seems to have been Scarpa's muse for this detail, may reveal something about how these elements changed. The sensuality of the woman located behind the door appears to have been absorbed into the reality of the window as a potential presence at any given time in the experience of the building. In other words, by not actually constructing the window with the curved wood frame and the brass cross, Scarpa concretizes the presence of the erotic figure through a detail that desires such presence 'as if inside' the window, but never physically inside. This would mean that the detail he was studying through a positive and fixed presence in the drawing turned into a state of potentiality within the openness of the window frame. It becomes an element to exhibit not just one curve but as many curves as women who go through the door of the edifice. In the built work, the sense of interiority when someone is behind the window is emphasized by the use of two pieces of beveled glass set slightly recessed within each face of the door, creating a play of reflections accentuating a sense of depth [fig. 8.25 - 8.26]. The rose wood inside frame skillfully made showing a stepped profile originally designed in the plan drawing also contributes to enhancing the internal aspects of the window [fig. 8.25]. The possible appearance of a face instead of a cross in this in-between space is also significant in that the presence of a religious symbol is embodied in the expression of each person who goes through the door. The placement of the window in the middle of the door and the fact that in order to go through one needs to step over the bottom edge of the larger door, means that one must pause to look out and down

whenever entering or exiting [fig. 8.13]. This pause allows the one gazing at the door to discover the hidden details activated through its use.

The skinny window proportions indicate that perhaps the purpose of the window is not in facilitating a view in or out, but rather, in bringing attention to the window itself. The reversed intentionality of what we normally assume a window to be disrupts our familiar understanding of its purpose, thus making an exceptional detail in what appears to be at first a very common one. Scarpa's epiphany seems to have been in the shift from the presence of the woman in the detail into a form of absence that would more effectively activate her presence.

The fact that some of the elements in the drawing needed to be removed in order to make present a more profound detail exhibits the action of epiphanies proper to drawing practices. In Scarpa's case the drawing acted as a stage for epiphany in the realization that something which exists in the embodiment of the door, the woman, can appear and present herself as already in the door without needing the sympathetic details of the cross and curved edge. Rather than relying on the physicality of the built detail, the detail is understood as a dynamic structure that appears and disappears as the building is inhabited. It marks a clear sense of presence in a building that celebrates precisely the encounter between life and death.

In being attentive to that which gives life to the drawing, in a *pygmalionic* manner, the woman in the architectural detail becomes alive through the elimination of the detail that was occupying the same space that she was. Scarpa's epiphany consists in the realization that his own 'fictional' marks, i.e. the female figure, can become, quite literally, the detail. The elimination of the curved rosewood detail and the brass cross propelled the detail to become more beautiful by not having a permanent presence in the physical world, but a dynamic and ephemeral one. Perhaps the window waits for the scent of a beautiful woman to come close in order to complete itself through her presence. The epiphany, in

this case, occurred quite literally at the 'epiphany' of the chapel, that is, at the *finestra* or window, and element that manifests light in both the building and Scarpa's imagination.

3. Ingenuous Inconsistencies

Listen for the single word that tells the whole story. Look for the simple gesture that reveals a complex set of relationships. It follows that the writer, like the mystic, must be peculiarly aware of these manifestations. What seem trivial details to others may be portentous symbols to him

Harry Lavin²⁵

When James Joyce published *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, he opened the book with a quote from Ovid's *Metamorphosis*:

Et ignotas animun dimittit in artes²⁶

Referenced from Ovid's story of Daedalus making a set of wings for his son Icarus, Joyce translated this curious sentence as, 'And he sets his mind to work upon unknown arts.'²⁷ The full passage from Ovid reads as below:

Meanwhile Daedalus, hating Crete, and his long exile, and filled with a desire to stand on his native soil, was imprisoned by the waves. 'He may thwart our escape by land or sea' he said 'but the sky is surely open to us: we will go that way: Minos rules everything but he does not rule the heavens'. So saying he applied his thought to new invention and altered the natural order of things [*Et ignotas animun dimittit in artes*]. He laid

²⁵ Levin, Harry. *James Joyce, A Critical Introduction* (Norfolk, Connecticut: A New Directions Books, 1960), 29.

²⁶ Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, Book VIII, 188; Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc. p. 1

²⁷ Ibid

down lines of feathers, beginning with the smallest, following the shorter with longer ones, so that you might think they had grown like that, on a slant. In that way, long ago, the rustic pan-pipes were graduated, with lengthening reeds. Then he fastened them together with thread at the middle, and bees'-wax at the base, and, when he had arranged them, he flexed each one into a gentle curve, so that they imitated real bird's wings. His son, Icarus, stood next to him, and, not realizing that he was handling things that would endanger him, caught laughingly at the down that blew in the passing breeze, and softened the yellow bees'-wax with his thumb, and, in his play, hindered his father's marvelous work.²⁸

As Ovid recounts, Daedalus is the maker that works upon an "unknown art" by changing the natural order of things. The conscious alteration of known rules allows the ingenuous and witty architect to discover a field of invention. It is not a coincidence, then, that Joyce pairs Daedalus with the last name of the novel's main character, Stephen Daedalus. With Stephen the alteration of the natural order is discovered first through a resistance towards tradition as historical and second as a matter of liberation for the poet to write and think in his own words.²⁹ Ernesto Grassi's essay, *'Demythologization of the Real'*, offers important insights in the interpretation of Ovid's trope quoted by Joyce. Grassi's translates Ovid's statement as: "to find spirit in the mysterious art", and he relates Stephen Daedalus' search to the discovery of the spirit in the art of the word. This art was not understood 'as a rational expression' but as that which achieves a transformation of the real through metaphor Grassi expresses that: 'Metaphor is the key to the metamorphosis of the real in order to escape the human labyrinth [*dedalo*];³⁰ this, metaphor does not refer to anything else transcending history but illuminates the source of history in order to define the original space in which it becomes possible."³¹ Through

²⁸ Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, Bk VIII:183-235 Daedalus and Icarus

²⁹ Joyce, *Portrait*,

³⁰ Ernesto Grassi. "Demythologization of the Real: in *Vico and Joyce* ed. Donald Verene, 152.

³¹ *Ibid.*

the transformation of the word that is unique to the artist's search, the spirit of such art emerges and becomes discovered.

Why is this important for understanding the notion of epiphany in architectural drawings, and, more specifically, for understanding Scarpa's epiphany while drawing the chapel's door window? What has been shown in this example, but still merits further exploration, is how Scarpa intentionally employed inconsistencies in his drawing, such as elongating the female figure's proportions, mirroring her body in an unconventional manner, and implementing confusions with up and down. It seems through Scarpa's work that the practiced use of inconsistencies, where the creator disrupts or alters 'the natural order of things', are a requisite exercise in opening up the potential for epiphanies. Interestingly, the notion of inconsistency brings together well Joyce's invocation of Ovid and Scarpa's drawing practices.

In the spirit of inconsistency, we proceed next with the opposite. In Italo Calvino's last written and published work, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, only five of the six proposed essays appear, as the sixth memo was never written due to Calvino's death before the completion of the manuscript.³² Nevertheless, the original table of contents revealed the name for the sixth memo, CONSISTENCY [fig. 8.27]. Piecing together various sources from Calvino, including the other memos themselves, it seems probable that he would have addressed 'inconsistency' in his quest to illuminate that of 'consistency' itself. Calvino himself expresses in one the memos: 'each value or virtue I chose as the subject for my lectures does not exclude its opposite.'³³ In looking at the etymology, consistency is a compound word from the Latin *con-*, 'together', and the word + *sistere* which means 'to cause to stand, place, stand firm, stand still, stop.'³⁴ Consistency, then, means 'to hold

³² Esther Calvino explains that by September of 1985 Calvino had written the five memos to be delivered at Harvard University. She explains that Calvino was planning to write the sixth memo on Consistency in Cambridge, MA. A Note on the Text in Calvino, Italo. *Six Memos*, introduction.

³³ *Ibid.*, 45

³⁴ OED, 2014.

together or to exist together along compatible facts, to co-exist'.³⁵ In cooking, for example, the point of consistency in a sauce is when enough liquid has evaporated and the sauce thickens to the point where it is neither liquid, nor solid, holding its flavors together precisely. Material consistency was a process of transformation that implied holding things apart in order to re-join them. Common in alchemical processes, consistency relied on a procedure that oftentimes required a separation of matter and spirit in order to be rejoined in a stronger and more revelatory way.³⁶ Consistency in this regard was a process with no clear ending and responded to particular qualities rather than general recipes. One could only find the 'right' consistency when it appeared itself through its own transformation. The alchemist work was to set certain conditions for things to begin acting upon each other.

Returning to Ovid's story of Daedalus, Icarus' wings are made by subverting the consistency of natural rules. This allows Daedalus to find a new form of consistency that allows Icarus to fly like no one else had done it before. In the case of Stephen Daedalus, inconsistency is seen in his desire to reject tradition and to find it altogether again by means of his own poetic freedom: "to discover a mode of life or of art whereby your spirit could express itself in unfettered freedom."³⁷ Grassi explains that in Joyce's development of the novel: 'What cannot be explained is and can only be exclusively an object of description in order to see what can "come", come true in the adventure of existence.'³⁸ This process of description that can in itself unveil something never seen before is exactly the point that magic-realist writers and artists were making in their efforts to re-tell reality. Grassi explains that Joyce interests in the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico

³⁵ OED, 2014.

³⁶ 'The opus, the work [Dorn says], consists of two basic steps: first comes the solution, the dissolution of the body; and second the coagulation or condensation of the spirit [by which we can guess he means the opening of the body to the heavenly influence by melting or evaporating it and destroying what we would call the coarse outer appearance], after which the hidden gold appears which has to be coagulated into a new body, and that would be the gold. As you remember, gold is the form separated from the body. These three simple operations are like making the quintessence of wine.' von Franz, Marie-Louise. *Alchemical Active Imagination*. Second Edition. Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc. (1997) p.45

³⁷ Joyce, *Portrait*, 180.

³⁸ Grassi, .158.

come from his 'approaches born from ingenuity', or from the fact that 'the reality that overlaps daily life is born from the ingenious association that is not an unconscious one but a "new" unveiling of the real, the imaginative, from which metaphorical descriptions stem.'³⁹ Let's remember that for Vico, ingenuity, which was part of the imagination, was understood as a necessary form of invention that by a new turn was giving new arrangement to the things remembered.⁴⁰ While this process of re-arrangement may appear sometimes inconsistent, it turns out to be the very source of a new revelation of the real. Grassi explains that Stephen Daedalus arrived at this revelation through the transformation of the word, thus through the use of metaphor, a metamorphosis, or one could say, a rearrangement of order of the word. Grassi expresses that the activity of description is associative, and 'association is the presupposition of metaphor.'⁴¹ The philosopher emphasizes that "from here and only from here the new style comes, with the intersection of the different layers of the real, which becomes metaphor, and of metaphor, which becomes reality."⁴² Within these transformations of the real through new ingenious associations, in this case through the word, there is an access to a new realization of the real, which is not other than what *Stephen Hero* would describe as an epiphany.⁴³ The requisites for beauty that Joyce lays out in *Stephen Hero* through the work of Aquinas seem to be break down in *A Portrait* through Stephen's discovery of the power of finding quiddity on his own words through the use of metaphor. As Grassi has explained: "Metaphor is possible only as an "ingenious" discovery of relationships, of

³⁹ Ibid.,156.

