



reflections

Carlo Scarpa

in collaboration with Guido Pietropoli

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Reflections: Carlo Scarpa

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Reflections Carlo Scarpa

Narrating Carlo Scarpa

Anastasia Bychkova

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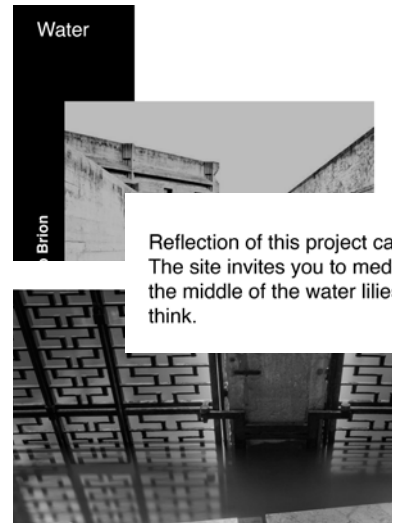
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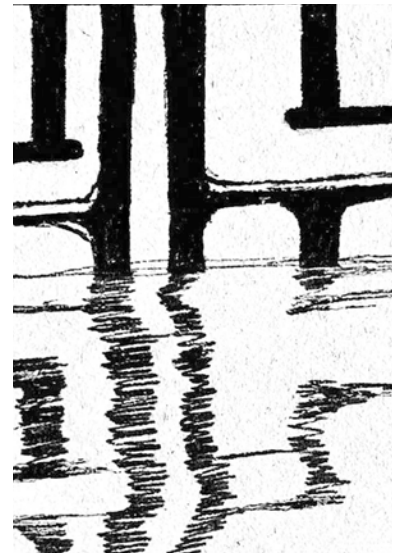
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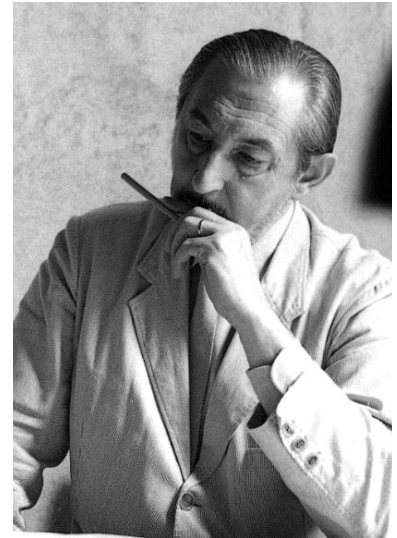
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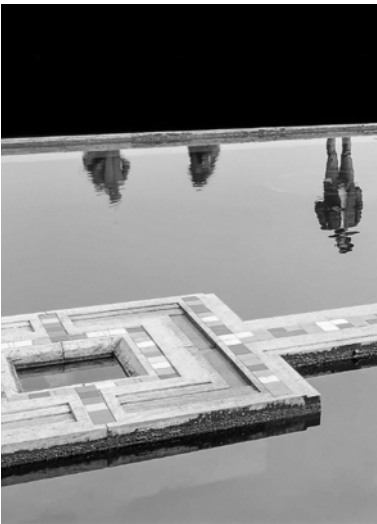
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Reflections: Carlo Scarpa



Introduction: Venice

0.00 - 01.56

Reflection of Venice on Scarpa

"...in perfection of beauty, (Venice) is still left for our beholding in the final period of her decline: a ghost upon the sands of the sea, so weak – so quiet, - so bereft of all but her loveliness, that we might well doubt, as we watched her faint reflection in the mirage of the lagoon, which was the City, and which the Shadow." -John Ruskin, Stones of Venice

The myth and reality of Venice are shaped by water. Although water and Venice seem inseparable in the imagination, it was Water that preceded Venice and later that will be there when Venice is no more than a shadow...

The most celebrated vision of Venice, inspiring centuries of art and verse, has the city rising from the water "...fully-formed and [a] perfect fabrication..." – just as Venus rose, fully formed from the foam of the sea. - When allegorically referencing Venus in depicting Venice and Venetian identity, there is an inherent dualism of love and beauty ranging from the profane to the transcendent.

In contrast to the Venusian myth, Venice originated on the foundations of an ancient temple built by the mythological poet and musician Orpheus. In all legends surrounding Orpheus, he is revealed as "the seducer at all levels of the cosmos and the psyche – Heaven, Earth, the ocean and the Underworld; the subconscious, the conscious and the superconscious; he enchants." Legend has it that Orpheus enchanted the sea and seduced the stones to stack upon one another, and Venice was conceived.

"Time has a different dimension in Venice. ...Eternity is a dimension that suits Venice very well, part and parcel of her own special brand of real life. ...And yet what shapes life here is an ever-present dualism, the clash between this unsuppressable idea of timelessness and an ominous sense of ephemerality that soon rears its ugly head...[In Venice] Eternity and fragility cohabit like love and death in a tender embrace romantically immortalized by poets and writers through the ages.

Reflections: Carlo Scarpa

Eros and Thanatos, love and death. ...Her entire existence is conditioned by the dualism rooted in her soul, every aspect of the city helps create her magic: joy and sadness, meeting and separation, chaste love and licentious, sacred and profane... [D. Reato, Venice: Past and Present (New York: Barnes and Nobles Books, 2001), 8-10.]

The contrasts and contradictions represented by Venetic myth are symbolic of the dualistic nature of water as well as qualities embedded within Venetian culture.

What shapes life in Venice is an ever-present dualism, Eternity and fragility cohabit like love and death in a tender embrace romantically immortalized by poets and writers through the ages.

Carlo Scarpa is one of these poets.

