

## Seeing Through Franco Albini Domestic Modernity in Rationalist Italy

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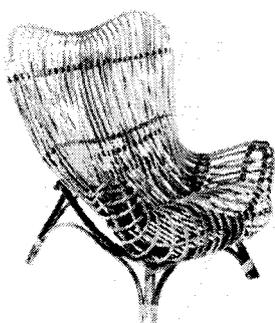
### INTRODUCTION: FOUR OBSERVATIONS

Even a cursory glance at a range of works by Franco Albini, including ornament, furniture and building plans, suggests his influence on the works of later and better known architects. I do not intend to argue that Gehry, Koolhaas, and Johnson were knowledgeable about Albini's work, but through closer inspection of selected projects I want to suggest the currency of the ideas and talents of this lesser known modern architect.<sup>1</sup>

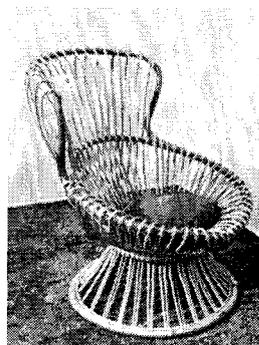
As a designer with a lasting legacy, Albini's work deserves more critical consideration, which I hope to advance through studies of his museums, housing, interiors, furniture, private and public commissions, and teaching. His prolific career extended from pre-war rationalism to post-war progressive modernism located in Italy with few exceptions. In this paper, I will look specifically at his domestic interiors from the early 1930s through the 1950s. This subset of his work is of interest in the context of this conference for at least three reasons. First, the dwelling is the domain of architecture that has most resisted modernization, especially in North American popular culture. Secondly, Albini and partners' most important design contributions during the post-war period, evident in their public

museum commissions, reflect the influence of his pre-war domestic experiments in interior design. He initiated themes in these minor projects that require modern transparency and love of craft.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the nature of the *modern room*, largely subverted by the breakdown of the box and the elimination of the wall in seminal modern icons, is intact in Albini's interiors and works to reinforce the room as the unit element of architecture.

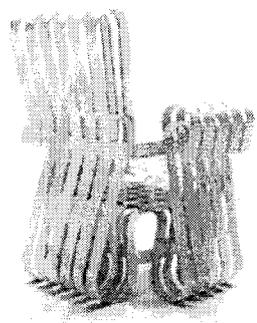
Manfredo Tafuri credits Albini with leading the way in one of the architectural breakthroughs of his generation: modern museum design. Tafuri recognizes his "houses of art" for achieving equilibrium between novel space and exhibition function, and between memory and innovation. Albini produced Italy's first white box gallery in the Palazzo Bianco in Genoa. The 16th century palace on the Renaissance Strada Nuova houses a civic museum collection of historic artifacts. Tafuri also noted Albini's extraordinary contribution in the example of the Treasury of San Lorenzo Gallery built just after Palazzo Bianco (1950) in the same city. Characterizing what he calls "magical abstraction" in Albini's rationalist sensibility, Tafuri writes:



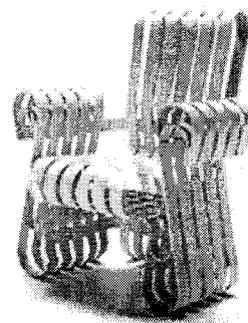
Albini's "Gaia"

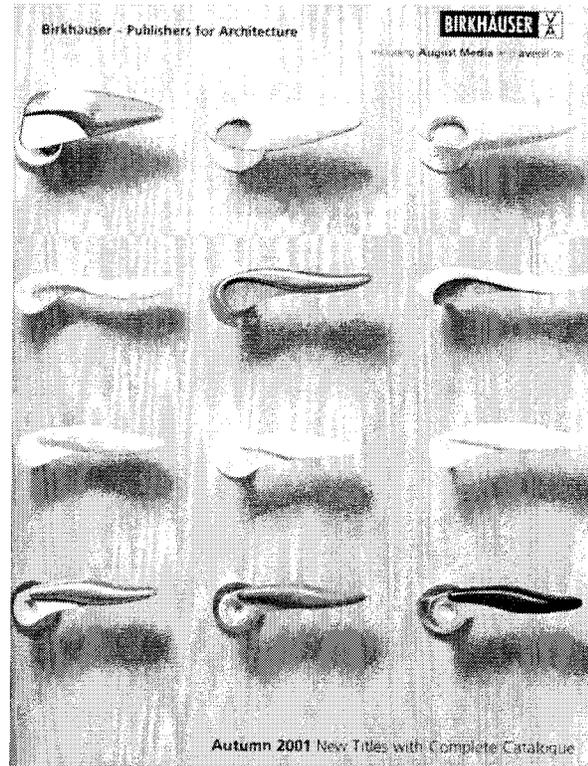
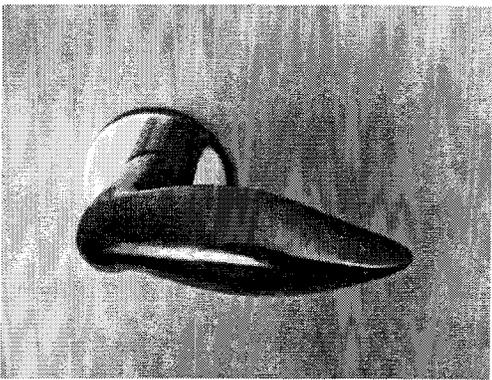
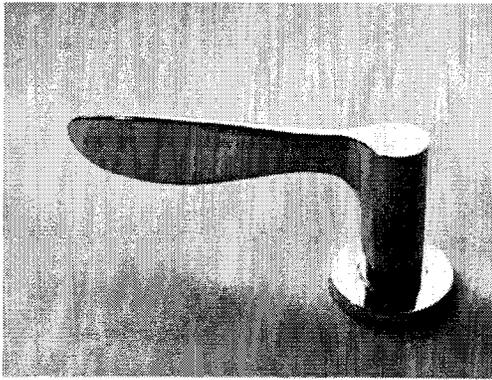


Albini's "Margherita"



Frank Gehry's "Power Play"





