

Carlo Scarpa and some Aspects of Venetian Influence in his Creative Conservation

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Abstract

The aim of this work is to present some creative restoration aspects that characterize Carlo Scarpa's work and that succeed to maintain contemporary heritage buildings that had been restored half century ago. Our objective is to illustrate a creative model that may maintain in time the conservation value due to its translucent creativity. The way in which he approached creatively peculiar architectural elements gave rise to an original type of restoration which preserved both the original substance and the historical message, emphasizing the non-material cultural values of authenticity. Scarpa succeeded to create new architectural elements in an original contemporary method by using the memory of the architectural place and its vehicles. Besides the conservation of the original structure and irrespective of it we may find in Scarpa's work new valuable elements that create an interior architecture that does not incite the old. The works that we have analysed are the built areas of Olivetti store and of Querini Stampalia Palace's partner. The general analysis method is the combination of the research of the specialised studies regarding the Venetian influence in Scarpa's work with studies that refer to identity elements in his work, their comparison and personal observations and comparisons by direct examination of the areas. The aim of the work is to emphasize the force of the valuable identity elements that are emblematic for the Venetian space and that may be found in the original contemporary details of C. Scarpa's work. The creative conservation at Carlo Scarpa is a spatial composition, a model of expansion of the context by refreshers and comprehensions of the past in different fields: history, architecture, arts, social or technical urban, in order to be communicated to the future.

Rezumat

Scopul lucrării este prezentarea unor soluții de restaurare creativă ce caracterizează opera lui Carlo Scarpa care reușesc să mențină în contemporanitate clădiri de patrimoniu restaurate acum o jumătate de secol. Obiectivul nostru este ilustrarea unui model creativ care menține în timp valoarea conservării prin calitatea creativității transparente. Modul în care a abordat creativ elementele arhitecturale ce constituie specificul locului a generat un tip original de restaurare care conserva atât substanța originală cât și mesajul istoric evidențiind valorile culturale nemateriale ale autenticității. Crearea de elemente arhitecturale noi a fost realizată de Scarpa într-o originală modalitate contemporană folosind memoria locului arhitectural și vehiculele ei. Dincolo de conservarea structurii originale și independent de aceasta regăsim în opera lui Scarpa valoroase elemente noi ce crează o arhitectură interioară care nu incită vechiul. Lucrările analizate sunt spațiile construite ale magazinului Olivetti și ale parterului Palatului Querini Stampalia. Metoda

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generală de analiză este combinația cercetării studiilor de specialitate referitoare la influența venețiană în opera lui Scarpa cu studii referitoare la elementele identitare regăsite în opera sa, compararea acestora precum și menționarea observațiilor și comparațiilor personale din parcurgerea directă a spațiilor. Lucrarea dorește să evidențieze forța elementelor identitare valoroase, emblematice pentru spațiul venețian regăsite în lucrările lui C. Scarpa în detalii originale de factură contemporană. Conservarea creativă la Carlo Scarpa este o compunere spațială, un model de extindere a contextului prin memorări și înțelegeri ale trecutului în registre diferite: istoric, arhitectural, artistic, urbanistic social sau tehnic pentru a fi comunicate viitorului.

Keywords: creative restoration, models and way to restore, Venetian influences, the juxtaposition of old and new, composition / detail, structured visual commentary / combination.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is presenting some aspects of Venetian influence in the creative restoration solutions that characterize the work of Carlo Scarpa (1906-1978) and that get to maintain the contemporary of the valuable heritage buildings restored half a century ago. These solutions illustrate a creative model, transparent, non-invasive and full of the atmosphere of the site, placing the work of Carlo Scarpa between historical Venice and contemporary Venice.[1]

2. Some considerations on the method of creative restoration

Restoring a monument, said G. M. Cantacuzino, is a creative activity.[2] It should define the idea that the past has a present and thus may have a future.

Creative restoration is a recovery and not a mere enhancement, introducing new stratifications that increase the value of the building. There is obviously where this type of restoration, a boundary between old and new clearly defined. [3] Those we can understand how C. Scarpa see this again: "... architecture is not a game but a serious matter of life and death" for the historical monument.