John Ruskin, "Ponte dei Pugni a Santa Fosca", 1849



the plan

The idea of reflection has always been the starting point as a concept both in the material sense and in the metaphorical sense. This is an approach much like Scarpa's architecture because the material carrying into the symbolic, the poetic, is a great theme of Carlo Scarpa's work.

The intention has always been to primarily read Scarpa through 2 chosen works: Fondazione Querini Stampalia, and Tomba Brion. Although the way we narrate the documentary and the formation of the chapters occurred after doing the interview with Guido Pietropoli. His explanations not only gave us new information that we have not seen in the bibliography but also guided us to make the documentary.

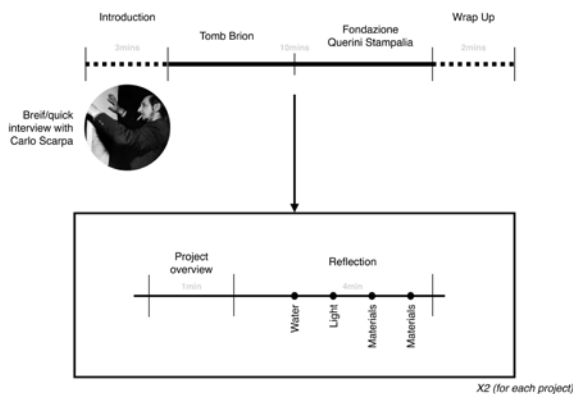
After the interview, three chapters gained importance after the introduction of Venice's reflection:

Chapter 1: Water

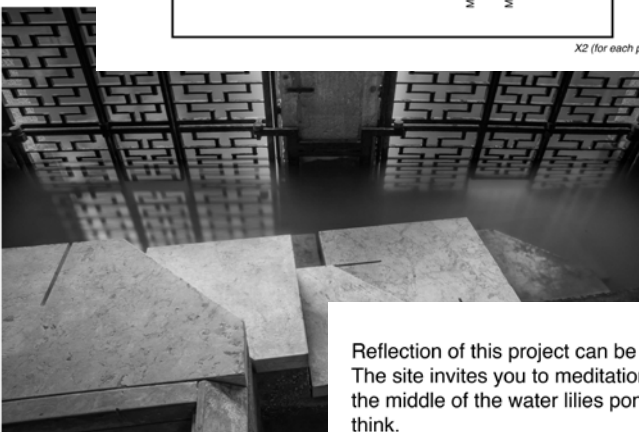
Chapter 2: Material

Chapter 3: Nature and Poetics

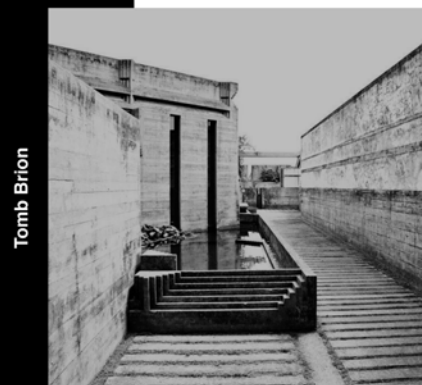
After learning the poetics involved in the topic, the last chapter became the place to leave the audience and reflect on the work of Carlo Scarpa.



Fondazione Querini Stampalia



Water



Tomb Brion

Reflection of this project can be philosophical. The site invites you to meditation and reflection. In particular Scarpa created the bench in the middle of the water lilies pond precisely for this reason: so the visitors could sit and think.

Reflections: Carlo Scarpa



Interview with Architect Guido Pietropoli

Guido Pietropoli was a pupil and collaborator of the great architect Carlo Scarpa, since 1968 until his death in Sendai (Japan) in 1978. He published many writings and photographs of Carlo Scarpa including the books *A Fianco Di Carlo Scarpa* (2020), *Quasi un racconto. Carlo Scarpa 1968-78: La storia del progetto del Cimitero Brion a San Vito di Altivole* (2020), and *Carlo Scarpa. La tomba Brion* (2009) with Enrico Renai.

He kindly accepted our request for interviewing him. His narration accompanies the documentary, talking about Scarpa, his works, and reflection; both in the material sense and in the metaphorical sense.

Biography

Born on September 19th 1945 in Rovigo, Italy, Pietropoli attended the Architectural Institute of Venice University between 1964 and 1970, and graduated, full marks and credit, with Prof. Carlo Scarpa.

He then worked in the studio of Le Corbusier for the new hospital in Venice with Architect Jullian de la Fuente.

He started working as a professional architect in 1972, opening a studio in Monselice, Padova, and collaborating on projects with Prof. Carlo Scarpa.

Between 1972 and 1976 he was an assistant lecturer on

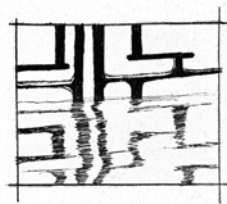
Educational activities on Prof. Carlo Scarpa's Architectural Planning Courses at the Architectural Institute of Venice University.

From 1977 to 1979 he was a professor of Elements of Industrial Design at the School of Arts and Crafts, Vicenza.

In 1980 he opened a new professional studio in Rovigo in collaboration with the Japanese Architect Theruisha Ito. At the same time he was the Director of the School of Arts and Crafts in Vicenza between 1981 and 1982.

From 1989 to 1994 he designed buildings components on behalf of the Japanese Company YKK.

Chapter 1: Water



01.56 - 05.19

"I'm fond of water, perhaps because I'm a Venetian..."

