

brion-vega cemetery

architect: Carlo Scarpa
date: 1970 – 1972
style: eclectic post-modern

Scarpa biography:

Carlo Scarpa (Venice 1906 - Sendai, Japan 1978) is recognised as one of the most important architects of the twentieth century. His artistic formation took place above all in Venice, where he was part of a circle of artists and intellectuals associated with the Venice Biennale and the Fine Arts Academy (Accademia di Belle Arti) from which he was awarded a diploma as professor of architectural drawing in 1926. From 1933 to 1947 Scarpa was the artistic consultant to Venini, the great Venetian glass manufacturer. Scarpa's highly inventive use of traditional Murano techniques resulted in some of the most original glass works in the history of design. It was in this environment that Scarpa's attraction to the orient, and the decorative and applied arts began, with particular attention in an initial period to the Viennese Secessionists (Hoffmann, Loos, Wagner) followed by a life-long interest in the organic architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright.

After a period spent in the office of Professor Guido Cirilli, Scarpa began teaching at Venice's Istituto Universitario di Architettura where he remained on the faculty through 1976, acting as director from 1972 to 1974. In 1948, with the design of a Paul Klee exhibition, Scarpa began a long collaboration with the Venice Biennale. His sensitivity to works of art and unique ability to transform spaces using highly original materials, chromatic relationships, and lighting effects made him a master of exhibition design. Scarpa was awarded the Olivetti Prize in 1956 in recognition of his achievements in this field.

- castelvecchio museum website: <http://www.comune.verona.it/Castelvecchio/cvsito/english/scarpa.htm>

In The Creator's Words

"I would like to explain the Tomba Brion...I consider this work, if you permit me, to be rather good and which will get better over time. I have tried to put some poetic imagination 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....The place for the dead is a garden....I wanted to show some ways in which you could approach death in a social and civic way; and further what meaning there was in death, in the ephemerality of life— other than these shoe-boxes."

- Carlo Scarpa. "Can Architecture Be Poetry." from Peter Nover, Ed. *The Other City Carlo Scarpa: The Architect's Working Method as Shown by the Brion Cemetery in San Vito D'Avitole*. p17-18.

"Scarpa's last major work was certainly "immodest": the construction of the San Vito cemetery at Asolo for the tomb of G. Brion, begun in 1970. "Necropoli ludens" are the words that have been used to describe this tormented sequence of formal episodes, frozen and overwrought – design was never a mere means for Scarpa – tunnel-like and metaphysical, laid out according to a plan based on secret rules. A homage to the "art of concrete and invention", the San Vito cemetery resembles a battlefield where forms – the little temple evoking the Oriental, the small pavilion and the covered passageway leading to the entryway and the hermetic funeral arched covering the family sarcophagi – all play a partita with death. ...The free associations of the Brion tomb... give rise to a variety of recurring, deformed "figures" that speak to each other in a kind of uninterrupted dialogue. Scarpa's language, which is marked by gaps and interruptions, can be read as a musical score, the phrases of which are interwoven in a complicated pattern punctuated by pauses".

- "History of Italian Architecture, 1944-1985" Manfredo Tafuri (translated by Jessica Levine) p113-114. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts

museo di castelvechio

architect: Carlo Scarpa
date: 1954 - 1967
style: eclectic modern

The castle of the Scaligeri family, the Lords of Verona, was built in 1353 and subsequently transformed into Napoleon, Italian and Austrian barracks, and was later destined to be a museum in 1925. It was restored by the architect Carlo Scarpa in the years 1958-64, with Licisco Magnato as Director, and it houses a fascinating group of sculptures dating from the XIV to the XV century, paintings and canvasses from Middle Ages to the XVIII century. In the gangway linking the Reggia and in the Sala del Mastio (the highest tower of the castle) one can see findings from the Longobard Age and side arms dating from the XIV to the XVIII century. The most important work in the museum is the equestrian statue of Cangrande della Scala, Lord of Verona from 1311 to 1329. In the courtyard there is a medieval lapidary.

Carlo Scarpa's museum projects belong to the post-war Italian architectural panorama, and take their place within the context of renovation and the complex relationship between old and new, tradition and modernity. His special ability to integrate historical structures and contemporary innovations reflects a deep knowledge and respect for history, traceable to his formative education. Essential to the development of Scarpa's highly original and unprecedented architectural language are the influence of oriental art combined with elements from Dutch neoplasticism, the modern movement and organic architecture.