Restoration is a creative recovery by preserving valuable historical monuments from the time of contemporary intervention at the requirements of the past and in the same time a recovery harnessing the past with the requirements of the present. Interventions of safeguard are addressed to the integrity of the buildings as they are today and at the time of their creation. It is about using the new as an alternative to regeneration, revitalization, re-functionality and other ways to reactivate the "past" representative of the community and we want to convey to other generations.

Alvar Aalto said that "architecture is a language difficult to understand, is mysterious. The value of a work is its expression when something is well made it is great value".

When we speak of a creative way of restoring the monument to express better in dialogue with contemporary society and in this context it was said that the result of creative restoration of Scarpa is ideal response both to the limited partner requirement and heritage protection required by the companies responsible with saving historical monuments. His creation must be such a "review" conducted around the original historical and artistic elements around some details related parts or new art objects that wishes to include in the final composition of the historical monument.

Creative restoration recalls the task of the architect restorer to reiterates the retrieval of the "spirit buildings", as called by Robert Venturi, in all its details. [4]

When involved new concepts of creativity, creative, first thought should not be to the "creator" but the ability to look at historical monument as architecture recovered (conservation concept refers to the value of past and present of the historical monument) and find solutions to support the present heritage building restored. So we ask to have the capacity for knowledge, learning, to seek to inform on the existence of works and personalities from the world of historical monument preservation, who thought the issue of building in context. The architect must engage with history to enrich the historical legacy.

The local tradition and the relations they established with other intangible values of authenticity historical monument adjusts spirit-memory relationship. "Towards it [memory] spirit is a centrally position. The recent is not necessarily more clearly than distant past. Memory has its living areas, changes and develops without our consciousness, intervention and are new in their entirety" [5] and can be remembered creatively as a way to restore.

3. Creative way of restoration of Carlo Scarpa:

One of the best examples is the creative restoration of Carlo Scarpa. To him, preservation is an experience of the historical monument itself and restoration is regarded as a creative activity, applying a new package of interventions. "The draft is a process by which new historical monument is aware of its own experience, is achieved through constant transformation of information in creative reflections ... through active dialogue unites elements juxtaposed to one another, thus creating a third component between them as a result of the difference of identity. [6] Mechanism of thinking is based on decomposition and creative reassembly.

Decomposition of premises is necessary to achieve new spatial composition. Scarpa uses spatial articulation points. With these changes axes and inner surfaces subordinate requirement "to invent their related areas and turn to one side of intangible heritage is ultimately vital, but often neglected in favour of other topics". [9] It is about interrelationships between the various material components, individual traditions and collective, memory as the past message, symbolism, expression of cultural - ability, urban atmosphere, the atmosphere of the historical monument, the manifestation of cultural connections, national specificities, etc.

Reassembly is done through special communication zones (reconciliation) resulting from changes in shaft (areas targeted differently, different spaces), by the detail that "the marking formal event of the creation" (window, jutty, door, floor) through a juxtaposition of individual elements (incomplete combinations dynamism, open to possible of ideas for enhancement) by modern ornament made in the register of basic symbols: spiral, ziggurat, eye, etc., by refined game, sensuous, allusive, theatrical of light, texture, contrast of old and new material, through openings, uncovering, splits and passages that give new spatial and temporal relationships or by replay of themes typical Venetian (immersion, floating, bridge-deck, bridge, canal, mosaic, portico, interior garden, outdoor walls, scraping the wall, grid, etc.

3.1. About the relationship that Venice had with Scarpa and how it was reflected in his work of creative restoration

There are different opinions known on the Venetian influence in its creative restoration. It is a wide range of interpretations from the idea of confrontation with historical Venice to the idea that the roots of its work are started from the tradition, are Venetian, but that he goes "emerging layers of tradition and is not affected by them". [1]

Going through his works you can understand the personal and privacy way that it must have the

architect restorer in a historical context valuable or unique, such as Venice: Scarpa culturally assimilated with sensitivity and irony, from the architecture to the Byzantine era of Venice to the eclecticism of his early career as an architect and expresses its own language that has never pastiche. It has been said that there is a personal filter, a spacer, even limited influence of Venetian architectural conception. This influence is too broad context that does not fall directly Scarpa. The mental construction which characterizes him are directed by the impeccable technique applied to detail and quality of craftsmanship. It is interesting to note that Scarpa does not use as defined perspective illusion that turns into historical perspective. He uses memory concentrated in detail seen and remembered. (Francesco Dal Co). [1] In this way the Venetian influence is in his creative thinking background where are fixed elements that compose space in historical context.