-Carlo Scarpa

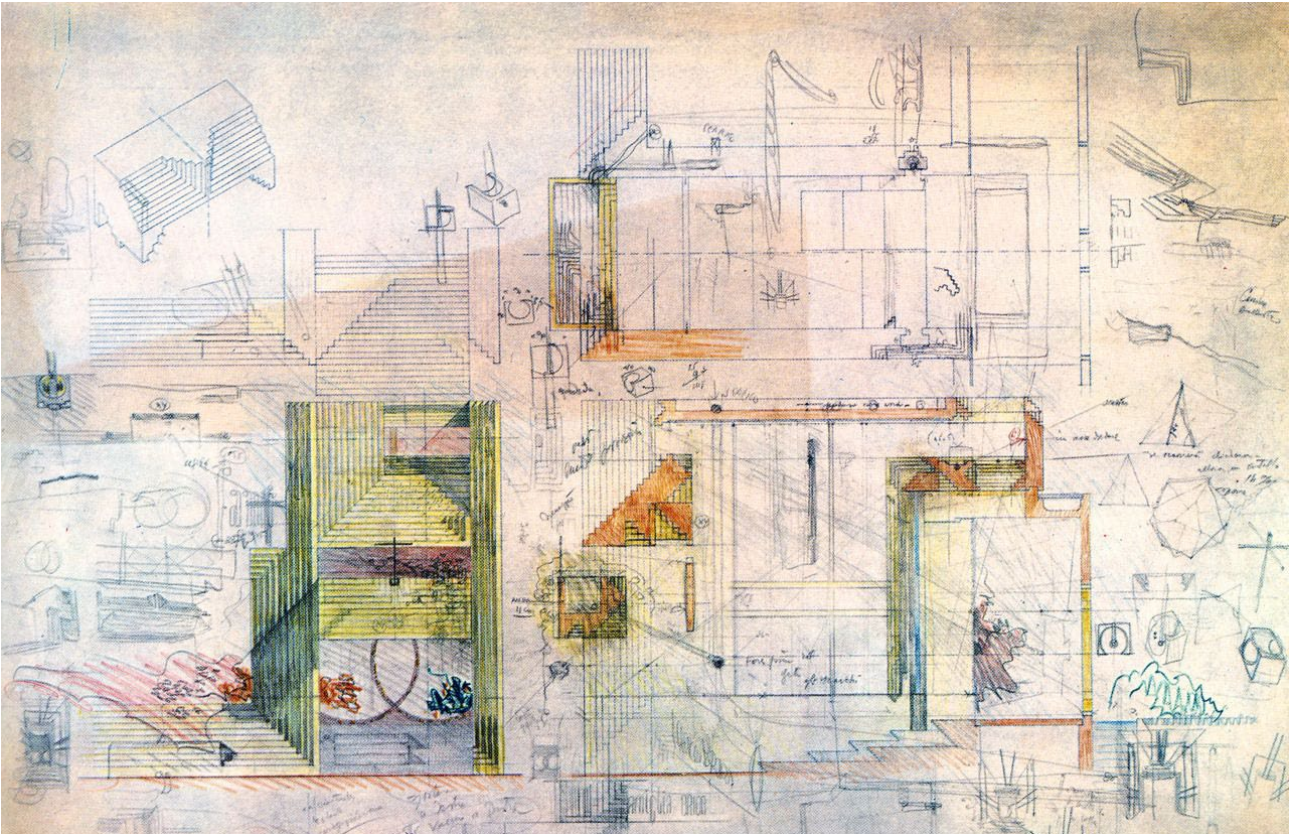
When shaped by Scarpa, water also reflects rhythmic and carefully articulated details giving added depth to both structure and material. Combined with the water's movement, sound and touch, its application provides a common vocabulary for a wholly sensual experience.

Water presents an animated presence with Scarpa's architecture. Like light, the qualities of water are subject to change based on natural forces. The interplay of wind, clouds, rain, dawn, sun, dusk, and moonlight act as eternal agents, working on the surface or depths of the water to transform space and create individual sensorial moments.

Even in new interventions without a site context including water, Scarpa orchestrates duets between light and water so that one plays on the surface of the other – changing the experiential dimension of the spaces around it.

At Brion Cemetery, the use of water is incredibly profound, not only in the metaphor of crossing the mythical river into the afterlife but also because it is a place designed for the living. Scarpa was aware of the allegorical significance of crossing the water after death and, especially, its ritual significance in the funeral rites of Venice. These concepts are poetically articulated in his handling of a series of spaces where water alternates between reflective surface, path, submerged structure and threshold. (Beverly L. Frank, Seeking The City)

Reflections: Carlo Scarpa



Carlo Scarpa working about Tomb Brion quoted often part of a poem by Paul Valery. And this poem is "Cimitero Marino", it's a very well known poem. And Scarpa quoted usually these words:

Le don de vivre a passé dans les fleurs

The gift of life has come in the flowers.

And this is water. It's a different kind of water, it's not visible water.

Pietropoli frequently underlined the effect this poem had on Scarpa, and we can sense a relation between Tomba Brion and Valery's poem **The Graveyard By The Sea**, immediately after reading it.

...