⁴⁰ Imagination, however, is nothing but the springing up again of reminiscences, and **ingenuity** or invention is nothing but the working over of what is remembered.. Also in §24: Lastly, in the plane most illuminated of all, because the hieroglyphs there displayed represent the most familiar human things, the **ingenious** artist exhibits in capricious arrangement the Roman fasces, a sword and a purse leaning against the fasces, a balance and the caduceus of Mercury. Also in §819: Memory thus has three different aspects: memory when it remembers things, imagination when it alters or imitates them and **invention** when it gives them a new turn or puts them into proper arrangement and relationship. Vico, *New Science*, §699:

⁴¹ Ibid., 156.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ "The instant of inspiration seemed now to be reflected from all sides as once.... The instant flashed forth like a point of light In the virgin womb of the imagination the word was made flesh. Gabriel the seraph had come to the virgin's chamber." Joyce, *Portrait*, 11.

similitudes in the context of history; this boundary cannot be surpassed.”⁴⁴ Grassi, however, warns us that “the original structure of metaphor does not imply merely the transferring of a meaning from one term to another term, but actually implies that metaphor obtains its objectivity if previously, in an ingenious way, it comes to discover the “similarity,” the similitude with the appeal of the real.”⁴⁵ In other words, metaphor is not an aleatory game of transferring meanings, but as Vico has expressed it is an evolution from a primordial recognition and grasp of the real that can only later be transformed into a metaphor.⁴⁶

Epiphanies, then, linger among several conditions and orders. First they constitute the third requisite for beauty as expressed by Joyce in *Stephen Hero*. Second, since beauty is not fortuitous, epiphanies cannot be fortuitous either. In other words, they do not come from nothing, but also, they cannot be planned or preconceived. Their possibility of emergence resides in the propensity of the work to be in a constant search with no clear destiny. Third, such search must be conducted through often-inconsistent actions that attempt at transforming anything that has been defined in order to penetrate deeper into its apparent and consistent meaning. As Calvino has clearly expressed regarding the necessity for a form of inconsistency in order to see more:

When everything finds an order and place in my mind then I will start not to find anything worthy of note, not to see anymore what I am seeing. Because seeing means perceiving differences, and as soon as differences

⁴⁴ It seems as if Grassi finds the nature of metaphor in metonymy, something that Vico does also with the explanation of the first language spoken by the first people. Grassi, *Demythologization*, 156. In sections §406/§407 Vico expresses that synecdoche and metonymy evolved into metaphor. In §404 Vico expresses: ‘All the metaphors conveyed by likenesses taken from bodies to signify the operations of abstract minds must date from times when philosophies were taking shape. The proof of this is that in every language the terms needed for the refined arts and recondite sciences are of rustic origin.’ Vico. *New Science*, §404, §406, §407.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 155

⁴⁶ Issues of metonymy as funding metaphor are explored in chapter 9.

all become uniform in what is predictable and everyday, our gaze simply runs over a smooth surface devoid of anything to catch hold of.⁴⁷

And fourth, the ingenious way by which such transformation of the real occurs belongs to the one who searches, in the case of Stephen Deadalus, is a liberation and personal emancipation through the word that feels completely necessary to him, which he expresses in the novel:

Through this image he had a glimpse of a strange dark cavern of speculation but at once turned away from it, feeling that it was not yet the hour to enter it. But the nightshade of his friend's listlessness seemed to be diffusing in the air around him a tenuous and deadly exhalation and he found himself glancing from one casual word to another on his right or left in stolid wonder that they had been so silently emptied of instantaneous sense until every mean shop legend bound his mind like the words of a spell and his soul shriveled up sighing with age as he walked on in a lane among heaps of dead language. His own consciousness of language was ebbing from his brain and trickling into the very words themselves which set to band and disband themselves in wayward rhythms.⁴⁸

The propensity towards epiphanies from the materiality of the trivial or the everyday life requires a willingness from the artist or architect to work within unknown rules, to work with the making of new rules and even with inconsistent processes. These elements may altogether provide in return an unseen realization of the real, which paradoxically has always been operating within the very same questioned rules.

⁴⁷ Italo Calvino. "Old woman in the Purple Kimono" in Italo Calvino *Collection of Sand* (Boston, Mass: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014), 154.

⁴⁸ Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, 51.

In the case of Carlo Scarpa we must notice that his practice of drawing questions and challenges the standard norms of architectural representation. How does he do this? He does it by not always drawing all the parts of the buildings, by superimposing drawings on different scales in the same sheet of paper, by drawing human figures with altered proportions, and by being 'inconsistent' when drawing the same element in different planes, like the example of the door drawings. However, this does not mean that he does not use architectural representations norms. One of the key elements in his practice of drawing consists in positioning himself at the fringe line of both, the consistent norm and the inconsistent transgression of it. For this reason, as we have seen in several examples, drawings are rarely completed, the use of color is never homogenous, each drawing belongs to a set of personal and internal rules that makes sense to himself even if seemingly inconsistent to the eyes of the reader. In creating differences within the field of a work that clearly turns out to be absolutely holistic in its built reality, Scarpa can nurture a field of working where there is a rich propensity towards the encounter of epiphanies. Specifically in the case of the chapel's entrance door, the inconsistencies seen in the female figure proportions, the play of mirroring the elevations without exactly following the rules of reflections, the confusions created between front and back, and above and below in the design of the wood door seem to be necessary to the realization that the female figure was already becoming an essential part of the design and that her presence was related to the activation of a dynamic detail within the inhabitation of the building.

For Scarpa, the real appears in the epiphany of the window as a woman, and not in a preconceived determination of what a typical window is as a general rule. As Grassi would explain following Vico's science of the origin of poets: "the "true" as "made" reveals itself in its original manifestation in the urgency of the imaginative word which makes "light," "clear," in the original forest..."⁴⁹ If we extrapolate this thought to comprehend Scarpa's epiphany we must substitute the 'word', for that of the drawing, which constitutes the

⁴⁹ Vico, *New Science*, 21, 347 21 and Grassi, *Demythologization*, 152.

architect's language. In the drawing, the stunning construction of the woman in the drawing is what illuminates the reality of the window detail.

Harry Levin, who also studied the notion of epiphany in the work of James Joyce, explains that:

There are such moments in store for all us, Joyce believed, if we but discern them. Sometimes, amid the most encumbered circumstances, it suddenly happens that the veils lifted, the burthen of the mystery laid bare, and the ultimate secret of things made manifest.⁵⁰

This reflection becomes introductory to expose briefly another instance where Scarpa seems to have been illuminated by an epiphany. A recount told by Francesco Zanon, one of the smiths who worked with Scarpa at the Brion cemetery, will reveal the case. Zanon recounts the story of a particular detail that took the architect more than two months to design. The detail consisted in the installation of a tensed metal rod cable that had to span through the entire width of the cemetery green grass lawn. [fig. 8.28] Many in-situ tests were performed, but the tensed cable kept snapping, especially when kids on Sunday would play and jump on it.⁵¹ Francesco recalls the day when Scarpa called him and said: 'Francesco: I have solved it!' Francesco later discovered that the idea had come to the architect by observing a large metal spring of one of the trains he would usually take to commute between towns.⁵² The detail was finally built using this 'epiphanic' revelation and it stands perfectly today at the cemetery. [fig. 8.29] The story exposes a form of ingenuous thinking intimately tied to very mundane events of Scarpa's everyday life. Francesco curiously describes this instance of discovery as the intuition of the architect.⁵³ In an earlier interview, Francesco's brother, Paolo Zanon expresses that Scarpa always wanted to be informed regarding new materials or how to treat existing ones in new

⁵⁰ Harry Levin. *James Joyce, A Critical Introduction* (Norfolk, Connecticut: A New Directions Books, 1960), 28.

⁵¹ Francesco Zanon monologue in the documentary film: *Memoriae Causa*.

⁵² I have learned this thanks to Guido Pietropoli who told me that Scarpa did not know how to drive.

⁵³ Francesco Zanon monologue in the documentary film: *Memoriae Causa*.

ways.⁵⁴ In the interview he tells that most of the times ‘Scarpa was not satisfied with materials commonly found on the market, and that sometimes he had the need to design handcrafted details that went from the handles to the hinges.’⁵⁵ By using mundane objects of everyday life as a point of departure, the Venetian architect was dedicated to make and find unexpected connections between the work and the world. He has in fact stated that one of the most important tasks of the architect is the skill to make and find relationships between things,⁵⁶ and that they are these relationships what it is needed to make vivid things.⁵⁷

Clearly stated at the beginning of this chapter, Bontempelli’s notion of stupor, which as we saw shares grounds with Joyce’s epiphany, relies precisely in obtaining ‘marvels’ by discovering the laws of things and by subverting this laws through the artist’s imagination, which requires an acute immersion within the materiality of everyday life and within the materiality of making.⁵⁸ By making connections and new relationships between seemingly inconsistent elements Scarpa re-defines a new consistency that is guided by epiphanies emerging as he works with the materiality of the drawing, as well as with the materiality of his everyday world. The appearing lines are those that re-appear to him through a very constant and curious search that involves all kinds of presences that come and go as the design distills itself into its most profound quiddity and the architect simultaneously finds it. Beauty then, as Stephen expresses, is not fortuitous but it emerges from ingenious encounters made through the total and constant immersion of the artist in the world.

⁵⁴ Interview to Paolo Francesco in Sandro Giordano, *Il mestiere di Carlo Scarpa : collaboratori, artigiani e committenti* / relatori: F. Dal Co, G. Mazzariol ; [laureando]: Sandro Giordano, - 1 v. ; 30 cm Doctorate Thesis (IUAV: Istituto universitario di architettura di Venezia, Corso di laurea in architettura, Anno accademico 1983/1984, Sessione estiva , 1984), 98. Translation by Author.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Semi, *A Lezione*, 61.

⁵⁷ Ci sono dei rapporti che bisogna inventare per fare qualche cosa di vivido.’ Ibid.

⁵⁸ “L’arte fu data all’uomo per creargli il piacere del miracolo e della meraviglia. –L’uomo può ottenere la meraviglia per due vie: - scoprendo le leggi delle cose (il bambino quando scopre che dagli alberi spuntano i fiori; che i suoi piedi camminare) – oppure quando con l’immaginazione si riesce a mescolare e sovvertire le leggi scoperte: far camminare gli alberi.” Bontempelli, *Realismo Magico*, 72.

