Neutra's now forgotten Venetian lecture of 1949 reveals him as a polemicist with a sense of humour anxious to distance himself from Bruno Zevi's 'Organic school of architecture of the United States'.

Richard Neutra's Venetian lecture

George Dodds

Neutra a Venezia

Richard J. Neutra

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I always hear that architecture is supposed to follow tradition, and the examples of historical data, that it ought to be rooted in the ground, rising like a tree from the earth. But I have never believed this condition could be true absolutely; evidently Venice is the best demonstration of my belief. It is evident that those who constructed this city have not followed any example; they have rather used the example of how one can render habitable an area that previously was uninhabitable. No one who is not crazy would believe that these buildings are growing from the ground of the lagoon: on the contrary, their construction depends upon an entire forest of trees (this lumber comes from the distant Cadore, of Dalmatia and the stone from the caverns of Istria). Everything, from lumber to stone is from elsewhere.

This is exactly the contrary position of what the Romantics say, for whom everything ought to seem as if it grows out of the soil – ought to be rooted in the soil. Architecture, in Venice and elsewhere, never grows naturally from the soil, but rather it depends upon a firm platform of reinforced concrete. This can seem to some very mechanistic and to exclude the beauty and poetry of nature. Venice is once again the demonstration that this is not true: even an artificial construction can be magnificent and beautiful. Those who dedicate themselves to the reading of treatises on the aesthetics of architecture can well understand why I underscore this point. In this way Venice is the demonstration of the greatest human intellect of those who can produce the artificial, but not different from nature, not severed from nature. Everything connects with nature in an extremely physical and metaphysical way: to the extent that sometimes the effect of the moon has resulted in the cleansing of the city, with the ebb and flow of the water. The light that reflects in the water and against the buildings and the buildings that appear in the water create an intimacy with the city, with the tenor of the time: it is the most miraculous intimacy between nature and a constructed city. In conclusion, once more I am struck by your city that I have not visited now for 35 years.

The city of Los Angeles from which I come, stretches amorphously across the plain, without any organic form. Your city is magnificently articulated, does not spread itself like the mud of the lagoon. It is articulated in the life of the water. In the parishes, in the neighborhoods: each of these elements is a field of sedimentation and the city itself is an immense field of sedimentation in which it is situated. Exactly this is the work of the urbanist: to obtain similar results with urban lines not disarticulated in an amorphous confusion, without any relationship with human measure. I retain the belief that one of the principal works of the architect is that of defending this city and precisely using improvements in technology to render inhabitable the places that have never been inhabitable before: the jungle, the Amazon River, Arctic and Antarctica, Peru, Saudi Arabia.

I have always disapproved of architects trained to consider architecture as a work of small substitution for the province of the city. Our city after all, is not expanding with the same velocity that permits it to anticipate the rushing of airplanes or of television. Take for example a country like Brazil, from which we get enthusiastic statements on the architectural realization that we are developing: in reality all of the architectural production of Brazil is restricted to and compressed from Rio de Janeiro and San Paulo. Brazil is 15% more vast than the United States. In an airplane flight of six or seven hours from Rio de Janeiro to Trinidad, however, one flies over a zone in which canibals yet live. Our civilization has the tendency to skip over and to not take into consideration the vast zones of our planet. This is true of many countries and even in Italy. It is truer still in the United States where certain areas are terribly neglected. Even in the cities this happens: I have seen in Milan certain areas that are modernly constructed and certain others that have not been affected by reconstruction. When a foreigner or tourist arrives in a city, his guide shows him the great palaces and the local nightlife.

I am staying at the Ca' d'Oro. I have returned with pleasure, but I am more content seeing the houses of the everyday people of the past and of the present. I have visited the houses of the cinquecento, the seicento, the settecento; groups of houses, projects from designated residential neighborhoods of diverse categories of acquired power and of diverse economic conditions. Professors at the School of Architecture in Venice have prepared a study of the social characteristics of these houses and of these projects as they were never examined before. These projects of ancient
construction were good, excellent; they would be good even for one to live in now, if there had not been overpopulation.