*Once here the future comes as idleness.
The brittle insect scrapes the dryness;
all is burned, defeated, drawn to air
I cannot tell to what severe essence...*

*Life is vast, being drunk with absence,
and bitterness is sweet and the mind, clear.*

*The dead lie easy, hidden in earth where they
and all their mysteries are dried away.
High noon, this motionless and midday blue,
thinks of itself and of its own renown...
a mind complete and perfect crown,
I am the secret change you have in you.*

*You have me only to contain your fears!
My doubts and my regrets, my closest cares
are in the fault-line of your diamond heart...
But in their night with marbles heavy weighted,
a people vague and to their tree roots mated
have slowly nonetheless taken your part.*

*Into an absence thick they melt away,
white race drunk up by red clay,
the gift of life has passed into the flowers!
Where are the phrases that the dead control,*

Reflections: Carlo Scarpa

*a people's art, the individual soul?
Worms now gnaw where tears once had their hour.*

*Sharp squeals of girls tickled anew,
the eyes and teeth, the eyelids' moistening dew,
the charming breast playing within the flame,
the blood that shines on lips so keen to yield,
those final gifts, that fingers aim to shield,
all below ground and back into the game!*

*And you, great soul, do you expect to dream
of lying colours that no longer seem
like waves or gold made here for fleshy eyes?
When you are merely vapours will you sing?
Go to! All flees! Presence here passes on a wing!
Holy impatience also dies!*

*Lean immortality, so black and gold,
a laurelled comforter, so ghastly to behold,
that out of death can, from a mother's breast,
make beautiful untruth and pious ruse!
who nothing knows and nothing can refuse,
that empty skull and that eternal jest!*

*Heads uninhabited, fathers profound,
under the weight of so much shovelled ground
are now but earth and can our steps deceive.
The real, the gnawing, wriggling worm of doom,
is not for you who sleep beneath the tomb;
and yet devours my life which he will never leave!*

...

I think that water is very important in the architecture of Scarpa but water has many meanings; water is life, it's blood, and so on, if the blood runs you have life, if the blood has no circulation you are dead!

There is also a visual effect of water and the visual effect is reflection.

There are many problems about water because water was a great problem of Querini and Querini suffered very much last year for the high water. Scarpa thought that the water was not to be stopped outside the building but to consent that the water enter the building. He made many channels inside that the possibility that water may enter. He was able to put the water all in the ground level of Querini, artificially, not natural water.

We have papyrus- piante di papiro, in the channel behind the exit of the main hall in the ground level. The water comes out from a special stone with some holes, water makes a very labyrinth way, and after it falls down and gives water for the papyrus plant.

Professor Giuseppe Mazzariol was the director of Querini Stampalia when Scarpa was alive. He talked very well about this problem of the water and he repeated the waters of Carlo Scarpa who said that don't stop the water outside, let the water come inside building, and so on.

And he wanted the water inside because the water inside could give many reflections on the surface in the ceiling and in other parts.

Reflections: Carlo Scarpa



Chapter 2: Material



05:19 - 09:32

The light is a sort of material, a solid material to make architecture.

When you enter in Brion and you make the little stairway from the cemetery and you arrive in the tunnel with the two rings. You don't have roof over your head but you have opening. In this moment you receive light from the two rings but also from the top. And there is a beautiful poem from an ancient Greek poet he said

"when the light is directly from the top vertical you have your face dark and your shoulder gold".

When you are in that position your face is dark and your shoulders that seem of gold.

In the church you have many quality of light. Because you have the very high window with the special shape then you have the little window that you are talking about before, with the rosa del portogalo marble. It's a special

marble with screen with metal, and you have the pyramid dome that has a square opening in the top.

[All around the dome is made by two different woods, one wood is Pear wood and the other one is Ebano wood. And you have these steps in two colors because Ebano is dark and Pear wood is white or clear. If you have this experience in the backside of the alter.]

In the church. You have two big windows you may open these windows. And when you open these doors the reflection of the water all around the church goes in the ceiling and gives a sort of living decoration of reflection. And this idea, perhaps, came from the church designed by Jullian De La Fuente, the hospital in Venice by Le Corbusier. In this church, Le Corbusier keeps the water inside the church and gives this natural decoration by reflection of the water.

Reflections: Carlo Scarpa

[If you are studying the reflection of Carlo Scarpa it is very important also the plaster Stucco, stucco is a sort of water.]

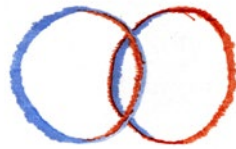
There are many components with many importance like concrete, wood, metal, iron, or brass. The brass in Carlo Scarpa is not brass but it's Muntz Metal. Muntz metal is a special metal invented for marine use. [for ships and boats and so on.]

Glass is a sort of solid water, if you want. Scarpa started with a non-transparent glass. The first glass he designed were like Japanese "Lacca" with color but without transparency. And then, he worked with master factory of glass and he understood that the quality of glass is transparency, and he made many new idea to have different transparency. [If you see the glass from top, from the side, with special light, and so on... I think that glass is a sort of solid water.]

Scarpa tried to express this kind of transparency also in his glasses. And he used glass. Also in Brion, he used many water. In the grande vasca with the water pavilion, or the vasca all around the church. [The little church but also he used glass in the glass door, the sliding door that goes in the floor and return wet with water.]



Chapter 3: Nature and Poetics



09:32 - 15:33

symbol

syn- "together" + bole "a throwing" (*Gr.*)



Reflections: Carlo Scarpa

I have seen the 2200 drawings that Scarpa made for Brion. I know very well all these drawings. And the first drawings, were with the water under the *arcosolio*. Arcosolio is the arch. And it's funny because if you go now, you don't see water in the floor all around the circle, but the first idea was to have water all around.

[Son of Joseph Brion said "Please professor no water there because it is dangerous. If we go to see our father and our mother..."]

