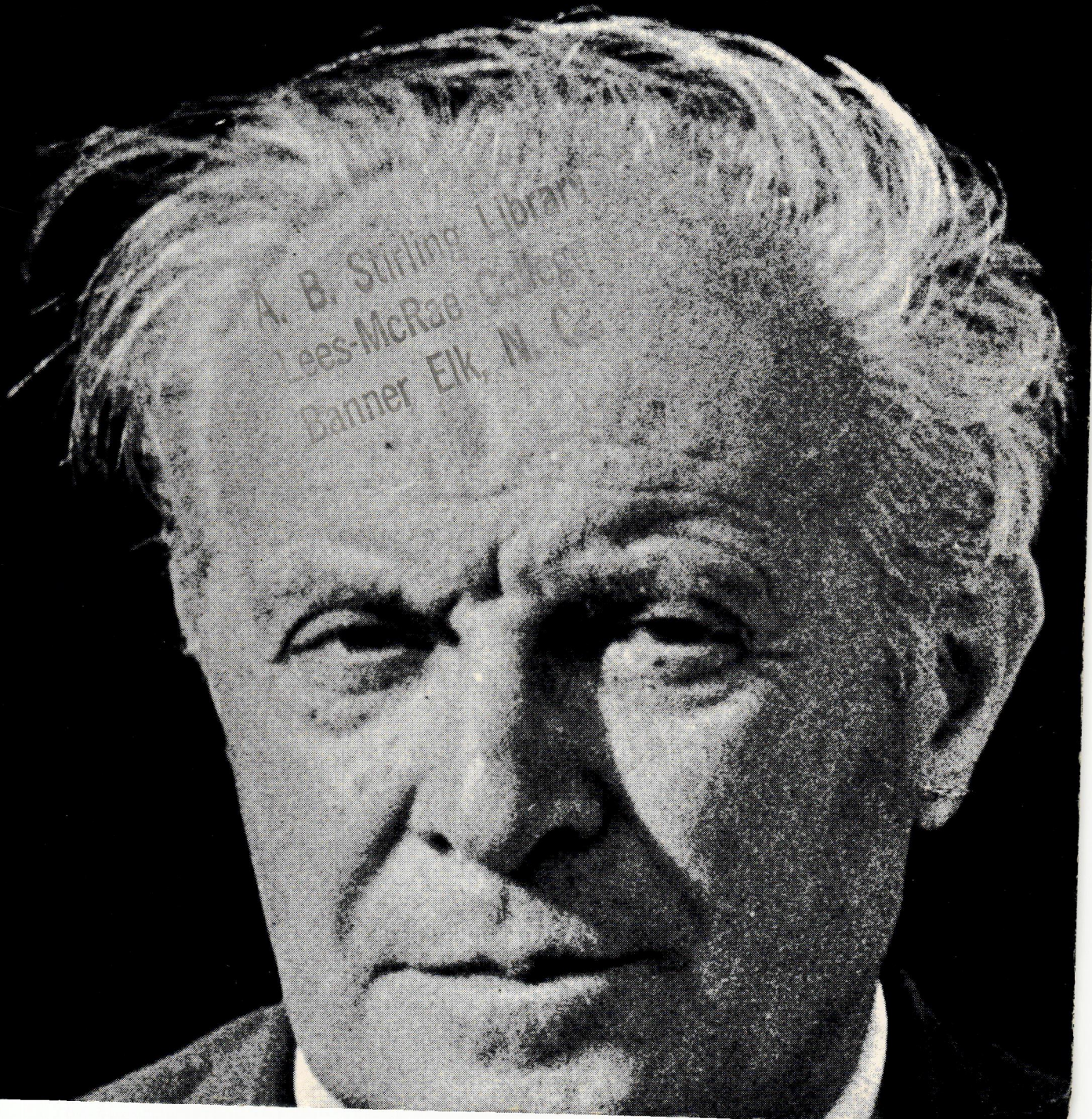


DESIGN QUARTERLY 69 70

THE EXPRESSION OF GIO PONTI



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NATHAN H. SHAPIRA

THE EXPRESSION OF GIO PONTI

WITH A FOREWORD BY CHARLES EAMES

This special issue of DESIGN QUARTERLY surveys the work and philosophy of the renowned Italian architect and designer, Gio Ponti. Living and working in Milan, Ponti edits the design magazine, DOMUS, which he founded in 1928. His book, *In Praise of Architecture*, and his numerous articles on modern design and architecture have distinguished Ponti as an important anthologist of design.

Early in his professional career, Ponti was involved in the Triennale exhibitions and in 1933, as executive director of the 5th Triennale, he opened the doors to the young avant-garde of Italian architects. A teacher and lecturer, he has also been a juror for many international architectural competitions.

Gio Ponti, a courtly individual, speaks of the design of buildings with reverence and love, much in contrast to some architects for whom architecture is merely a profession, not a calling, and for whom the design of a building is only an expedient, not a great fulfillment. At 75, Ponti still works twenty hours a day in his studio, a practising example of his maxim: "Think at night (about architecture) and work during the day (on architecture)." He prefers the traditional studio arrangement to the present-day organization of an architectural office. His studio in Milan is a large hall similar to an airplane hangar and affords him the particular open-space arrangement he needs.

Through his continuous publication of examples of good architecture and design in DOMUS, Ponti has had a very strong influence on Italian design. Constantly striving to improve our surroundings, he has also designed furniture, silverware, glass, ceramics, and numerous other objects. As an architect, designer, teacher and painter, he is involved with our total environment. But his major influence stems from his innovations in architecture, the use of materials, and the application of new techniques.

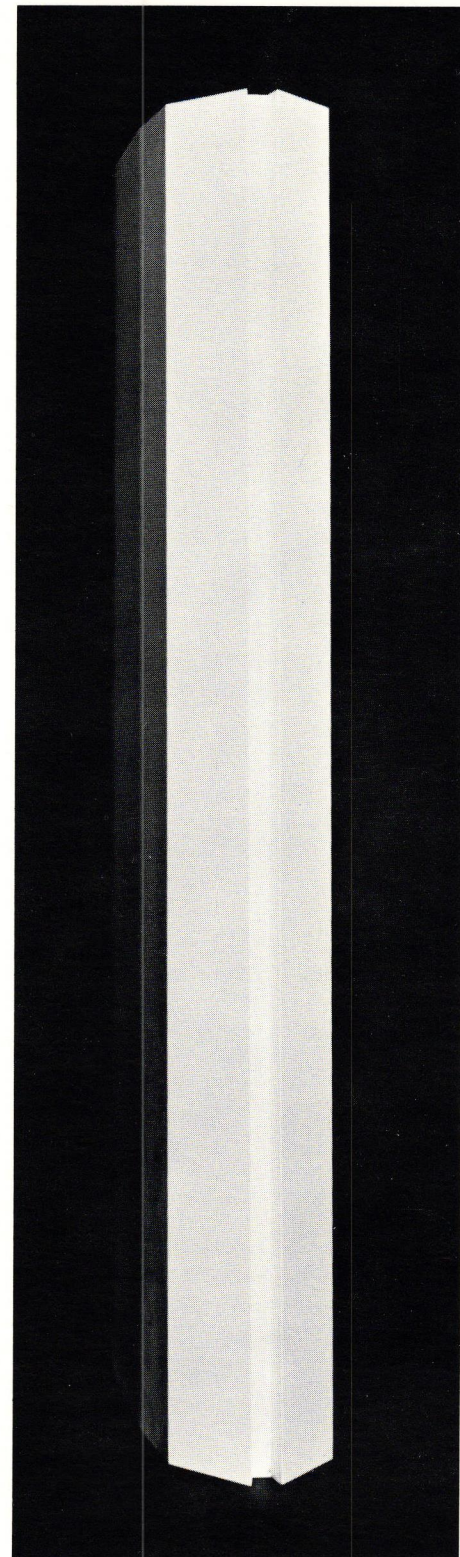
In his book, *In Praise of Architecture* (in Italian entitled *Amate L'Architettura*, "Love Architecture"), Ponti spells out his requirements: for him, architecture is a work of art to be looked at and judged by the people. He says we should ruthlessly demand that our modern architects build "happy and consummately civilized cities, glowing with imagination and full of human comprehension." He also emphasizes that an amusement park should be exuberant and whimsical, but governmental offices should be "solemn and severe in order to raise the level of thought and gesture."

Ponti clearly differentiates between architecture and engineering, admiring both, but maintaining that "great architecture lasts, because it is art and thus surpasses its use, while engineering disappears because of its progressive character, being consumed by its own use." He searches in all his architecture for a form that is simple and "unique — one that could not be added to or subtracted from" — as in the Pirelli office building in Milan.

"Architecture must achieve a definite closed form, which cannot grow in height and width, since this would be the contrary of the form: much of modern architecture is a repetition of parallel surface elements, it creates architectural slices, but not architecture; architecture is not made by volume but by form, the closed, finished, immodifiable form."

For Ponti, architecture is something everybody must think about, cooperate with, and participate in: this is our duty. He says the time of architecture has not arrived yet, but it is beginning.

This double issue of DESIGN QUARTERLY, written and designed by Nathan Shapira, Associate Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, coincides with an exhibition of Gio Ponti's work. The exhibition has been arranged by Frederick S. Wight, Director of the UCLA Art Galleries, and Mr. Shapira and it is being shown in a number of American museums, including the Walker Art Center.



Form study for the
Pirelli Tower

**Ponti is one of the rare ones —
an architect who considers everything as architecture
and has practised architecture in all his work.**

**He has both the skills and the lore of the art —
perhaps, a super abundance of the lore, but his concern
with lore grows naturally from his willingness and need
to become completely involved in anything he does.
His masteries of skill are those that seem to come
automatically to the special few who have the capacity
for really caring.**

**Perhaps what strikes us most is Ponti's remarkable
ability to live and relive every aspect of every experience
that each possible person will have in any situation he constructs.**

**Have him introduce you to a project on which he is working —
a model or an object or an idea —
and you will find yourself experiencing, through Ponti,
the reactions, the pulls, the needs and the pleasures of
many different people. Your own notions of function will
have broadened considerably and you will feel that somehow
the project itself has developed a little farther.**

**You know that every drawing, every costume, every object
he has built, every loving action has gone much the same
route — the examination of spaces, of the city, at home,
working in theatre, with exhibitions, with machines,
and in the freedom and the discipline of producing "DOMUS,"
and in instilling the same love and the same eye in his daughter, Lisa.**

**In this process of design, or growth, where he anticipates
and relives the experiences that others will have —
in this enthusiasm — he surely thinks of all people
as rich human beings possessing those same capabilities
and sensitiveness to experience that are his own.**

This is the only way — and this is the secret.

The obelisk is an enigma

The definition is an estheticism, I know . . . but estheticisms are useful for explaining many things, to indicate, for example, that the obelisk, sibylline and metaphysical — not without reason is it engraved with illegible signs — represents an arcane, nonfunctional, “disinterested” (says Le Corbusier) architecture; the pure, the only plastic act; the accent.

Miraculous equilibrium is the essential dynamic expression of architecture. By achieving it, architecture begins to speak (later on it will sing), for such balance interrupts the sleep of easy symmetry, of wide, comfortable, tolerant dimensions. Art is utmost exactness without tolerances or margins of safety. It is a demanding game, a winning game. It is an impossible equilibrium that succeeds. It is the exactness of an excess.

Gio Ponti



At 75 Gio Ponti is active and involved in a plenitude of projects ranging from tiles to tableware and from shopping centers to a procathedral. Unlimited enthusiasm, resolute faith, and a restless imagination maintain his creative vigor. Almost fifty years of dedicated commitment to the "modern movement" have led him to develop an idiom of his own, which remains consistent with itself in spite of its articulated variety. This variety, whether in choice of medium or in the complexity of surface, is rooted in the nineteenth century which, according to Vincent Scully, "believed in continuous movement, in the process of evolutionary change itself. . . . This was a measure both of its confidence in the future and of its separation from the fixed values of the past." When, because of the broad and varied scope of his activities, Ponti was compared with the well-rounded men of the Renaissance, he responded, "Why must I be compared to Italians of the past and not to a modern Italian or just an Italian?" His pride in belonging to a nation with so remarkable an artistic tradition has constantly impelled Ponti to search for the meaningful and, by choice, optimistic expressions of his time. Like so many other Italian artists in the past, he succeeds in expressing those contemporary aspects of life which have stimulated a sense of identity among an entire generation of artists from a variety of fields: at a given moment painters, sculptors, craftsmen, designers, and architects find themselves confederates.

In a time when man, again according to Scully, "has become at once a tiny atom in a vast sea of humanity and an individual who recognizes himself as being utterly alone," the specter of an Orwellian future or an Albee or Ionesco present is challenged by too few confident visions. Our intellectuals appear more threatened by an unprecedented sense of danger than released by the unlimited possibilities that have been opened to them. In contrast, Gio Ponti's expression is committed to a different set of values: serenity and play, harmony and grace, color and light are sustained by a love and compassion that draw their strength in turn from the religious tradition that lives within him.

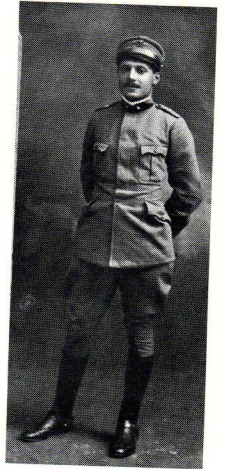
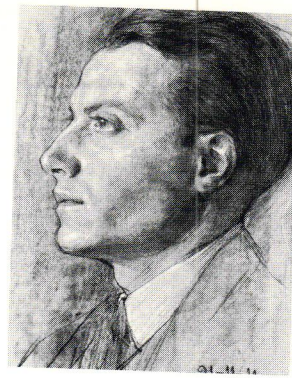
Gio Ponti was born in Milan in 1891 as the only son

of a middle-class Lombard family. As a youngster, he suffered poor health and was prey to feelings of inferiority. At the center of the Ponti home was Gio's mother, a proud and distinguished woman of unswerving convictions. The painter Massimo Campigli, one of the devoted friends of his family, says that Ponti's unusual creative resources stem from the isolation and privacy of his childhood and adolescence.