Albini's door handles 1954

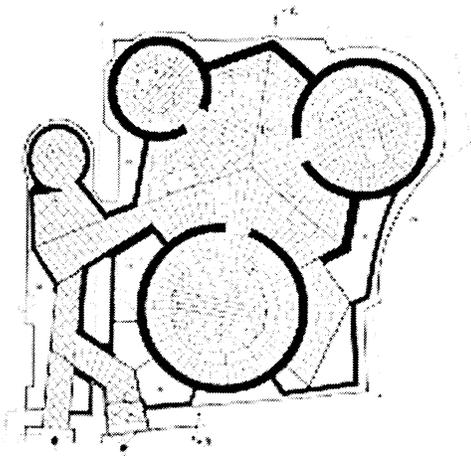
Koolhaas' door handles 2001

Albini managed to sublimate the esoteric nature of his referents. The dialectic between spaces, the variations of light, the dialog between the glass cases and the ambiguous suggestiveness of the interconnected organisms articulated one of the most original ingredients of Albini's poetics: a surrealism all the more subtle in that it was resolved in technically faultless vocabulary. Albini's "buried architecture" possesses its own language. Isolated from the external world, it elicits a dialogue between technological elegance – a further tool for achieving supreme detachment – and forms. This dialogue exalts an unreal dimension: the dimension to be precise, of abstraction as 'suspended image.' It was the same abstraction that characterized Albini's interiors: ephemeral containers for magically transported historical objects. . . . Albini created masterpieces of representational virtuosity and dreamlike suggestiveness. His lyricism resided in the erect, suspended, and reinforced frames . . . Albini's severity alludes to an absent without ever becoming tragic.<sup>3</sup>

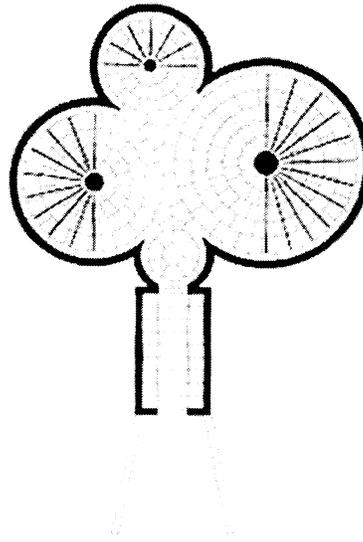
How does Albini's work offer poetic alternatives to the purity of enigmatic modern minimalism and the abstract transparency characteristic of International Style architecture? Like many from his generation in Italy, Albini produced furniture, interiors, exhibitions, affordable housing and spaces of high culture using a variable palette of modern materials and methods of construction with careful attention to craft. His cultural frame

of reference from futurism to *arte povera* supplied a decidedly different conceptual background from Colin Rowe and Robert Slutsky's understanding of cubism as the heritage for modern architecture. Albini's architectural language was more directly shaped by his identification with the rationalists with whom he was trained and collaborated, including Gardella, Persico, Pagano, and Palanti, during the 1930s and early 40s. His unique contributions become progressively apparent in his post-war projects, produced first on his own, then later with his partner, Franca Helg. Their later projects demonstrate a fresh freedom from the stylistic dogma of pre-war rationalism, revealing a perpetuation of his own motifs developed during the prior period. Albini effectively interiorized transparency. He entered pictorial space to weaken and enrich the literal language of the abstract void. By focusing within, he explored new uses of ephemeral materials with emerging technologies, maintained privacy as an urban imperative, and established a recurring tension between the artifact and the room. Albini's use of glass and fabric employed for horizontal and vertical layers offered sophisticated variations of spatial transparency, that part of contemporary architecture that cannot be suppressed.

As a material practice, the work of Franco Albini embodied a pluralist language of transparency all his own yet also belonging to the Italian *tendenza*. Albini produced numerous installations, exhibition interiors, trade fair pavilions and temporary con-



franco albinì's  
treasury of san lorenzo in genoa, italy  
1950-52



phillip johnson's  
painting gallery in new canaan, ct  
1965

structions inspired by the theories and practices of the Milanese school. His insistence on subdividing a large room with scaffolding-like steel or wood armatures provided a measuring device to break down the scale of monumental spaces. His featherweight columns served to support displayed subjects at eye level with directed sources of light. At the same time, and while teaching in Venice and Turin, Albini produced urban mass housing and began to receive more important commissions. He worked for industry and cultural ministries, and built large residential quarters. Yet among his theoretical interiors, including one realized for himself, are some of his most compelling projects suggesting the role of the good modern room as the elemental unit of new architecture. Characteristic of Albini's poetic pragmatism is his fearless delight in textures, patterns, colors, materials and light. Selected articles of furniture, two experimental rooms, and several domestic interiors will be considered here to exemplify Albini's use of non-utopian relational transparency and from which the following observations about his work can be made:

1. Internalized transparency refocuses attention away from Miesian exterior/interior phenomena to interior/interior spatial relations that maintain separation between public and private domains while exploiting weightlessness, transparency of displays, and visual connectivity within.
2. The composition of "pure space" is mediated in favor of deferential treatment of the container to the contained, where a weakening of edge is sought to privilege the contents of the room and its perceiving subject over abstract form.

3. Careful negotiation of radical form and modern materials within historic structures transcends ideals of simple purity or erasure to realize more complex themes with non-standardized assemblages.
4. Tectonic solutions for built spaces exhibit conviction in the empirical role of materials. Detail precision and craft are essential to the diagrammatic clarity, legibility, and endurance of his work.