So, he designed many instruments to collect the water. And the water started from very close to the *arcosolio*, because, as I said before,

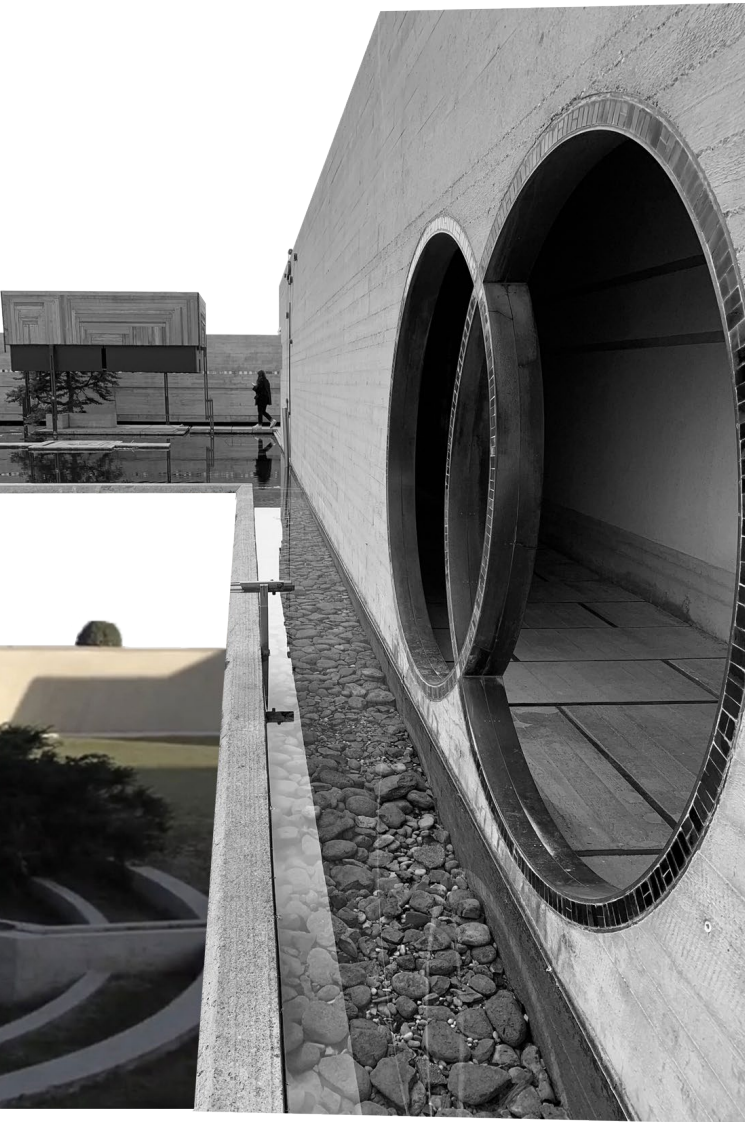
le don de vivre a passé dans les fleurs

The body gives its water to the ground, and then this water goes in the flower. River started from the *arcosolio* and goes to the *Vasca grande*.

Tomba Brion has many possibilities of reflection. Because also the water pavilion, if you go in Brion in winter time, you see the water without flowers, and you see the double image of the water pavilion over the water, and reflecting on the water. And you may see this only in winter. [Not in easter, not in spring, because there are many flowers.]

The water in the main basin, named *vasca grande* comes from the two tombs [by Onorina and Giuseppe Brion. Because the little river started from the two tombs.]

In brion you have two kinds of basin water. Because you have the *vasca* all around the church, and the *vasca* in the position of the water pavilion. Otherwise, in the water pavilion, you cannot see the *fondo de la vasca*, because the water is dark. [and you may see only fishes and so on. *Vasca* of the church has a concrete slab, the meaning of this, is in the church, you have a religious tradition that try to explain what's happening in the water.] But if you are a poet, and you walk till the water pavilion, you see in the water pavilion meditation you have a very dark and very deep water, because you cannot see the transparency of the water. But it's a fantastic water because it seems like a painting by Paul Klee, because you see red fishes and the beautiful gold fishes.



Reflections: Carlo Scarpa



[The one important side of] the work of Carlo Scarpa is symbolic. Symbolo. “symbolo” means putting all the things together. The etymology of the word means: I put all the things together. And this is the contrary of the devil, because it is ‘diaballo’. [meaning I destroy all the things and I throw the things out.]

[Symbolism is very important because you may understand many things with the simple geometric figure and with these single images and these extraordinary means or method of expression.] All Brion is a symbolic architecture. It’s not useful architecture because you don’t need to have such a wide cemetery to give some ground to the dead body. You need to reflect about the problem of death, and reflect and return.