The introverted, fragile youngster seemed destined for obscurity. Slowly he gained physical health, but it was only after his military service (Ponti participated in the first World War and was awarded the War Cross and the Military Performance Medal) that he recognized his personal unappeased longing for knowledge. As a student in Milan's Polytechnic School of Architecture, from which he graduated in 1921, painting became the center of his early aspirations; later the stream of his activities turned him toward the applied arts, design and architecture. But "the dream of painting has accompanied me all my life," Ponti insists. Failure in a number of public architectural competitions was, in Ponti's opinion, a healthy discipline for his early professional activity. Much of his energy was spent at this time in the promotion of cultural projects. With the writer Raffaele Calzini and the architect Alpago Novello, Ponti directed the Second, Third and Fourth Biennale Exhibitions of the Decorative Arts in the Villa Reale at Monza. At the Third Biennale, Ponti promoted the "electric house" which brought recognition to its designers, the "group of 7" (Terragni, Figini, Pollini, Rava, Larco, Frette and Libera). When Ponti was again appointed director of the Fifth Biennale with Alpago Novello and Mario Sironi, he decided with Sironi to expand its scale. He was instrumental in moving it to Milan where it opened in 1933 in the Palazzo dell'Arte that was especially designed in the city's Central Park by Architect Giovanni Muzio for the Bernocchi Foundation. It was then known as the Fifth Triennial Exhibition of Modern Art and Modern Architecture of Milan. Subsequently Ponti directed, with Raffaele Calzini and Pietro Chiesa, the Sixth and Seventh Triennial Exhibition. The series has continued to this day and enjoys a world wide reputation.



1. Ponti, at six with his father
2. Ponti at twenty
3. In the army



Though a contemporary of Boccioni and Santi Elia, Ponti did not join the futurist movement, nor did he participate in the rationalist movement in architecture (MIAR—Movimento Italiano dell'Architettura Razionalista, or Group 7) which flourished in Italy in the twenties. Instead, at the suggestion of the writer Ugo Ojetti (after meeting the publisher Gianni Mazzocchi on January 15, 1928), Ponti became the editor of *Domus*, an architectural, design, and art periodical which was to have an illustrious future. Except for the years between 1941 and 1948, *Domus* has been published continuously under Ponti's guidance. From a publication concerned initially with lifting the general level of taste, *Domus* grew into one of the most widely read publications on modern architecture, a familiar sight all over the world. Today, Ponti directs the preparation of each issue of the magazine with the assistance of his eldest daughter, Lisa Licitra, and the help of a small staff.

When recalling his youth, Ponti relates with much humility how his physical frailty, and the fact that he was an only child, set him apart, and centered his existence on his immediate environment. His habitual preoccupation with the immediate, the concrete, has kept him outside the tumult of the theoretical movements with their programs for radical reform and change. Instead, he needed a means to clarify, to express his inner judgments, and they centered on quality, on the right of a building of any epoch to be called architecture. Critically alert, he welcomed whatever he believed deserved to last. *Domus*, more than any of his other activities, projects these characteristic concerns. It has been the vehicle for his capacity to inspire, to stimulate, to lead. Over the years it has had a cumulative influence on our contemporary culture.

Ponti's design activity begins in the field of ceramics with his affiliation in 1923 with the Richard-Ginori Industries in Doccia (Florence) and San Cristoforo (Milan). Indeed the affiliation really began with the company's participation in the Paris Decorative Art International Exhibition (1922). This was an exceptional opportunity for Ponti. The organization resulted from the merger of two companies with long traditions, and it had become

one of the largest Italian ceramic industries. It was then seeking a total redesign of its products. Ponti leaned at first on his interests in the fine arts, and the earliest of his many ceramic creations was conceived in a neo-classical manner. He produced many mythological subjects in gold-leaf engraving, and often, it must be confessed, he showed a lack of concern for relating the applied image to the shape of the porcelain ground, which was usually blue. It is only in his later work as a designer for the ceramic industry that Ponti covers the basic form with rich three-dimensional decorations, balancing the two in a lively dialogue.

Reviewing the ceramics in the Paris Decorative Arts Exhibition in 1926, Ponti wrote: "We would certainly lose ourselves if we sought the revealing elements of the modern style only in decorations."⁴ While Ponti is directly involved with the expert craftsmen, often surrounding himself with many of them in an effort to create a total environment in which to insert his own work, he has always made a clear distinction between the process of making creative decisions and the activity that implements them. For example, his ultimate concern with form in ceramics is, in his own words, "to design for able hands—not to work as a potter but to develop designs for pottery."⁵

In answer to an article, "Inquiry on Handicrafts," published in *Zodiac* in 1959, Ponti wrote:

During my recent travels to America I was much interested in a movement which has its nucleus in the American Craftsmen's Council and its expression in the *Craft Horizons* magazine; under the sponsorship of Mrs. Vanderbilt Webb, this movement promotes the development of hand work; but the most interesting fact is that this is not due to the existence of craftsmen nor is it even aimed at creating an American guild of craftsmen, but it is the work of artists and intellectuals. . . .

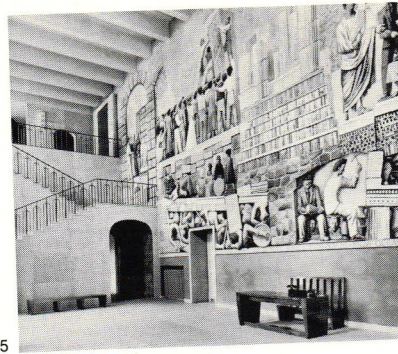
I was very excited to learn that in America there is a movement in favor of hand work; it could not be otherwise with me since I have a special attitude towards this problem: perhaps a shyness of using my own hands. Instead, I have much intuition and am always ready to offer guidance and suggestions to the hands of others.

I do not wish to confuse manual work as I understand it and Industrial Design; the first is not creating prototypes



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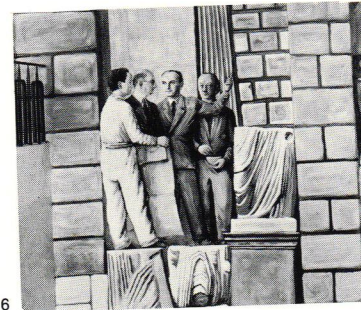
4. Mother's portrait by Pontì, 1922
(Oil on board, owned by the artist)
5. Entrance hall with staircase
Liviano Building, School of Archeology
University of Padua, 1937
wall frescoes by Massimo Campiglli
6. Detail of fresco representing
from left to right:
Giuditta Campiglli, the painter's wife,
Carlo Anti, the University's Rector,
Gio Pontì, the architect and
Massimo Campiglli, the painter
7. Detail of fresco: "A hero"



5



7



6

but monotypes (each is different); the second creates prototypes: the first is not conditioned by repetition, the second is. But the first is so full of possibilities that it may influence an entire production. In the first the imagination is intrinsic. It is contained in the improvisations (the hand always improvises); in the second the imagination is a go-between, working toward a forthcoming result.⁶

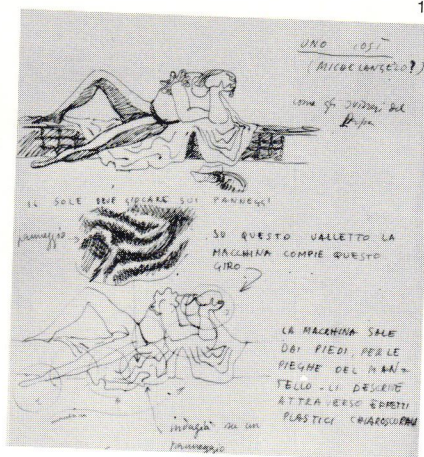
Pontì's first architectural commission, in 1926, was a home to be built in Garches, near Paris, for Tony Bouilhet, president of the Christofle Company. Later, this same firm was to produce Pontì-designed silverware. In 1928 Pontì had an opportunity to perform on a larger scale by designing condominium apartment houses in Milan, and also designed a cemetery chapel for the Broletti family. Then came his most important early assignment, the Liviano Building for the School of Humanities at the University of Padua. With Carlo Anti, the university chancellor, Pontì invited Massimo Campiglli to execute a two-floor-high fresco for the atrium. In complementing Campiglli's dynamic, allegorical tribute to archaeology and education, Pontì conceived a monumental staircase for this hall. His view was that the "architect who does not conceive the staircase as a fantastic thing is not an artist. He is not a stage director of architecture... The public wants the fantastic, the comfort of the fantastic."⁷

The first Montecatini Building completed in 1936 with Antonio Fornaroli and Eugenio Soncini, Engineers, for Guido Donegani, the founder of Italy's major chemical industry, marks Pontì's abandonment of the neo-classicism in which he had been trained. He states that he came to know better neo-classicism during his war years in Palladio's Veneto province. Instead of repeating the arches and columns of the old Montecatini Center adjacent to his new building, or following his earlier Ferrania office building in the Corso Matteotti, Pontì produced what Giulia Veronesi calls "an elegant modernism, derived partly from the Viennese style of the time, mixed with neo-classic motifs of rationalist lucidity."⁸ This is not unrelated to his recent experience in Vienna where he designed the interiors of the Italian Cultural Institute at the Furstenberg Palace (1935). By then he had been exposed to the work of Hoffman, Josef Frank,

Carl Wlach and Ostvald Haerdtl. Giuseppe Pagano (who later lost his life in a concentration camp) presented the Montecatini Building in a special issue of *Casabella*, the distinguished architectural periodical of which he was an editor. He wrote:

A city that allows itself no other just pride than that of being a hive of production cannot be called upon to get dressed up for fake ceremony. Every house, every city has its morality: the Avenue des Champs Elysées is not Fifth Avenue. The Montecatini Building had no duty to enrich the light and dark of rows of columns on the street, or to amuse the passing pedestrians with various masks that show their tongues, as was customary on the pageant of streets of the Rome of the Popes. The Montecatini Building has not attempted to make an appearance on Via Principe Umberto (today Via Turatti) which differs from what its interior structure has already defined morally and esthetically. Yet it does not renounce the aristocratic feeling that the large industry wanted to express.⁹

In spite of the recognition that Pontì received for this first Montecatini Building he did not hesitate to question it later (*Domus*, 313). He had become interested in the finite form that gives a sense of unity to the architectural experience, and he found his first Montecatini too limited in its rationalism. In his attempt to oppose the concepts of scale, simplicity, and extreme care for details to the current monumentality and a tradition of artificial exuberance, further steps, or stages, were needed. The requirements of form — unity and consistency — were not satisfied in the first Montecatini Building, nor was Pontì to find them satisfied later in the second Montecatini Building of 1951. Pontì often remarks that every building is a relative failure, because the architect never has a chance to build it a second time. In a sense, he found, the first Montecatini Building had no beginning and no end: the form could grow or decrease almost inconspicuously by adding or taking away floors. For Pontì, art, and implicitly architecture, cannot be divorced from the concept of form. The first Montecatini Building was important for its break with the neoclassical tendency, but it did not solve the problem of a valid architectural expression.



8. Ceramics for Richard-Ginori
9. *Triumphus Amoris* porcelain plate for Richard Ginori
10. Motion picture stage and costume design for "Henry IV" by Pirandello directed by Louis Jouvet and Giulio Bragaglia; collaboration with Cesare Mercandino, 1940
12. *Venere stracciona* Oil on board, 1953
13. *Trois yeux, deux visages* Oil on board, 1953

The fifties were for Ponti the years of search and experiment: the search for finite form, the form with unity and cohesion which gives meaning to architecture. In some instances the form emerges from a single volume, as in the studies for the Lancia office building in Turin (1953), or for the Planchart House in Caracas (1954); other solutions, like the Garzanti Foundation Building in Forli (1954), relate to the site in a way that recalls Ponti's Italian-Swedish Institute in Stockholm (1953), a finite form that derives from a balanced interplay of volumes, with each volume fulfilling a different function.

Ponti's frequent contacts with Le Corbusier whom he always considered the major modern architect, and with Oscar Niemayer, have not developed imitative mannerisms. Instead they have clarified, sometimes quite in opposition, Ponti's individual expression and his own hierarchy of values. This long process was accelerated by Ponti's 45 days visit to Brazil where he worked on two unrealized proposals: the Brazilian-Italian Center and the Nuclear Physics Institute of the University of São Paulo.

The Brazilian-Italian Center project for São Paulo can be seen as an important study clarifying the concepts for the Pirelli Building (1956), combining as it does the search for finite form and functional "essentiality," to use a key Ponti word. The Brazilian-Italian Center is a vertical outgrowth of the search for true form. The large scale itself leads to the concept of multiple visual sequences which intensify the architectural experience through an engaging interplay of volumes. An equilibrium of interrelated forms rather than isolated single units seems to be the outcome of this search. We see it on a smaller scale in the Arreaza House (1955) in Caracas; and on a larger scale, expressed horizontally, in the Institute for Nuclear Physics of São Paulo University (1954) and the Carmelite Monastery near San Remo (1956). The office building for the Government Development Board in Baghdad (1958) is again a vertical study in interrelation. Ponti's drive to provide architectural form with a valid expression, culminates in the sixties.