Figures Chapter 8

Fig. 8.1

Magazine cover

'900' *CAHIERS D'ITALIE ET D'EUROPE*

Founders: Massimo Bontempelli e Curzio Malaparte

Year: 1926

Number: 1 (cahier d'automne)

Publisher: La Voce, Roma-Florence

Authors in this volume: Massimo Bontempelli, Mac Orlan, Renato Barilli, Corrado Alvaro, Emilio Cecchi, George Kaiser, Antonio Aniante, James Joyce and Achille Campanile

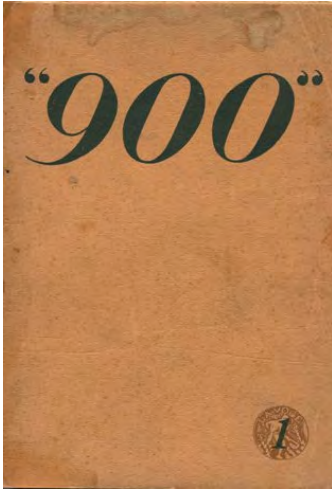


Fig. 8.2

Chapel main door

Photo sequence by Author





Fig. 8.3
Chapel main door
Photo diagram by Author

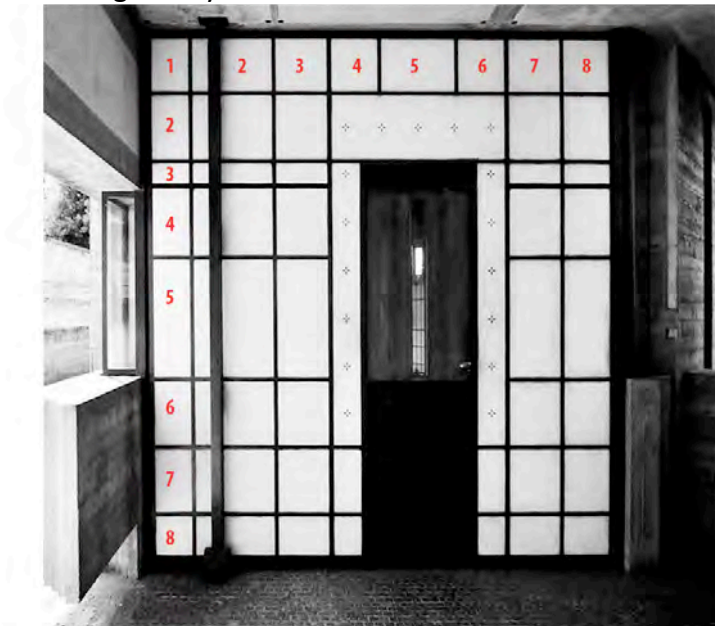


Fig. 8.4
Inserted metal cross on cement
Photo by Author



Fig. 8.5
Ebony door opened within larger metal/cement door panel
Photos by Author



Fig. 8.6
Depiction of Janus



Fig. 8.7
Ebony door (exterior)
Photo by Guido Pietropoli



Fig. 8.8
Ebony door (interior)
Photo by Guido Pietropoli



Fig. 8.9
Door – Exterior side diagram
Photo and diagram by Author

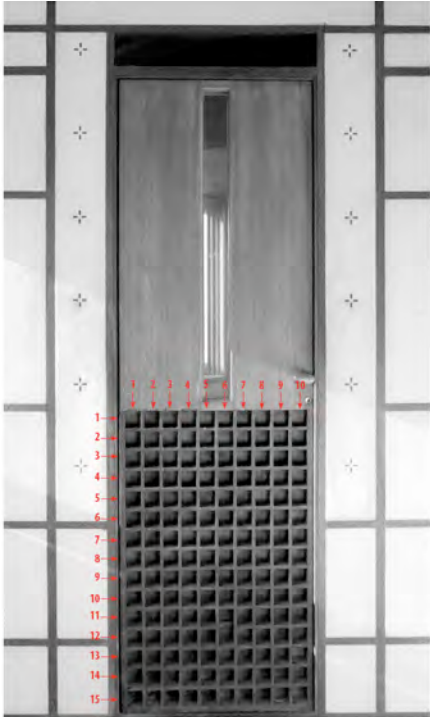


Fig. 8.10
Door – Interior side diagram
Photo and diagram by Author

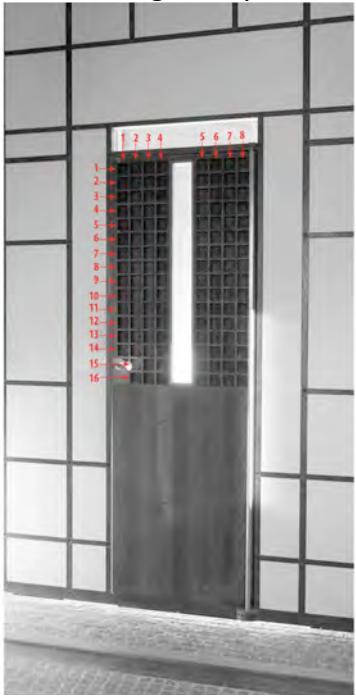


Fig. 8.11
Chapel door elevations and plan
NR #2675
Archivio Carlo Scarpa
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Rome, Italy

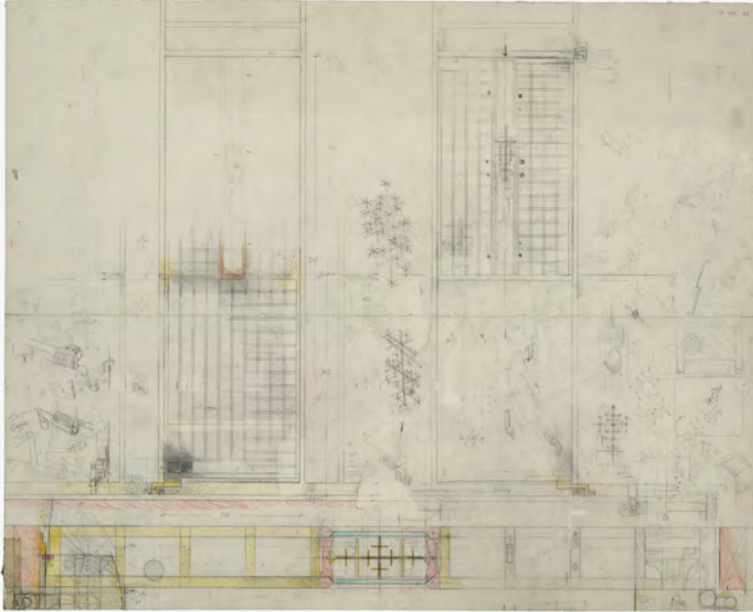
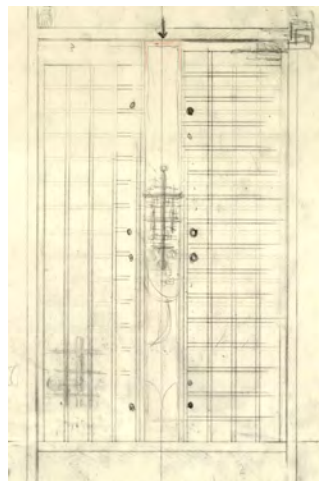


Fig. 8.12
Chapel door elevations and plan (detail)
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(exterior view)



(interior view)

Fig. 8.13
"Moon" concrete opening at chapel
Photo by Author



Fig. 8.14
Chapel floor plan
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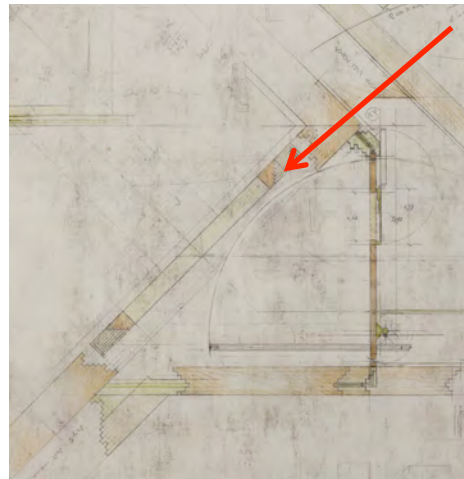
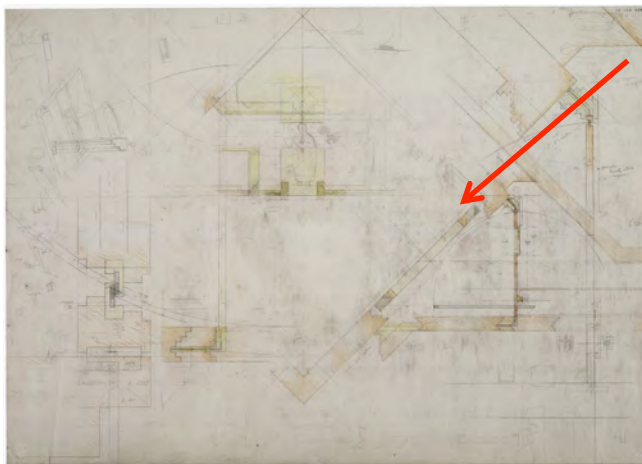


Fig. 8.15
Chapel elevation and section
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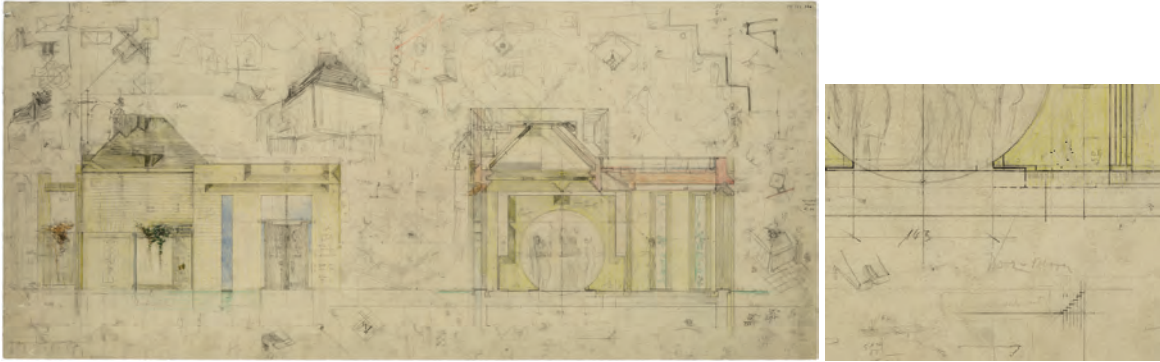


Fig. 8.16
Chapel elevation (detail)
NR # 3889
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Fig. 8.17
Chapel door elevations and plan (diagram by author)
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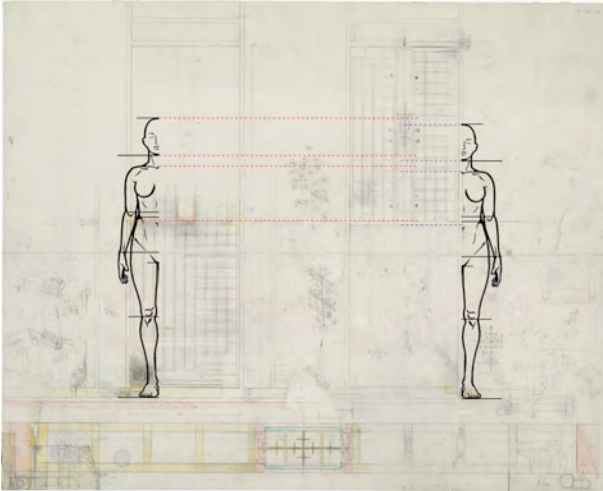


