

# INTERNI

LA RIVISTA DELL'ARREDAMENTO

N° 11 NOVEMBRE 2008

## **ARCHITETTURE**

**KUMA, STARCK, PUTMAN,  
FLORES & PRATS**



## **ATTUALITÀ**

**XI BIENNALE DI ARCHITETTURA  
A VENEZIA**

**TEMA CENTRALE  
CARPETS**

## **PROGETTO DESIGN**

**BLUMER, MARIANI/AEDAS R&D,  
BARON, FRAGILE**

## **OSSERVATORIO**

**LA CUCINA ABITABILE**

## **REPERTORIO**

**I NUOVI LETTI**

**TRAMPDESIGN**

by Tom Dixon



Mensile/monthly  
with complete English texts



strutturale dell'edificio in modo da sfruttare il massimo dell'altezza interna consentita dalla normativa locale. Una grande dignità dell'architettura, dei suoi spazi e dettagli, dei suoi materiali e colori, caratterizza entrambe le scale d'intervento, anche nel percorso di avvicinamento, nel percorrere il giardino – nel caso delle ville –, il parco per la fabbrica (ottenuto creando un parcheggio interrato per più di seicento veicoli). Qualità spaziali e cura del particolare che si ripetono per gli spazi commerciali (show room per B&B, Arflex, Stildomus e San Lorenzo, senza dimenticare lo studio dell'immagine coordinata per i punti vendita Benetton) e che si ritrovano, come elementi guida di un percorso unitario e diversificato allo stesso tempo, anche nel campo del restauro. Sia esso di tipo conservativo e di 'sola' ricostruzione, come per la Loggia dei Cavalieri di Treviso (1988-99), sia di più aperto confronto tra segno contemporaneo ed eredità storica come nel progetto per Villa Loredan a Volpago (1997) sede in quel periodo del gruppo Benetton, o per il restauro in corso delle Gallerie dell'Accademia a Venezia. Se i pezzi di arredo sono stati disegnati da Afra e Tobia Scarpa quasi sempre in rapporto a un'idea di spazio a essi relativo, un procedimento comune unisce il modo di progettare le case a quello degli oggetti. Si tratta di un procedimento di 'smontaggio e rimontaggio' che le due ville prese a esempio ben sintetizzano; smontare un organismo, in questo caso un'architettura domestica, e ricomporla in modo nuovo. Molti dei pezzi di design si riconducono a tale pratica dove però lo smontaggio delle componenti, oltre a rispondere a un'indagine compositiva e di verifica formale, si lega anche allo studio della sua ottimizzazione seriale, produttiva coerente alle logiche dell'industrial design. La sedia Pigreco (disegnata per un esame universitario sostenuto con Franco Albini nel 1959-60, esposta alla Triennale milanese e messa in autoproduzione dal suo autore) offre un saggio sulla possibile riconfigurazione della seduta di legno con sedile imbottito sperimentando l'impiego del legno impiallicciato chiamato a disegnare una stratificazione figurativa nello schienale in curva (tecnica ripresa per Maxalto nel 1975), mentre il divano Bastiano per Gavina (1961) propone una struttura lignea esterna indipendente dai cuscini rompendo la tradizionale idea dell'imbottito come arredo fatto d'un pezzo dove l'imbottitura nasconde la trama strutturale. Il letto Vanessa (1962), sempre per Gavina, ripropone in chiave contemporanea l'uso del ferro verniciato, qui un piatto metallico, associato a piccole piastre di ottone, che forma la struttura e poi disegna in modo fluido la testata, piegandosi con grande armonia, come un nastro di stoffa. Coronado (1969), il divano per C&B, assemblabile in serie in soli 15', unisce la modernità della produzione industriale al ricordo del divano 'storico' nell'uso dei bottoni, secondo la tradizione capitonné che segnano il cuscino dello schienale fermando il rivestimento