#### LA CASA ALL' ITALIANA AND FIRST TENDENCIES

The intellectual and social climate that produced Franco Albini was fascinating and complex, albeit contradictory and beyond full analysis here. Fascism evolved into a regime under Mussolini's dogma that sought to "nationalize" Italian social, family, and cultural life.<sup>4</sup> Therein, the modern dwelling provided a paradigm and became the primary site for revolution of the Italian lifestyle. Open to continuous scholarly investigation are questions about the predominance of nationalism vs. international influences in the quest for progress among the Italian design community. Yet there exists little doubt that the nationalist fervor and patriotism that persisted to shape discussions of the *tendenza* directed the intentions of prominent designers leading to and during the war.<sup>5</sup> Journals flourished in provoking the battle between false opposites of tradition vs. transition and reflected the culture's anxiety in the flux of change. Writings and exhibition fairs paralleled building design in the search for national identity. Edoardo Persico,

antifascist architect and critic, wrote: "The greatest obstacle to the integral affirmation of Rationalism in Italy was the inability of its theoreticians to pose rigorously the problem of the antithesis between national and European taste."<sup>6</sup>

Modernization in Italy suggested scientific and technological progress, which eventually rationalized the dwelling as both a formal and an economic construct. Throughout the 1920s, before terminology such as the "new dwelling," "exitenz-minimum" or "machine a habiter" were common in Italy, foreign models brought scientific principles for organizing domestic life with influences on hygiene, family size, and women's roles.<sup>7</sup> Milanese architect Gio Ponti published his essay entitled "*La Casa all'Italiana*" in the first issue of the journal *Domus* in 1928 in which he distinguished the modern Italian house from its neighbors north of the Alps. He claimed that Italy's mild climate diminished the need for distinction between inside and outside, consequently forms and materials are often continuous. Probably responding to European influences and to the Rationalists manifesto published the prior year, Ponti insisted that the "new spirit" should not focus on what was purely functional but attend to "spiritual comfort," over pragmatic practicalities. Maristella Casciato has identified Ponti's three primary concerns in the evolution of the modern Italian house regarding aesthetic, social and technical programs all aimed at the sense of style.<sup>8</sup> Ponti's focus on lifestyle was considered bourgeois by the progressive young architects of the *Gruppo 7*, since it ran counter to the rationalists' adherence to logic and order.<sup>9</sup> Terragni's controversial *Novocomum* apartment building in Como in 1929 was quickly recognized as a tangible example of rationalist principles, yet only its façade as built presented alternatives to the traditional Italian apartment building. Its interior rooms were not published and probably without significance in defining a new dwelling type. Enrico Griffini provided architects with a manual of new domestic form in his outline of principles entitled *costruzione razionale della casa* in 1931 and applied his proposals in collaboration with *Gruppo 7* members.<sup>10</sup> Yet the most influential ideas about the modern Italian house were disseminated via the exhibition for a vacation house sponsored by *Societa' Edison*, the *Casa Elettrica*.

Produced for the IVth Biennale in Monza in 1930 by several members of *Gruppo 7*; Figini, Pollini, Frette, Libera, and Bottoni, the *Casa Elettrica* was the first truly glass house, programmed for domestic inhabitation, and realized only a year after the Barcelona Pavillion.<sup>11</sup> The exhibition house was streamlined, economical, and efficient, with special emphasis placed on dining, for which Bottoni designed an assembly line of production, distribution, and collection. The machine-like kitchen was not visible to diners who were served from blind revolving doors. The *sala da pranzo* (dining room) was part of the open central room that separated day and night zones in the dwelling. The entire room expanded upward toward clerestory windows and outward with a vista linked to the landscape

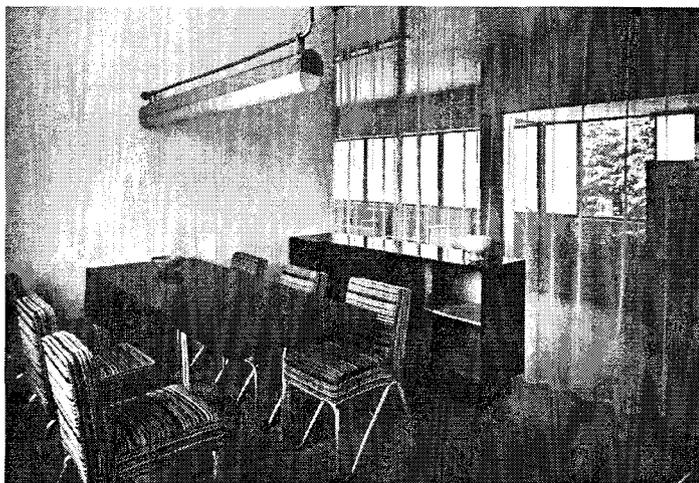
through a continuous glass wall. A dark curtain could be drawn to isolate the dining area from the *stanza di soggiorno* (living room).



#### ALBINI'S BEGINNINGS: INTERIOR TRANSPARENCY AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS

Albini had completed his architectural studies at the Politecnico di Milano only one year prior to the Monza Biennale. In forthcoming exhibitions, Albini would contribute to three experimental shows and realize several domestic interiors during the same decade. These projects trace the evolution of his transitional motifs for the modern room. For the Vth Triennale in 1933, Albini participated with 6 architects on a team headed by Giuseppe Pagano to produce the four-story steel frame house. Persico singled out the project for "providing practical solutions to national problems."<sup>12</sup> On the third floor, the *sala da pranzo* was separated from the corridor by a veil-like transparent curtain. During the same year, Albini transformed an artist's studio into a studio apartment with a single room accommodating functions of sleeping, writing, sitting and eating. Albini used black waxed sailcloth to isolate the bedroom nook, while a smoked glass and metal partition flanked the dining table made of black glass. The dark materials afforded greater visual privacy in a compressed area, while their glossy surfaces reflected light.

In 1936 the VI Milan Triennale was coordinated by Giuseppe Pagano, whose interest in rationalist functionalism and mass production guided his selection of young colleagues for commissions in the exhibition.<sup>13</sup> Albini was charged along with Giancarlo Palanti and Renato Camus to design a "Room for a Man." In 1940 for the VII Triennale, Albini alone designed the "Living Room of a Villa."<sup>14</sup> Both designs exhibit the nature of a stage set with curtains and perceptively contrived parameters. Each space had a floor grid and a bilateral division of juxtaposed programs as if to separate daily life into dialectic domains. The mind and body of the monastic individual were polarized in "Room for a Man." A black transparent curtain