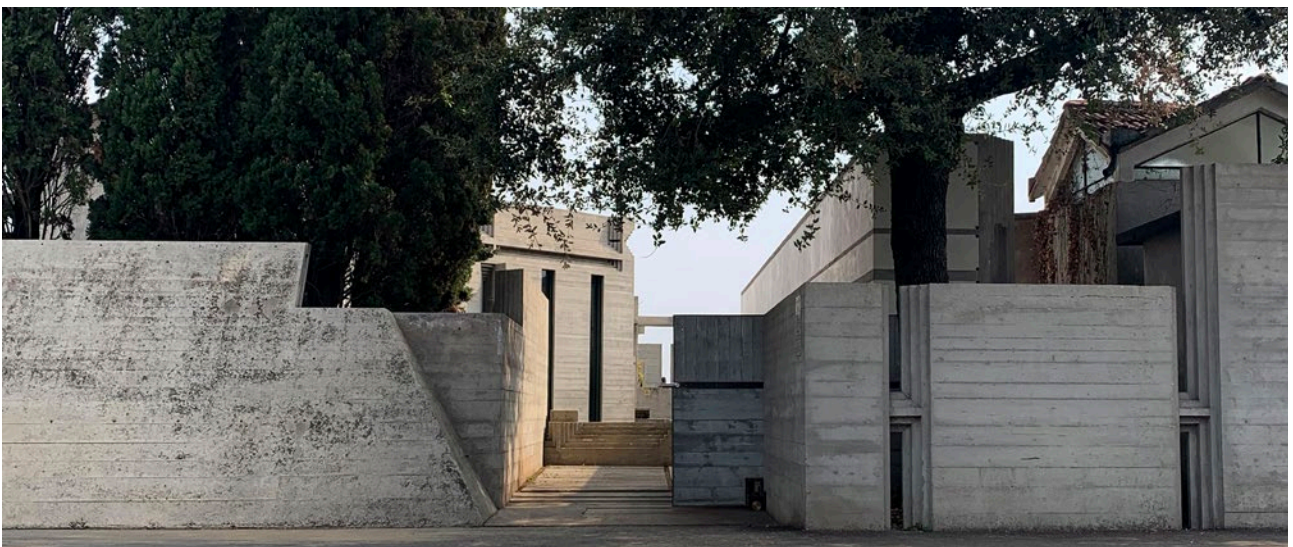
The work of Carlo Scarpa is a sort of seme. Seme (seed) means something natural that if you put in the ground it grows and becomes a tree or a flower. [The quality of these architecture is that you need to return many times] because this seme must grow inside you. And this is the great, strength of the poetry language. [If reflection means re-flection, also the form that Scarpa used in the Brion tomb,

Reflections: Carlo Scarpa



these steps all around are a sort of reflection because you must try to carve form. All these steps are a sort of stairway to heaven, because the sloping of these stairways are 45 degrees. And you may go down or you may go up without any direction.]

[External wall is a very strange wall because it's not vertical, it's 60 degrees sloping. And some people could think that Scarpa wanted to do something very strange but in fact Scarpa was not a strange man. He was a very deep man, poetic, If you've been there you have experienced that the entry in the tomb you go up, because the level or the ground inside the tomb is higher than the ground level of the country side and so sloping wall means that the ground is growing - Also this level that covers the tomb is opening now, it is still opening, and this hasitant wall the Brian tomb is growing from the ground because the meaning of the tomb is Tumulus. Tumulus means something that grows, became greater. And if you remember the words by other word about a grave, he said that when you walk in a natural space and you see between the trees a very strange part of ground and formal this ground is two square upper part is in form of roof you immediately became serious and you understand that in this part of the ground is buried a

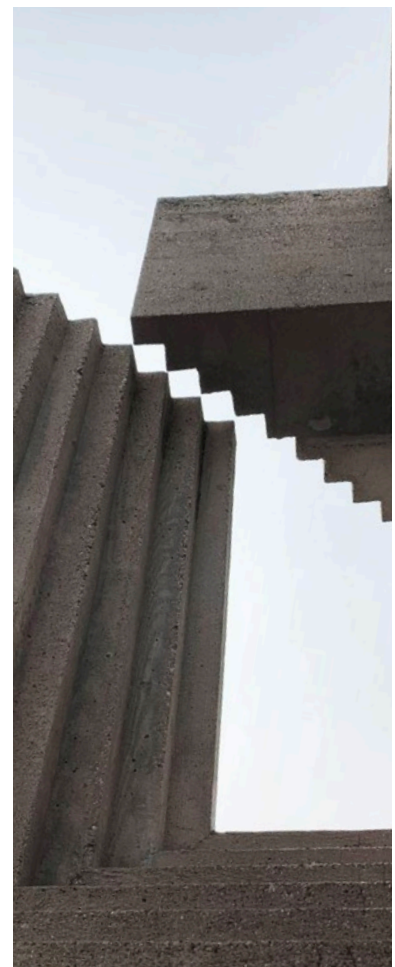
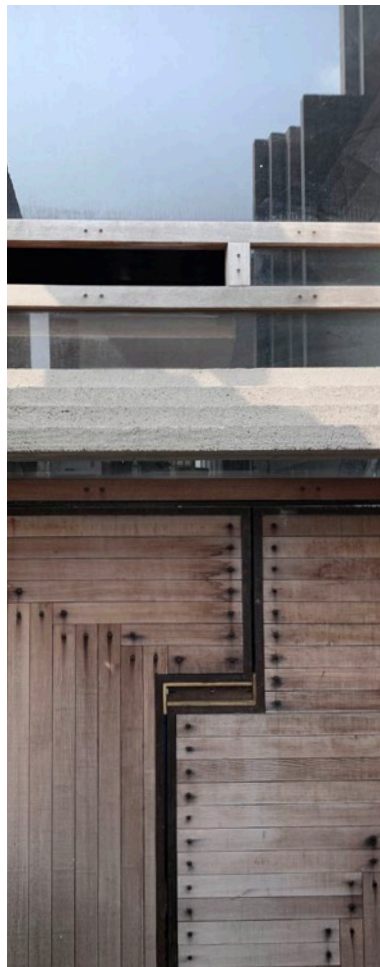
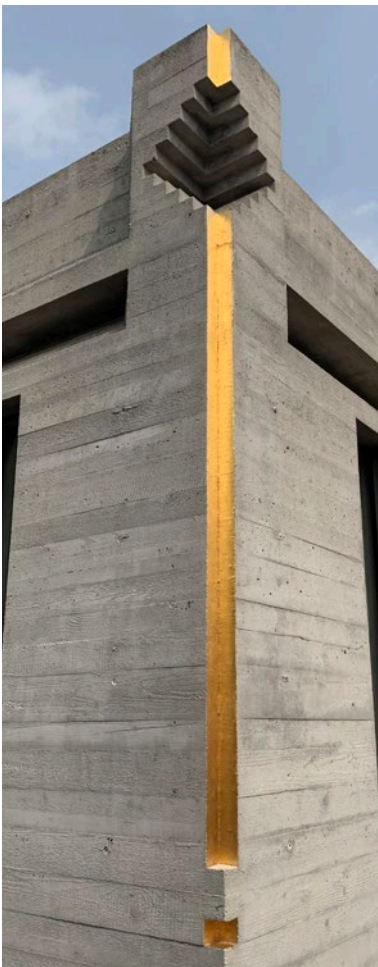