4. Creativity of the restoration model of Carlo Scarpa - features:

- **the juxtaposition of new and old;**
- **detail / composition;**
- **structured visual comment / combination;**

His model is one-time validation of ideas and / or new concepts, of the original associations which made them among the many existing ideas or concepts in the Venetian environment where he worked, in a word to his creativity.

In a short presentation we try to illustrate the definition of the model, considering creativity as a process formed by stepwise made by the architect in solving problems or inventing new architectural "products". In the case of C. Scarpa, the activity can not be described as a simple sequence of steps of a model. Carlo Scarpa starts a project that lasts until the end of the work. His work is relevant to the survival of the historical monument. His project includes the experiment to highlight creative limits of materials and is in the spirit of cultural materials. It also includes different arrangements, unusual combinations, mixes of alteration that Scarpa makes them using his cultivated memory, "trained eye", craft and always with great respect for the historical monument.

Formal culture of the eye, in his case, is carried out mostly by the reminder process. Past events are acts of the momentary fixation of the experience (Walter Benjamin). Perhaps best is distinguished creative influence of the Venetian atmosphere is case of arrangements and become compositions and architectural reviews. They always call the involuntary memory and thus its creation moves always in the known past by accumulating tensions by drawing craft. [1] Essentially, Scarpa uses architectural elements available to historical context that fragment to reinvent a new form.

We exemplify how the Venetian creative influence is reflected in two of the most popular works:

Olivetti showroom

- Limited partner Adriano Olivetti, 1957, theme: Olivetti brand for the future; -
- Location: under the arches of the "Procuratie Vecchie, dating from 1538", Piazza San Marco, Venice, minimal space, inside, "cramped and narrow"; [7]
- Type of intervention: conservation and creative reorganization of the space in order to function again.

Querini Stampalia Foundation

- Limited partner Giuseppe Mazzario, 1961, theme: modeling ground floor and interior courtyard and finding new opportunities for access directly from the market;
- Location: patrician residence sixteenth century, Santa Maria Formosa Square
- Type of intervention: preservation and creative reorganization of the outdoor access and spaces

from ground floor including backyard in order to function again.

We stopped on three specific aspects. First we illustrate the idea of juxtaposing of the old and new (Fig.1, 2) that defines its creative model. The idea to join a new layer preserved historical monument, an architectural protective layer made in a brave and full of tenderness at the same time. The result is a highly personalized interior space, a new story about the historical monument, a new Venetian atmosphere.



Figure 1, 2. Showroom Olivetti - structure during consolidation works / new project at the end. The Juxtaposition NEW – OLD - is realized through independent composition where the old and the new coexist and reinforce each other. Results an Art of interface.

From the constructive point of view the report of position is joining by means of the spacers and is defined "by a subtle breathing space". [1]

Operational speaking "new" ensures completion of the "old" strengthened and preserved for the present world. At Scarpa, the design is a dual operation of knowledge and communication, which once mastered them, invites us to do the same.

Knowledge of the space leads to establishing relationships to preserve the original form as it appears at the time of intervention: custom swivel joints (scale, speed), dynamic articulations interior spaces - inside (mezzanine, bridge), and inside - outside (wall surface, lagoon water, light), outside - outside (bridge) or modified axle traversal to recompose the interior (portal). Knowledge is an action in favor of the authenticity of the historical monument.

It was mentioned in its work the existence of ways of creating new architectural elements as a result of original contemporary thinking such as rich visual culture may lead thinking in images (images sufficient in themselves, but embodied the absolute membership in context), [4] knowing traditions that determine the formal language (active archetypal symbols) or full of tenderness thinking as a result of belonging valuable historical and artistic context.