in tessuto o in pelle. Un'attenzione, quella verso l'ottimizzazione dei tempi produttivi coniugata alla soluzione formale che caratterizza sempre l'approccio al design di Tobia Scarpa: il divano e la poltrona 915 con struttura di lamiera stampata e la poltrona Carlotta per Cassina (1964 e 1967); la poltrona e divano Soriana per Cassina del 1969, il sistema dei contenitori modulari Torcello per Stildomus del 1964; il divano Erasmo per B&B del 1973; l'essenziale sistema componibile Lola per Meritalia 1992, solo per citarne alcuni. La sedia Oscarina di compensato verniciato assemblata ad incastro (Merotto & Milani, 2004) e Libertà (Meritalia, 1989) ottenuta da un foglio di alluminio fustellato, piegato e rivettato, evidenziano la razionalità del loro assemblaggio in rapporto alla soluzione finale. La Libertà dichiara un interesse per i metalli che la produzione di pentole di argento massiccio e attrezzi da cucina per San Lorenzo (1988) svilupperà in chiave sperimentale, sino ad arrivare al Putter (San Lorenzo, 2002) un'essenziale quanto perfetta, dal punto di vista formale e funzionale, mazza per il golf. Anche nel campo delle lampade i lavori di Afra e Tobia Scarpa producono dei 'classici' del design italiano: dalle lampade per Flos che impiegano il cocoon (materiale a spruzzo a solidificazione successiva già usato dai fratelli Castiglioni) come il Fantasma, riprese nelle attuali scultoree luci per Marco Pezzolo (Monnalisa), alla lampada da tavolo Jucker (1963) che, prima dell'Eclisse di Vico Magistretti, utilizza lo stesso principio con la calotta oscurante di rotazione, sino all'applique Foglio del 1966 per Flos, che denuncia la semplicità e l'eleganza di una lamiera piegata su se stessa. La lampada da tavolo Biagio (1968), ricavata da un disco di marmo tornito, se da un lato si riconduce ancora all'idea di smontaggio e ricomposizione già accennato, dall'altro sperimenta nuovi impieghi per il materiale lapideo. Sperimentazione che si ritrova anche nella grande lampada a muro o a soffitto Ariette ottenuta impiegando due teli di tessuto sintetico Tyvex (Flos, 1973), in quella da terra Papillona (1975), con riflettori-diffusori in vetro prismatico in grado di modulare la luce nell'ambiente, sino alla Pierrot (Flos, 1990), una lampada da tavola costruita con il materiale impiegato per i circuiti stampati e il lampadario Nastro per Andromeda (1988) che reinventa la tradizione delle grandi luci a sospensione in vetro di Murano. Un percorso di lavoro che più che indicare un linguaggio, un metodo ripetibile, uno 'stile', ha come caratteristica quello di ascoltare. Ascoltare i materiali, i luoghi, le architetture e ovviamente gli uomini, per rispondere ogni volta in modo appropriato. Come indicava Roberto Masiero: "questo non è un programma, è un modo d'essere, [...] le opere di Afra e Tobia Scarpa rappresentano una sfida etica prima che estetica, rivolta alla comprensione del possibile, piuttosto che alla occupazione del futuro".



Afra e Tobia Scarpa: **1.** Divano Coronado (C&B, 1969).

**2.** Lampada da tavolo Jucker (Flos, 1963).

**3.** Lampadario Nastro (Andromeda, 1988).

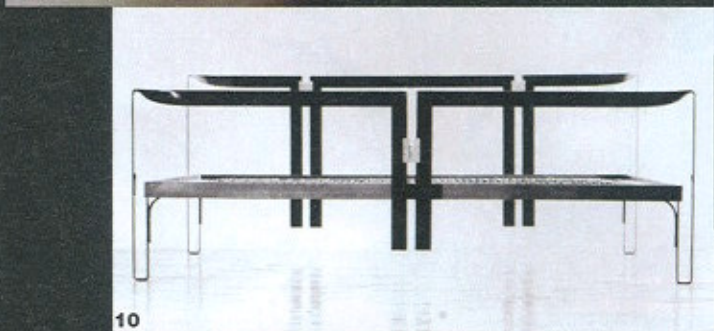
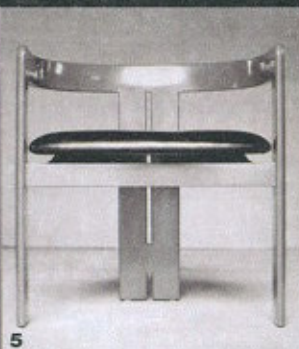
**4.** Lampada da terra Papillona (Flos, 1975).