Fig. 8.18
Chapel door elevations and plan (detail)
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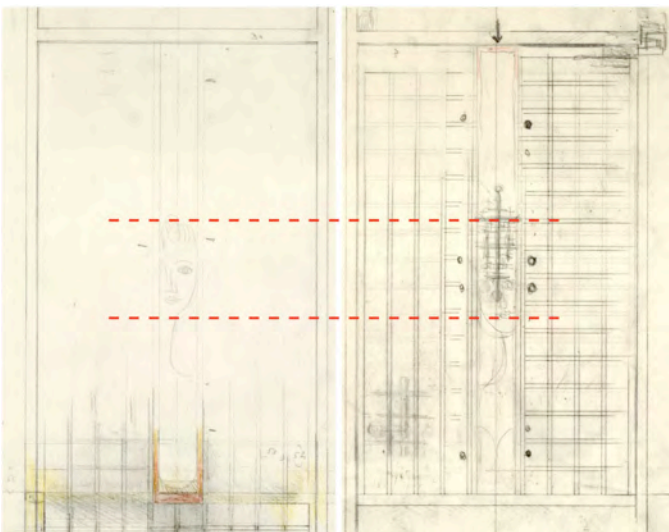
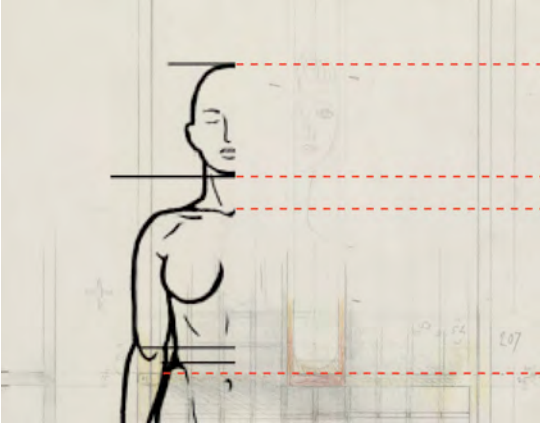
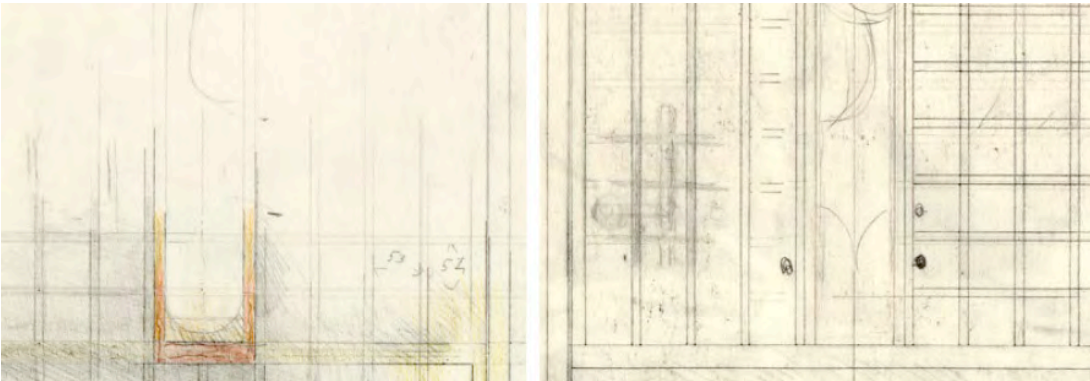


Fig. 8.19
Chapel door elevations and plan (detail)
NR #2675 (diagram by author)
Archivio Carlo Scarpa
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Rome, Italy



(exterior view)

Fig. 8.20
Chapel door elevations and plan (detail)
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Archivio Carlo Scarpa
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(exterior view)

(interior view)

Fig. 8.21
Window door detail
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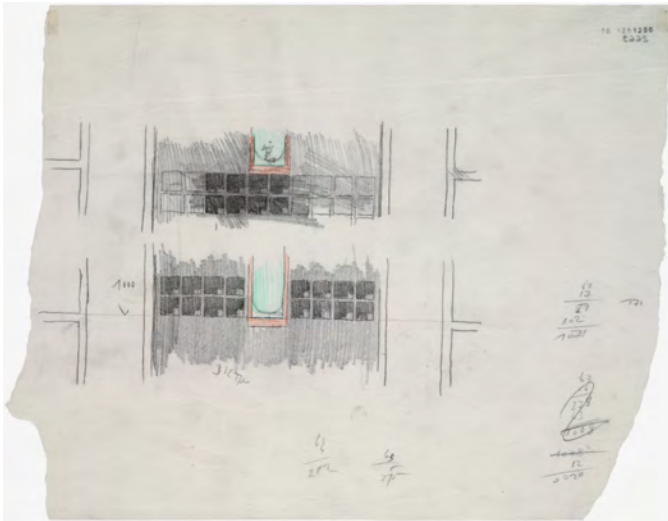


Fig. 8.22
Window door detail
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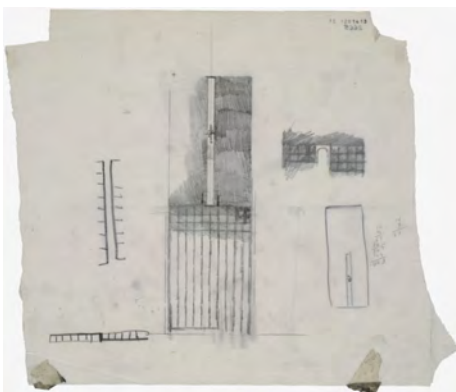


Fig. 8.23

Window door detail

NR # N/A (VS: 70 129 1327)

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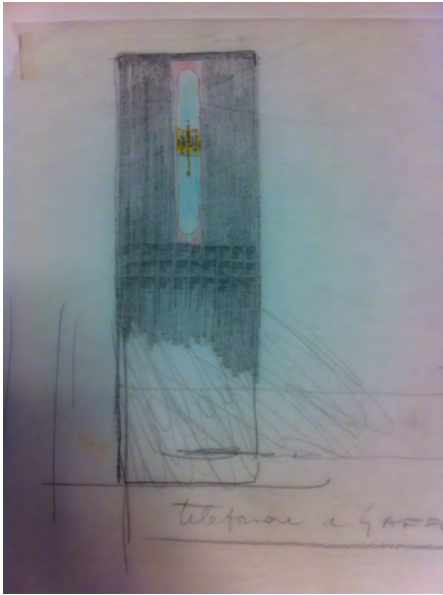


Fig. 8.24

Chapel door elevations and plan (detail)

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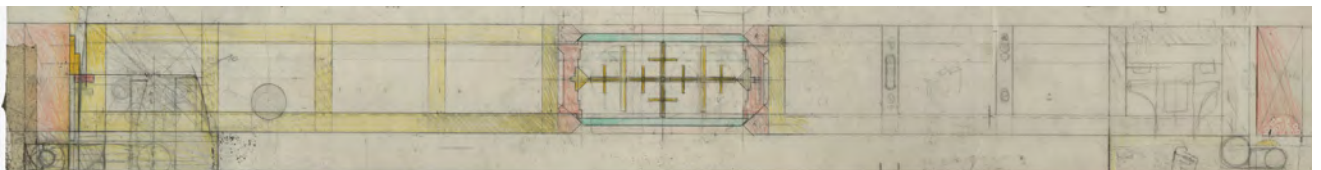


Fig. 8.25
Beveled glass window detail
Photos by Author



Fig. 8.26
Window at ebony wood door
Photos by Guido Pietropoli

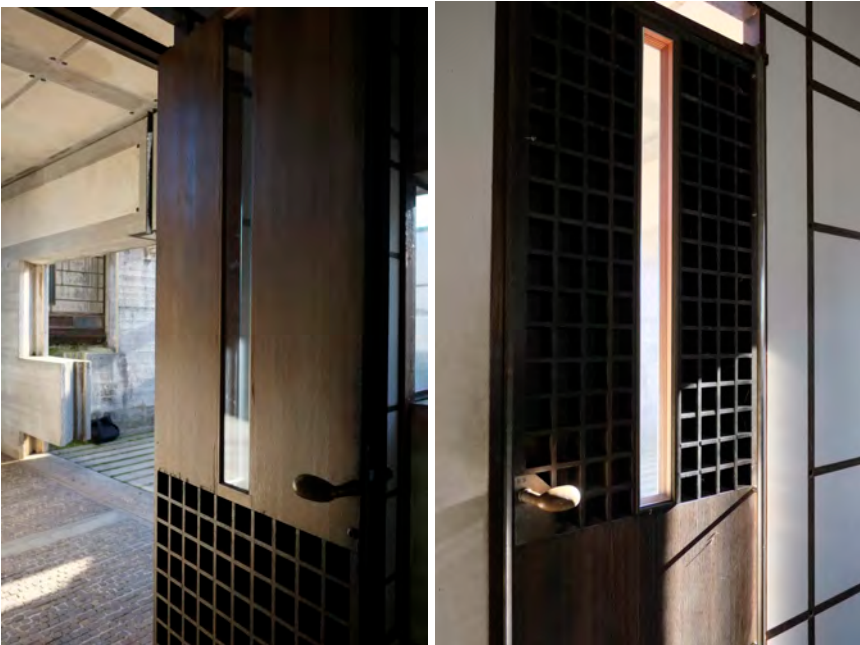


Fig. 8.27

Six Memos for the Next Millenium table of contents

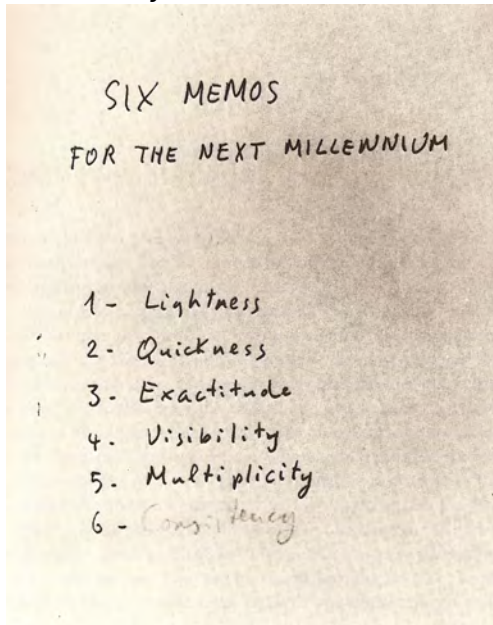


Fig. 8.28

Cable structure with spring

Photo by Paul Emmons



Fig. 8.29
Cable structure with spring
Photos by Paul Emmons



Chapter 9

Vanishing Lines: the ninth marvel

1. Framing the Elephant

Will wonders never cease?

Harry Houdini¹

On January 7th, 1918, the Hungarian-American magician, Harry Houdini, performed the ‘Vanishing Elephant’ trick at the New York Hippodrome Theater. The trick was only performed once, haunting hundreds of spectators, with the revelation of how he performed the trick still shrouded in mystery. One version recounts how a metal frame cage surrounded the elephant and within this frame a curtain system was installed. At the sound of a gun fired by Houdini, the curtain rolled up quickly enough from bottom of the frame that the spectators perceived the elephant as disappearing in an instant. The sound of the shot caused the audience to blink, allowing the stage to become invisible for less than a second and the curtain to roll up unnoticeably [fig. 9.1].² The raised curtain depicted an exact image of the background initially shown behind the elephant, revealing that the trick was to bring the background to the foreground with the elephant hidden behind the new screen. The cage, strategically positioned on the stage, also played an important role with how the trick was perceived by the audience [fig. 9.2]. Another version of the trick speculates that Houdini relied on placing the elephant into a blind cabinet. Once inside, the cabinet would be rotated on a turntable by several strong men, after which the magician would open the cabinet windows to reveal what appeared to the audience as the curtains of the stage behind. Relying on a play of curtains that gave the illusion of viewing through a seemingly empty cabinet, the elephant in fact remained all

¹ Harry Houdini would usually say these words by the end of his shows. Brooke Kamin Rapaport. *Houdini: Art and Magic - Jewish Museum* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 1.

² Modern Mechanics Magazine. *Houdini’s Mystifying*, Article by R. D. Adams (The mechanic who made Houdini’s magic trick apparatus) December, 1929 issue, 92-94.

the time inside, never physically vanishing.³ What did vanish for the audience, however, was the idea that elephant was in front of them.