From this I have the impression that it is possible to conduct modern planning (design) in Venice that might be of major importance for all of those who are able to create in the rest of the world. The people of the whole world are spending millions, billions of dollars in order to see Venice and if you are able to set an example you would be once more the center of the world's attention. The idea and the image of a sad and dead Venice is only an unhealthy diversion of some poet. Porto Marghera, Mestre, Murano – the island of glass – all constitute vital and important zones of production. They have more material and major possibilities to add something to our zone of habitation that is in conformity with the modern contemporary spirit than have any of the other countries of Western Europe. The old construction that I have visited today, even if it were rather dispersed and modernized, would become efficient with modern necessity and be an optimal accommodation, even now.

When I have seen how the traffic in Venice functions, separated into different categories, foot and aquatic, with localized accessibility by means of two separate paths by which everyone reaches their destination in peace and tranquility without being torn to pieces, I think that it can establish another example for urbanism. I have truly marveled to see how many envy the students that study in Venice and how many modern architects here you are able to study. I am a stranger and here I will show that I can make through representations, images that relate to buildings that do not adjust to Venice. The social and economic point of view of my country, beyond the climate, is so varied, that it is not possible to apply directly anything of what one builds there to here. If nothing can be applied directly however, each project can give an idea of the planning (design), of the capacity to adapt specific material to a specific environment. The possibility of adapting a project, a building to an ensemble of circumstances is comprehensible and acceptable even to a stranger, even to you who are here now, in another environment.

Translated by George Dodds ©

Absent the intellectual apparatus with which he augmented his architectural oeuvre, Richard Neutra seems a relatively uncomplicated figure. His buildings are eloquent paradigms of the International Style wherein the 'landscape genesis of architecture', to use Gio Ponti's aphorism, generates a somewhat narrow range of primarily domestic settings wherein the distinction between environmentally enclosed space and exterior are different in degree, not kind. Yet, Neutra's place in the history of modern architecture is muddled at times, in part because of the relation of his writings to his buildings, and in part owing to his relationship with Frank Lloyd Wright (Curtis 2001, 236). Neutra's own admission that his early work (for the architect Gordon Kaufmann in Los Angeles) was nothing more than a 'tame compromise' of Wright's vision, and his apprenticeship with Wright at Taliesin, adds to this perception (Hines 1982, 59).

Neutra, R. M. Schindler, Antonin Raymond, Carlo Scarpa, and others of that generation, were similarly united by an interest in Japanese architecture, construction, and landscape (Leatherbarrow 2000, 158–169).

Polemicists such as Bruno Zevi in Italy aggravate things further. In Storia dell'architettura moderna (1950a), Zevi lists Neutra, Schindler, and Wright as part of a heterogeneous group of American practitioners of 'organic architecture'. Zevi's inventory includes Harwell Hamilton Harris, Raymond Viner Hall, William Hambly, Oscar Stonorov, William Wilson Wurster, Albert Henry Hill, John Ekin Dinwiddle, Gardner A. Dailey, Frederick L. Langhorst, Francis Joseph McCarthy, Robert Royston, Francis Violich, and Edward Williams (Zevi 1950a, 496). Zevi amalgamates these architects under the united banner of 'Il movimento organico negli Stati Uniti', a clearly defined group existing only in Zevi's mind, and in his publications. That neither Wright, nor Zevi, produced an unambiguous definition for 'organic architecture', despite years of trying, further tangles the knot.

Human activities rather than form-making

Neutra's mature work shares little common ground with Wright; evinced, perhaps most eloquently, by the buildings themselves. He further distanced himself from his early mentor in his writings, preferring biological and anthropomorphic analogies to organic ones. While the turgid prose of such ambitious and polemical works as Survival through Design, tends to deflect the reader back to the elegance of his built works, the values Neutra expressed in his writings were patent and unequivocal. When he does speak of the relation of the 'organic' to architectural production, he focuses less on form-making than on the human activities around which his buildings were formed. Speaking of the common houses of Kyoto, particularly in relation to how they resolve the improbable combination of repetitive units, interior rituals, and their relation to exterior space, Neutra comments:

All activities are subtly and organically integrated with the shell in which they are housed and the stage on which they play. This is equally true of the stationary, noiseless Japanese dance on padded floors ... within an enclosure of light non-resonant partitions of paper stretched to dull tension, require no reverberation ... Everything is typical, from the focal distance and light suitable for the scale and painting techniques of the picture, to the arrangement of the knock-knacks and the flowering branch. The buildings are designed to serve this refined ritual of life. (Neutra 1954, 39)