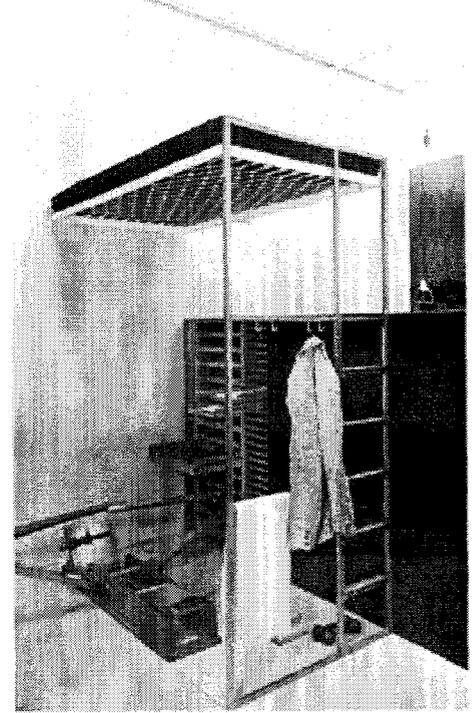
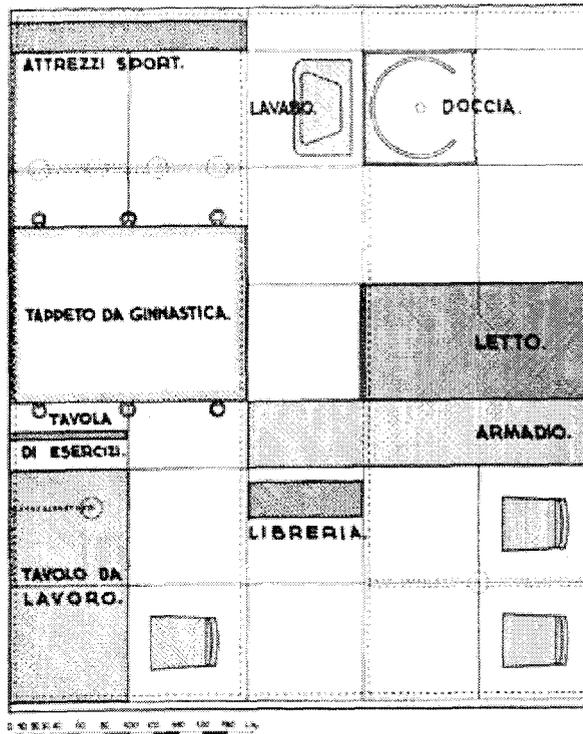
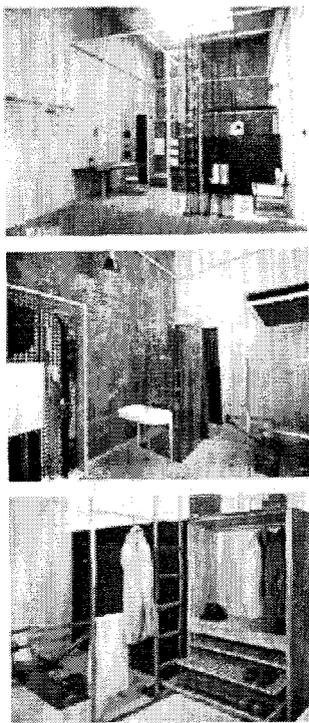
suspended between the two areas addressed the ambiguity of separating mind and body. The room was 5 meters tall, forming a square end elevation. At 4 meters high a delicate white grid delineated an airy ceiling above eye level. The square end wall was faced in rough-cut stone, as though the earth's surface had slid sideways and upwards to ground the "body" end of the room, giving depth to the scenic backdrop. Wood was used for closets and shelving, but fully refined and finished as part of the technologically-precise machined, rather than organic, domain. The bed was suspended above all other activities to float as in a dream. A see-through book-wall spanned from floor-to-faux ceiling, suspending books on glass shelves. The *libreria* was slid off the grid into the "mind" zone of the room and was the only element positioned symmetrically and on center within the space.

In his next series of domestic commissions, Albin used the stair as both section organizer and expressive motif to accentuate linear movement along slipping boundaries. Horizontal pliability (curtain) shifted attention to diagonal thrust (stair). The profile of the stairway composed the room's end elevation for the Villa Vanzetti in 1935 (Como), while at the Vanzetti apartment (Milan) the next year, Albin opened the risers. For Villa Pestarini (1936-38) Albin suspended Carrara marble treads while opening the risers, balustrade and adjacent wall, to integrate dynamics of movement and light. A similar marble ramp stair later organized Albin/Helg's San Agostino Museum in Genoa. Albin's stairs proved a flexible medium for material and tectonic composition and the lyrical suspension of weight.

His fluency with the language of Italian Rationalism guided Albin to manipulate the rules of mass and gravity within phenomenally transparent space. Employing veils, curtains, sheers, glass shelves and tables and his own furniture, he explored possibilities that lie between phenomenal and literal layers marked with ephemeral boundaries. But he largely avoided the polemics of compromised privacy and interaction with the city or the voyeur. His internalized subdivisions suggested a psychological rather than sociological journey from here to there, as he simultaneously compressed activities of body and mind, culture and nature, and the organic with the man-made. His rapt attention to the artifact and its position within the space served his play of whimsical alignments and suspension structures challenging the rigors of point, line and planar geometries. Two pieces of furniture produced between 1938-40 characterize his serious playfulness where pragmatics embrace reality to form poetry. Each design also demonstrates Albin's transparent aesthetic and flawless attention to detail and craft.

Albin's radio places the operational necessities of speaker and transmitter into a naked body.<sup>15</sup> The essence is revealed as the designer addresses only what is his domain and leaves technology to exist on its own, resulting in a visually dynamic dialog between opposites. Two planes of Securit glass hold the perceptually heavier rectangle over the circle, both of which appear suspended in air, allowing sound, music, and voice to emerge as if floating into the room. His tensile bookshelf called "*Veliero*," or sailboat, was designed for his own apartment.<sup>16</sup> At once poetic and pragmatic, the piece of furniture is both an artifact and a transparent wall extending the room's space. The balanced 'V' is formed by two brass-tipped wood tensile columns that support suspended glass shelves. The bookshelf is more stable when loaded with books, which can stand, lie flat or remain open. Even the base slab is detailed to appear not to rest on the ground, heightening the tension and gravity as dynamic elements of form. Each artifact states Albin's thesis that there are no passive objects. Predominant in his later museums, relational transparency depends upon the dynamic interaction of a room with its contents. A static, universal container of objects or bodies is not Albin's idea of modern space. The room as the unit element of architecture is thereby defined as a closed container of controlled proportions with subdivisions of varying degrees of permeability and visual penetration of the functions and forms within.