Reflections: Carlo Scarpa

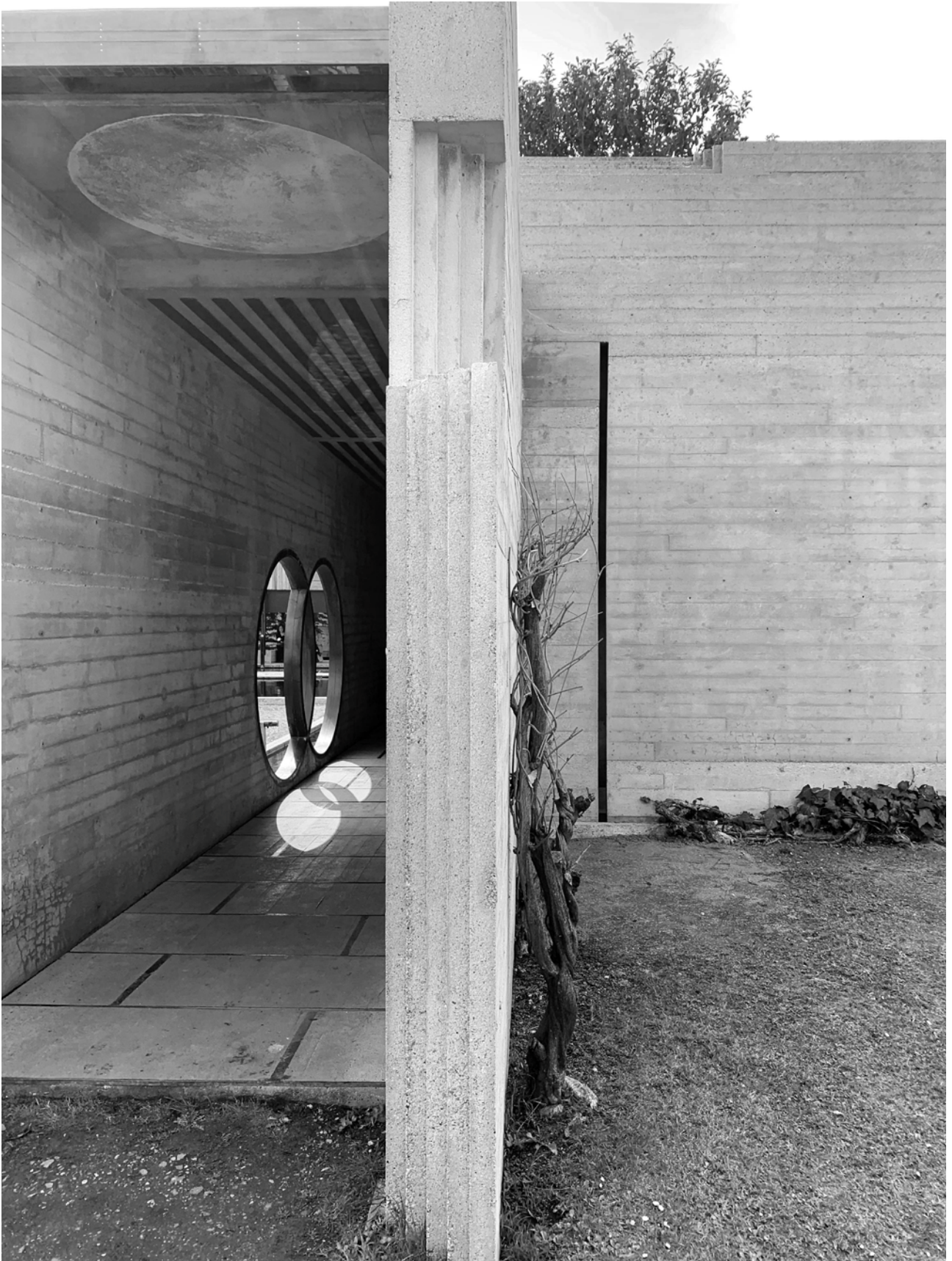
dead people, and this part is higher with difference of the other part of the ground because the ground is growing for the presence of the dead body inside.]

About the two rings, every ring has both colors. Because if you enter, you see one ring pink and the other side you see the ring blue. But if you go outside, you see that the ring that was pink now is blue and this is a sort of reflection between husband and wife, because everyone has both the quality of feminine and the masculine in the same ring.

Details are the most famous part of the architecture of Carlo Scarpa. Because Carlo Scarpa is celebrated for his details. But these are like a part of a flower, they are necessary to capture your attention, and to invite you to reflect in the meaning of the building. The details are a system to bring your attention. Because they are very interesting and very well connected but this is not the main part, the most important part of the architecture of Carlo Scarpa. The most important is the same. What you may accept about the architecture, and the desire to return, to visit the architecture of Carlo Scarpa. This is not so frequent in the modern architecture, because you see a building you are very astonished, you like the building but you don't feel the necessity to return. Because it's enough, one visit is enough. But when the work is a work of poetry, you return. Also you return to the museum, to see beautiful paintings for one more time. Because every time, you understand more things about them...