**5.** Tobia Scarpa, sedia Pigreco (1959, autoprodotta e poi prodotta per Gavina).

**6.** Tobia Scarpa, Lampada da terra Monnalisa (Marco Pezzolo, 2005).

**7.** Applique Foglio (Flos, 1966).

**8.** Tobia Scarpa, Putter, mazza da golf (San Lorenzo, 2002).



**9.** Tobia Scarpa, padella in argento puro (San Lorenzo, 1999).

**10.** Letto Vanessa (Gavina, 1962).

**11.** Tobia Scarpa, sedia Oscarina (Merotto & Milani, 2004).

**12.** Divano Soriana (Cassina, 1969).



Milanese saying 'offellè fa il mestè' (baker ply your trade), which in this case becomes a banal proverb, because the theme proposed (and poorly managed) corresponds to a real urban condition and does not necessarily mean a detour into art and frivolous expression. What is lacking in Venice, in fact, is the urban framework, the only framework in which this theme makes sense; it has not been positioned within the wider crisis of the role of architecture in the society of the Third Industrial Revolution, within the logic of use of space in the electronic age, and the invasion of merchandise in the metropolitan environment. Not to mention the area of environmental issues, where the theme 'beyond the building' has a certain urgency as well...

Actually, I had the impression that Betsky had proposed a theme that is part of the tradition of the Modern Movement, but without fully realizing it; just consider the Futurists or, as Fulvio Pratesi points out, the recommendation of Giuseppe Pagano to "go beyond architecture": a theme that has been addressed by the radical avant-garde of the 1960s and was at the origin of deconstructivism itself (which then degenerated into a sort of new international style). Historical references that would have made the title less abstract. The theme, in fact, is so complex and timely that it would have required not free interpretation, but a thematic exhibition directly curated by Betsky himself; a historical, very selective, very controlled show. What the slogan 'Architecture beyond building' implies is a disciplinary revolution that all artistic activities have been faced with since the start of the 20th century, as a way to 'get out' of the limits of traditional disciplines: painting, music, writing, faced with the transformations caused by the Industrial Revolution, reorganized their approach in terms of an 'abstract' dimension, or one no longer based on self-representation, harmony, functionality. They went precisely 'beyond the building' into a more conceptual dimension, but one that corresponded better to a society equipped with new sensibilities, which demanded that culture produce new signs, sounds, thoughts. This 'abstraction' did not lead to the disappearance of art, but over the long term to its greater spread, to a new capacity to penetrate 'inside' reality. Modern architecture, due to a series of reasons and misunderstandings, never came to grips with this type of strategy; it updated its vocabulary, its techniques, and to some extent its functions, but it continued to 'think of itself' as building, without realizing that design, information and services were already constructing a new architecture and a new city; a city no longer composed only of architectural boxes, but also of molecular flows that define new spaces and new urban qualities. 'Architecture beyond building' already exists, and its name is 'design'. But in Venice design has not even been mentioned. - **Caption pag. 46** The installation of MAD Office at the Corderie dell'Arsenale, in the exhibition *Uneternal City-Urbanism beyond Rome*. - **Caption pag. 47** The Lotus project by Zaha Hadid Architects at the Corderie dell'Arsenale. - **Caption pag. 48** The installation *Ungapatchket* by Frank O. Gehry, Leone d'Orto for the career, 11th International Architecture Exhibition of Venice.