In the collected essays Nature Near, published posthumously, Neutra makes one of his typically protracted bio-anthropocentric analogies: 'In many respects, the expectant mother is the most sensitive and active of organic beings'. Stretching the analogy of the womb and the experience of birth to environmental design Neutra continues:

The neonate enters the world superbly equipped for protection. Its vestibular sense of balance, individually attuned to the gravitational forces that pervade life, was already alive in the foetus ... [The pre- and post-natal relationship between mother and child have an indelible
effect ... [T]he practical as well as emotional sustenance of this fluxing symbiosis should be the fundament of the architect's design. Compared with this provision for deeper human needs, the average birthing place is an antiseptic and alien manger. (Neutra 1989, 42–43)

Although it is often difficult to literally link the content of his writing with what he built, both remain relevant today, particularly if architecture's role in environmental reform, popularly called 'sustainability’, remains the ingénue of a significant part of architectural discourse and practice.

Besides practising architecture and writing books, Neutra was an active participant in Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM), chiefly after the war. In 1948 he toured Europe to assess the status of urban rebuilding and urban planning, the results of which he published in a modest summary in Progressive Architecture, 'Europe Rebuilds' (1949b). Neutra reported that one of the countries that suffered most from material shortages was Italy. Moreover, he singled out Italy as having 'the minimum of public controls applied to the building economy ...'. Neutra observed:

Milan and Rome need up to half a million rooms at a popular price level; Venice and the war-devastated cities of Florence and Naples suffer from unbearable population densities. Yet a corresponding building activity of people’s houses (case popolare) still is negligible in comparison with the conspicuous multistory, loudly advertised luxury apartments (appartamenti di lusso) to which costly materials and the truly superb talent ... of Italian artisans are largely devoted ... (Neutra 1949b, 22)

He returned to Italy the following year for the CIAM meeting in Bergamo where city planning and post-war reconstruction were central topics.

Neutra also delivered lectures while visiting and recording the status of the four Italian cities he cites in his PA report, a mark that his international status, particularly in Italy, was already well established. In Venice he gave a brief talk in the Ca' Giustinian, a palazzo on the Grand Canal that today houses the offices of the Venice Biennale (Neutra 1949a, 1). Although Gio Ponti published the lecture under the title 'Neutra a Venezia', as a textual frontispiece to Domus 273 (1949), it remains curiously absent from the Neutra literature. Yet, it provides valuable insights into both Neutra and the status of architectural discourse in post-war Italy.

**The debate on post-war Italian architecture and planning**

Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, Ernesto Rogers, Gio Ponti, and Bruno Zevi engaged in a debate on the pages of Casabella, Domus, Metron and L'architettura, cronache e storia focused on the future of Italian post-war architecture and planning. Among the most nettlesome arguments was the response to what Sigfried Giedion called the 'new tradition' of the International Style and the growing influence of CIAM within the culture of Italian architecture and urbanism. Rogers advocated an inclusive modernity, acknowledging the inherently Italian need for continuità - renaming Casabella, Casabella continuità to underscore the point (Rogers 1958, 304). Meanwhile, Ponti used Domus to expose Italian architects and designers to broader international trends and a richer template of design cultures.

It is too simple, however, to place Rogers and Ponti at opposite poles of Italian architectural discourse after the war. Bruno Zevi's uncritical promotion of Frank Lloyd Wright's 'organic architecture' in Metron and L'architettura, cronache e storia, and his periodic attacks against Sigfried Giedion and CIAM also contributed to shaping the content and trajectory of Italian architectural discourse and production. Despite their disparate opinions, Rogers, Ponti, and Zevi curiously converged on Richard Neutra's architecture as an exemplar that offered a possible way out of the morass.