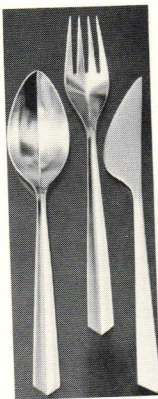
Consistent patterns of inquiry and study guide Ponti as he works. Quickly, the problem is formulated. Then, from his accumulated sources, ideas begin to be

scanned. He reaches constantly within and beyond himself for intuitive truths, for sudden bursts of images that clamor for expression. Sketch follows sketch in a rapid association of thoughts until a full array of possibilities is explored. With the suddenness of a final and decisive pencil stroke, he stops, gathers all his sketches, and evaluates them one by one. The rejects fall from his hands until he comes to the one full-blown realization, "the inspirational leap." Form is the potent stimulus, the key to Ponti's total involvement; it resembles a psychedelic experience. In Ponti's own words, "Imagination is restless. Architecture must imprison it in its static ecstasy. Imagination is the ecstasy of a vision."¹⁰

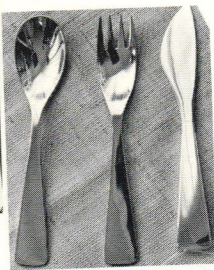
Perhaps more than any other architect of his generation, Ponti has an extraordinary ability to grasp the pace of change in his time. His vigorous efforts to adapt to a variety of different situations become clearly evident in his multiple accomplishments as an industrial designer and as editor of *Domus*. Misha Black, of the Royal College of Art in London, considers fashion, used in the "sense of satisfying the emotional need of a society in a moment in its history" a predominant factor in the fields of industrial design; yet Ponti makes a clear distinction between fashion and the need of awareness for the historical moment. It is this awareness that shapes the identity of the artist.

If I were a tailor of apartments I would say: yes, in Paris everyone makes modern interiors; the refined minds conceive mechanical-rational interiors furnished sometimes with 1830 furniture, the most refined minds conceive rooms lined with parchment, straw, galuchat... This is, ladies and gentlemen, the fashionable interior for this year! But I am not a tailor, I am an architect. I am not interested in the fashionable novelty; "liberty" was also a fashion and many things that seem today to be among the ugliest were at some time fashionable; decisions regarding the home reached under the influence of fashion are superficial, irresponsible, ugly, undignified for us.¹²

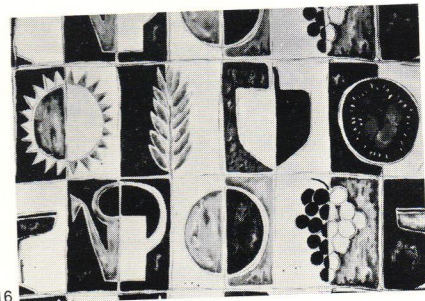
To the concept of fashion Ponti opposes a term that is dear to him, "the true form." He differentiates between "true form" and "real form." The latter may be more the expression of essential objectivity leading to statements of great austerity, such as Mies van der Rohe's. Although



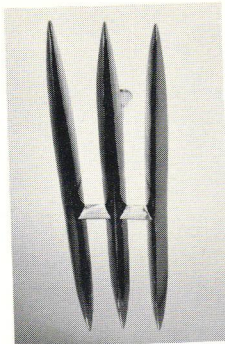
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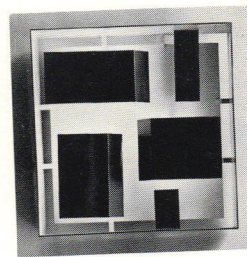
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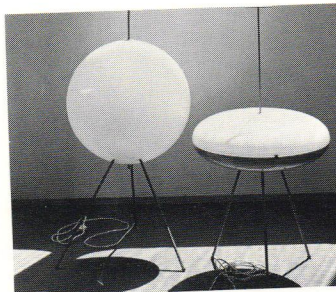
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19

14. Stainless steel tableware for Arthur Krupp Company, 1951

15. Silver Tableware for Christofle, 1956

16. Summer printed fabric for ISA, Busto Arsizio, 1956

17. Ceiling lamp for Greco, Milan, 1951

18. Wall lamp in brass for Arredoluce, Milan, 1957

19. Garden lamp in plastic material for Arredoluce, Milan, 1957

Mies calls his expression "truth," Ponti's truth is a reality much enriched by his own personal experience and imagination; it relates to Suzanne Langer's definition of art as the "creation of forms symbolic of human feelings."¹³ This "true-form" concept may be better understood if we examine two of Ponti's masterpieces for mass production: the sanitary equipment for Ideal Standard (1954) and the Superleggera Chair for Cassina (1957). In both instances simplification was an important consideration. It took full advantage of the possibilities of the materials involved: wood for the chair and vitreous china for the sanitary equipment. But, besides simplicity and a rational approach to the functional requirements of both products (the tilted seat back has since been widely adopted, after many elaborate research projects on the human engineering of seating), there is something more. Ponti adds an indisputable elegant refinement in the slim poise of the chair and in the organic curves of the sanitary equipment. Writing about the sanitary equipment for Ideal Standard, Mario Labo says that Ponti has succeeded "in stripping away that conventional technicalness, which in the greater number of industrial products is simply a sign of small imagination and often of lack of research into true technology; in short, the hallmark of ignorance and laziness. In the first stage of his work Ponti obtained the *bare* form of the article. This he remolded according to its functional purpose, discarding in the process every irrelevance, and thus the *true form* was obtained."¹⁴

The *Touring* automobile body developed by Ponti in 1953 has become a formula for what was known as the European reaction to the exuberance of Detroit. While tail fins and pink cars were making their impact on the American public, Ponti was searching for a solution of simplicity. He eliminated unnecessary volumes and chrome accessories. He sought to offer maximum capacity for maximum space, to increase visibility for the driver by lowering the front hood, to protect the car all around by introducing continuous rubber fenders. He replaced the unnecessary curved mannerism of "styling" with a dry and austere "crystal" and "essential" look. The *Touring* body was never produced as Ponti designed it, but one can see it adapted — it is a question

of degree — in the cars by Fiat, Peugeot, and Austin, where a continental coherence has had its influence on the development of the compact car in the United States.

Ponti's book, *Amate l'Architettura* (Genova: Vitali and Ghianda, 1957), is an unpredictable sequence of aphorisms on architecture and life which either baffle the reader or invite enthusiastic response, but it constantly stimulates thought. It is not a monologue, but an invitation to a dialogue with the reader, whom Ponti addresses as he speaks, almost in the manner of Montaigne, saying, "I speak to my paper as I speak to the first person I meet." The book brings out Ponti's reverence for the glory of the past as well as his faith in the promise of the future. Architecture is for him the true expression of our society: "Architecture is order, but an order that liberates a potential, it is a shell where you can hear the sea."¹⁵

In Praise of Architecture becomes a storage room for ideas that often develop outside the pressure of professional obligations. We can see Ponti's architecture unfolding from insights and ideas that are rooted in his system of values. As Eric Hoffer comments in his essay, "The Playful Mood":

We are told that a great life is thought of as youth wrought out in ripening years, and it is perhaps equally true that "great" thinking consists in the working out of insights and ideas which come to us in playful moments. . . . It is true that the working out of ideas requires persistent hard thinking, and the inspiration necessary for such a task is probably a by-product of single-minded application. But the sudden illumination and the flash of discovery are not likely to materialize under pressure.¹⁶

Ponti's lyrical approach to life and to architecture, as well as his involvement with writing, has clarified a number of creative insights which may be found in his "expressive" solutions for buildings: for open spaces, for stairs (in the Pirelli Building [1956]), for doors (Planchart House [1956]), for floating walls (Shui stores, Hong Kong [1961]).

The Pirelli Center is perhaps the major expression of Ponti's many virtues as catalyst and innovator, as motivator, and as poet. It grows out of Ponti's concern with valid architectural expression, but an expression made

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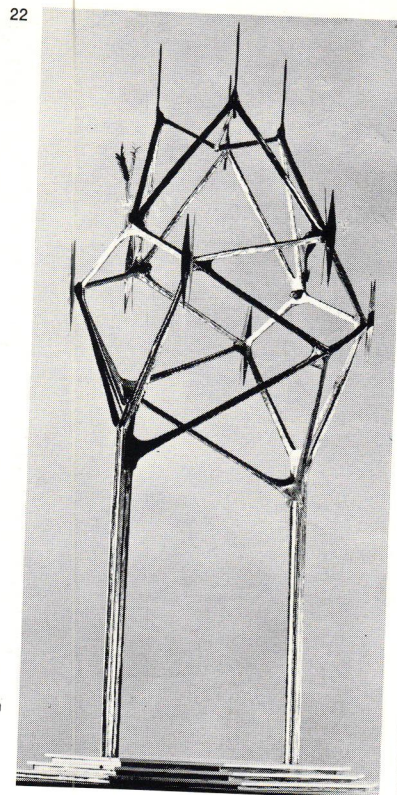


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20. Ponti and Le Corbusier

21. Ponti and Adriano Olivetti

22. Cyborium in Oropa Sanctuary with Mario Negri, 1966



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possible in this instance by Pier Luigi Nervi's brilliant and lyric structural solution. The Pirelli Building is the result of a successful collaboration between the two studios of Gio Ponti, Antonio Fornaroli, and Alberto Rosselli and of Giuseppe Valtolina and Egidio Dell'Orto of Milan; and to this collaboration we must add the consultative services of Pier Luigi Nervi of Rome and Arturo Danusso of Milan. Ponti has acted as the catalyst for this group, putting into practice his statement that it is impossible to separate art and technology: "Art or technique, human beings or technicians, wise cautious men or angry technicians, humanity or technicism. For me, these qualities do not exist, or must be fused with and: art and technique, human beings and technicians, etc. etc."

Basically, the Pirelli Center is the result of an interplay between a very high office building, a tower of thirty-two stories, and two low volumes: the front one houses the computing center, the auditorium, and the electricity plant, and provides parking space for visitors on the roof; the one in back of the tower is for the employees' restaurant and for services. The center becomes the campanile of the *centro direzionale*, the new business area developing around the Central Railway Station. Similar solutions in high density urban areas had been developed before, mostly in the United States: the United Nations Headquarters in New York by Wallace Harrison and a team of international architects; Lever House by Gordon Bunschaft of Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill; and in Denver, on a smaller scale, the Mile High Center by I. M. Pei. While most of these office buildings look as though they could be extended indefinitely up or sideways, the Pirelli Building aims at a perfection of form independent and self-contained.

Seen in perspective, the office tower appears as a poised and incredibly slim volume obtained by the graceful narrowing of the two sides. This appearance expresses a structure that takes the form of four triangular ends backed by four giant pylon walls whose sections decrease in size at the upper floors. Similar tapering concrete supports were previously used by Mies van der

Rohe in the Promontory Apartments in Chicago (1946). The suspension of the whole construction from these high pylons is a most ingenious solution for a reinforced concrete high-rise building of so large a size. With the exception of Frank Lloyd Wright's Price Tower in Bartlesville, Oklahoma (1955), the search for a more sculptural solution for tall buildings is a European phenomenon: it was found as early as 1919 in the first version of Mies van der Rohe's project for an office building in Friedrichstrasse, Berlin, or in some attempts of German Expressionism like Fritz Höger's Chilehaus in Hamburg (1922-23), and to a certain degree in the futuristic visionary sketches of Antonio Sant'Elia (1914); more recently the rising tide of "neo-liberty" (Art Nouveau Revival) produced the Torre Velasca in Milan (1957) by Belgiojoso, Peressutti, and Rogers. Though quite different from the Pirelli Center, the Phoenix-Rheinrohr skyscraper by Helmut Hentrich and Hubert Petschnigg in Düsseldorf (1957-1960) might be added to the list of European efforts to change the conventional approach to skyscraper design. In the United States, attempts somewhat similar to the Pirelli example were made later in the Pan-American Building in New York by Emery Roth Associates, with Pietro Belluschi and Walter Gropius, and by the late Eero Saarinen in his proposals for the World Health Organization Headquarters Competition in Geneva. But none of the previous attempts to create a large-scale interplay of nonorthogonal volumes, and to redefine the vocabulary of an office center in the middle of a busy city, has reached the elegance and the efficiency of the Pirelli Center.