Communication means to Scarpa, how "there is a creative transformation of nearby historical monument. Between architectural element and the image of Scarpa obtained is a true magic (talent, knowledge, respect for the past, creative spirit)". [1] Communication is an action carried out for the benefit of new project to sustain the viability of his character non - invasive. His architectural language of a modern nature is filtered creator through "independent compositions where old and new coexist and reinforce each other". [6] (Fig.3,4) Their surfaces of separation are phases different of the resulting architectural system. In this context, it was spoken about his creative restoration as an "art of interface". [10]



Figure 3. Visible monument to be visited. Querini Stampalia Foundation
Figure 4. Invisible monument - new „SMART BOX” Showroom Olivetti, Venice

The Juxtaposition NEW – OLD - is realized through independent compositions where the old and the new coexist and reinforce each other - Areas of Spatial Communication.

If Scarpa Olivetti store, it creates a "smart box" (Fig. 2, 4) harmonious interior within which puts "values" that he creates. It is one of the few cases that today are a historic monument within another historical monument. In this open space are happening true metamorphoses of architectural culture.

I could name three of them that can cause you to get involved emotionally as a guest. The first is the spatial - functional: the central pillar, entrance and two balconies long as two "sidewalks" along the channel create a specific urban area, so outside, inside. Here from the balcony you can see this precious architectural arrangement, so artificial, the statue, and fountain – water basin discovered, built in parks and squares, light and vibrant water of the lagoon.

The second is the combination of uneven access by one notch and iridescent colored floor. It recalls how Scarpa reminds on the one hand of *portego* (Fig.5, 6), the headroom of water to indoor, Venetian and *acqua alta* phenomenon and suggests it to be functional and plastic (Fig.17, 18, 19, 20).



Figure 5. Querini Stampalia Foundation
PORTEGO-Venetian typical space of water crossing towards the interior spaces.

Figure 6. Portego, Venice

Not least we could talk about creative ways by which focuses our attention inside to Piazza San Marco. We are talking about outer windows/doors that have shutters transparent (Fig.13,21,23), corner window (Fig. 9,10,11), reminiscent of cobblestones floor wet, the glow of the water surface (Fig.8), or the precious glow of the material of the statue of Alberto Viani (Nudo al sole, 1956) (Fig.12).



Figure 8. The reminiscent of Cobblestones floor wet



Figure 9, 10. Corner windows to Piazza San Marco

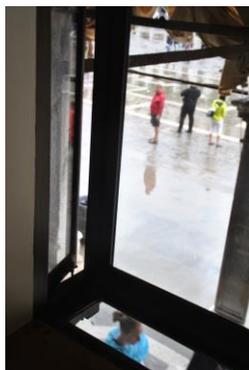


Figure 11. Corner window



Figure 12. The precious glow of the material of the statue



Figure 13. Outer door with shutters transparent

Creative ways by which focuses our attention inside to Piazza San Marco

In the second example Scarpa realizes access from Santa Maria Formosa Square using a Venetian emblematic element, bridge-ladder (Fig. 14, 15, 16). That reinterprets the modern registry and treats it like a piece of detail. In this way architectural element is a counterpart of the neighbouring bridge made with traditional materials. It includes all of its detail as element providing quality to restoration: is a flexible composition, original, forces you to make that the focal reducer to look curiously to it, is a form that gives the impression of perfection and quality. At the same time combinations of materials make it "an event and a successful experiment". [7]



Figure 14,15,16. Querini Stampalia Foundation
The bridge - The Juxtaposition NEW – OLD, the transparency

The ground floor questions creative use of lagoon waters that flood it. Sewage of lagoon moving waters, *acqua alta*, is resolved by exploiting this "defect" not through his mask. (Fig.17, 18, 19, 20) Scarpa restores patrician residences portego old site, creates a pedestrian traffic to protect visitors, typical outdoor and indoor remind us of wooden walkways of St. Mark's Square during the Venetian lagoon overflow.