In either of these explanations, Houdini relied on optical illusions surrounding the context of the elephant and not on the elephant itself to create the trick. The magician thinks: 'by not doing anything to the actual elephant, I can make it vanish!' As the attention of the audience remains focused on the elephant, the surrounding context becomes secondary. Such 'invisibility' around the elephant is the place where the magician works without being seen. So, what is visible for the audience, the elephant, becomes invisible for the magician in terms of designing the trick, and what is invisible for the audience becomes the visible working area for the magician. With these two sets of attention inverted, the haunting effect appears and creates awe and wonder within something seemingly unexplainable.

In the realm of magic, the vanishing acts are usually connected with the actions of hiding. For the magician, hiding something is a process of careful and acute design where even the smallest details contribute in the performance and success of the trick. Because magic is tightly connected with vision, it requires that the magician is aware of what the audience sees but, more importantly, all the things that the audience does not see.⁴ In other words, the magician needs to see the multivalent aspects of reality in order to understand all what remains hidden to a general public. The magician is a magic-real character par excellence, dedicated to looking at that which remains hidden from apparent reality as well as that which could become hidden in order to create a new awareness of reality.⁵ Exploring and questioning those places that appear 'invisible' to most people, they become the materiality of the magician's work, and it is here that the magic-real is revealed. Scarpa, like Houdini, understood the potential of such places and,

³ Jim Steinmeyer. *Hiding the Elephant* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2003), 3-18.

⁴ Donald Kunze "The Goldfish Variations, a Cartography Love Story" (Fall, 2012), Accessed on November 2014 on <http://art3idea.psu.edu/metalepsis/texts/goldfish.pdf>, 17.

⁵ It is not a coincidence and Massimo Bontempelli before publishing his manifesto on magic-realism he studied and wrote a manuscript on early practices of magic.

within the realm of invisible, allowed the visible to be ‘haunted.’ However, instead of stage performances, it is in the realm of the drawings that these secrets appear, suggesting and showing some of the craftiest architectural tricks.

The ninth and final chapter will examine one of the drawings of the last buildings that Scarpa designed for the Brion cemetery, the ‘mediation pavilion’ or ‘water pavilion’ [fig. 9.3]. In this drawing the notion of vanishing acts will be explored through a close reading of the marks and gestures that Scarpa made to design this mysterious structure.

2. Unfolding the Trick

2.1. Isolated Meditation

The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something because it is always before one’s eyes.)

The real foundations of his enquiry do not strike a man at all

Ludwig Wittgenstein⁶

The ‘mediation pavilion’ or *padiglioncino*, was built in 1972 [fig. 9.4]. Tucked in the southern edge of the Brion complex and conceived as a place for meditation, the building was sympathetically the place where Scarpa meditated for the longest period in drawing it, as is evidenced by the almost 300 drawings archived today at the MAXXI in Rome. After the chapel design, the largest number of archived drawings belongs to the water pavilion.

The *padiglioncino* can be accessed through the corridor that follows the *propylei*, the cemetery’s main entrance described in chapter 6 [fig. 9.5].⁷ By turning right turn at the corridor level, one discovers that the space narrows at the point where the glass door

⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1958), § 129 – 50e.

⁷ See chapter 6 for full explanation of Scarpa’s design between right and left at this point of the project.

creates a physical barrier between the rest of the cemetery and the entry point to the meditation pavilion. The narrow glass door, opened by the physical effort of one person pushing it downward into the water pool below, is the first indication that the place beyond is a place for solitude. After the glass door has been submerged, one continues walking through the “orphic corridor” floor, as Pietropoli has called it, due to the sounds the loose pavers make while stepping over them. Looking ahead, a concrete wall terminates one’s view, hiding an exquisite detail [fig. 9.6]. The wall that appears to float over the water is actually held by the concealed perimeter wall beyond, resulting in the water passing underneath it and giving a sense of infinity beyond the concrete structure [fig. 9.7]. Pietropoli explains that the dark water of the pond and the invisibility of the pool’s bottom given by the copious amount of aquatic plants and water lilies was an effect that the architect insisted upon [fig. 9.8].⁸ He also explains that Scarpa did not want the bottom of the pool to be made out of a concrete, rendering it visible through the water; instead he specified a thick layer of clay that made the bottom surface both muddy and impermeable.⁹ It could be said that in both directions, depth and length, Scarpa sought a sense of continuation due to the uncertainty of a visible end. Continuing on the path a few meters more, the concrete walkway, now fully surrounded by water, makes a left turn, introducing the entrance to the pavilion [fig. 9.9]. The pavilion consists of a large roof structure made out of wood, steel, concrete, bronze and copper [fig. 9.10]. Scarpa explains in the following paragraph the reason for the pavilion location and also the layers of discovery that are involved as one inhabits this place. He also mentions the thinking behind the ‘ribbon’ wall, as he used to call it, or perimeter wall, as a way to trigger an awareness of depth:

I thought that in the background you would have seen a wall and a set back that would contain water at a distance, and there, at the end, at most a cow or some bird would pass. But in this perspective something

⁸ Pietropoli, *La tomba Brion*, 33.

⁹ *Ibid.*

was lacking, I had a sense of emptiness; it seemed to me then that I needed to do 'something', so it was done.

And it is here that the conversation is accomplished in all the senses: here I go to contemplate and to contemplate means to mediate; it means then to be covered a bit from the rain or the hot sun. And then I demonstrate that here there is a plastic event that allows one to find the depth of the ribbon wall [perimeter wall] and to feel it in a greater sense.¹⁰

Once one arrives at the pavilion, the concrete floor, seemingly floating on the water pond, hosts a small bench which comfortably accommodates one person to sit looking towards the rest of the cemetery [fig. 9.11]. The bench is purposely designed to allow one to only sit facing the cemetery and not the back wall. A distinct sense of silence, simplicity and isolation is felt in this part of the complex, enhanced by the acoustic effects that the tall and hollow roof structure creates over and around one's head, together with the offsetting perimeter walls. As Scarpa desired, depth is felt at greater length as one spends more time at the pavilion, and the simplicity that initially welcomes the inhabitant begins to reveal itself as a complex web of gestures. This sense of depth seems to emerge in complicity with the strange presence of many details that slowly and quietly enchant the experience. As we will see, some of these details have been created through presences that vanish in the built work but that crucially inhabit the drawn one.

2.2. Strange Gestures

Only when the creative process achieves its goal from the inside out can it generate new views of reality, which is at most built in pieces, never imitated as a whole.

¹⁰ "Pensavo che alla fine si sarebbe visto un muro di cinta e arretrato avrebbe contenuto dell'acqua, in lontananza e lì, sul fondo, al massimo avrebbe potuto passare qualche mucca o qualche uccello. Però la prospettiva mi veniva a mancare, cioè avevo un senso di vuoto; mi pareva quindi necessario fare un <<qualche cosa>>, che poi è stato fatto." Semi, *A Lezione*, 260.

Ed ecco che il discorso si compie in tutti sensi: qui vado a contemplare e contemplare vuol dire meditare; vuol dire quindi essere coperti un po' o dalla pioggia o dal sole cocente, e poi dimostro che qui esiste un fatto plastico che permette di avere la profondità di questo muro di cinta, per sentirla in maggior modo.

We begin with a section/elevation of the meditation pavilion on a thick sheet of paper that shows all the parts of the pavilion almost exactly as it was built [fig. 9.12]. Interestingly, the most striking difference between the drawing and the built work is probably the five characters drawn by Scarpa inhabiting the pavilion. Seemingly contradictory, the crowding of five figures into a space dedicated to single person exposes an interesting set of questions as to their actual role in Scarpa's imagination. In modern architectural drawings human figures often assume a role as a 'scale figure' or measuring guide with no character beyond its specific reference to the dimensions of the body.¹² Or, in other cases, the human figures are depicted performing specific actions, doing exactly what the building program indicates, i.e., in a drawing of the library, the human figure is shown reading. Scarpa's approach to this drawing and many others, as will be seen, is quite different. Why Scarpa allows five characters to inhabit a room that is designed for an isolated experience? Why do they all seem engaged in activities unrelated to meditation?

Beginning from left to right, the first character in the drawing is a naked woman with marked curves and red lips, sitting on the previously mentioned concrete bench [fig. 9.13]. Looking slightly to the left side of the drawing, she is picking up with her right hand a flower from behind the bench where some plants are growing. Her left arm is bent towards her shoulder, providing a resting place for her long and curly hair. Her gesture leftward accentuates the nearness between her face and a detail of one the columns of the pavilion. Scarpa traces very slightly two significant lines at this point, beginning with two parallel lines connecting the woman's lower red lip with the end of a bronze piece, highlighted in yellow color pencil, that helps join together the complex column structure [fig. 9.14]. This column, like the other three, has been created out of two overlapping vertical sets of parts [fig. 9.15]. The lower part departs from a concrete foundation sitting on the bottom of the water pool, made through the assembly of four square-section steel

¹¹ Roh, *Magical Realism*, 25.

¹² Frascari, *11 Exercises*, 80-86.

bars that are interconnected with steel spacers. This bottom portion ends at the height as determined by the woman's red lip, at 88cm from the finished pavilion floor. A bronze piece articulated by a negative half sphere and the same motif used at the Brion couple's tombs caps the first portion of the column [fig. 9.16 - 9.17].¹³ The upper part is configured in a similar way and is attached parallel to the lower part, creating a 'coupled' column system [fig. 9.18]. The complexity of these columns, intensely studied in previous drawings by the architect, begins to indicate the significance of the characters inhabiting the mentioned pavilion drawing. The seated woman is perhaps not sitting there solely for the sake of the bench design, as her role seems to be intimately connected with the column detail.

The second character we see is a masculine figure standing up [fig. 9.19]. His right foot is resting on the concrete bench and his left one on the pavilion floor. His eyes are shut and his ears have been significantly emphasized as if he were concentrating on listening to the surrounding sounds. As has been purposely delineated by Scarpa, the centerline of his figure is aligned with the centerline of the pavilion. His face coincides with a detail located in the low hanging part of the roof structure designed and built in copper. Here, there is a narrow parting of the copper that frames the entire landscape of the cemetery, the only place where one may see the cemetery complex while standing up. Although not appearing in the drawing, the edges of the copper are braced in the built work with a bronze element configured to suggest a kind of 'binocular' artifact. [fig. 9.20] Several drawings studying this particular part indicate that Scarpa was thinking of this element as framing the mouth of a standing person and not one's eyes [fig. 9.21 - 9.22]. Once again, the man standing begins to reveal that perhaps his role in the drawing is not solely concerned with 'seeing', since his eyes are shut and his position expresses a moment of personal introspection. The detail framing his face seems to provide a window for us to

¹³ This detail was also used by Scarpa in the design cover of the only book he published on the Brion cemetery which is a book of photographs curated by himself. The book had a small run of prints. Carlo Scarpa. *Monumenti in memoriam Josephi Brion ab Honorina uxore filiisque facti his chartis continentur imagines*, self-published, funded by Onorina Brion (1977).

see him, instead of allowing him to see us, or the cemetery. His strange gestures in the drawing make us wonder about his contribution to the architectural design and the architect's desires for it.