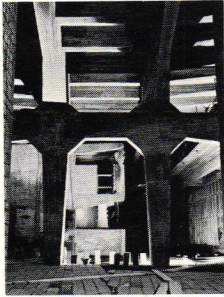
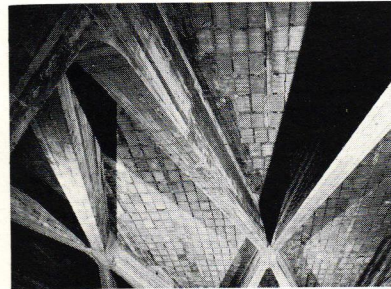
The accesses to buildings designed to house a population of 2,000 white-collar workers, have been planned according to a logical distribution scheme: employees enter at ground level from the back of the office tower on Via Fabio Filzi, while visitors enter from the piazza Duca d'Aosta by way of a plaza that is about 11 feet above ground level. This plaza provides parking for 2,000 cars, a number arrived at on the assumption that the working day is eight hours long and the average length of a visit is twenty minutes. An inner truck line parallel to the tower descends to 15 feet below ground, with direct

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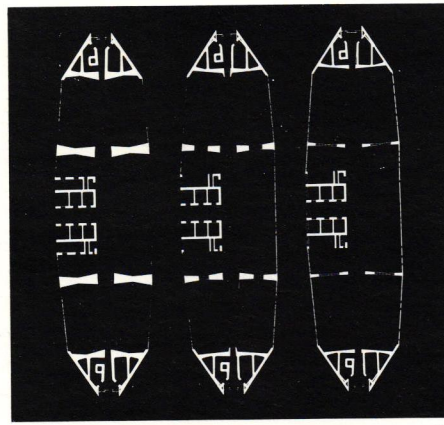
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23. Ponty and Pier Luigi Nervi

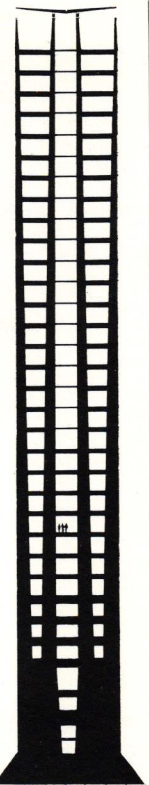
24. Structural detail from the Pirelli Auditorium

25. Structural detail, 31st floor Pirelli Tower

26. Typical floor plans (1st, 15th and 30th) indicating the decrease of the pylons sections, Pirelli Tower

27. Section through the Pirelli Tower

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access to the services and the freight elevators. A battery of six central elevators, each with a capacity of twenty-one persons, serves all floors, while two batteries of flanking elevators, each with a capacity of fifteen persons, serve the first twelve floors. The interiors for the entire building show a consistency of design vocabulary constantly related to the architecture: maximum flexibility, rational distribution schemes, and a general sense of dignified austerity are the rule in all interiors from the clerical workers' environment to the reception areas and the offices of the executive directors. Color schemes for the interiors include a very detailed study of the installation plant. Priority has been given to the use of rubber and other company products.

In comparing Mies van der Rohe's endless architecture with Ponty's attempt to accomplish his "forma finita" concept with the Pirelli tower, Reyner Banham, the British architectural critic, makes an interesting observation:

It is in the nature of Miesian endless architecture that walls on opposite faces of the building can be produced to infinity without meeting... the classic demonstrations of Miesian endlessness hinge on the fact that adjoining walls do not visually intercept one another, but are separated by a double re-entrant and only their imaginary projections intercept in the process of continuing to infinity... the mass of black painted steel exposed in the process of creating the double re-entrant makes a corner stop to the walls as positive as that created by a double pilaster turn in Renaissance architecture...

The Pirelli device makes an equally emphatic stop, without this thick black line, and the method by which it does this can be most easily seen by examining the other air-gap, that under the roof. The main facades of Pirelli run vertically through thirty-two uninterrupted stories, as the eye reads them and then stops. The implication of endlessness would be overpowering were it not that one story further on, a roof-slab is imposed, visually distinguished from the facade by the air-gap... Now, rotating this effect through ninety degrees, one sees that it works in a similar way for the vertical air-gaps in the ends of the building.¹⁸

Analyzing the cantilevered roof slab of the Pirelli tower, Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., observes that such slabs have been used more often in modern European skyscrapers. Some of the Chicago school buildings — Carson, Pirie,

Scott, by Louis Sullivan (1895), for example — and perhaps more convincingly Chicago's Reliance Building by Burnham and Root (1895), are significant precedents in their use of similar slabs. "While Wright has used slabs freely in every part of his building designs, and later architects have followed suit, the beginnings of thin extending planes as horizontal termini topping a design may be seen not in architecture before Chicago of the 1890s, but in the furniture of Mackmurdo and the British adherents of the Arts and Crafts movement after 1885. These furniture designs were well known to the Chicago architects."¹⁹

By the time the Pirelli Building was constructed, a number of changes in the original proposal had intruded. These changes are reflected in the lack of refinement of certain details, particularly in the treatment of the facades of the office tower; yet the total impact of the center remains impressive. We are confronted with what is undoubtedly Europe's major contribution to the development of the twentieth-century skyscraper. Walter McQuade comments about some incongruities between the initial project and the finished building:

It is the spirit of any design which is most vulnerable in execution: it generally is not delivered to the site intact. Ponty wrote a really marvelous program in intangibles as well as tangibles, and had the strength necessary to deliver a great deal of it. Some practical considerations tortured him along the way, evidently, and robbed him of his full triumph. But this is a building that would grace any city in the world, especially the vertical city of New York... It is a building which can instruct anyone who is even aware of architecture. It is a building which must irritate Ponty when he thinks what it might have been, but is not, quite. There are a few architects, however, who would not be pleased to have designed such a building as one of the testimonials that man can leave behind.²⁰

The experience of the Pirelli Center has been an important step in Ponty's conceptual approach in large-scale design. The Montreal Towers (1961) have extended the concern for the interplay of finite forms to residential architecture. Departing from the idea of monotonous apartment buildings, Ponty succeeds in bringing a sense of individuality by means of cantilevered variations on



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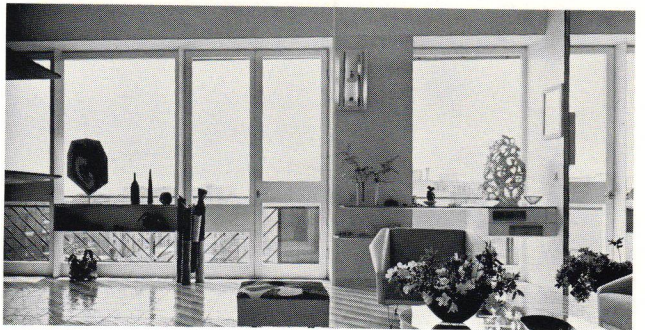
28. Organized wall in the Vanzetti apartment
Milan, 1940

29. Proposals for arranged window

30. Detail from the Ponti apartment
Milan, 1953



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the surface without changing the structural skeleton. Taking advantage of the inclined site, and being concerned with limitations imposed by the climate, he develops his solution around a covered plaza which shelters shopping areas and parking space.

With the enlargement of scale, the problem of integrating pedestrian traffic flow with cars and parking becomes the center of Ponti's preoccupation. A most inspired answer is given in his study for a cultural center on the Danube, a proposal submitted for an architectural competition organized by the city of Linz (1961). Exhibition rooms, a small and a large concert hall, and a little museum for Anton Bruckner — all are facilities requiring efficient systems of access by car and coach. By raising the entire area above the Danube embankment to make the most of the view and obtain adequate parking space on the ground level, Ponti created an array of "expressive forms, pure forms, representative forms, forms that, for whoever walks around them, inside and outside, will take him on the *promenade architecturale* of my god Corbu."²¹

Though conceived for a variety of places, the Baghdad Planning Board Building, the Montreal Towers, the Linz Cultural Center, and indeed the Pirelli Center, all express qualities that Ernesto Rogers attributes to the tradition of modern Italian architecture:

Individualism, a quality — in some cases a dangerous one — of the Italians, finds in architecture its most complete expression because its whole esthetic consists in the exaltation of artistic individuality and of the intrinsic quality of the parts which make it up.

... One of the characteristics of Italian architecture is the balance in the constant relationship between the single parts and the whole. This represents a desire for synthesis which seeks decorative values not so much through arabesques or ornamentation as in the interplay of volumes and surfaces, by emphasizing structure and constructive feelings (even when it does not exactly correspond to actual structure).²²

Like the past accomplishments of Italian architects in other countries, in Leningrad or in Prague, Ponti's architecture abroad brings a flavor of his native climate. This quality is conspicuously present in the Bijenkoff shopping center in Amsterdam (1966) or the high-rise office

building in Beyrouth (1965); it becomes evident in the large complex development for the new Pakistani capital in Islamabad (1963-1965), and to some degree in the new museum conceived for the city of Denver (1966), for which Ponti is a consultant.

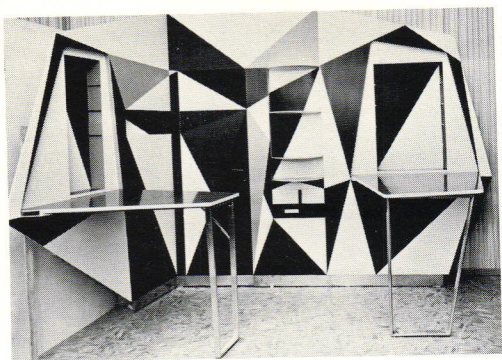
Ponti's ideas on residential living have been illustrated in his work, both small and large scale. His own apartment, completed in 1953, occupies the top floor of an apartment house at 49, Via Dezza, in a high-density residential area. This apartment house is separated by an inner courtyard from an industrial shed structure converted into a large, one-floor studio area with movable partitions and overhead natural light. This studio is the home of Ponti, Fornaroli, and Rosselli, the firm founded in 1954 with Alberto Rosselli, his son-in-law, and the engineer Antonio Fornaroli, an old friend who has collaborated with Ponti for more than thirty years. Modest in size, the Ponti apartment carries out concepts formulated as early as 1936 when the architect presented a demonstration home at the Sixth Triennial in Milan:

The home is made for life; we must give to life the best home. This is a fact, not an opinion. Life is contemporary life; this is another fact which eliminated all the eighteenth century nostalgia. But the "contemporary" life need not be for us who want to create life, the image of an anonymous life, or, worse still, the "artificial" image created by some of us; contemporary life, conceived in a modern way, has as a postulate, the presence of a human relaxed spirit free of our middle-class deadly instincts. It is at once practical, yet nourished by all the spiritual actualities of today's life. A humanistic ideal, not a mechanical one; in a sense not an antimachanical humanism but one that has assimilated the machine and its by-products.²³

To cite details, Ponti's apartment reflects his dedication to maximum flexibility in the use of plastic folding partitions, some that cover built-in cupboards, some that separate rooms and offer opportunities to vary the size of areas according to need or mood. The serenity of the home is due in large measure to the color schemes: colored tiles on the floor, colored curtains and furniture coverings, all designed by Ponti; sometimes the wall itself becomes a color background placing the furniture and the various objects collected from all over the world

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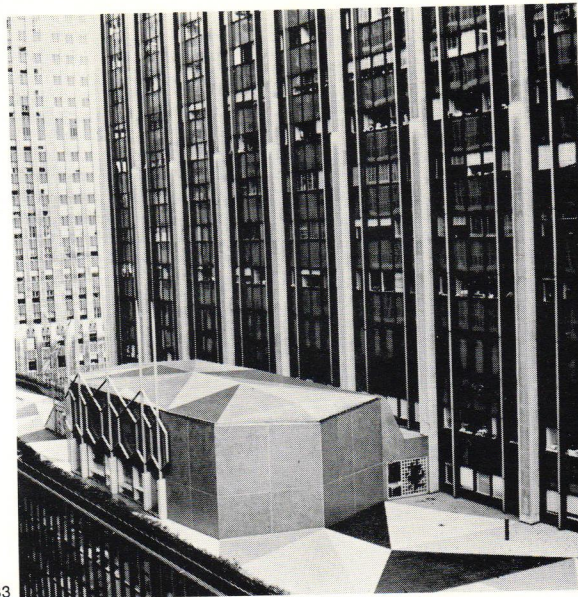
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31. Bar in the Planchart House
Caracas, 1954

32. Cow-skin floor carpet
produced by Colombi, 1955

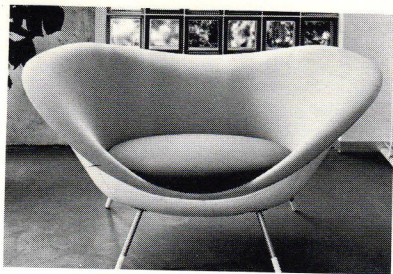
33. Auditorium on the 8th floor
of the Time and Life Building
New York, 1959

(ceramics and indoor plants are conspicuously present) in a better relationship. An interplay of tonalities and harmonious colors, muted yellows and blues, contributes to a firm sense of simplicity and good taste. The "furnished windows" are other imaginative suggestions of Ponti. Almost all windows are equipped inside with shelves which add to the outside view, as in a collage, various ceramic objects, family photographs, indoor plants, even paintings displayed against the light. Like the "furnished window," many of Ponti's wall lamps are equipped to support small objects or various temporary displays.