Figure 17. Querini Stampalia Foundation



Figure 18. Santa Maria Formosa Square



Figure 19. Showroom Olivetti

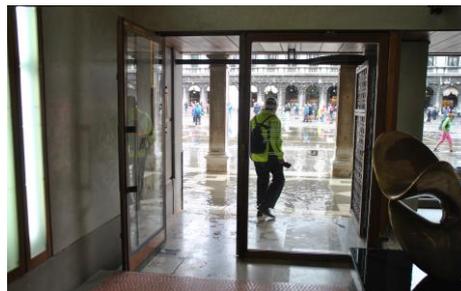


Figure 20,21. Piazza San Marco, Venice
ACQUA ALTA – Partial flooding in Venice („high water”)



Consolidated floor space is hidden from our view (Fig. 19, 20, 21). Between the original substance restored and the new project is a subtle and clear at the same time layer of suggestion of the old difference protected and new protector. We can imagine that this is just water lagoon. The rout has structural articulation points for transposing the existing constructive axis in the way of visiting the historical monument itself as a "museum". The transformation takes place in the portal door and window in dynamic articulations of inside – inside spaces, inside – outside and also redefines the horizontal and vertical movement by the kind of scale proposed and by its generative positioning to value the restored space.

A second aspect that we want to present speaks about detail and composition.

Its composition is always free (does not apply compositional rules, are not used stylistic compositions), flexible, based on ruptures, contrasts, differences, based on a "focal reducer" on the architectural detail and aims to show that at Scarpa, the form is never a simple form that emphasizes a function. Quality of composition is given by detail of its facilities, although they are highly artistic quality, they sometimes lack that "something" incomprehensible or undiscovered, and mystery that does not feed its architectural space. The composition of the concrete, Carlo Scarpa adds local effects, Venetian, light, the lights and shadows of different surfaces, combinations of light - water - vegetation, the combination of a base material and a precious one, chromatic relationships, etc. "Relations between existing spaces without initial function were reorganized at Scarpa, always using geographical context, historical and artistic historical monument, says Francesco Dal Co trying to find the place of this unpaired architect in modern Venetian architecture.

His detail is always thought to the smallest detail and is loaded with meanings as perfecting its form along the process of passing the project through the execution. Its details are famous not subject to stylistic canons (modernism) or usage of combination of materials. Scarpa detail issues, not constrains, not controls. For Olivetti showroom composition was performed avoiding the usual spatial clichés of functional sub grade with a mezzanine generated by two longitudinal balconies between was ordered the free scale "pivotal point".[7] (Fig.22, 23, 24, 25).

It also avoided the cliché of application of the new finish on original surfaces using covering with stone surfaces made with advanced technique, craft and art.

Scarpa uses here two sources: modern architecture as an abstract architect and recalling Venetian traditions and local history that makes it a personal manner. From the first source, Scarpa uses ideas of matter but does not consider only material but a structural modeling loaded with meaning. Thus the matter turns into detail - unique sign.



Figure 22.

Figure 23

Figure 24

Figure 25

Showroom Olivetti, Exterior passages- The stair which becomes a visiting passage in the interior and channels which become „balconies” in the interior.

Much has been written about creativity of Scarpa's inventions in the construction details, on the personal way to maintain alive the attention of the one that goes through the spaces. He uses great detail (Fig.34) that can appear perfect or unfinished, broken, combined preciously, simple archetypal, compound or ornament. Seeing him always remains in your mind his share and his fragility. The details are in memory fetches of the details of Byzantine art, Roman or Venetian Gothic monuments that we know in order to interpret them creatively.

On the ground floor arranged of Querini Stampalia Foundation are mentioned two of the areas where we can focus our original space and we realize the alterations produced in its essence. There are places where the visitor interacts with the original mass as a contemporary museum. It is about the succession of spaces adjacent to the channel to secure a journey of discovery of nearby water lagoon and is also mentioned the porch area to the garden area where Scarpa consists in its original manner new and original material in a transparent composition. This transparency is given by the values of the game with lights made from side walls, floor and glass closure.

Outside, Scarpa turns the old backyard into a garden. Here the vegetable is a neutral element. The main feature here is the creative restoration is the combination water-stone, of Japanese influence (Japanese spirit), which reinterprets using its Venetian remembrances: the water as element created in nature, becomes Venetian canal water (Fig. 26, 27, 28, 29), (Venice memory) has a well established route usable, adjacent to pedestrian paths. Stone is the result of a sculptural game by which Scarpa sets his personal memories. Geometric character of the garden is mainly generated by

a contemporary material, concrete. The water and various mineral stones used, form an artistic composition as an outdoor sculpture "sitting" on the grass in the garden.