The third person in the drawing is another naked feminine figure closely related to the male figure just described [fig. 9.23]. Her body gestures are perhaps the most intriguing of the five characters. Beginning with her feet and legs, we observe that her left leg is standing on the tip of her foot [fig. 9.24]. Her right leg is bent at the knee and the arch of her foot touches the concrete corner bench [fig. 9.25]. The corner of the bench is not centered with the vertical centerline of the previously described man but extends a few centimeters beyond. Her upper body leans slightly towards the male figure next to her, and, while her right hand touches the man's right knee, her left arm is raised and her hand is resting on top of her head. The woman's face is tangentially touching the man's ear. As she looks down to the floor, her eyes are aligned with the edge of the copper roof structure [fig. 9.23]. In the end, she assumes a very peculiar and theatrical posture that relates to multiple portions of the pavilion design. A seemingly insignificant one is the bench corner, where her foot rests. Another is the emphasis on the delicate stability created by her hand leaning on the man's knee, which seems to speak back to the gentle balance of the pavilion held by four slim columns. The third relationship is the edge copper that barely prevents her from peering out. In total, as the woman uses her four members to graciously hold up her body, perhaps she personifies the embodiment of the entire pavilion structure that is held also by four elements. In yet another instance, the unexpected gestures of Scarpa's figure causes us wonder about their role in the design work.

The fourth figure, also a naked female, is portrayed in profile [fig. 9.26]. She is depicted armless and looks towards the center of the pavilion. Her curly hair, prominent nose, breasts and pubic area have been emphasized through the precision and darkness of the graphite pencil Scarpa used. Two sets of relationships with the pavilion seem to be

addressed through her presence. One is visible through a pencil line Scarpa makes parallel to the horizontal edge of the roof. Coinciding with the location of the woman's mouth, we find that if projected in the direction of her gaze, the line coincides with the end of a drainage detail located on the left side of the pavilion [fig. 9.27]. The other relationship between her presence and the building occurs with the shared horizon between her pubic area and one of the columns spacers, highlighted by Scarpa with yellow pencil color [fig. 9.28]. Far and near from her, the details of the pavilion connect subtly with her presence and her gestures.

Lastly, the fifth character is a male figure. His face is not shown in the drawing, nor are most parts of his body [fig. 9.29]. The visible part drawn very faintly in pencil shows the left side of his body located just outside of the pavilion at the entry point. The pencil line is rendered darker at the point where the man's hand appears to hold an oval shaped object, as if it were a stone or a coin. It is reminiscent of the obol that, according to classical literature, needed to be paid to Charon, the boatmen who carried the souls of the dead across the Acheron or Styx into the underworld [fig. 9.30].¹⁴ Because the main floor of the pavilion is detached from the access path, the floating feeling of the meditation area creates the sense of a possible journey into another realm.¹⁵ The loosely held 'obol' seems to perfectly fit in the cast bronze void toward his left, which, in its spherical, upward facing geometry, has the obvious propensity to hold something. Compared with other figures inhabiting the pavilion, especially the other male, this one shows very marked muscles and an elegant body structure that seems to speak to the strength of the coupled column which appears in front of him. The bronze detail of the column, emphasized again with yellow color pencil, relates directly to the position of the hand and it seems to receive graciously the 'obol' that the man is carrying, as if the pavilion itself would be an embodiment of Charon.

¹⁴ Susan T. Stevens. "Charon's Obol and Other Coins in Ancient Funerary Practice" in *Phoenix*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (1991): 215-229.

¹⁵ This feeling is also emphasized thanks to the recessed foundation that Scarpa designed to hold the pavilion floor.

With each character inhabiting this mysterious drawing introduced, I would like to begin to untangle the role of their strange gestures. It is important to point out that, while this space was designed for one person to mediate, the drawing required the inhabitation of multiple characters performing seemingly unrelated activities to that of meditation. It is also important to mention that this drawing arrives rather late in the design process, and Scarpa has already thoroughly studied and designed many of the parts shown in this drawing. However, this drawing gathers all his ideas together, refining them and making them participate sympathetically as a whole. The gathering of the details and previous designed parts occurs in the drawing simultaneously as a gathering of strange characters who seem to reveal things previously unnoticed.

2.3. Magic Real Contiguity

In the article, "A New Corporeality of Architecture," Marco Frascari questions the role of the body in architectural drawings, elaborating on the difference between metaphorical and metonymical relationships. He writes:

In rhetoric, the metonymy indicates figures of semantic transfer based on relationships of logical and material contiguity between the literal and the figurative terms. While in the metaphor the relationships established are pragmatic and extrinsic (city= body, head =seat of government, stomach = market, church = heart, etc.), in the metonymy the relationship is syntagmatic and intrinsic. The effects substitute for the causes, the materials for the objects, the contained for the container, the abstract for the concrete or vice versa. In architecture the dominant figures are visual and the morphological characteristics are perceived by the nonvisual entities which give privileged status to perception. A sound is grave or acute; a tactile sensation is soft or cold. The metonymy acts in relation to this privileged status of perception while the metaphor acts

through other types of consciousness that are based on judgment. In a metonymical procedure, the project of a handle results from the mold of the grasp of a hand rather than from a formal representation of the hand itself.¹⁶

Following Frascari, then, the metonymical relationship emerges from an embodied and intrinsic action within the making of architectural drawing and within the thinking of the architectural project. In other words, contiguity is proper to metonymy since it directly relates to the thing that it is signifying. Frascari gives the example of the door handle, which, when metonymically designed, would emerge from the action of handling, i.e., how one grabs the handle already makes the handle. Metonymical relationships with the work, Frascari also points out, give priority to perception more than they give to judgment. In the case of Scarpa's drawings, this distinction poses an important question: are Scarpa's strange figures metonymically relating to the design despite their seemingly unrelated actions to the architectural project?

After carefully exposing the gestures of the figures, I think it could be argued that the figures *do* relate metonymically to the making of the architectural elements. This reasoning departs from the understanding that if, in the first place, there is a magic real approach to how one inhabits and perceives the world, then there is a magic real contiguity that affects the design. This would mean that, for example, Scarpa sees more in the door handle than simply how it is handled. This deeper understanding of what a door handle may hide opens a whole new set of rules operating within the design of the work that relies on a contiguous approach to it. In other words, unexpected contiguity between the design and its perception still creates metonymical relationships that affect and create the work from inside out. In the case of Scarpa, the strange figures he draws are working metonymically with the design of the pavilion through a magic real perception of each of

¹⁶ Marco Frascari. *A New Corporeality of Architecture*. Journal of Architectural Education, Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, Inc., Vol. 40, No. 2, Jubilee Issue (Winter, 1987): 22-23.

the elements. In this scenario, the creation of a bench is not concerned only with how one sits for example, but more unexpectedly with how one's foot can lean on the corner of the bench.¹⁷ Scarpa's perception goes into unexpected places while still relating metonymically to the subject because he seems to question, in the first place, the idea of what a bench is or how we relate to it. In performing these actions, Scarpa makes a design that exceeds what is expected for a bench, and it becomes in its own right a product of wonder through the careful and minute orchestration of everything that happens within and around it. Consequently, when one is sitting on the pavilion's bench, an encompassing set of details are participating in the experience of sitting, such as: the smell of the plants behind, the bronze detail at the height of one's lips, the sharpness of the corner of the concrete bench in relation to the pavilion's center, the spacers' detail at the height of a feminine pubic area, and the presence of the masculine vertical elements strongly holding the large roof [fig. 9.12]. In the actual built work, the bench becomes all the characters present in the drawing even though the inhabitation of the pavilion will never be embodied in the same way that the drawing of the figures showed. What vanishes, in the end, is the obvious presence of the characters in the drawing remaining hidden within elements that frame the experience of sitting. At the same time, by sitting in isolation one becomes aware of the various parts of one's own body that are being 'suggested' through the design of the pavilion details.

In Scarpa's practice of drawing, when the assumed rules of embodying a familiar object like a bench vanish, other presences enter into play, elevating the design of the very same object that originally needs to vanish as such, that is the bench as bench. Like Houdini's disappearing elephant, the bench is always there, only not as it seems. One's expectation that the bench is only a place to sit vanishes, even as the bench as a place to sit remains in plain view. By looking at the magic real aspect of sitting, standing, and other postures, Scarpa integrates details that elevate the design complexity of the project through very

¹⁷ It is also relevant to mention that the formwork of the bench was very carefully designed. In the lower part of the vertical front side, two wood planks of 5,5cm and one of 11cm were used. Two 11cm wide wood planks created the seat of the bench. Finally, eleven concrete steps create the back of the bench.

unexpected bodily contiguous gestures. By performing these actions, the architect enhances the very nature of meditation through his own meditative drawing, acquiring a state of internal reflection that directly relates to the very purpose of the building he designs: the mediation pavilion. In questioning the life of the architectural elements and how the body perceives them in a magic real fashion, Scarpa's meditation pavilion drawing creates 'absurd' scenes that in the final order of experience make complete sense for the act of meditating in solitude.

The notion of vanishing, as we saw with Houdini's examples, consists in hiding by altering the *locus* of the expected gesture. In architectural drawings, this form of hiding occurs in the exposition of unusual situations inhabiting the drawing that are unlikely to be performed as such in the built work. By altering the rules of inhabitation through the presence of unexpected gestures, the architect is able to first discover a new set of relationships between the body gestures and the work, and second, to carry those gestures into the architectural detail that later exposes a series of strange details affecting one's inhabitation of the built edifice. The magic real principle stated by Bontempelli resonates with the very same actions Scarpa performs:

It is necessary to have the sensation of mystery on the earth, faith in the imminent supernatural, the sense of an occult presence mixed within the quotidian of our real lives.¹⁸

In hiding a series of presences around such a quotidian act like sitting, Scarpa is able to re-frame the act of sitting as an action that can all of a sudden provoke many other feelings. In other words, Scarpa's drawing does not have a cause-effect relationship with the form of the bench per se. Rather, his imagined inhabitation of it as a place other than for sitting imbues it with a potential to be mysterious, having multiple, and unexpected inhabitations. His emphasis on the passing of time as a way to acquire a deeper awareness

¹⁸ Bontempelli, Massimo. *La Mia Magia Innocente*. Unpublished Manuscript. Getty Archives, 5.

of what this place really is makes more sense now that we understand, through his drawings, the presences that have remained occulted within the project. The way by which Scarpa creates these rules for his thinking are born in a peculiar understanding of the body, like if only through embodiment can he discover his ideas. In making the relationship between gesture and building through his own embodiment of both, the gesture and the building, the bodily gestures can then be transferred into the physical edifice.

The role of the body in architectural drawings is not only in the metonymical translation from body to building, as Frascari has expressed, it is also understood as magic real, where very distinct and unusual gestures participate in the transference of material, formal and perceptual actions. This approach gives an altogether new approach to the role of the body in architectural drawings, perhaps a *new magic real corporeality of architecture*, where the actual body in the drawing must disappear into a deeper embodiment that appears at unexpected locations within the edifice.

3. Mute Bodies

We painters, wish to represent emotions through the movements of limbs...

Leon Battista Alberti¹⁹

The metonymical relationship between the body and the world was also studied and deepened by Giambattista Vico, who wrote developed in his *New Science* the development of spoken languages from barbarism to human civilizations. Vico distinguishes three different types:

In harmony with these three kinds of nature and government, three kinds of language were spoken which compose the vocabulary of this Science:

¹⁹ Leon Battista Alberti. *On painting and On sculpture*. Latin and English texts, trans. Cecil Grayson (London: Phaidon, 1972), 83.