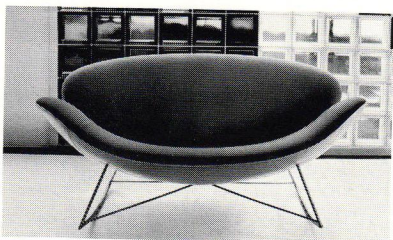
Regardless of scale, each house represents Ponti's concern for the visual field from a sequence of angles. As an example, he has a prototype for a low-cost, three-bedroom, one-floor house designed for mass production (the Anguissola House). As the house will be seen by more people from the outside than from within it, Ponti takes pains with the roof. It is shaped like a symmetrical leaf with two slopes, and is covered with ceramic tiles. "Why this roof in ceramic stripes? Because it is so low that it can be seen and it was meant to be beautiful and unusual. Then because it was assumed that two or three of these houses could be built on a hillside, and the upper house may see only the roofs of the lower ones; and then it would be *bellissimo* to see these flat, brilliant, surfaces with colored patterns, those ceramic gardens blossoming forever among the green of the trees, those surfaces that in shadow reflect the sky and the clouds, and, in the night, the moon."²⁴

The same concern for constantly lifting up daily existence with an inspiring visual experience has been carried out on a much larger scale in the luxurious two-floor house designed for Anala and Armando Planchart in Caracas, Venezuela. This house has been conceived, according to Ponti, as "a giant abstract sculpture, not made to be seen from outside but to be seen from inside, penetrating and walking through it."²⁵ The house is placed on a hill in the middle of a most unusual garden which harbors beautiful tropical flowers and a large colony of rare, colorful birds, including many varieties

of pheasants and parrots. The scheme of the house is classic. Ponti places all eight bedrooms (including guests and housekeeping personnel) on the upper floor, while the double-height living room, dining areas, studio, library, and kitchen are all grouped on the ground floor around an open patio. The floor plan of the Planchart house shows the ends of the building bracketing the facade, an often repeated gesture that expresses Ponti's general philosophy of the "forma finita." The simplicity of the structural solution enables Ponti to show eloquently his personal way of treating the walls and the ceiling as weightless independent entities. The walls are separate and do not meet at corners to form a closed volume; they are hung like curtains that separate the inside from the outside, and carry no load. The roof also becomes a detached entity which gives us the feeling that it continues beyond the interior ceiling. Ponti has painted the ceiling in light colors in irregular geometrical patterns, sometimes accentuated by colored hanging surfaces that conceal the source of indirect lighting. The pattern of the ceiling is mirrored in a flexible arrangement of colored tables of various heights, and various arrangements of painted doors repeat the diamond shapes overhead. Visually all the painted ceilings, doors, walls, and tables create what Ponti calls "the relaxing visions of peace needed for the recreation of our spirit." The Planchart house makes bolder, more convincing use of the decorative abstract patterns with which Ponti experimented in the Melandri house in Milan (1953). The Planchart house summarizes many of Ponti's ideas and obsessions, such as the expressive luminous quality of architecture at night, the "organized walls," and the participation of painters, craftsmen, and sculptors in the completion of the interior environment. Ponti uses colored materials like glass and ceramics to increase the intensity of the polychromatic balance in his total three-dimensional composition. Yet with all this originality — perhaps because of it — the Planchart villa becomes a transplanted Italian house. What makes an Italian house is explained by Ponti in his first issue of *Domus*: "... to give through architecture a measure for our thoughts, to provide for a healthy way of life through



34. Lotus Arm-chair for Figli di Amedeo Cassina Furniture Manufacturing Company, 1937



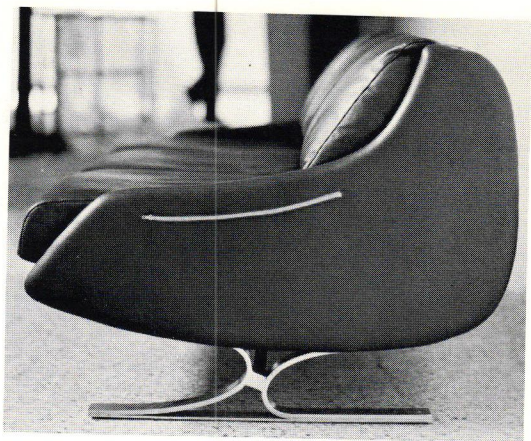
35. Two Leaves settee for Figli di Amedeo Cassina Furniture Manufacturing Company, 1957

36. Round Arm-chair for Figli di Amedeo Cassina Furniture Manufacturing Company, 1957

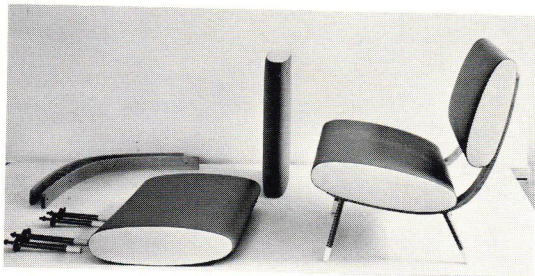
37. Sofa-bed for Arflex Furniture Manufacturing Company, 1966

38. Distex Arm-chair for Figli di Amedeo Cassina Furniture Manufacturing Company, 1953

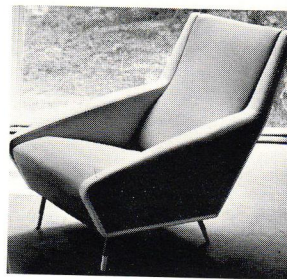
39. Arm-chair for "Frau" Furniture Company, 1965



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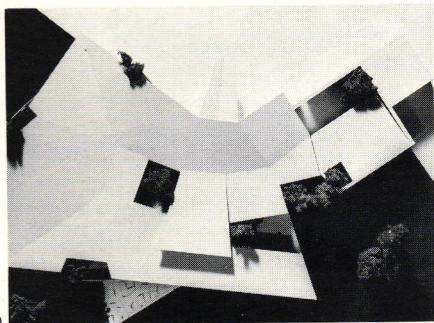
simplicity, to give through generous hospitality the sense of a confident and rich life. . . a design is not limited to the fulfillment of the material needs of life."²⁶ Unlike Bruno Zevi of Rome, who saw in Ponti's preoccupation with form a "neo-decorativist" tendency,²⁷ Edoardo Persico, the young and erudite codirector of Giuseppe Pagano's "Casabella" (1935), saw a deeper meaning in Ponti's architecture:

Ponti's work, however we may judge it, has never been a dilettante's, or simply an antithesis of the new Italian art. For Ponti, as for many artists of the twentieth century, the achievement of a modern task depends on finding scope for his own activity in a world of ideas. He would free himself from the limited territory of a peasant tradition, and in so doing he precipitates an irreducible conflict. For this reason we may identify Ponti with the *novacentista* taste, as well as Carra or de Chirico. For Ponti, the problem of art — it is the fate of his generation — becomes a moral drama, the drama of the moral individual.²⁸

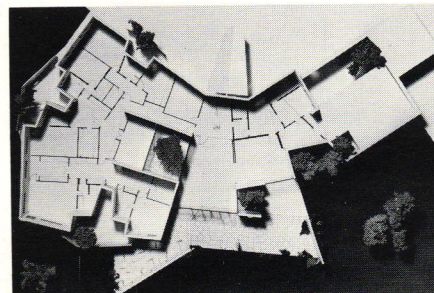
In his search for moral values and for spiritual enrichment, Ponti has derived consistent support from religion. His religious devotion stems also from his love for his homeland and for his traditional attachment to family life. In his book, *In Praise of Architecture*, he writes, in a "parenthesis for Italians":

. . . our great love for children, miraculously affectionate and alive even in the midst of violence and disasters; our love for the family, for our birthplace, for art, for poetry; our love for love; our inner rebellion and our disgust and our fatigue in carrying our persecutions; our exceptional independence in obeying and disobeying — all testify that our blood is alive with catholicity, even when this is an unconscious feeling. An Italian civilization that is truly Italian has a Christian and Catholic vocation or it is not Italian. . . . The attribute I prefer, our Italian one, is that of calling the church "Mother." It is insuperably Italian. . . . This attribution is symptomatically Italian in that the most ascetic and mystical devotion of the Italian still wants to become filial and to obtain from the church protection, comprehension, and indulgence, or rather infinite motherly compassion, a motherly forgiveness, a motherly confidence. . . . I am also strongly tempted to think that real art and Catholicism are one and the same thing . . . art is love, and Catholicism is love.²⁹

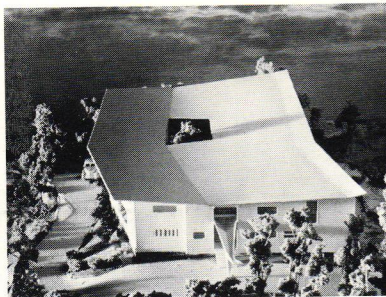
With the exception of the Borletti Chapel (1923) at the Cimitero Monumentale in Milan and the World Exhibition of the Catholic Press at the Vatican Palace (1936), Ponti's creative accomplishments for religion come later. Recalling with emotion his own religious experiences in various sanctuaries like Notre Dame des Pauvres in Paris or in some old Brazilian churches in the vicinity of São Paulo, Ponti has said repeatedly that "religious architecture is not a matter of architecture but a matter of religion." The essential role of a religious building, for Ponti, is to offer "comfort for our moral and spiritual solitude." The individual in our age becomes more introverted, more solitary, almost secret about his inner aspirations; conscience becomes a reality of close intimacy because the collective society is depriving the individual's existence of meaning. Under these circumstances religion becomes a very personal act of faith, often in a desperate effort at survival against everyday pressures. To the faithful and the lonely, the religious environment becomes a shelter of serenity and a source of unlimited charity. Ponti speaks with deep admiration of certain modern churches which he finds inspiring, especially Le Corbusier's Notre Dame du Haut at Ronchamp (1950-1954). The difference of climate between Le Corbusier's La Tourette monastery at Eveux-sur-Arbresle, near Lyon (1953-1959), and Ponti's Carmelite nunnery at Bonmoschetto, near San Remo (1959), is conspicuous and should be remembered when we compare Ponti's churches with Le Corbusier's. In contrast with the austere compactness of Le Corbusier's La Tourette convent, the Carmelite nunnery at Bonmoschetto has an irregular, horizontally extended plan that consists of several "Ponti-shaped" articulated volumes. A polygonal chapel, surrounded by a court, is set apart by a grill that affords the cloistered nuns a distant view of the altar. The public has separate access, from the road in front of the convent, either to the chapel or to the long wing for guests. The interiors have an elegant simplicity. The domination of immaculate white is interrupted from time to time by clear bright accents from colored glass or ceramics. In the mild Riviera climate the tall windows open to a view of foliage, cypresses, and flowers; the idea of God and religion is directly related to nature.



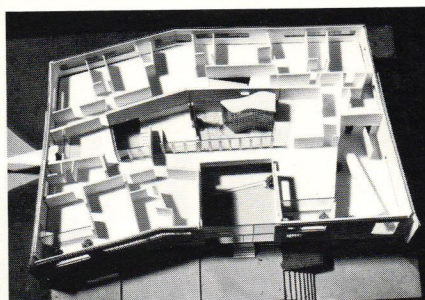
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40. Floor plan, Arreaza House

41. Volumetric study, Arreaza House, Caracas, 1955

42. Planchart House, Caracas, 1954

43. Planchart House, floor plan, Caracas, 1954

The San Lucca Church (1955) and the San Francesco Church (1963), both in Milan, have been important steps in clarifying Ponti's thinking on religious architecture, paving the way for the new chapel adjacent to the San Carlo Borromeo Hospital (1961-1965), which is an expression of forceful clarity and inspiring simplicity. The San Carlo chapel is placed in a garden; its elongated polygonal shape serves as a central nave and two attached hexagonal volumes provide for a chapel and the baptistery. As in Philip Johnson's place of worship in Westchester, New York, the access to the chapel is at the center of the long side. A harmonious relationship is maintained between the structural skeleton and the walls, enlivened by a free, well-balanced composition of hexagonal and rectangular windows. The pattern of fenestration is conceived for both day and night. The shape of the roof is naturally determined by the chapel's floor plan, as are also the interior trusses, which find their support in columns that are visible on the walls both indoors and out. Ponti's diamond-shaped tiles cover the facade and offer a subtle, unpredictable play of reflections.

The San Carlo chapel opened for worship this year; meanwhile Ponti has already designed a procathedral for Tarranto.

From 1936 on, Ponti has been associated for almost thirty years with the School of Architecture at the Milan Institute of Technology (*Politecnico*). His course in the "Ordering and Architecture of Interiors" became one of the major courses of the school; it extended over a period of two years in the upper division. The course, consisting of studio work, lectures, and seminar discussions, expanded beyond the strict limits of the subject; architectural criticism, theory of modern architecture, prefabrication, and industrial design were all areas covered in the discussions with the students. Ponti's own multidisciplinary activities and accomplishments offered a rich body of illustrative knowledge; his outgoing temperament and interest in the students added to his success as a teacher. Through the pages of *Domus*, at school and at his office, talented young designers have always received strong backing from Ponti. A believer

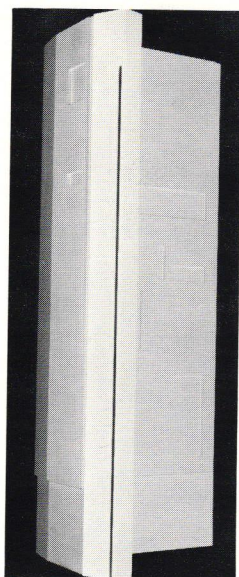
in the need of a good design climate and a stimulating architectural environment, Ponti extended his activities far beyond his own professional work. He has generously dedicated a large part of his energies to help, to influence, and to stimulate. Perhaps the clearest formulation of Ponti's educational philosophy has been summarized in his essay, "Contribution to the Modernization of the School of Architecture," *Journal of Lombardy's Regional College of Architects* (July, 1959):

The expression "completed studies" no longer makes sense. Studies are never completed. It is not important to receive from the school facts upon facts, up to a meaningless saturation point, nor to exercise by writing paper after paper. Instead, we must overcome obsolete studies and academic procedures related to outdated ways of practicing a profession by redimensioning them and by orienting them toward the pertinent and the adequate. It is important to take from school a clear vision of the modern world and a mind trained to formulate valid answers with competence, clarity, and coherence.³⁰

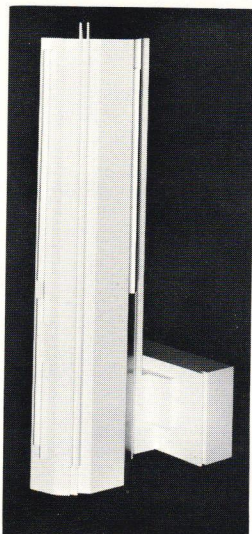
Ponti suggested fewer projects and exercises, fewer disciplines and courses, but more treatment in depth of concrete and tangible problems. And these problems should bear directly on the present state of architectural culture, in the following forms of knowledge: (a) historical knowledge, the discovery of perpetual laws through the study of the succession and changes of various styles and technologies; (b) critical knowledge of modern architecture carried through the accomplishments of Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Gropius, Nervi, Aalto, Neutra, Niemeyer, Saarinen, the Austrians and the Belgians, the Dutch and the Scandinavians, the Japanese, and so on; (c) the knowledge of taste and its extension to industrial design, graphic arts, and applied arts as it influences the climate in which architects must express themselves; (d) the knowledge of mathematical and physical sciences and the building science; (e) the typological knowledge of modern building; (f) the knowledge of modern technology; (g) the knowledge of modern languages, so much needed in the international climate in which we live; (h) the knowledge of communication techniques; and (i) the knowledge of planning and

methodology. To these "cultural forms of knowledge" Ponti adds the applied forms of knowledge, which are basically laws and regulations, as well as office management.