Reclaiming the editorship of Domus from Rogers in 1948, a journal Ponti founded and edited from 1928 to 1941, Ponti soon began publishing Neutra's work. Neutra's International Style aesthetic, combined with his physiognomic sensitivity and his concern for the relation of building and site, resonated with an emerging generation of post-war Italian architects searching for answers, urban and architectural, to the degradation of living standards and physical destruction left in the wake of the Second World War. Among the first works Ponti published was Neutra's Kaufmann House in Palm Springs California [1–3]. Julius Shulman's ethereal night-time photographs of the pool and house, illuminated from within [1c], illustrate the article. Neutra briefed Shulman as to how to best photograph the house. ‘Dusk and evening shots from the exterior into the illuminated interior of the living room, master suite and guest rooms are desirable and appropriate, like a night shot, with fire in the fireplace in the “gloriette” roof porch, and from the roof onto the illuminated pool and garden areas' (Hines 1982, 201). Neutra's desire to see the house documented in twilight underscores his agenda for creating dwellings in which he obscures the edges in the penumbra of conventional notions of edge and threshold. His use of the term 'gloriette', which denotes a highly decorated chamber in an otherwise inhospitable location, connotes his vision of the entire project.

**Neither "organic" nor "Wrightian"**

The Kaufmann House was a place of almost surreal pleasure and repose. The extreme limitations of the desert sun and night sky were effaced by exterior radiant slabs and a rooftop dwelling that was half gloriette and half ‘altana’. An altana is an open loggia with tables, sheltered by parapets, situated above a house for domestic uses. In Venice, these terraces are often substantially ornamented with potted flowers and trees. Terraces decorated in this manner have been part of Western architectural and urban culture since, 'ancient Mesopotamia [where it was the custom] to celebrate the god of vegetation by decorating the flat roofs of their houses with small potted trees' (Croset 1981, 23). In the Kaufmann Desert House, an open hearth warmed the altana at night; during the day a roof and louvre screen walls protected the space from sun and desert wind.
1 Edgar J. Kaufmann House, Palm Springs, California, 1946–47, Richard J. Neutra, architect. This was among the first works of Neutra’s published by the Editor of Domus, Gio Ponti. Neutra’s International Style aesthetic combined with his concern for the relation of building and site resonated with the emerging post-war generation of Italian architects.

a) Plan, presentation drawing, by Richard Neutra
b) Daytime view aligned with edge of swimming pool and stairs to second-storey ‘gioriette’
c) Night view with illuminated interior and swimming pool. The dark prone figure of Mrs Kaufmann can be seen at left
d) Exterior, with living room and master bedroom on ground floor with ‘gioriette’ above e) Exterior, view of entrance from below.
Edgar J. Kaufmann
House, Palm Springs
a Rock garden
b Dining room with
service core beyond
c Master bedroom
with view of
swimming pool
d "Gloriette" during
the daytime
what he considered the naïve conception of 'organic' architecture that he witnessed in the United States and Italy. In 1960, Neutra's Miramar Chapel appeared in the same issue of Domus alongside Carlo Scarpa's Olivetti Showroom. While Scarpa was renovating the garden and ground floor of the Fondazione Querini-Stampalia, in 1961, Esther McCoy published an article on Neutra in the Venice-based Zodiac 8 (McCoy 1961). For Bruno Zevi, Neutra and Scarpa each represented important transformations of the ideal of organic architecture: Scarpa through the idioms of culturally specific craft, and Neutra through his physiological tempering of International Style motifs into more commodious habitations.

Bruno Zevi's desire to define and codify an international school of 'organic architecture' further adds to the conflation of Neutra's oeuvre with that of Wright's. Zevi studied architecture under Walter Gropius and Sigfried Giedion at Harvard, yet the most enduring influence of his American education was his exposure to the work of Wright. The pull of Wright was so strong for Zevi that he founded and was the most visible spokesperson for Italy's short-lived Associazione per l'architettura organica (APAO). Through such books as Verso un'architettura organica (Zevi 1943), Sapere vedere l'architettura (1950b) and his journals Metron, and L'architettura, cronache e storia, Zevi proselytized an alternative to the hegemony of the International Style codified by Philip Johnson, H. R. Hitchcock, and institutionalized by Gropius and Giedion (Johnson and Hitchcock 1929; Giedion 1941; Zevi 1949b). Zevi's alternative view was influenced by Benedetto Croce's aesthetic theory (Croce 1909), Giulio Carlo Argan's architectural speculations, and most importantly, the American architecture of Wright (Argan 1959; Dean 1983). Moreover, he published a monograph on Neutra in 1954 as he continued to polemicize Neutra's work to support his anti-Giedion, anti-CIAM, and pro-organic architecture agenda (Zevi 1954), just as Ponti, Rogers, and others published Neutra's work for their own purposes.