(1) That of the time of the families when gentile men were newly received into humanity. This, we shall find, was a mute language of signs and physical objects having natural relations to the ideas they wished to express. (2) That spoken by means of heroic emblems, or similitudes, comparisons, images, metaphors, and natural descriptions, which make up the great body of the heroic language which was spoken at the time the heroes reigned. (3) Human language using words agreed upon by the people, a language of which they are absolute lords, and which is proper to the popular commonwealths and monarchical states; a language whereby the people may fix the meaning of the laws by which the nobles as well as the plebs are bound.²⁰

The first language, Vico explains, was mute and depended on signs, physical objects and gestures.²¹ Vico explains in greater detail that, in this first language, mute acts and objects had natural relations to the ideas they were meant to signify. In other words, the relationship between signifier and signified was metonymical. However, the scholar Jürgen Trabant elaborates exactly on the question of what this ‘natural relation’ means for Vico. Trabant brings forth the distinction that Vico, when referring to the type of relationship between signs and ideas, uses the subjunctive mode of the verb ‘to have’. In doing this, he suggests that Vico is not saying that signifiers and signified had or have a natural relationship, but more accurately, that they are supposed to have it.²² For this reason the ‘natural relation’ between signifier and signified is not intrinsic or inherent, but it is poetic and subjective, as in how the first poets assigned names to things. Trabant explains: ‘It was the poets who intended that the gestures they made or the objects they designated should have natural relations to ideas.’²³ Further on, he expands: ‘Words are

²⁰ Vico, *New Science*, §32, 18.

²¹ *Ibid.* §34, §401.

²² Trabant exposes that the verb tense Vico uses is in the subjunctive, thus it is not stated as a fact.

Jürgen Trabant. *Vico's New Science of Ancient Signs*, trans. Sean Ward (London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), 39.

²³ *Ibid.*

first coined when humans project themselves onto natural objects and transform them into animated substances.²⁴ This, of course, assumes that if humans could project themselves onto natural objects, it was because their bodies were already infused with meaning. In this regard, Trabant writes:

The human body's hitherto meaningless movements are imbued with meaning: movement becomes gesture. Gestures embody the natural signifier-signified relation as a mimetic dance in which the writhing body "writes" (and becomes one with) its meaning.²⁵

Vico explains this synthesis occurring between the signifier and the signified in his axiom §402, pointing out the sublimity present within the mute first language:

For when we wish to give utterance to our understanding of spiritual things, we must seek aid from our imagination to explain them and, like painters, form human images of them. But these theological poets, unable to make use of the understanding, did the opposite and more sublime thing: they attributed senses and passions, as we saw not long since, to bodies, and to bodies as vast as sky, sea and earth. Later, as these vast imaginations shrank and the power of abstraction grew, the same objects were apprehended by diminutive signs.²⁶

In transferring their passions onto objects, the first humans transformed 'physical objects into signs and thoughts (*logos*) by animating them with their ideas and meanings.'²⁷ And these meanings simultaneously came from the own perception of their own bodies, i.e. because the human body is already meaningful the first poets could transfer meaning to external objects through their own senses and passions. This perception of the body is not

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Vico, *New Science*, 115, §402.

²⁷ Trabant, *Ancient Signs*, 40.

abstract like a rational thought, but it is corporeal; it comes from an imagination that is buried within the body.²⁸ Vico gives an example that explains this notion by comparing children with the first poets:

The most sublime labor of poetry is to give sense and passion to insensate things; and it is characteristic of children to take inanimate things in their hands and talk to them in play as if they were living persons.²⁹

By doing what they know in their corporeal understanding of things and projecting themselves into objects, children animate the world through actions that already mean something to them. In so doing, they create new worlds with new signs and meanings that simultaneously speak back to their corporeal imaginations.³⁰ In reference to the play of children, which mimics that of the first poets, Vico wrote in his *Autobiography*:

The laws of the game are invented and re-invented as long as the children want to stay in the playground playing, the game must begin with fixed rules, but after the first games, the children decide to stay and they re-figure the game so they have never played it and yet the place is the same, but not the same for them.³¹

This expands beyond the notion of simply making signs and enters into the realm of allowing those signs to be re-defined as they are experienced, embodied, or played. The body, which is already infused with meaning, can only make a meaningful language by projecting itself onto the world through a subjective projection, creating signs that are

²⁸ Vico, *New Science*, §378.

²⁹ Vico, *New Science*, §186.

³⁰ On worlds, see Nelson Goodman. *Ways of Worldmaking* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 1978); on children animating objects, see John Matthews. *The Art of Childhood and Adolescence: The Construction of Meaning*. (London: Routledge, 1998).

³¹ Giambattista Vico. *The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico* trans. Max Harold Fisch and Thomas Goddard Bergin (Ithaca, New York: Great Seal Book, A Division of Cornell University Press, 1944), 56.

metonymically tied to it. The muteness of the first language emphasized by Vico allows the body to acquire an even stronger role in the making of signs through its embodiment of the world. Trabandt has pointed out that for Vico the mind is corporeal, since *logos* emerges from corporeality itself.³² Vico offers an interesting history of the word mute, which departs from the word *logos*:

The word logic comes from *logos*, whose first and proper meaning was *fabula*, "fable," carried over into Italian as *favella*, "speech." In Greek the fable was also called *mythos*, "myth," whence comes the Latin *mutus*, "mute." For speech was born in mute times as mental [or sign] language, which Strabo in a golden passage says existed before vocal or articulate [language]; whence *logos* means both "word" and "idea." It was fitting that the matter should be so ordered by divine providence in religious times, for it is an eternal property of religions that they attach more importance to meditation than to speech. Thus, as stated in the Axioms [225], the first language in the first mute times of the nations must have begun with signs, whether gestures³³ or physical objects, which had natural relations to the ideas [to be expressed].³⁴

Muteness, then, derives from a primordial form of corporeal understanding which was capable of manifesting itself in the world through its relationship to the body.

From this line of reasoning, I would argue by extension that the representation of the body in architectural drawings shares the muteness of the first language. First of all, the drawn figures do not speak; secondly, they rely on the making of signs, and third, each sign is a projection of our own bodily understanding of the world. Despite the fact that architectural drawings have been overwhelmed with abstract diagrams, rules and codes,

³² Trabandt, *Ancient Signs*, 42.

³³ The word he uses to refer to gestures is *corpi*, which means bodies. Vico, Giambattista. *Scienza Nuova*

³⁴ "Mutes make themselves understood by gestures or objects that have natural relations with the ideas they wish to signify." Vico, *New Science*, 114, §401, §225.

the architect still embodies and can make sense of the drawing through his or her own body.³⁵ In the case of Scarpa, the aspect of the metonymical relations between the body and the architectural elements is distinctly particular because he seems to be aware of the potential between the projections of his own passions, thoughts, and ideas into the making of signs. The way in which he signifies the body in relationship to the architecture denotes a story or 'fable' that questions the conventions in what he is designing.

Following this reasoning and returning to the pavilion, the pavilion steel columns are re-framed into a new set of signs through their relationship with the various parts of different bodies inhabiting the drawing. The bench is re-framed around a very unusual set of gestures that allow the architect to see and embody the bench beyond its conventional understanding. The pavilion roof, which is where all the heads of the standing figures reside, embodies the act of thinking and is exactly the place that allows thinking to be enhanced. Each of the figures inhabits the drawn edifice in unique and uncommon ways, leading to the conclusion, as Frascari has written, that:

The body as reality thus becomes the basis of architectural facticity, its action/thoughts determining through material and logical contiguity the configuration of the constructive elements.³⁶

In this magic real approach to architecture, two series of actions are performed by Scarpa that concern the representation of the body in his architectural drawings. Already mentioned is the act of questioning the metonymical relationships between the body and the building. The second set of actions consists in the importance of making the very same gestures that give origin to the architecture to vanish within the work. The act of vanishing

³⁵Paul Emmons research on diagrams proves that many conventions used in architectural drawings are derived from embodied gestures related to material conditions, perception and cultural understanding. Paul Emmons. *The Image of Function: Architectural Diagrams in Handbooks and Normative Practices in the Twentieth Century*. PhD Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2003.

³⁶ Marco Frascari. "The Body and Architecture in the Drawings of Carlo Scarpa," *Anthropology and Aesthetics*, No. 14 (Autumn, 1987): 123-142, 139.

requires first a presence and then a removal of such presence into another realm. It is not an act of elimination but and an act of transformation and dislocation. In other words, both the body and the place of something are re-introduced into another reality. The vanishing elements are those that perform in the drawing but must be hidden in order to make the design a reality. The act of vanishing does not mean, as in the case of the elephant, that the actual presences disappear; it means that their absence becomes present through their location in unexpected places. In the case of Scarpa the location of the unusual figures is found in the curious details throughout the pavilion. Through a magic real metonymical relationship the arch of the foot shapes the location and design of the corner of the pavilion's bench. The arch of the foot, an edge condition that un-touches the earth, contributes to the existence of a bench that is dedicated to mediation in a place that addresses the edge encounter between life and death [fig. 9.23 – 9.24].

In his unpublished treatise entitled *Natural Magic*, Bontempelli wrote a section on *Natural Architecture*. He found a sympathetic relationship between magic and architecture that was born in the fact the architecture was concerned with both the search for a spiritual beauty and the beauty natural to practical life. Architecture, according to Bontempelli, was the magic-real realm par excellence.³⁷ Architecture's origin in the necessity of functioning, accommodating, and sheltering, at the same time in a poetic realm of expression, is what allows it to be intrinsically magic-real. Regarding the arts in general Bontempelli expresses:

All arts were born from the need to express oneself, to stop and then to put oneself outside and to make an object, or any movement from the subjective life, that is the lyric one. This is the spiritual and metaphysical genesis of art. However, in its material and empirical genesis, each art is born in practical life.³⁸

³⁷ Bontempelli, *Realism Magico*, 45-49.

³⁸ "Tutte le arti sono nate dalla necessità di esprimersi, di fermare e poi collocare fuori di sé, e far diventare oggetto, qualche movimento della sua vita soggettiva, cioè lirica. Questa è la genesi spirituale, metafisica,

But then he distinctly points out architecture is the one discipline where its practical as well as spiritual nature remain within the work:

The art in which the sense of beauty remains in time mixed with a practical scope, is architecture.³⁹

The meditation pavilion at the Brion cemetery, stands today in San Vito d'Altivole as one of the most mysterious edifices among the entire complex. Designed and built to be inhabited in isolation, it was conceived in complicity with multiple characters that vanished within subtle details. The illusion of an improbable form of inhabitation in the drawing seems to have contributed to what makes the actual form of inhabitation possible. While Scarpa drew several times the pavilion with just one character sitting on the bench as he imagined to be, [fig. 9.31] the significant role of what seems simply an 'amusing' drawing hides very key secrets of his practice of drawing and thinking. By changing the assumed role of figures in architectural drawings, Scarpa silently creates through magic real gestures a magic real architecture. To conclude I would like to include a piece of advice that Vico gave to a class of students at the Royal Academy of Naples on October 20 of 1732:

Ply your gifts and energies in all possible directions. Stir your minds up, enkindle the divinity that fills you. If you take this course of action (poets come to it by nature, as it happens) you too will engender God-inspired marvels of your own, and surprise yourselves in the doing of it.⁴⁰

dell'arte. Ma quanto alla sua genesi materiale, empirica, ogni arte nasce dalla vita pratica." Bontempelli, *La Architettura Naturale*, 2.

³⁹ *"L'arte un cui il senso del bello rimane più a lungo mescolato con lo scopo pratico, è la architettura"* Ibid., 3.