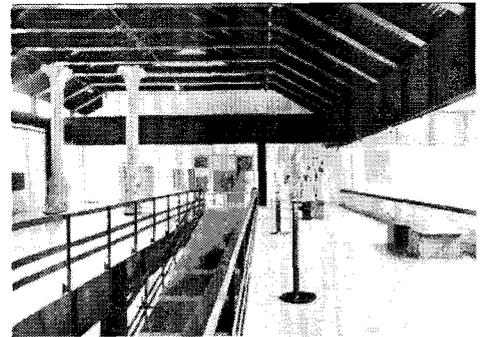
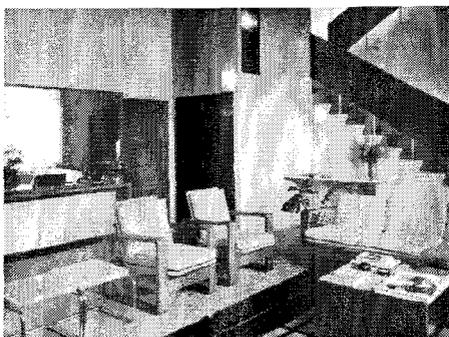
Albin's furniture appears in his own 1940 apartment design accompanied by his transparent curtains-as-walls. Designed between the two Triennale projects, Albin's Milan apartment displays leitmotifs observed in his theoretical projects, and includes his transparent radio, bookshelf and glass-topped tables.<sup>17</sup> In addition, he introduced a single floor-to-ceiling white steel rod to support frameless paintings at eye level and overhead light fixtures. The apparatus, borrowed from his installations, reduced the repetitive frame to a single instru-

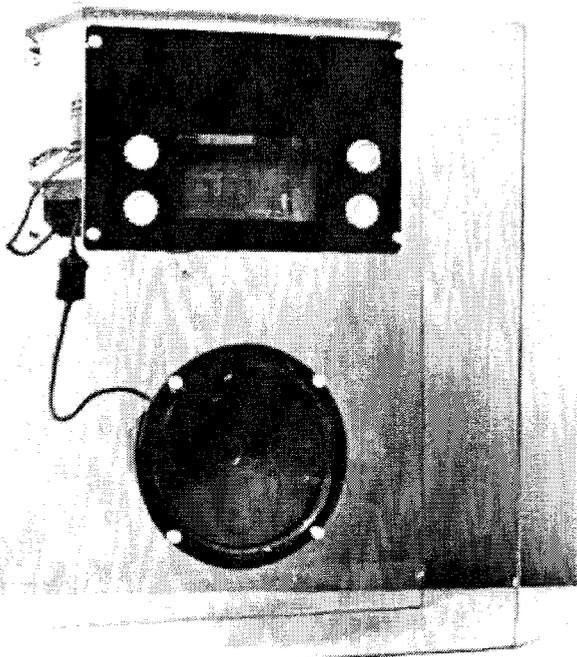


ment. In the context of a small apartment the intervention appears to be inspired both by the need for more exhibition space than wall surfaces allowed and the opportunity to float such weighty subjects as Madonna and Child. He also introduced a means to dematerialize the wall surface while transforming a traditional functional form into a modern one. Sheer white curtains hang the entire dimension of the outside walls reaching corner-to-corner and suspended from ceiling to floor with concealed hardware. The effect of veiling the entire wall was to reduce the quantity and cool the quality of window light while making an ethereal planar edge. Windows appear more distant as framed views yet detached from the public realm, while the wall is rendered ambiguous focusing attention inward. An opaque azure interior curtain in the salon is positioned perpendicular to the outside wall to provide separation between dining and living functions but maintaining openness and flexibility. The pair of curtains adds color and texture while respecting the desire for privacy from within and beyond. Albinì is comfortable combining modern abstract elements and textures with antique furnishings and artifacts,

foreshadowing his radical encounters after the war when he is commissioned to house historic collections in revitalized monuments and to intervene with modern themes in historic churches and palazzi.

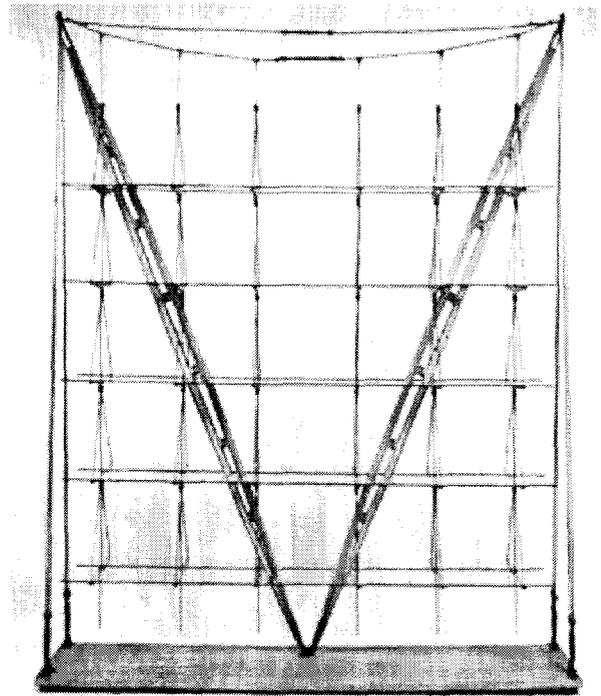
In the same year, Albinì produced the experimental interior acclaimed by the critics as the only example in the VII Triennale capable of defining principles of modernity.<sup>18</sup> Like his previous Triennale statement, "Living Room for a Villa," (*soggiorno per una villa*) was composed using a gridded frame to provide perspectival structure in plan and section. In this scenario, the 6 x 7 bay plan was divided exactly in half as two 3 x 7 bays and demarked to represent exterior and interior spaces using different floor materials and set pieces. The section was also bifurcated with a mid-level platform made with open-spaced wood slats, suspended over the "indoor" half of the room and from which two swinging chairs were suspended into "outdoor" space. Transparencies of all sorts and materials merged interior and faux exterior space for a sublime domesticity reflective of Ponti's earlier *la casa all'italiana* depiction.