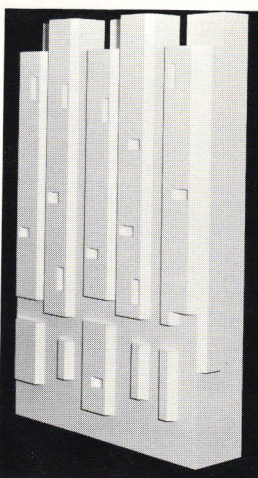
While recommending the elimination of single courses, such as theoretical chemistry and mineralogy, topography and road building, Ponti outlines a modern implementation of the antique principle of "Utilitas, Firmitas, Venustas," which embodies the simultaneous concern for functional efficiency, structural stability, and visual quality; he believes in grouping together various disciplines in institutes whose activities parallel the schools. The student would then spend part of his time in these institutes, which would offer him a greater depth exposure to the increasingly complex problems of a changing profession. Ponti proposed an institute for modern architectural criticism, to expose the student from his very first year to contemporary accomplishments, the criteria for understanding these accomplishments to come from travel, reading, and lectures; an institute of building science to teach calculus and to familiarize the students with outstanding accomplishments of great engineers, such as Pier Luigi Nervi, Torroja, and Freyssinet; an institute of architectural technology in which materials, equipment, and industrial design would be related to architecture; an institute of architectural typology, offering an opportunity for a comparative study of the modern masterpieces; an institute of architectural representation in which old communication techniques would be either replaced by or complemented with photography, model building, and so on; an institute to develop the detailed elements of every project and to organize a transition from idea to reality; an institute of urban planning science, extending over a period of two years, to integrate architecture into patterns of larger scale, based as far as possible on study trips to the meaningful accomplishments in this field; an institute of conservation and restoration of historical landmarks; an institute for interiors, covering the organization of interior spaces; an institute for languages, including French, English, German, and Russian; an institute for professional practice, grouping accountancy, estimates, law, and the like.



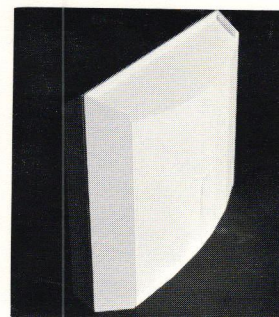
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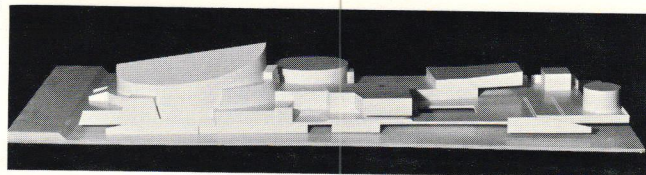
c



b



d



e

44. Morphological form studies illustrating the theoretical background of Ponti's architectural lyricism: "inventiveness, essentiality, representativeness, expressiveness, and illusiveness."
- a. Italian-Braslian Center, São Paulo, 1953
 - b. Apartment high-rise, Montreal, 1961
 - c. Office and apartment high-rise, Milan, 1964
 - d. San Carlo Borromeo Hospital Chapel, Milan, 1966
 - e. Cultural Center with Concert Hall, Linz, 1963

With these institutes, Ponti sees an evolution from the traditional learning in isolated courses to a dynamic integration of disciplines. He advocates group study, a teamwork in which the instructor shares leadership responsibility with the students, improves the offerings constantly, and maintains contact with other schools of architecture. In short, Ponti would update instruction: "The architecture taught in school: Utopia? Utopia must be remembered — it is a great force, not all utopic. It moved the world, it is guiding it secretly, it is the force of the hope of people. It is the force of youth looking with pure eyes."³¹

In an effort to summarize his philosophy of modern architecture, Ponti has cautioned against the error of separating the new architecture from the past by considering it as an element without continuity, unrelated to previous architectural expressions. While admitting that new materials, new techniques, new structures, new functions, and new scale represent a radically changed outlook, he insists that "when the new architecture must be judged as a reality and a work of art, then the term 'new' no longer exists, for we must evaluate it within a framework of universal and unchanging terms."³²

The unchanging elements, according to Ponti, are nature and man. In his evaluation of architecture as a timeless work of art, he considers six essential factors which he uses as guiding principles in his own work:

a) *Formal and structural inventiveness* (or the search for finite form, for "forma veritatis," the true form, unchangeable, unrepeatable, unique and coherent in each part).³³ As illustrations of this principle, Ponti mentions Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water house and Le Corbusier's Ronchamp Chapel.

b) *Essentiality*, the search for an honest expression based on a truly creative approach. This calls for the avoidance of mannerisms and exaggerated searches for sculptural values to the detriment of the functional requirements.

c) *Representativeness*, the easy-to-perceive identity of a building, or what Gillo Dorfles calls "the semantic quality of architecture."³⁴ In this factor, Ponti precedes the modern analysis of architecture oriented to the con-



ceptual frame of the information theory. Art in general and architecture in particular are for him a language, and "communication . . . is one of the terms in the proof of the existence of art."³⁵

d) *Expressiveness*, another basic principle which stresses the analogy between architecture and language. It is, in Ponti's words, "the judgement of the architect's acuteness, of the manner in which his imagination speaks."³⁶

e) *Illusiveness* brings finally into focus Ponti's essential and most insistent goal — the need for poetry and imagination. Without "unreality, the building is not a work of art; it remains in essence technique and engineering, not architecture."³⁷ The invitation to emotional involvement, the need to commit men and women beyond the boundaries of pragmatism and logistics in their evaluation of architecture, remains Ponti's inspiring contribution to a society in search of values in its effort to improve and articulate today's man-made environment. Architecture's "poetic unreality, . . . its only true reality,"³⁸ underlines a concern often overlooked by the policy-making bodies in charge of urban development or by building committees with their power to choose.

When the University of California decided to honor Gio Ponti on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday with an exhibition of his work, he wrote the following message:

My approach to architecture is essentially based on the conviction that present historical events and our great technological advances could foster a great wealth of architecture.

Some of the contemporary factors favorable to architectural developments are the unique technological facilities; the availability and variety of building materials; the efficient means by which a building can be completed in a relatively short period of time; the scientific means by which complex problems can be solved; the movements of artistic, scientific, and philosophic thought throughout the world, keeping pace with grandiose historical events of unprecedented scale; the presence of great masters and the social orientation of today's architecture.

All these favorable factors, however, have not been conducive to the creation of universally acceptable beauty such as antiquity produced. For instance, they do not lead to a

total cohesiveness in style, as has happened in the past when architecture has shaped an entire civilization; they led only to isolated statements of exceptional value created by the great contemporary form givers.

We witness instead a uniformity of structures which may be labeled a renunciation of architecture, which is essentially a creative representation, an invention (as Palladio said). Our accomplishments cease at the level of functional and economic requirements, and reject those factors of civilization which are essential to keeping architecture alive.

The expression of Gio Ponti's work is an imaginative and unpredictable evocation of architectural poetry. Exploratory experimentation with new materials, sensitivity in the treatment of the surfaces of volumes, renewed concern with walls and roofs as distinctive elements of architecture, a reconsideration of doors and windows, and, finally, the manipulation of light as a major syntactic element in the duality of day and night architecture — all are parameters waiting to be integrated in what Ponti calls the "perpetuity" of a building. Ponti's belief in the need to create timeless expressions of our historical reality reinvests the architect with the traditional mission of integrating the knowledge of specialists and experts into a compelling poetic expression. In essence, Ponti's architecture, like art itself in the definition of Albert Camus, "cannot tolerate reality . . ." ³⁹ it must enhance it.

Los Angeles,
November, 1966

¹ Vincent Scully, *Modern Architecture* (New York, 1965).

² *Ibid.*

³ Aria d'Italia, *Espressione di Gio Ponti* (Milan, 1954).

⁴ Gio Ponti, *Le Ceramiche* (Milano, 1926), from the volume *L'Italia alla Esposizione Internazionale di Arti Decorative e Industriali Moderne* (Paris, 1925).

⁵ Aria d'Italia, *Espressione di Gio Ponti* (Milan, 1954).

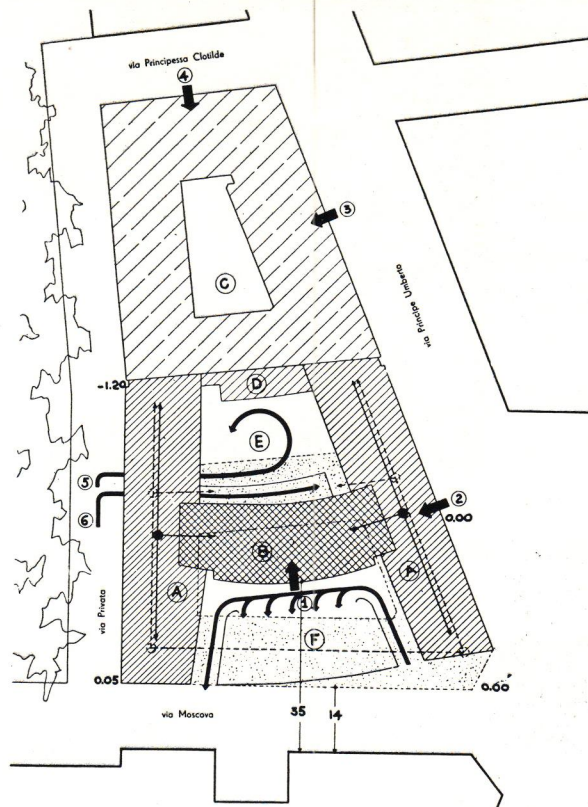
⁶ Gio Ponti, "Inquiry on Handicrafts," *Zodiac*, 4 (Milan, 1959).

⁷ Gio Ponti, *Amate l'Architettura* (Genova, 1957), translated by Giuseppina and Mario Salvadori as *In Praise of Architecture* (New York, 1960); published in Japanese by Bijutsu Shuppan-Sha (Tokyo, 1962).

⁸ Giulia Veronesi, "Gio Ponti," in *Encyclopedia of Modern Architecture* (New York, 1965).

⁹ Giuseppe Pagano, "Alcune Note sul Palazzo della Montecatini," *Casabella*, 13-9 (Milan, 1939), 140.

¹⁰ Ponti, *Amate l'Architettura*.



46. Site plan of Montecatini Building, Milan

- a. regular offices b. executive offices
- c. old building d. garage
- e. interior courtyard f. parking
- 1. main entrance 2. employees entrance
- 3. main entrance old building
- 4. second entrance old building
- 5. entrance to inner courtyard
- 6. entrance to second basement

¹¹ Misha Black, "The Education of the Industrial Designers" (Cantor Lectures, *Journal of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce* (Oct., 1965).

¹² Giulia Veronesi, *Difficoltà Politiche dell'Architettura in Italia, 1920-1940* (Milano, 1953).

¹³ Suzanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form* (London, 1953).

¹⁴ Mario Labo, *Ponti: A Summing-Up* (Milan, 1958).

¹⁵ Ponti, *Amate l'Architettura*.

¹⁶ Eric Hoffer, "The Playful Mood," *Contact* 7.

¹⁷ Gio Ponti, "Esthetics and Technique," paper delivered at Third Annual Congress of the European Foundation for Culture, centered on the theme, "Character and Culture of Europe" (Vienna, November 20-22, 1959).

¹⁸ Reyner Banham, "Pirelli Building, Milan," *Architectural Review* (London) (March, 1961).

¹⁹ Edgar Kaufmann, "Scraping the Skies of Italy," *Art News* (New York) (Feb., 1966).

²⁰ Walter McQuade, "The Pirelli Building," *Architectural Forum* (Feb., 1961).

²¹ Gio Ponti, "Risultato felice di un concorso perduto," *Domus* (Milan), 438 (May, 1966).

²² Ernesto Rogers, "The Tradition of Modern Italian Architecture," in G. E. Kidder-Smith, *Italy Builds* (London, 1955).

²³ Gio Ponti, "Una abitazione dimostrativa all VI Triennale," *Domus*, 103 (July, 1936).

²⁴ Gio Ponti, "Uno scarabeo sotto una foglia," *Domus*, 414 (May, 1964).

²⁵ Gio Ponti, "Una villa 'fiorentina' per Anala e Armando Planchart a Caracas," *Domus*, 375 (Feb., 1961).

²⁶ Gio Ponti, "La Casa all'Italiana," *Domus*, 1 (1928).

²⁷ Bruno Zevi, *Storia dell'Architettura Moderna* (Turin, 1953).

²⁸ Edoardo Persico, "Giovanni Ponti," *L'Italia Letteraria* (April 29, 1934).

²⁹ Ponti, *Amate l'Architettura*.

³⁰ Gio Ponti, "Contributo alla modernizzazione delle Scuole di Architettura," *Atti del Collegio Regionale Lombardo degli Architetti* (Milan) (July, 1959).

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Gio Ponti, "Out of a Philosophy of Architecture," *Architectural Record* (Dec., 1956).

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Gillo Dorfles, *Nuovi Riti, Nuovi Miti* (Torino, 1965).