In Verona, Scarpa oversaw the renovation and re-installation of Castelvecchio Museum between 1958 and 1964, with further work done in 1969-1970 and 1975. Castelvecchio is the result of a close and remarkable collaboration between the client, represented by the museum's director, Licisco Magagnato, and the architect. The image of Castelvecchio today is inseparable from that of Carlo Scarpa's intervention, which left an indelible mark. Once over the drawbridge, the visitor to the della Scala castle first encounters the reorganised courtyard space, one of the rare examples of contemporary gardens in Verona. Particularly beautiful is the protruding sacello, a cube sheathed in a mosaic of Prun stone of various colours that clearly reflects the influence of Mondrian on Scarpa's work.

The reorganisation of the sculpture gallery represents one of the most poignant examples of Scarpian composition: a subtle balance of architectural elements and the installation on raised platforms of the works of art creates an unprecedented, emotionally evocative spatial sequence. The renovation work during this period brought to light much of the castle's antique structure, including the Porta del Morbio, an opening in the city walls dating to the twelfth century. It is near this ancient passageway, so rich with

history, and at a key point in the museum itinerary, that Scarpa chose to situate the equestrian stature of Cangrande, originally part of the della Scala family tomb, and one of the most interesting examples of fourteenth-century European sculpture.

Siting the Cangrande sculpture required an attentive and thorough analysis on Scarpa's part in order to find a location that permitted the visitor to encounter the work along the walk through the museum and that also allowed it to be seen from the exterior, while protecting it from the elements. Scarpa's final solution elegantly juxtaposes the Cangrande statue with the surrounding stairs and small walkways, so that it can be seen from several points of view, thus underlining its emblematic importance. The continual search for perfection, even in the smallest detail, that characterises Scarpa's work is evident in the 636 drawings that document the Cangrande siting, now in the Castelvecchio Museum's print and drawing study room.

- castevecchio museum website: <http://www.comune.verona.it/Castelvecchio/cvsito/english/index1.htm>

banco popolare di verona

architect: Carlo Scarpa
date: 1973 - 1981
style: modern

"The existing building, of little value, is completely absorbed by the new construction. The elevation is drawn on two parallel planes: one, a load-bearing wall, has a doorway and carvings in the red stone of Verona; the other, recessed, is in glazed panels, revealing an impatience with conventional work, almost to the point of challenging functionality. However, the care taken with the decoration gives a dazzling gloss to this purposelessness, suggesting new reflections on the relationship between use and uselessness, between function and ornament."

- Maria Antonietta Crippa, Marina Loffi Randolin, ed. Carlo Scarpa: Theory Design Projects. p74.

1973 were assigned Carlo Scarpa the transformation and the new building of an administration building of the Banca Popolare di Verona. An important aspect was the integration of the new building into the old urban environment. For this it sketched a multilayered, front differentiated in itself, which is divided horizontal into three ranges:

one base part, which is limited above by a Marmorfries

one center section in form of a concrete disk with circular and square openings

that top in steel and glass is implemented.

The base-limiting Marmorfries makes for instance in the center of the front an elevator jump of approximately a meter. Thus becomes conscious the viewer on the Piazza Nogara due to the resulting proportions that the front beyond the Piazza into the via Conventino continues and there the actual Eingangstüre has. Despite the formal discrepancy to the old fronts the new no disturbing element represents; this mainly by the Materialwahl: Finery, marble and reservedly steel and glass. Also the connection points between the old and the new building support this impression. By elevator shifts in relationship with the gurtgesimsen of the old buildings and by cuts at the corners a subtle stress ratio between old and new is produced.

The building was finished after Scarpa's death 1978 by Arrigo Rudi.

- archINFORM website: <http://eng.archinform.net/projekte/653.htm>

cemetery san cataldo

architect: Aldo Rossi
date: 1973 - 1981
style: modern

The cemetery of San Cataldo consists both of an ancient and a recent part. The ancient one was carried out by architect Cesare Costa from 1858 to 1876 and contains a lot of artistic great value handmade while the recent one was built on the basis of architect Aldo Rossi's project. The cemetery of Aldo Rossi is an analogical route through the collective images of the "house of the dead". The building, today partially completed, is structured in such a way as to confine wide green spaces further marked by a criss-cross of pedestrian paths.

The various building complexes run parallel to each other towards the central "vertebral" axis which objectively, almost "physically", links the orientational lines of this section of the project. The rhythmic articulation of the openings, framed by the cold neatness of the surrounding walls are to this day interrupted in counterpoint only by the central cubic element destined for the ossuary which, when the works have been completed, will be in visual balance with the conic tower of the common grave, also thanks to a decisive colour differentiation of the walls, instrumental for clear perception and identification within the sphere of the surrounding townscape.

- Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe <http://www.significantcemeteries.net/significant/modena/Intro.html>

Aldo Rossi designed the Cemetery of San Cataldo for a 1971 competition that called for an extension to the existing nineteenth-century Costa Cemetery. Employing conventions of perspective developed in the fifteenth century, Rossi uses an aerial view to give a sense of the cemetery in both plan and elevation. One enters this wall-enclosed space through a gate opposite what seems to be an abandoned house, a cubic structure designed as a collective or nondenominational temple to be used for funeral, religious, or civil ceremonies. As one proceeds along the central axis, it passes through successive rectangular structures, riblike ossuaries that rise in height as they diminish in length. The journey is punctuated by a cone-shaped smokestack monumentalizing a communal grave for the unknown, and referencing the industrial landscape beyond. Rossi's design is rooted in an Enlightenment typology of the cemetery as a walled structure set on the outskirts of town. It not only recalls the adjacent Costa Cemetery but, as Rossi says, "complies with the image of a cemetery that everyone has." A structure without a roof, it is a deserted building intended for those who no longer need the protection of shelter—a house for the dead in

which life and death exist as a continuum within the collective memory.

Through his use of aerial perspective, elemental form, and color, Rossi constructs a visual passage through the drawing that corresponds to the journey *contra natura* through the cemetery. Shadows stem from a particular light source yet reference no particular time of day. Perspective, traditionally universalizing, is colored with a Northern Italian palette, and draws our eye not back into space but rather up the page. Like the cemetery itself, the drawing presents a road toward abandonment in which time seems to stand still.

- Matilda McQuaid, ed., *Envisioning Architecture: Drawings from The Museum of Modern Art*, New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2002, pp. 160–161. http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?object_id=903

chisea parrocchiale di riola

architect: Alvar Alto
date: 1975 - 1978
style: modern

Alvar Alto biography:

Alvar Aalto was born in Kuortane, Finland in 1898, the son of a surveyor. He graduated with honours from Helsinki Polytechnic in 1921 after which he opened his own practice. He held the position of Professor of Architecture at MIT 1946 to 1948, and was President of the Academy of Finland 1963-68.

Although his early work borrowed from the neoclassic movement, he eventually adapted the symbolism and functionalism of the Modern Movement to generate his plans and forms. Aalto's mature work embodies a unique functionalist/expressionist and humane style, successfully applied to libraries, civic centers, churches, housing, etc.

A synthesis of rational with intuitive design principles allowed Aalto to create a long series of functional yet non-reductionist buildings. Alvar Aalto generated a style of functionalism which avoided romantic excess and neoclassical monotony. Although Aalto borrowed from the International Style, he utilized texture, color, and structure in creative new ways. He refined the generic examples of modern architecture that existed in most of Europe and recreated them into a new Finnish architecture. Aalto's designs were particularly significant because of their response to site, material and form.

Aalto generated a large body of work in Germany, America, and Sweden. Often at work on multiple projects, he tended to intermingle ideas and details within his work. The spectrum of Aalto's work exhibits a sensual detailing that separates him from most of his contemporaries. Aalto was a master of form and planning, as well as of details that relate a building successfully to its users. His buildings have provided renewed inspiration in the face of widespread disillusionment with high modernism on one hand, and post-modernism on the other. Aalto died in Helsinki in May 1976.

- http://www.GreatBuildings.com/buildings/Riola_Parish_Church.html

"The new church was one of the first in which the 'reformed' Roman Catholic liturgy would be given expression in architectural terms; the aim was to provide a close relationship between altar, choir and organ, as well as the baptistery. The shape of the church itself is an asymmetrical basilica with asymmetrical vaulting through which light, directed especially towards the altar, enters the building.

Galleries were dispensed with, but the choir area was extended to compensate for their absence. The front wall of the church can be opened so that the forecourt serves as an extension to it."