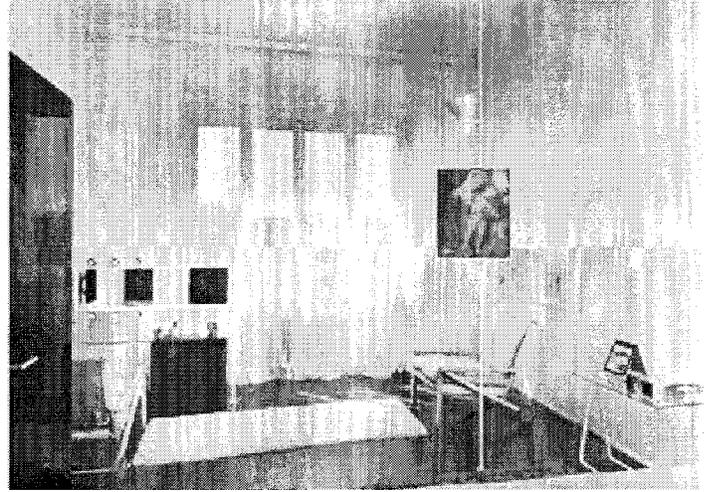
Glass was again used only horizontally as reflective table surfaces “inside” and as the floor of the outdoor “ground” where glazed panels were supported by a metal grid over grassy terrain. A tree and stair connected the two levels in section. Beneath the platform an aviary made of tensile span netting brought birds indoors. Light passed between the slats of the platform shadowing the zone underneath. A hammock and swing chairs, cantilevered bookshelf, suspended stair treads that did not touch the ground, and “natural” and man-made elements defined the lightweight sensuousness atmosphere of Albini’s ideal space for living.

In 1949 Albini was invited to Genoa and eventually awarded four prestigious museum commissions by the director of the cultural ministry for the city, Caterina Marcenaro.<sup>19</sup> Marcenaro had significant insight regarding the Italian *tendenza* along with the authority to intervene on several monuments in a relatively conservative cultural environment. It was her responsibility to revitalize bomb-damaged historic sites in the city center for the purpose of accommodating medieval and Baroque collections held by the municipality. She found sympathy in Albini who shared her aims to modernize the experience of viewing the historic collections. Marcenaro awarded him projects for the Palazzo Bianco, recognized throughout Italy as the introduction of the essential white gallery box into museum design, the Palazzo Rosso (1952-60), the Treasury Museum under the Cathedral of San Lorenzo (1952), lauded by Tafuri, and later the San Agostino Museum (1963-79).<sup>20</sup> Of particular interest regarding the problem of the architecture of the modern room, Albini also designed Marcenaro’s apartment in the reconstructed penthouse or “attico” of the 17th century Palazzo Rosso.



Since interventions in the existing palazzo and apartment buildings were restrictive, especially where the plan and structural walls were largely in tact, Albini was left little freedom to redefine the overall building form. However in the domestic space for the director, vestiges of his earlier ideas, reconceived after rationalism’s popularity had waned, provides further insight into his strategies for magical poetics that transcend the functions of a well-designed room.

The bomb-damaged original roof of the palazzo had already been reconstructed by Marcenaro’s predecessor before she attained oversight of Genoa’s artistic patrimony. Prior to 1954 Albini removed the new “historic” roof and replaced it with low concrete beams spanning a compressed open volume. Marcenaro’s apartment, therefore, received minimal exterior light and sat too high above the street for views of the narrow *viccoli* (alleys) outside. Detached from the city, she was indeed physically joined to her museum since the semi-public apartment linked directly to the semi-private public gallery sequence, paradoxically added to a formerly domestic palace. She had become a part of the building that defined her profession and her life, which were inseparable. Marcenaro’s space was neither claustrophobic nor oppressed by the history on which it was supported. Albini repeated his suspension of artifacts and furniture, choreographed as protagonists woven into sublime modern space, using a web of delicate “*allestimento*” or finish details made from black steel tensile members. Once again, overcoming weight is thematic and can be seen in visual relationships of floating objects, including the fireplace hearth and cap, which defy gravity and allow unobstructed views across rooms. The loft stairs and fireplace hover but do not rest, and antiquities are married to modern motifs.

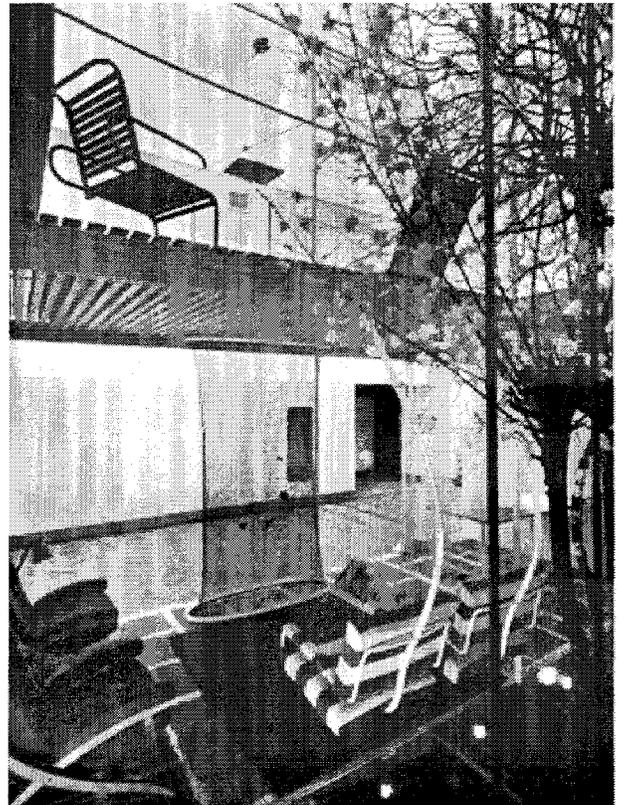
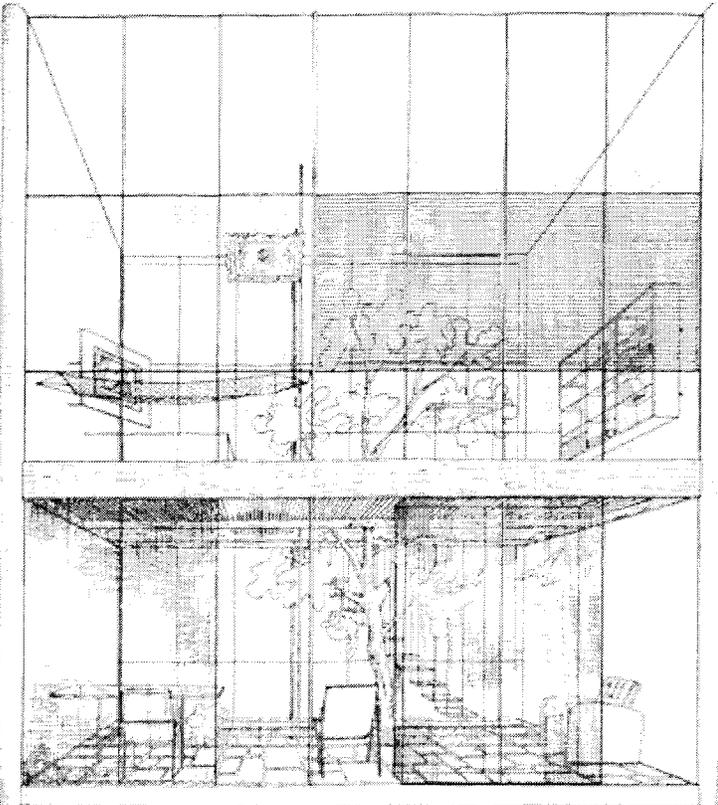