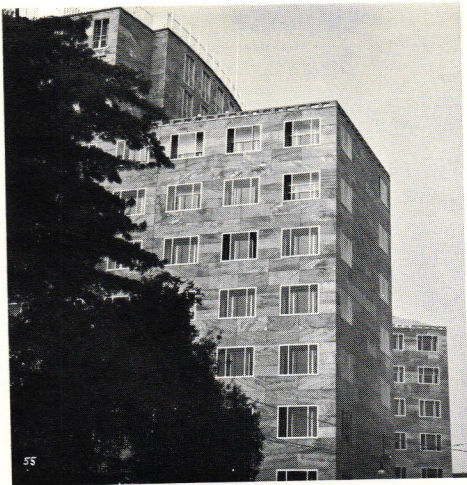
³⁵ Ponti, "Out of a Philosophy of Architecture."

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Ponti, *Amate l'Architettura*.

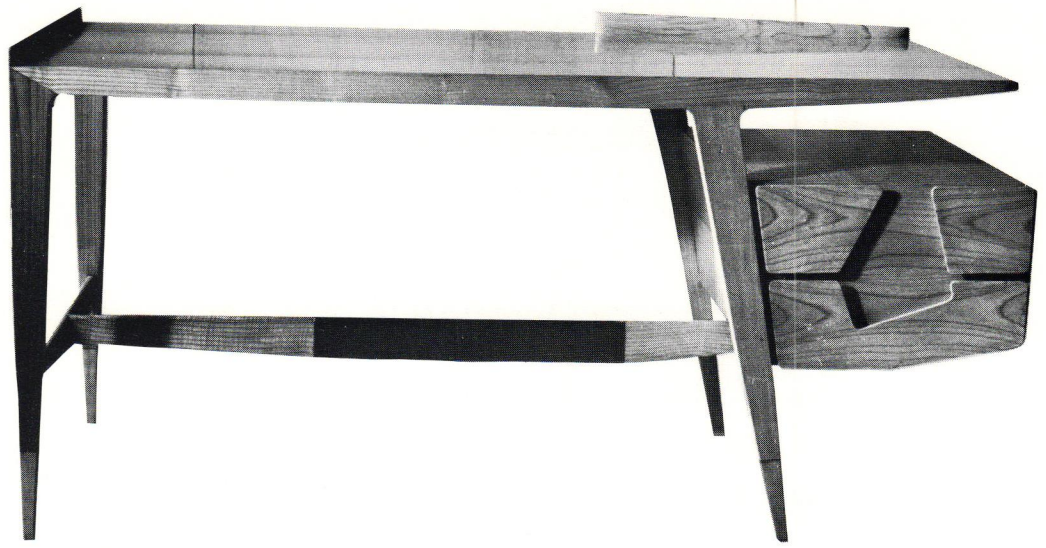
³⁹ Albert Camus, *L'homme révolté* (Paris, 1951).



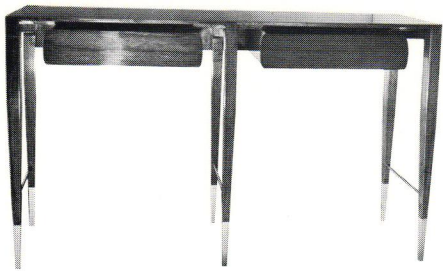
47. View from Via Moscova

48. Office Building for Montecatini
Chemical Corporation with Antonio
Fornaroli and Eugenio Soncini,
Engineers, 1936

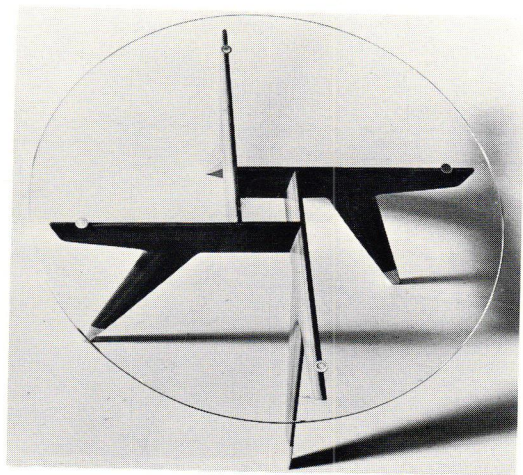




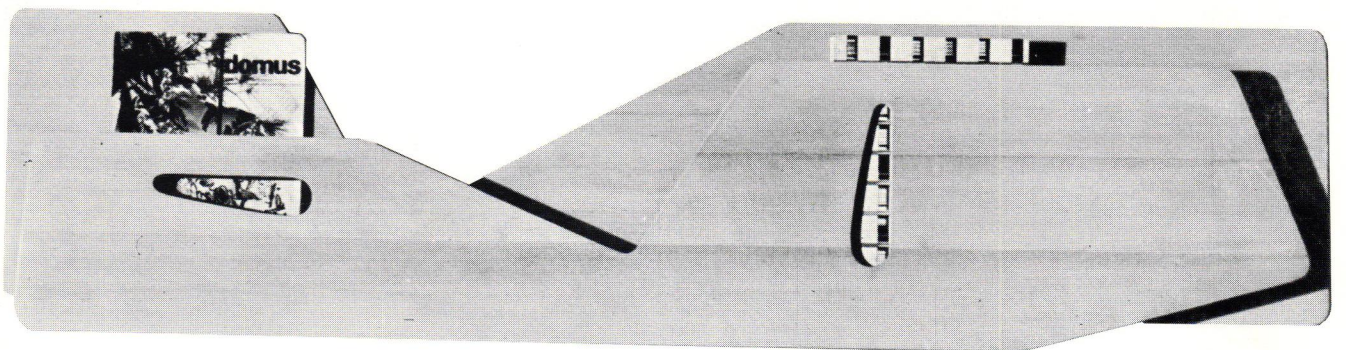
49. Desk for Altamira, 1953



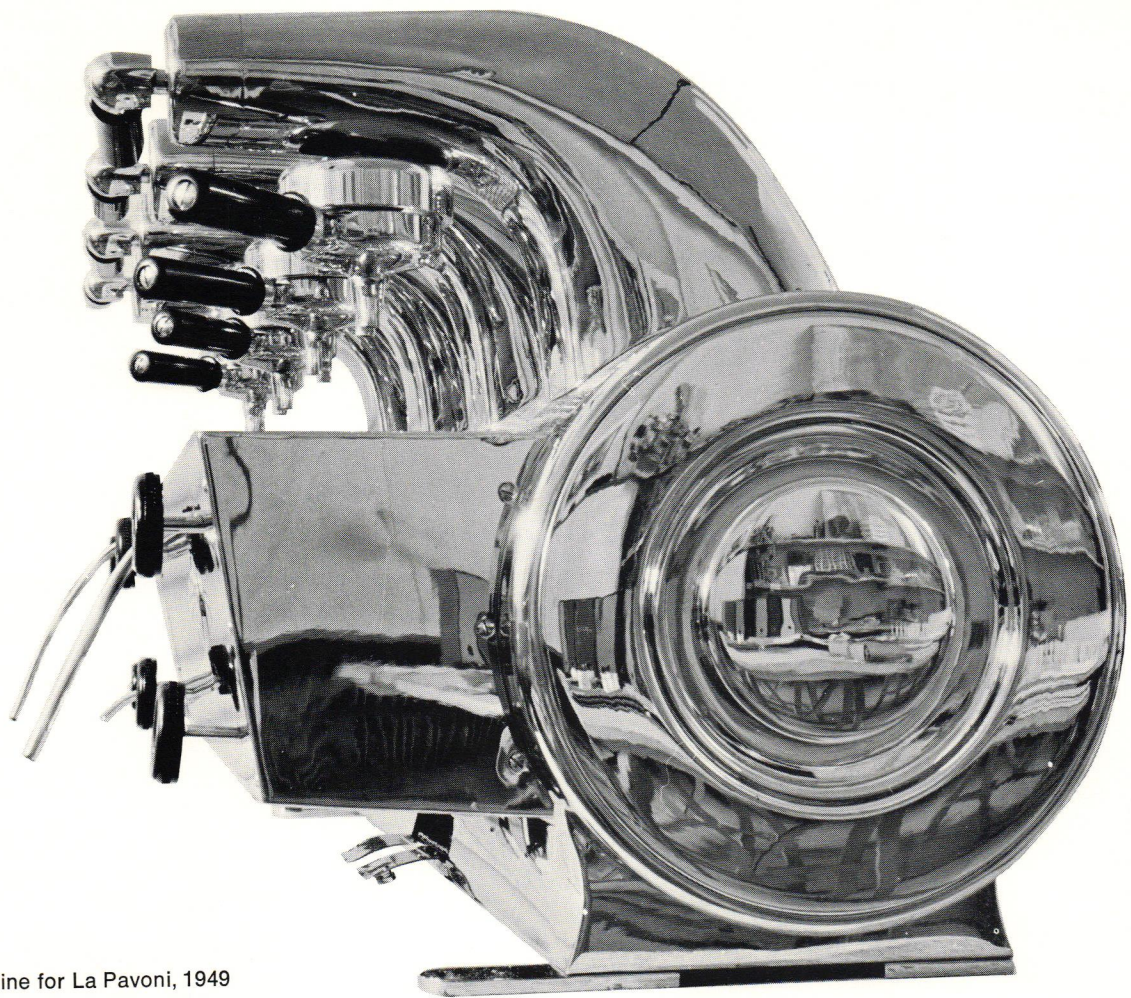
50. Table for M. Singer & Sons,
New York, 1952