## Masters

### Tobia Scarpa Rationality as poetics p. 50

by Matteo Vercelloni

Architect and designer, Tobia Scarpa has operated on all scales in his varied career: big industrial buildings, residential architecture, conservative restoration, commercial spaces, domestic interiors, furniture, sailboats, and a wide range of useful objects, from Murano glass to golf clubs. His rational approach is based on listening to material, as a source of poetic inspiration and verification of design with respect to reality. For Tobia Scarpa (1935), son of the famous architect Carlo Scarpa, an outsider of Italian design, we should be able to "recognize, through observation, the value of an object or a work of architecture". This principle, which might seem to be like a rather hasty conclusion, actually conceals a very slow, meticulous design path that involves multiple testing of projects and materials, production and form, with the final aim of stimulating emotions. In this perspective, the rational approach to the theme of the project emerges, in the work of Tobia Scarpa (conducted together with his wife, Afra, until a few years ago), through complex intermediate procedures of re-composition and disassembly, in a poetic three-dimensional form. First of all, the material is harnessed, as a design tool, in a complex process of invention. From his visits to work sites, as a child, with his father, from whom he inherited a focus on creative use of traditional techniques, to his first approaches to the chemistry of glass, in his youth, at Venini, respect for materials has been the condition for the formation of every compositional idea. In an attitude that, without embracing the ideological program of the modernist slogan "from the spoon to the city", necessarily becomes one of 'global design', Tobia Scarpa applies the same intensity and quality to every dimension and theme, seen as opportunities for experimentation that will lead to a conclusive solution. In architecture the idea of a free space, open, full of dignity in terms of both size and materials, characterizes a coherent, continuous path of balanced research, from the boats he has designed for himself (the Maxaltina, for regattas, the Aba for traveling) to the villas and the works of architecture on a wider scale. Tobia and Afra Scarpa abandoned, to some extent, the traditional layout categories and focused on the space we live in for most of the day, the part set aside for socializing, encounters, dialogue; the living room, the dining area, the external courtyards. A sort of fluidity of space that, from outside to inside and vice versa, attempts to activate a continuous sequence, a route that determines free environments, possibly of great height, with lights and colors dictated, for the most part, by the expressive potential of the materials themselves. Among the many houses, two projects can be seen as good examples of this type of design effort: the Daolio house in Guastalla (1988) and the Meroni house in Carimate (1992). Both involve pursuit of spatial qualities that emphasize the active, most lived-in part of the home, identified by a concept of the 'living area' that tends to go beyond the walls, spreading into outdoor spaces - patios, courtyards and gardens - which also become 'rooms' of the house. In Guastalla (near Reggio Emilia) the architecture takes the form of the grafting of three separate volumes, where the living room becomes the three-storey end on which to insert two symmetrical volumes for the bedroom zones, which create a precious internal green courtyard. The high volume, with a curved wall marked by small openings arranged in a rhythmical pattern, finds its counterpart, to the rear, in a forceful barrier wall with four circular perforations, open at the center toward the green courtyard it protects, which plunges into the swimming pool, conceived as the symbolic element of the overall design. At Carimate, near Como, the central court-impluvium