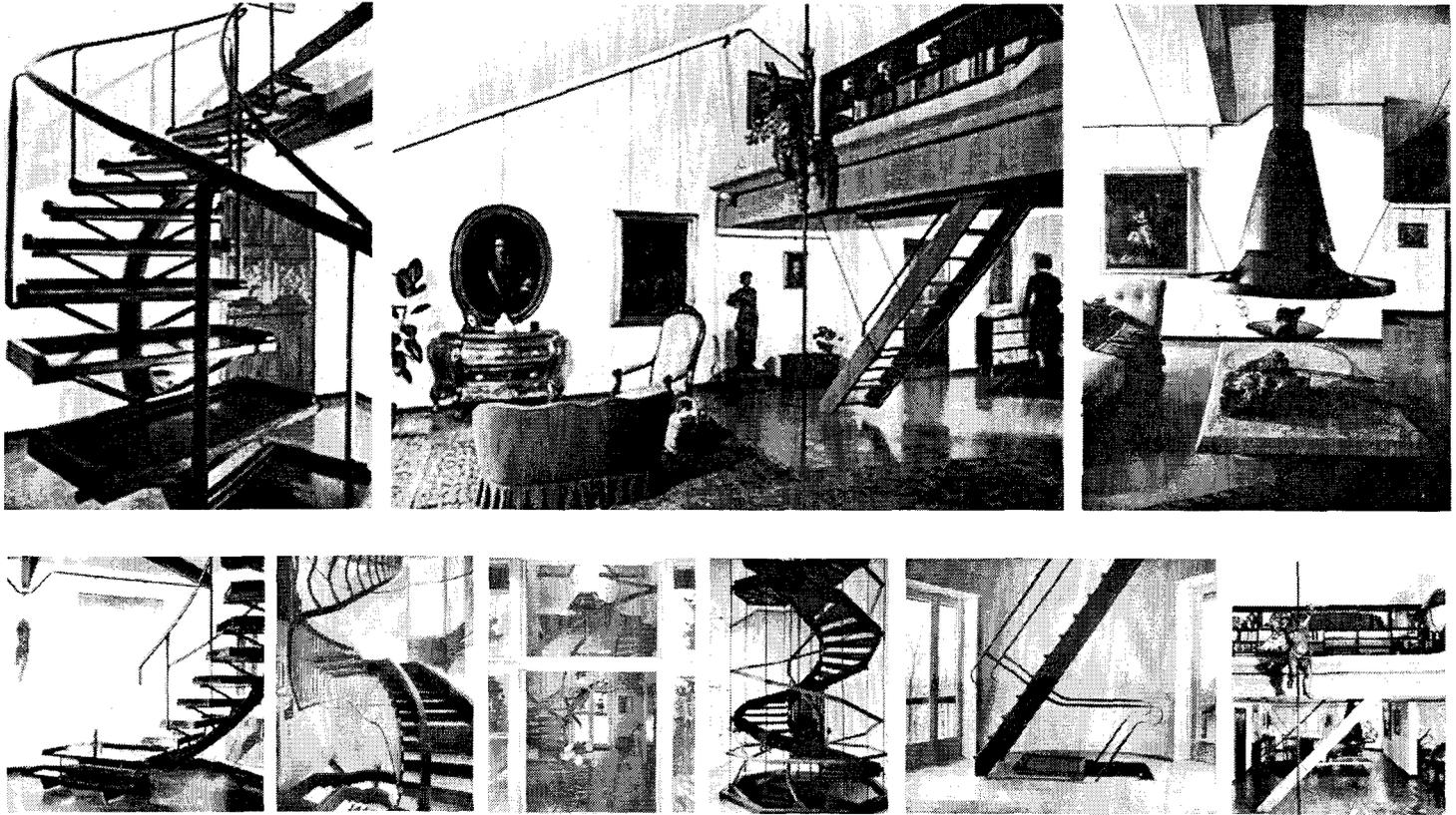
### CONCLUSION: JUST THE BEGINNING

The persistent question that accompanied the search for a unique Italian modern design in the early years can be seen in Albini's modern dwellings. If a distinctive Italian character exists, Albini's response to *la casa all'Italiana* was overtly influenced by both the rationalists 'logic and order' and Ponti's call for attention to style, design, and spiritual comfort reflected in Albini's recurrent motifs. Pre-war isolation and social realities of the war's aftermath served to provoke Italian architects pressured by new needs and economic constraints as catalysts for their maturing complex modern language. Umberto

Eco affirms the significance of *Italianita'* (Italianness) during the modern Italian metamorphosis:

*"An Italian character does exist. The first is a transhistorical characteristic that relates to 'genialita' (ingenuity) and 'inventivita' (inventiveness) . . . and consists in our ability to marry humanist tradition with technological development. What has undoubtedly acted as a brake on our culture, the predominance of the humanistic over the technological, has also permitted certain fusions, eruptions of fantasy within technology and the technologization of fantasy. Secondly, Italy is a country that has known*