The connection between Scarpa and Neutra, referred to earlier, extends beyond the subtext of their works being published in the same issue of an Italian architectural journal or the manner in which Bruno Zevi propagandized their works. It is very likely that Carlo Scarpa would have been in the audience at the Ca' Giustinian for Neutra's lecture. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Scarpa was moving away from the influence of Robert Mallet-Stevens and William Lescaze — working through the ideas and motifs of such disparate architects as Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and Alvar Aalto. Moreover, Scarpa was then beginning to focus on the problem of designed landscapes and gardens — all of which would have made Neutra's ideas that much more attractive. It was also at this time that he would have been starting design of the Galleria del Cavallino in the Biennale Gardens, a garden pavilion equally inspired by Frederick Kiesler's 'Art of this Century' exhibition for Peggy Guggenheim in New York (1942) and Frank Lloyd Wright's Ocatilla Camp.
in Arizona (Dodds 2000, 96; Zevi 1950c). Zevi hoped that ‘Il movimento organico negli Stati Uniti’, Alvar Aalto in Finland, William Marinus Dudok in the Netherlands, and Erich Mendelsohn in Germany and later in the United States, would find an Italian translation in the works of such architects as Luciano Giovanni, Mario Ridolfi, Ludovico Quaroni, and Carlo Scarpa. For Zevi, Scarpa’s Galleria del Cavallino Pavilion for the 1950 Venice Biennale was a direct connection to the work of Wright and one of the first constructed demonstrations of APAO’s precepts, outlined in its charter. Commenting on Book Pavilion in Metron, Zevi championed Scarpa as the finest architect working in Venice. This year there is a new air and spirit in the Biennale Gardens. In front of the ‘facciatone’ colonnade, Carlo Scarpa has built, for the Galleria del Cavallino of Venice, a book pavilion. It is like a thunderbolt in an otherwise serene sky or, for the people that are not (for their fortune and worth) of good sense, a serene break among the tempestuous darkness of the monumental folly. It is a strident and polemic work (but not too strident). It is programmatic, but, like all the work of Carlo Scarpa, it is intelligent and alive, programmatic in depth and completed in detail. For many years now the architect Carlo Scarpa has been qualified as the best architect of Venice. The arrangement of the exhibition of Paul Klee for the XXIV Biennial, the various municipal shops in a moderate and deep Neoplastic spirit, the projects, the teaching at the Venice Institute of Architecture, the prestige of having influenced so many students constitutes a figure that deserves, above and beyond the affection of his friends, the recognition of modern architects. (Zevi 1950c, 17–20)

An environment shaped to the human scale
The APAO’s charter called for, ‘creating an environment for a new democratic civilization ... shaped to the human scale’, which would be ‘the antithesis of the monumental architecture used to create official myths’. Recognizing these qualities in Scarpa’s work, Zevi endorsed Scarpa for the 1957 Olivetti Prize, which he shared that year with Ludovico Quaroni.

Neutra’s work, for Zevi, was reaffirmation of this charter by an internationally recognized architect and urbanist. Yet, if Neutra was concerned at all with ‘organic architecture’ or ‘human scale’, in the manner that Zevi outlines, it was primarily in relation to human physiology, which for him was the central issue for architects. In Survival through Design, Neutra explains: ‘Organically oriented design could, we hope, combat the chance character of the surrounding scene. Physiology must direct and check the technical advance in constructed environment’. Later he adds, ‘Whatever we perceive as “beauty” in nature is never, and in no way, an addition to what we perceive as “utility”. All organic shape and detail depend clearly upon structure itself, and never can they be looked upon as decorative adjunct’ (Neutra 1954, 80). Writing in a scientific and polemical mode, Neutra spends a remarkable amount of time discussing such topics as human fecal matter and its impact on design. The moralistic tone of the book leads, inevitably, to Neutra’s invoking the biblical apocalyptic of Sodom and Gomorrah, the stench of which he intends the reader faintly to smell and of which his visit to Venice may have reminded him as he gave his lecture.