becomes the element of reference for the social spaces of the home. A stone courtyard, open on one side toward the swimming pool, with four blue columns coated in marmorino with lapis lazuli, has a large central circular element (for the water) inscribed in a metal square that, in turn, is surrounded by a 'natural' design following the same geometry (traced by the dripping of rain water from copper drainpipes). These material and spatial qualities can also be seen, with other solutions, in the works of industrial architecture, among which the episode of the production area and automated warehouse of Benetton at Castrette di Villorba (1980-2008) represents a sort of architectural narrative spread over time, whose last chapter, the addition to the logistics zone and the loading dock, dates back to just a few months ago: a large Corten monolith with external structural elements that 'support' the structural framework of the building to take maximum advantage of the internal height permitted by local regulations. Great dignity of architecture, of its spaces and details, materials and colors, characterizes both scales of intervention, also in the path of approach, walking through the garden - in the case of the villas - or the park, for the factory (obtained by creating an underground parking area for over 600 vehicles). Spatial qualities and attention to detail that return in the shops and commercial spaces as well (showrooms for B&B, Arflex, Stildomus and San Lorenzo, as well as the coordinated image developed for the Benetton stores), and also inform the guidelines applied in the field of restoration. Whether the task is pure conservation and reconstruction, as in the case of the Loggia dei Cavalieri of Treviso (1988-99), or involves a more open confrontation between contemporary signs and historical heritage, as in the project for Villa Loredan in Volpago (1997), the headquarters of the Benetton group at the time, or the restoration now in progress of the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice. While the furnishings have almost always been designed by Afra and Tobia Scarpa in relation to an idea of the space where they would be used, the approaches to the design of houses and objects have a common procedure, namely one of 'disassembly and reassembly', which is clearly evident in the two villas discussed here. To take an organism apart, in this case a house, and to put it back together again, in a new way. Many of the design pieces also reflect this practice, but here the breakdown of the components is not only a matter of compositional study and formal testing, but also has an impact on industrial optimization, in keeping with the rational logic of industrial design. The Pigreco chair (designed for a university exam in the course of Franco Albini in 1959-60, shown at the Milan Triennale and then put into production by Scarpa himself) is a demonstration of the possible reconfiguration of the wooden chair with padded seat, experimenting with the use of veneered wood for a figurative stratification of the curved back (a technique reprised for Maxalto in 1975), while the Bastiano divan for Gavina (1961) features an external wooden structure, independent of the cushions, breaking with the traditional idea of upholstered furniture in which the filler conceals the structure. The Vanessa bed (1962), also for Gavina, reinterprets the use of painted iron in a contemporary way. A metal plate and small brass plates form the structure, and then the iron bends fluidly to form the headboard, like a ribbon of fabric. Coronado (1969), the divan for C&B, designed to be assembled in just 15 minutes, combines the modernity of industrial production with the memory of the 'historic' divan in the use of buttons, in the capitonné tradition, fastening the fabric or leather cover to the back cushion. This focus on optimization of production timing combined with a formal solution can always be seen in Tobia Scarpa's approach to design: the 915 divan and armchair, with structure in pressed sheet metal, and the Carlotta chair for Cassina (1964 and 1967); the Soriana chair and divan for Cassina in 1969; the Torcello modular cabinet system for Stildomus in 1964; the Erasmo divan for B&B in 1973; the essential Lola component system for Meritalia in 1992 are just a few outstanding examples. The Oscarina chair in painted plywood, assembled with interlocking (Merotto & Milani, 2004) and Libertà (Meritalia, 1989), obtained from a sheet of punched, bent and riveted aluminium, display the rationality of their assembly in relation to their design solutions. The Libertà indicates an interest in metals that the production of cookware in solid silver and kitchen equipment for San Lorenzo (1988) developed in an experimental way, work that later led to the Putter (San Lorenzo, 2002), an essential, perfect golf club. In the field of lighting, the work of Afra and Tobia Scarpa has also produced 'classics' of Italian design: from the lamps for Flos using cocoon (a sprayed material that then solidifies, previously used by the Castiglioni brothers) like the Fantasma, reprised in today's sculptural lights for Marco Pezzolo (Monnalisa), to the Jucker table lamp (1963) that, before the Eclipse by Vico Magistretti, used the same principle of a rotating cap to direct the light, all the way to the Foglio applique in 1966, for Flos, based on the simplicity and elegance of folded sheet metal. The Biagio table lamp (1968), made with a disk of lathed marble, also embodies the idea of taking apart and putting back together, while experimenting with new uses of stone. An experimental approach also found in the large wall or ceiling lamp Ariette, obtained by using two sheets of Tyvek synthetic fabric (Flos, 1973), in the Papillona floor lamp (1975), with reflectors in prismatic glass to modulate the light in space, or the Pierrot model (Flos, 1990), a table lamp constructed with the material used for printed circuit boards, and the Nastro lamp for Andromeda (1988), which reinvents the tradition of the Murano glass chandelier. A path of work that does not indicate a language, a repeatable method, a 'style', but seems to indicate a procedure of listening, to materials, places, architecture and, obviously, human beings, in order to respond, each time, in an appropriate way. As Roberto Masiero has pointed out: "this is not a program, it is a way of being [...] the works of Afra and Tobia Scarpa represent an ethical, more than an aesthetic, challenge, aimed at comprehension of the possible, instead of occupation of the future". - **Caption pag. 50** Afra and Tobia Scarpa, the Daolio house at Guastalla (Reggio Emilia), 1988: view of the three-storey space with suspended access routes. - **Caption pag. 51** From the recent projects by Tobia Scarpa for Meritalia: the Torii bookcase (2008), a self-supporting bridge structure in solid lamellar wood; the Nilo outdoor furniture (2008), for easy disassembly, in solid teak. - **Caption pag. 52** To the side, an evocative view of the underground space designed by Afra and Tobia Scarpa for the Benetton headquarters in the Villa Loredan complex at Volpago (Treviso, 1997). Below, the central courtyard of the Meroni house in Carimate (Como, 1992). - **Caption pag. 53** Above, the latest addition to the production area and automated warehouse of Benetton at Castrette di Villorba (Treviso, 1980-2008), a volume in Corten designed by Tobia Scarpa, with the large underground parking area, covered with greenery, in the foreground. - **Caption pag. 55** Afra and Tobia Scarpa: 1. Coronado divan (C&B, 1969). 2. Jucker table lamp (Flos, 1963). 3. Nastro chandelier (Andromeda, 1988). 4. Papillona floor lamp (Flos, 1975). 5. Tobia Scarpa, Pigreco chair (1959-60, self-produced, then produced by Gavina). 6. Tobia Scarpa, Monnalisa floor lamp (Marco Pezzolo, 2005). 7. Foglio applique (Flos, 1966). 8. Tobia Scarpa, Putter, golf club (San Lorenzo, 2002). 9. Tobia Scarpa, pure silver cookware (San Lorenzo, 1999). 10. Vanessa bed (Gavina, 1962). 11. Tobia Scarpa, Oscarina chair (Merotto & Milani, 2004). 12. Soriana divan (Cassina, 1969). >>