*enormous crises, foreign domination, massacres, and yet (and for this reason) has produced Raphael and Michelangelo . . . what often fascinates foreigners is that in Italy economic crises, uneven development, terrorism accompany great inventiveness.”<sup>21</sup>*

For Albini, the ‘new spirit’ awakened every dimension of everyday life. Even product design in Albini’s hands becomes architecture, not only because he defines space with furnishings, but because his objects speak poetically, linking function to fantasy. The most prosaic programs invited dream-like buoyancy and magical abstraction. His stairs dangle in suspension preferring never to touch ground. Artworks float, sometimes framelessly, challenging the weight of their baroque subject matter to complement the relational tension of the object to the space and the inhabitant to the dwelling. Albini’s motifs suggest a plethora of models in response to function, material, site and scale. While many modern masters aimed for the great building as the elemental unit by erasing spatial subdivisions, Albini sought and defined the modern room. With the loss of the formal room went scale, surface, and proportional relationships of interior space. Mies van der Rohe’s architecture linked the detail to the building as a whole and effectively collapsed the room. Albini designed not only many worthy details but saw them crafted to create a poetic architecture of a new social order. His ingenuity and inventiveness are everywhere apparent as his design work grows to maturity after the war.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Although I know of no scholarship that has connected Philip Johnson to the work of Franco Albini, this project gives cause to believe that Johnson was aware of and interested in Albini’s work during Johnson’s own peak, when he learned the language of transparency from Mies. His 1965 Painting Gallery buried on the grounds of the New Canaan estate bears a striking similarity in plan to the *tholos* diagram of Albini’s crypt. Beyond the plan similarities of four circular rooms with identical radii, its location underground and the floor paving graphics render the similarities between galleries uncanny. [While this possible relationship is the subject of another research project, it is worth noting here since Johnson’s works of architecture are far better known and have received more critical attention than those of Franco Albini.]
- <sup>2</sup> Many of Albini’s projects were continued by his office, led by Franca Helg, Marco Albini, and Antonio Piva, after his death in 1977. See *Franco Albini 1905-1977*, Antonio Piva and Vittorio Prina (Milan: Electa, 1998).
- <sup>3</sup> Manfredo Tafuri, p. 50. *History of Italian Architecture 1944-1985* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989).
- <sup>4</sup> David Horn, *Social Bodies, Science, Reproduction and Italian Modernity*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).
- <sup>5</sup> Dual forces were at work in the determination to identify aesthetic trends and forms that maintained the thread of Italian tradition. *Italianità*, those quintessential qualities that define and distinguish being Italian, and *mediterraneità*, that which is culturally unique to southern European geography and climate, were recurring themes in the struggle to direct emerging new forms of architecture, and in particular, modern dwelling in fascist Italy. 5. *Aggiornamento* called for bringing Italian architecture up to date with other progressive European theory and practice.
- <sup>6</sup> Dennis Doordan, *Building Modern Italy, Italian Architecture 1914-1936* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988) p. 111.
- <sup>7</sup> Taylorization and fordism introduced through venues such as the Fourth International Congress on Household Economy held in Rome in 1927 served the social programs of the regime. Management of the household was linked to the well-being of the family which supported parallel directives regarding the education of the housewife and the efficiency of domestic organization.

See Maristella Casciato "The 'Casa all'Italiana' and the idea of modern dwelling in fascist Italy," *The Journal of Architecture* Vol 5 Winter 2000, pages 335-353.

<sup>8</sup> Casciato p. 338.

<sup>9</sup> In December 1926, *Rassegna Italiana* published the manifest of Italian Rationalism signed by seven young architecture students from the Milan Polytechnic. The members of the Gruppo 7 were Ubaldo Castagnoli (later replaced by Adalberto Libera), Luigi Figini, Guido Frette, Sebastiano Larco, Gino Pollini, Carlo Enrico Rava, and Giuseppe Terragni. Doordan p. 45.

<sup>10</sup> Doordan, p. 112.

<sup>11</sup> The central glazed façade allows the interior to extend outside to the lakefront, much like the spatial intentions in the later Farnsworth House by Mies van der Rohe and in Philip Johnson's New Canaan house. But the glass is actually a pair of planes housing a greenhouse inside. Doordan pp 60-63.

<sup>12</sup> Doordan p. 119.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen Leet, "Pagano and Temporary Architecture of the Triennale," *Franco Albini 1934-1977 Architecture and Design*. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1990). pp. 24-25.

<sup>14</sup> *Franco Albini 1905-1977*, "Stanza per un uomo, VI Triennale di Milano, 1936," pp. 86-87, and "Stanza di soggiorno per una villa, VII Triennale di Milano, 1940," pp. 145-147.

<sup>15</sup> Piva and Prina, "Apparecchio radio trasparente," p. 110.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Libera "Veliero," p. 123.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, "Appartamento Albini, Via De Togni, Milano, 1940," pp 140-142.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, "C. Zanini in 'Costruzioni Casabella' del 1941 definisce l'ambiente di Albini come l'unico esempio che mostra 'principi di modernità' . . ." p. 145.

<sup>19</sup> Piero Bottardo, current director of the Palazzo Rosso Museum, and Clario di Fabio, director of Albini's later San Agostino Museum in Genoa, have each written about Marcenaro addressing her term as *soprintendente di beni culturale* from 1949-1974. They consider the architect's and curator's early decisions and problems in the historiographic analysis and response in "Una protagonista della scena culturale genovese fra 1950-1970: Caterina Marcenaro fra casa e musei," di Fabio, and "Palazzo Rosso dai Brignole-Sale a Caterino Marcenaro: luci ed ombre di un caposaldo della museologia italiana," by Bottardo. Original unpublished papers provided to author.

<sup>20</sup> Tafuri addressed Albini's achievements of museology as high points that unleashed repression during this period, and specifically credited Albini's contribution to the renewal of museum design whose themes ranged "from the 'civil' role of form to the encounter between memory and innovation." Manfredo Tafuri, *History of Italian Architecture 1944-1985* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989) p. 49.

<sup>21</sup> Umberto Eco, "You must Remember This . . ." in Guggenheim Museum catalog for the exhibition "The Italian Metamorphosis 1943-68" (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 1994) by Thomas Krens, p. 3.