At the Ca’ Giustinián, Neutra directed his talk at two distinct but related audiences: the academy and the profession. There was then an ongoing Italian academic debate characterized by the ‘old academic leaders’ who argued for continuity, and the younger faculty who promoted a modern avant-garde. Ultimately, the avant-garde lost the battle in every school in Italy except the Istituto universitario di architettura di Venezia (IuAV). Consequently, the IuAV, under the directorship of Giuseppe Samonà, became a kind of polemical island on an island in Italy, populated by Scarpa, Manfredo Tafuri, Bruno Zevi and others sympathetic to a more stridently international point of view (Gregotti 1968, 46). The other audience or issues that Neutra addressed were the questions of organic architecture and the problem of post-war reconstruction and town planning. Neutra later elaborates these ideas in his various books of the 1950s including The Mystery and Realities of the Site, Survival through Design, and Life and Human Habitat. They are first articulated publicly, however, during his Italian lecture tour.

Neutra begins his first book published in the United States, The Mystery and Realities of the Site, much like a fable, invoking the idea of the genius loci to begin his pragmatic polemic. Neutra directs his allegory not to architects however, but to potential clients.

Once upon a time the natural landscape had a face as familiar to man as that of his mate ... [before destruction by civilization, Nature, its objects, its constellations of stars or landscape, its natural sites were regarded as animated. They too had a physiognomy which conveyed a recognizable and expressive message ... A tree or a spring housed a nymph, and a certain individuality characterized valley, or isle offshore, was the homestead of a god or the playground of the devil ... What are we to think of those picturesque natives and their worship of natural fact and geography? ... It is a dream finally ravished by a shrill alarm clock that signals the dawn of the day opening – the opening of the subdivision. (Neutra 1951, 9–13)

Neutra continues:
My experience, everything within me, is against an abstract approach to land and nature, and for the profound assets rooted in each site and buried in it like a treasurable (sic) wonder. The ancients thought those vital assets spirits. By listening intently, you can hear them miraculously breathe in their slumber. (Neutra 1951, 14)

Searching for the ‘physiognomic’ rather than the ‘organic’
Neutra was not interested in evoking the mysterious past, however; rather, awakened by the ‘shrill alarm clock’ of the reality of the site, he was searching for a more ‘physiognomic’ path rather than an ‘organic’ or ‘mysterious’ one. Neutra sought a source that was synchronous with the nature of the human body rather than the anthropomorphized face of mythic
nature. He concludes The Mystery and Realities of the Site, with the pragmatic 'Admonition' to future clients that they should 'try to understand the character and peculiarities of [their] site. Heighten and intensify what it may offer, never work against its inner grain and fiber'. Otherwise, he warns, the client will 'pay dearly for any such offence' (Neutra 1951:62).

Neutra's skepticism on the subject of 'organic architecture', first publicly articulated in his Italian lectures, is demonstrated best in a particularly cynical passage in Life and Human Habitat. Referring to the Kaufmann Desert House, Neutra explained, 'Houses do not sprout from the ground, sucking natural juices out of the soil! That is lyrical exaggeration, a pretty fairy tale for children' (Neutra 1956:21). Ultimately it is left to the students of Neutra, to those of us who visit his work directly or through Julius Shulman's photographs, to reconcile the lyrical nature of his architecture and its apparently seamless connection to the landscape with his descissed and scientific prose. The thoughts expressed in his Venetian lecture foreshadow things to come.