Figure 26. Querini Stampalia Foundation
Exterior passage which becomes a visiting passage in the interior



Figure 27. Channel, Venice



Figure 28. The symbol-Querini Stampalia
Querini Stampalia Foundation - The channel which becomes a visiting
passage and symbol in the garden.



Figure 29. The passage

Querini Stampalia Foundation - The channel which becomes a visiting
passage and symbol in the garden.

The last mentioned aspect of us is bound by the comment visually structured and combination that he makes. For Carlo Scarpa, the recall process is a memorial 'to' mind at the time of restoration of formal representations besides which is passing daily and represents specific of Venice. They are creative rethought in a well-organized personal comment in the restoration concept that has set. It is a way to confirm the validity of the conservation project conducted. Meanwhile Scarpa creates formal representations for water, light, materials, colors and spatial arrangements for works of art. Scarpa said about his work: "Above all I was extremely astute in knowing how to combine a base material with precious one."

Venetian influence in creative restoration of Olivetti showroom appear us in typical Venetian themes resume (immersion (Fig. 23), flooding, bridge - bridge - bridge, canal, porch, outdoor walls, grid, mosaic) by the game exquisite, sensual, elusive of the light, water (Fig.32), surfaces, textures and contrasts or by reactivation of symbols as spiral, labyrinth (Fig. 30, 35), ziggurat (Fig. 33) or eye (Fig. 31). Ordering his visual commentary is not very strict and gives us a degree of understanding or his game.

Carlo Scarpa used fine arts techniques, contrast, lighting objects methods (the contre-jour), or

creating atmosphere, the focus of attention in areas covering the different architectural and artistic sights of the restoration concept created.

Symbols – Details



Figure 30. The labyrinth



Figure 32. The aqua symbol
Showroom Olivetti



Figure 31. The eye



Figure 33. The ziggurat
Showroom Olivetti



Figure 34. The perfect
imperfection symbol
Querini Stampalia Foundation



Fig.35.The labyrinth

The combination most interesting to me seemed to be one between two differently structured materials and between direct light and reflected light from floor surfaces. Concrete surface well shaped and copper strips or plaster panel and teak strips are some of the spectacular combinations that include Venetian water-related local memories. We are talking about the labyrinth or double line suggesting Venetian canal edges.

In the case of the patrician residence in Santa Maria Formosa Square, Scarpa restores by Venetian evocation of the context (geographical, historical and artistic). Authenticity of the patrician residence in its material value is preserved and its intangible values are restored once with the creative new project. Initial models of representation related to water are found in billboards, railings, basins or steps and are made of stone, marble, concrete, metal or copper. The most interesting combinations seemed to me the ones between water, light and stone from the area of *portego* as that of the reflected light from direct light and light reflected by the surface of water in the main exhibition walls, to the garden. "Essential element of the Venetian landscape, lagoon water becomes one of the protagonists of architecture, moving mirror that reflects the new structures".[3] Light evokes the Venetian atmosphere easily without firm contours, in playing with shade and water, more dynamic and different surfaces of walls and ceilings finished in plaster or stone. As well as in all Venice, there is a proper light to every detail whether the object or surface, there are lights worn of them related to time, to the moment of watching. Carlo Scarpa said "light makes things vibrate, but if they do not exist, nothing vibrates."

5. Conclusions

Trying a conclusive conclusion on alert of some aspects of the Venetian influence in the work of Carlo Scarpa, in the creative conservation context, we note:

Venice means for Carlo Scarpa "the house of his soul" of architect. He thought positive the action to recall the heritage values of the place as permanent source to "send" historical monument on the future to other generations. Venice also taught him that the work resulting from creative restoration must like giving you the feeling that was the right technical expertise. Strength of elements, valuable identity, emblematic for Venetian space found in the works of C. Scarpa, stays in original details of contemporaneous nature in which we find sometimes divinity, as Ludwig Mies van der Rohe said. [11] Venetian influence is found in the contents of his work representing a Venetian story and its mode of expression that reveals the way in which we was saying the story.[8]

We want to emphasize, finally, that the recall of a creative model for restoration which also by the force of detail as cultural symbol brings in this present patrimonial the modern elements that do not assault values of the restored monument authenticity, is necessary and useful for our activity of restorers of historical monuments.

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