⁴⁰ Giambattista Vico. "On the Heroic Mind" trans. Elizabeth Sewell and Anthony C. Sirignano in *Social Research*, Vol. 43, No. 4, *Vico and Contemporary Thought—2* (WINTER 1976),: 886-903, 891.

Figures Chapter 9

Fig. 9.1
Depiction of Houdini with raising curtain and elephant
Published by Modern Mechanics, 1929



Fig. 9.2
Depiction of Houdini with raising curtain and elephant
Published by Modern Mechanics, 1929



Fig. 9.3
Meditation pavilion
Photo by Author



Fig. 9.4
Meditation pavilion and water pool construction
Photo by Gianni Berengo Gardin
1972
© Gianni Berengo Gardin – CISA A. Palladio, Vicenza, Italy



Fig. 9.5
Entrance corridor towards meditation pavilion
Photo by Author

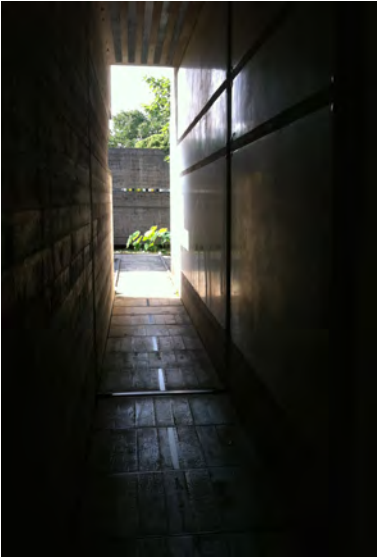


Fig. 9.6
'Floating' concrete wall, held by perimeter wall behind
Photo by Paul Emmons



Fig. 9.7
Wall-Beam (detail)
NR #4154
Archivio Carlo Scarpa
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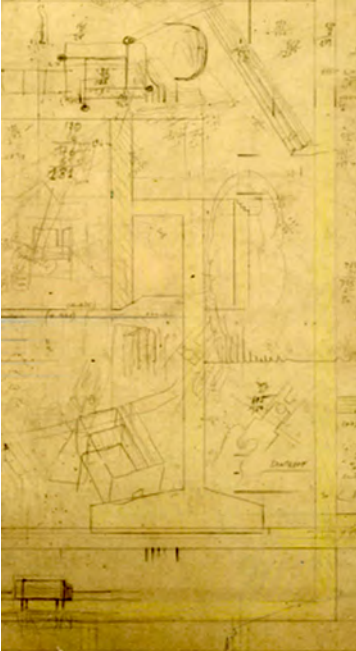


Fig. 9.8
Water pool plants
Photo by Paul Emmons



Fig. 9.9
Meditation pavilion entrance
Photo by Addison Godel



Fig. 9.10
Meditation pavilion
Photo by Paul Emmons



Fig. 9.11
Meditation pavilion
Photo by Author



Fig. 9.12
Meditation pavilion section/elevation
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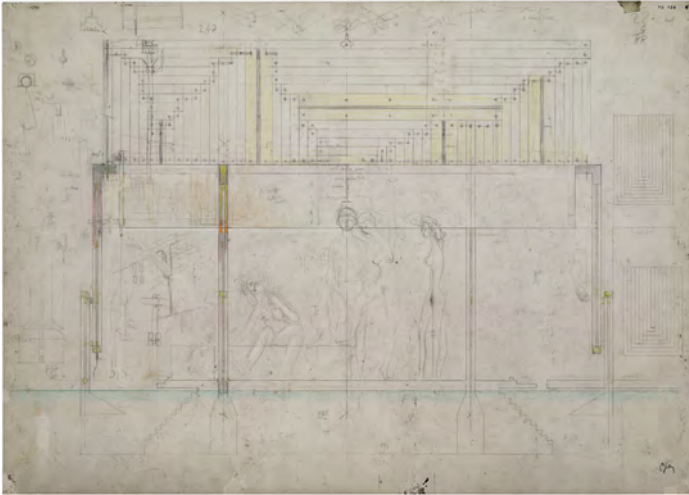


Fig. 9.13
Meditation pavilion section/elevation (detail)
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Fig. 9.14
Meditation Pavilion Section/Elevation (detail)
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Fig. 9.15
Pavilion column
Photos by Author and by Paul Emmons

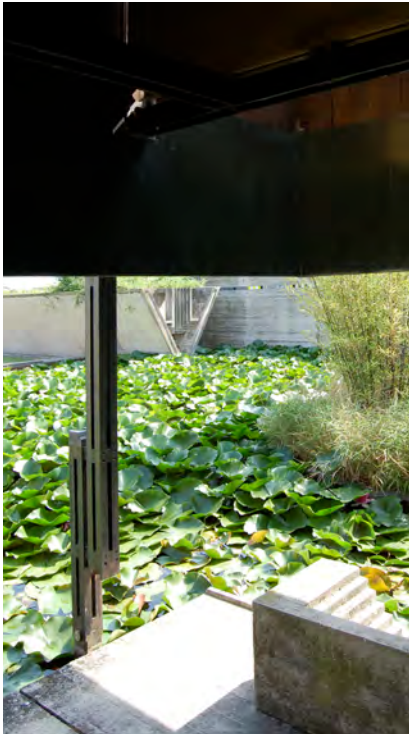


Fig. 9.16
Column detail
Photo by Author



Fig. 9.17
Tomb detail
Photo by Author



Fig. 9.18
Meditation pavilion section/elevation (detail)
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Fig. 9.19
Meditation pavilion section/elevation (detail)
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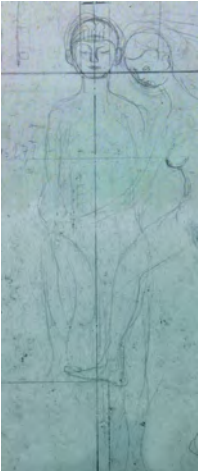


Fig. 9.20
Opening at pavilion detail
Photo by Author

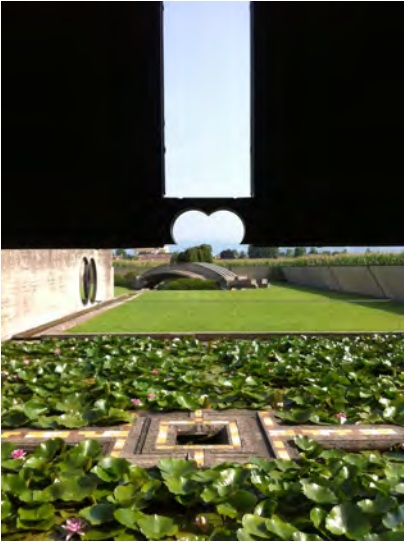


Fig. 9.21
Meditation pavilion section/elevation (detail)
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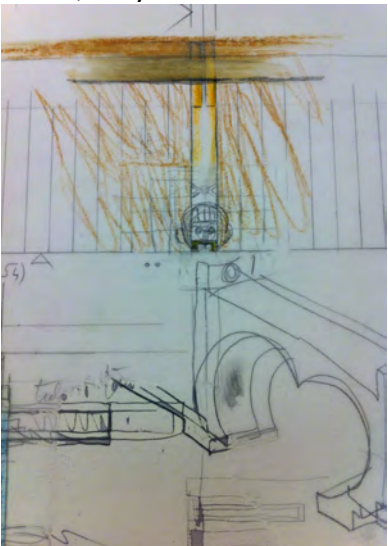


Fig. 9.22

Meditation pavilion section/elevation (detail)

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Fig. 9.23

Meditation pavilion section/elevation (detail)

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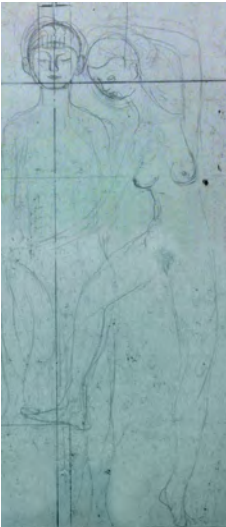


Fig. 9.24
Meditation pavilion section/elevation (detail)
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Fig. 9.25
Bench corner
Photos by Author



(plan view)



(front view)

Fig. 9.26
Meditation pavilion section/elevation (detail)
NR #4179r
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Fig. 9.27
Meditation pavilion section/elevation (detail)
NR #4179r (diagram over original drawing by author)
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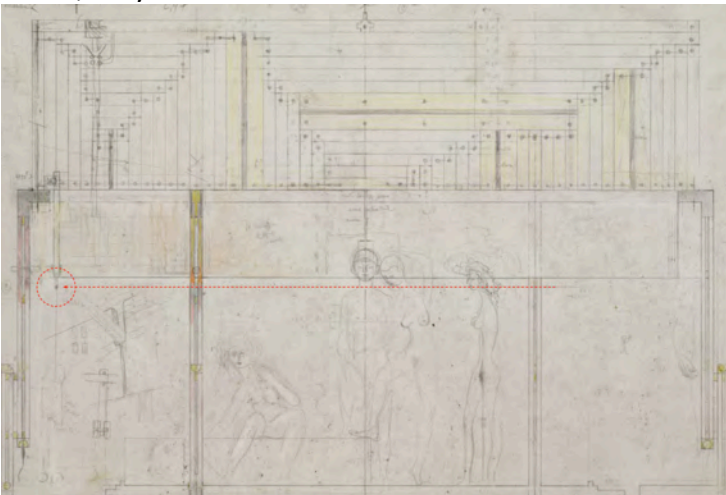


Fig. 9.28
Meditation pavilion section/elevation (detail)
NR #4179r (diagram over original drawing by author)
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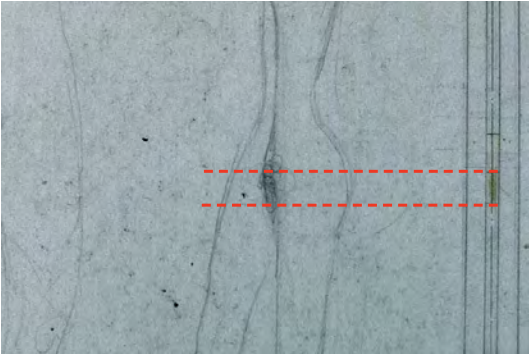


Fig. 9.29
Meditation pavilion section/elevation (detail)
NR #4179r (diagram over original drawing by author)
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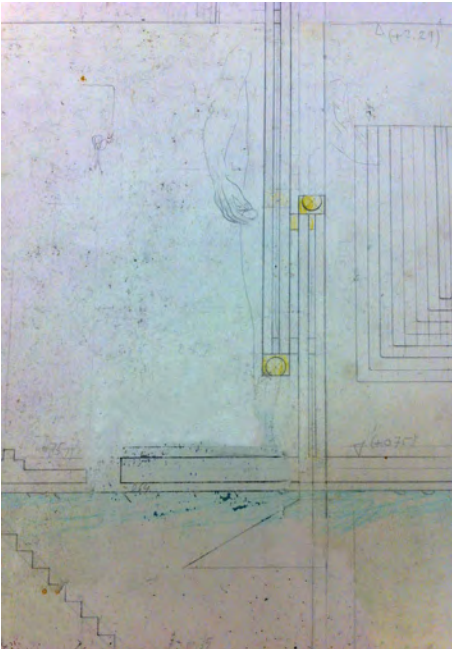


Fig. 9.30

Charon and Psyche

By: John Roddam Spencer Stanhope

Oil Painting

1883



Fig. 9.31

Meditation pavilion elevation

NR #4129

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