Notes
1. See Ponti 1957, 112–113. Neutra's oeuvre includes a variety of projects and completed works not limited to the United States. Among these are schools, office buildings, and urban design proposals. See Hines 1982, 193–197. He is remembered, largely, for the many houses he designed, most of which are extant and remain as provocatively 'modern' as they were when they were first built.
3. Rogers elaborated his position on the question of continuity and context in his many editorials, later republished in Esperienza dell'Architettura (Rogers 1958a; Rogers 1953).
4. [Innovators share with the so-called conservators the common flaw that they start from formal prejudices, maintaining that the new and the old are opposed rather than represent the dialectical continuity of the historical process; both are limited, in fact, to the idolatry of certain styles frozen into a few images, and they are incapable of penetrating the essences that are pregnant with inexhaustible energies. To pretend to build in a preconceived "modern style" is as absurd as to demand respect for the taboo of past styles' (Rogers 1955: 3–6).
5. A fourth and equally influential figure during this period in Italy was Adriano Olivetti. As the editor of Comunità and the money behind Zodiac and the Olivetti Award for Architecture, Adriano Olivetti was an important, albeit less visible force in Italian architectural and urban design discourse after the war. The art historian Carlo L. Ragghianti, in his obituary of Olivetti in Zodiac 6, compared Olivetti to Albert Schweizer, Henry Ford, and Albert Einstein (Ragghianti 1960, 2–3). Perhaps in response to Adriano Olivetti's influence, one of the first major retrospective analyses of Scarpa's work was published in this same issue of Zodiac.
6. Richard Belliene comments, 'The suspension was largely due to wartime logistics and interest, rather than any conflict with the [Italian Fascist] regime. Ponti was not a person to passionately support or oppose any political position, and this left him with the image of a collaborator. In 1946 [Ponti] was ready to resume publication of Domus, but his compromised status left him unable to serve as direttore. [Ernesto] Rogers had contributed through the Anomino series [a series of articles published under a pseudonym]. His intellectual and political credentials made him the attractive candidate for directorship. He held the post for two years, making the journal a high point in architectural thought' (Belliene 1994: 25). Ponti was the editor of Stile from 1941 to 1947. He became the editor of Domus in 1948. Lisa Licitra Ponti recounts that the two-year period of Rogers' editorship of Domus was characterized by a tension between neoclassical excellence and the emergence of the new, coming out of another level of thinking.' See L. L. Ponti, 1990: 18.
8. 'Loggia aperta da tavolo, riparata da spallette e posta sopra una casa per gli usi domestici.' Giuseppe Boerio, Dizionario del Dialetto Veneziano (Venezia: Giovanni Cecchini, 1856).
9. There is an uncanny resonance between the formal structure and iconic elements of this photograph and such quintessential Italian Renaissance paintings as Giorgione and Titian's Sleeping Venus wherein a reclining female nude foregrounds the hilltop village of Asolo. For more on the relation between Venetian Renaissance landscape painting and twentieth-century architectural production see George Dodds, 'Desiring Landscapes/Landscapes of Desire: Scopic and Somatic in the Brion Sanctuary', Dodds and Tavernor 2002, 238–257.
12. Earlier examples of the APAO charter were Mario Fiorentino's (et al.) Monument of the Ardeatine Caves (1944–47); Fiorentino, Quarioni, Ridolfi and Cardelli's competition entry for the Rome Termini railroad station (1947); and Quarioni's church in the Prasenestino quarter, Rome (1949). (Gregotti 1972, 44–45).
team members for the design of the exhibition and pavilion. Scarpa’s much discussed legal problems with local Venetian architects were probably prompted by his having won the Olivetti Prize and the subsequent commission for the design of the high-profile Olivetti showroom in the Procuratie Vecchie in Venice’s Piazza San Marco (Dal Co and Massari 1954; Dodds 2000). 15. He continues: ‘Yet, we look at a lot, a piece of property, and say it has a view. It has a good exposure, it has privacy. All this is really figure of speech. What we actually are concerned with are human responses, organic and social necessities, which can be gratified on or through this site. To us the site is not animated in the early sense. It no more has a view than it has eyes’ (Neutra 1951. 15). Neutra continues that if the architect makes a ‘fitting floor plan’ so that a structure is ‘fitted ... to its setting’, and works ‘with the grain of the site’, the owners will be able to live in harmony with their site (Neutra 1951. 15-16). Hence, for Neutra, a site can no longer be thought of as having a ‘spirit’, or ‘a face’, but it does have a ‘grain’, something that is particular to it. This site force can affect the body and mind of the client, positively or negatively, depending on how the architecture interacts with these forces. Later, using a kind of zoomorphic analogy, Neutra explains, ‘The architect who is sensitive to his site is not content with merely digging a foundation as a means of securing adhesion between the building and the ground. As a further means of site-anchorage he may send out tentacles of structure to catch or hook some surrounding feature of the land’ (Neutra 1951. 41).  

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Biography  
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Two temporary structures
Archigram’s invisible university
New slant on Citicorp tower saga