Reflections: Carlo Scarpa



Reflections of Carlo Scarpa



Louis Kahn and Carlo Scarpa in the house of Scarpa, Asolo, 1968. (ph. Guido Pietropoli, courtesy Archivio fotografico Guido Pietropoli)

The last thing Louis Kahn wrote before his death was a poem to his friend Carlo Scarpa - this is what he wrote:

“In the work of Carlo Scarpa

‘Beauty’

The first sense

Art

The first word

Then wonder

Then the inner realisation of ‘form’

The sense of the wholeness of inseparable elements.

Design consults nature

To give presence to the elements.

A work of art makes manifest the wholeness of ‘form’

The symphony of the selected shapes of the elements.

In the elements

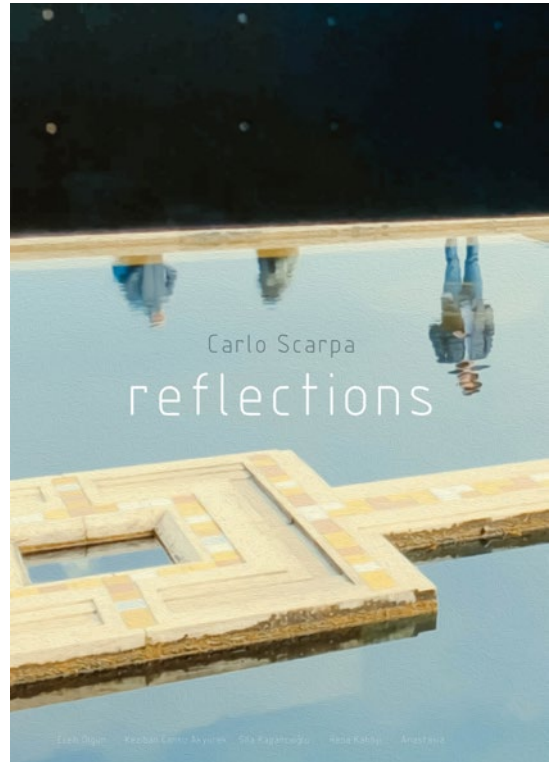
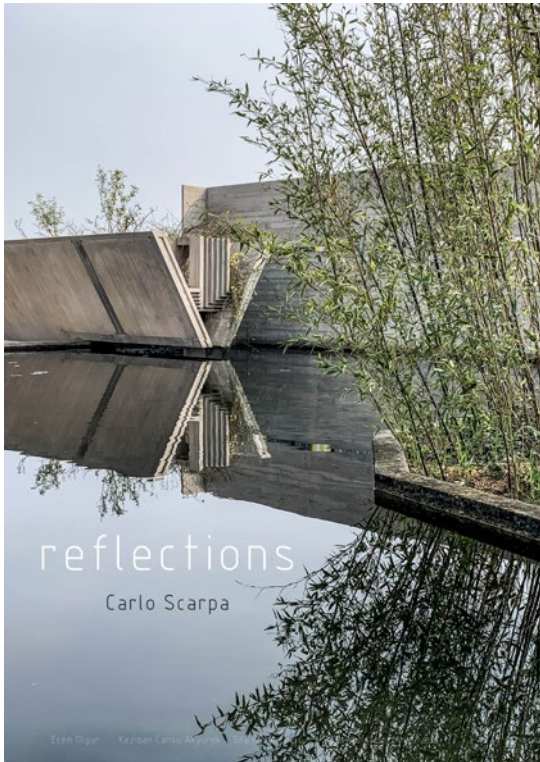
The joint inspires ornament, its celebration.

The detail is the adoration of nature.”

Louis I. Khan

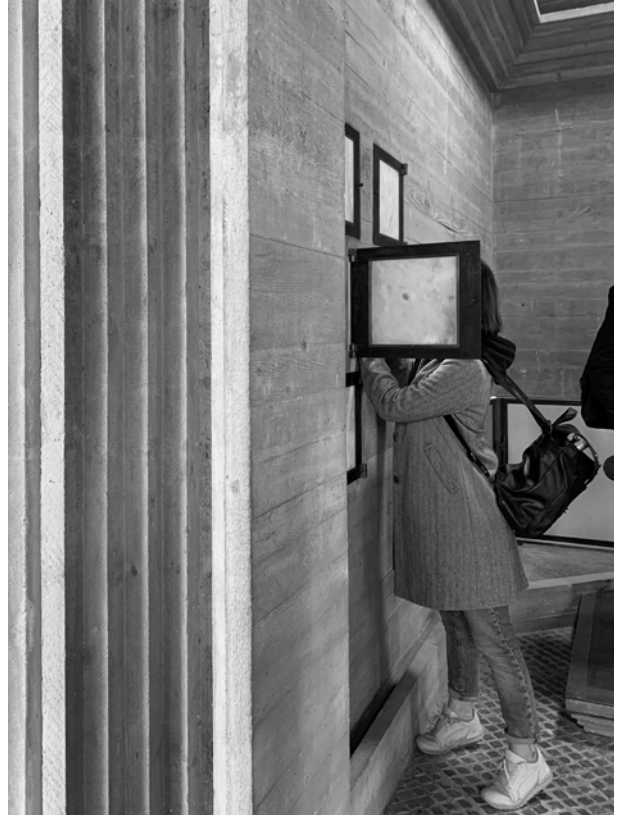
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Behind The Scenes



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Archivio Querini Stampalia

Reflections: Carlo Scarpa



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