- Karl Fleig. Alvar Aalto. p171

The small mountain village of Riola di Vergato lies on a slope of the Apennines some forty kilometres south of Bologna along the road to Pistoia. The ecumenically inclined Bishop of Bologna, Cardinal Giacomo Lercaro, asked Aalto in 1965 to design a small church next to the old highway bridge across the river Reno. Aalto's initial plan from 1966 already showed the church in its final form, but it was later supplemented by more comprehensive plans for old people's home and a kindergarten. Planning resumed in 1969 and again in 1975, continuing until 1980. As in Seinäjoki, Aalto laid out an enclosed piazza in front of the church in order to enable a large congregation of thousands to participate in divine services at major religious festivals. He also thought that the church itself, which normally seats a congregation of 200, could be divided up at need by a gigantic sliding wall into a mini-church - comprising the altar, chancel, and baptistery - and a larger room for non-religious events. The plan is an asymmetrical, slightly wedge-shaped basilica with an unusual roof system consisting of stepped, longitudinal vault fragments inclined towards the chancel. The vertical surfaces of the vaults are glazed, so that the whole church is bathed in light reflected by the white vaults. The vault system, which rises at ground level from one of the long walls, is borne by seven gently curved, asymmetrical concrete arches, related in form to Aalto's wood furniture. The baptistery is on a somewhat lower level to the right of the chancel; it has a lantern visible from outside and a window overlooking the river below. A campanile consisting of five parallel vertical concrete planks rises on the far side of the forecourt, providing an optical lift to the inclined roof of the church. One of the forecourt's long sides is walled off from the river ravine, the other is lined by a colonnade and a modest parish building with youth clubs, meeting rooms, etc. To the left of the chancel is the vestry, which forms part of the vicar's apartment. For a site some way off Aalto designed a Casa di Riposo (an old people's home) with cafeteria and a Scuola Materna (a kindergarten). Financial problems delayed implementation, and the church centre finally built between 1975 and 1980 was merely a shadow of the original plan. The most regrettable omission was that of the campanile, quite indispensable for the overall impression; but also the deletion of the forecourt, the riverside terraces, and the vicar's residence left unfortunate gaps. The moveable wall in the church interior was replaced by a mere drapery, which in no way justifies the mighty 'wing' that projects from one side of the roof, a relic of the intended sliding wall. The old people's home and kindergarten were not built.

- website: Alvo Aalto's Architecture: <http://file.alvaraalto.fi/search.php?id=087>

pavilion de l'esprit nouveau

architect: Le Corbusier
date: 1925 (Original at Paris (France) destroyed. Italian replica (1977))
style: modern

There can be no international exposition in Paris, it seems, without at least one dissident artist exhibiting in defiance of the authorities and official sanction. In 1855, it was Gustave Courbet who defied the juries by setting up his own gallery in plain view of the official exhibition of art. In 1867, it was Manet; in 1878, de Neuville and the military school of painting; in 1889, Gauguin; in 1900 (but with partial blessings of the city of Paris), Rodin. In 1925, it was Le Corbusier whose pavilion outraged the sensibilities of the authorities, and set in motion a debate about modern architecture that has continued in Paris to this day.

Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau, Le Corbusier's idea of a utopian housing unit.

Le Corbusier had troubles with the exposition authorities from the start. After strenuous petitioning for exhibit space, he was finally granted one of the worst sites of the fair. Here Le Corbusier and his associates erected the Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau, and announced that this spirit's program was "to deny decorative art, and to affirm that architecture extends to even the most humble piece of furniture, to the streets, to the city, and to all." The house of the future, he continues, must be a *machine à habiter*, a "machine for living," and not a three-dimensional backdrop for interior Decorators.

As exposition authorities laid eyes on Le Corbusier's *cellule*, they were horrified. The uncompromising geometry of the exterior was carried out mercilessly through the interior. A slab of stone cantilevered out over the living room, forming a kind of interior balcony. Boxlike furniture faced Juan Gris paintings on the wall, and stark Jacques Lipchitz sculptures adorned the otherwise Spartan Decor. Art Deco was nowhere to be seen. In its place was Le Corbusier's uncompromising vision of modernism: less playful, more severe, more more demanding in its adherence to the dominating presence of pure Form.

But the crowning audacity lay beneath the glass of the exhibit tables that Le Corbusier had placed strategically in the other part of his exhibit. Here, in his *Plan Voisin de Paris*, the upstart architect proposed the demolition of vast sections of Paris – especially the second, third, ninth and tenth arrondissements – and replaced these historic sections with Le Corbusier high-rise complexes on a grand scale. Each of the projected facilities would hold three thousand people, and free them spatially from the dead hand of the past.

Most of French architectural authorities were incensed at this brazen attempt to destroy the history and character of Paris. To begin with, they ordered a 20-foot high fence to be erected around the entire Esprit Nouveau pavilion, in hopes of hiding the shameful spectacle from curious visitors. The French Minister of Fine Arts, however, had the fence removed. The international jury was astonished, but proposed to award the audacity with a first prize. The French Academy, annoyed that the fence had been removed, had its revenge by vetoing the international jury's vote. The end result was for Le Corbusier what every avant-garde French artist most desires: a *succes de scandale*. From that time forward, his reputation as a leading architect was confirmed, and Le Corbusier never wanted for commissions.

- <http://www.retropolis.net/exposition/newspirit.html>

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