51. Coffee-table for Giordano Chiesa,
1953

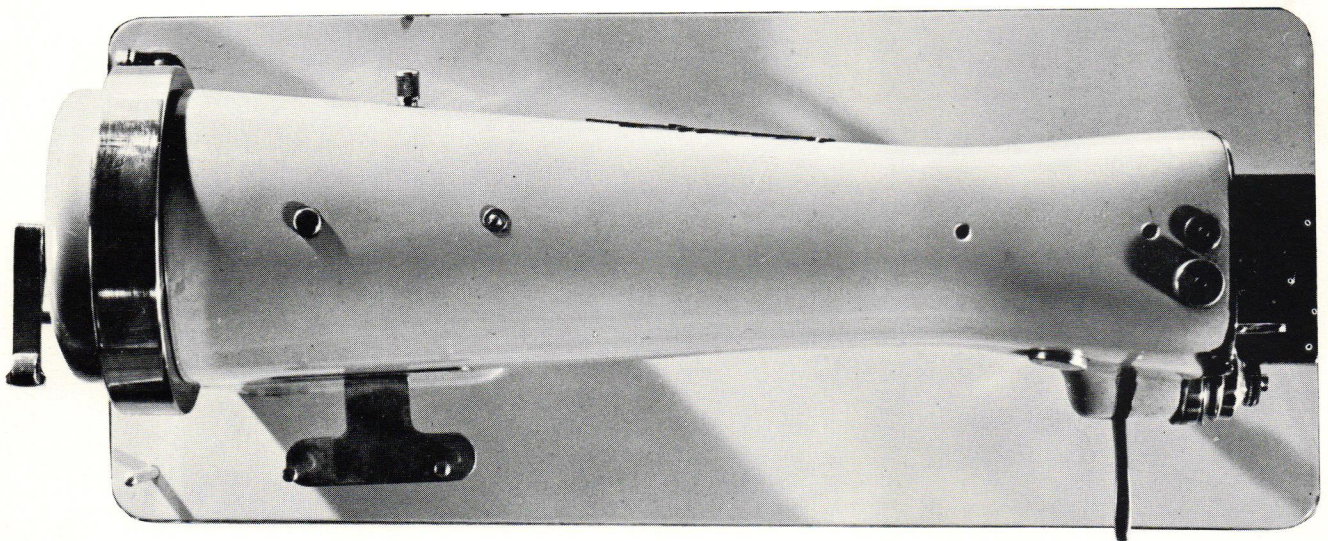


52. Magazine rack for Altamira, 1953



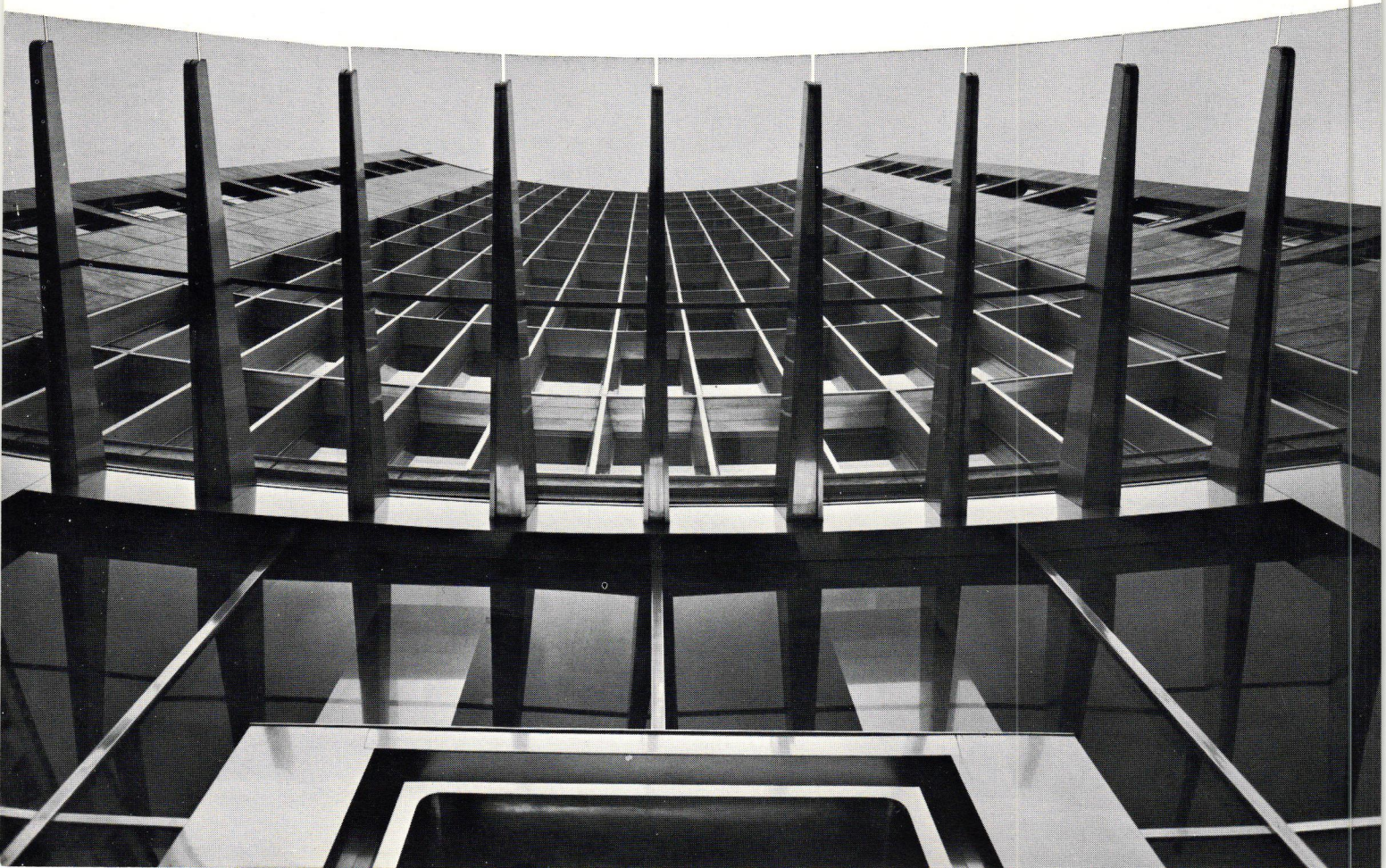
53. Coffee-machine for La Pavoni, 1949

21

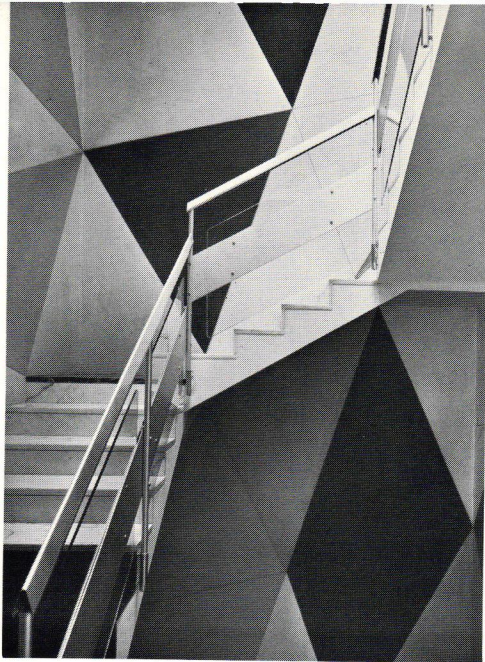


54. "Visetta" sewing machine for Visa, 1949

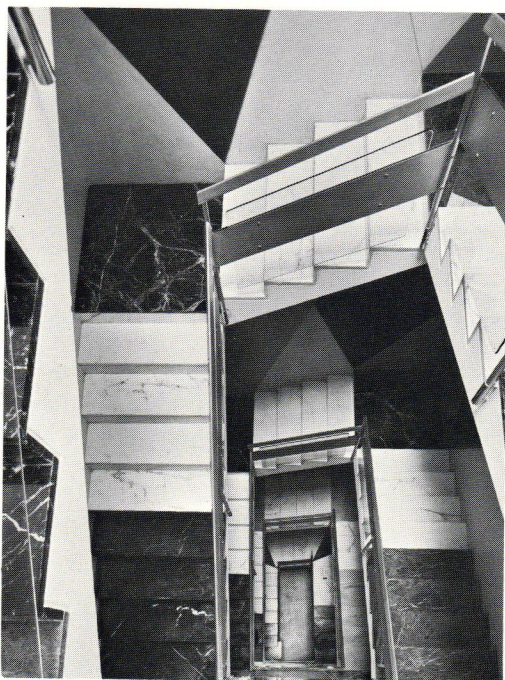
56. Main entrance canopy



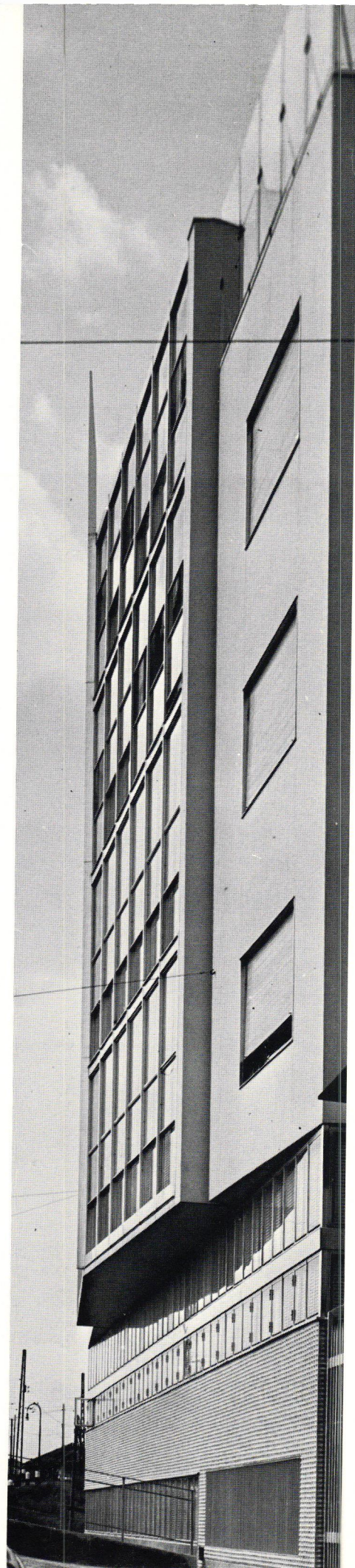




57. Detail of staircase wall



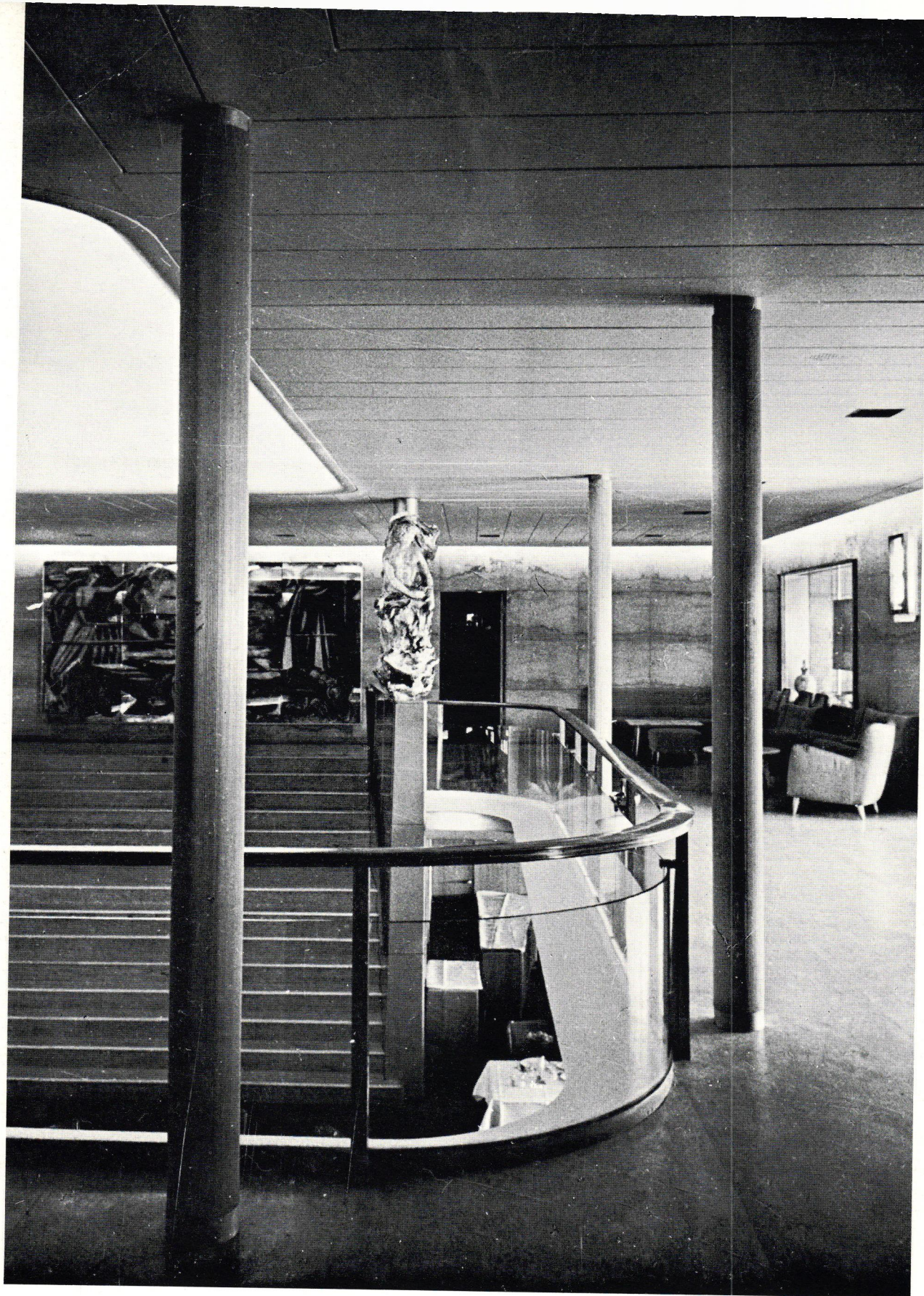
58. View of staircase



59. Melandri Apartment House,
Milan, 1957



60. View from Via Lunigiana

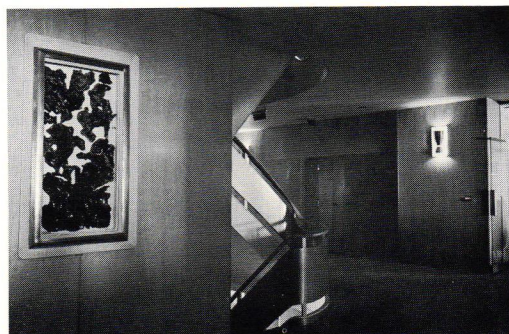


61. First class lobby on *Conte Grande*
liner with Prof. Nino Zoncada, 1950

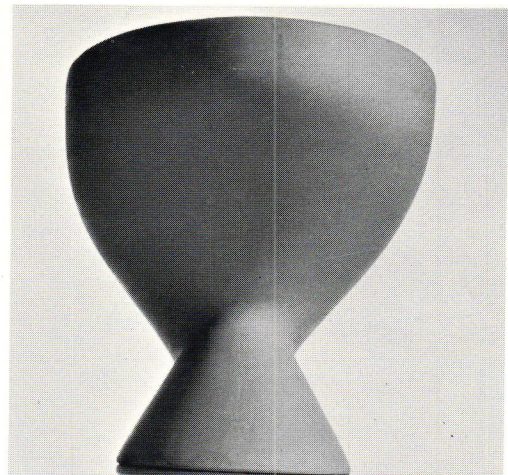
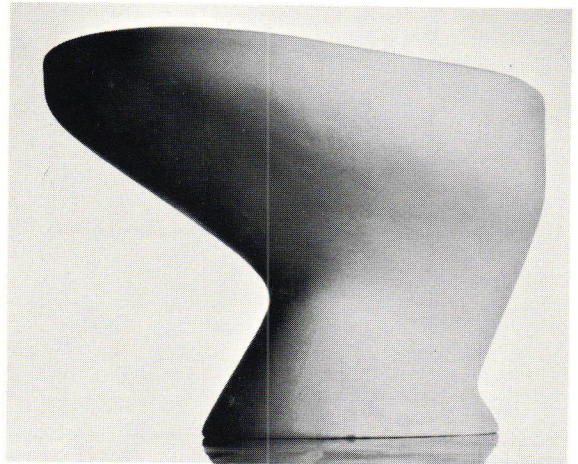
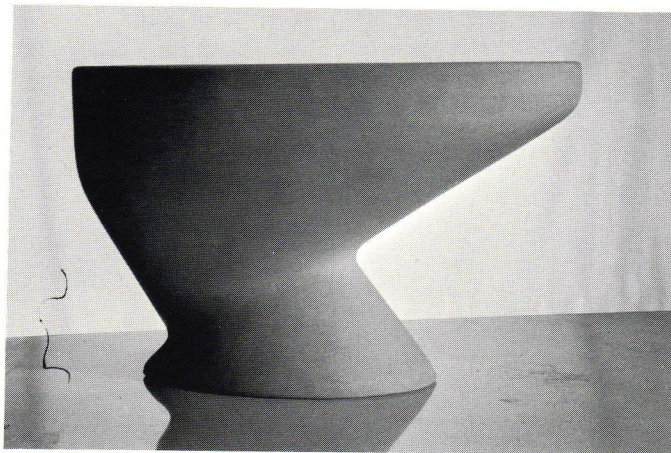


62. Ceiling of first-class lobby on *Andrea Doria* liner with Prof. Nino Zoncada
 Decoration on side wall by Pietro Zuffi

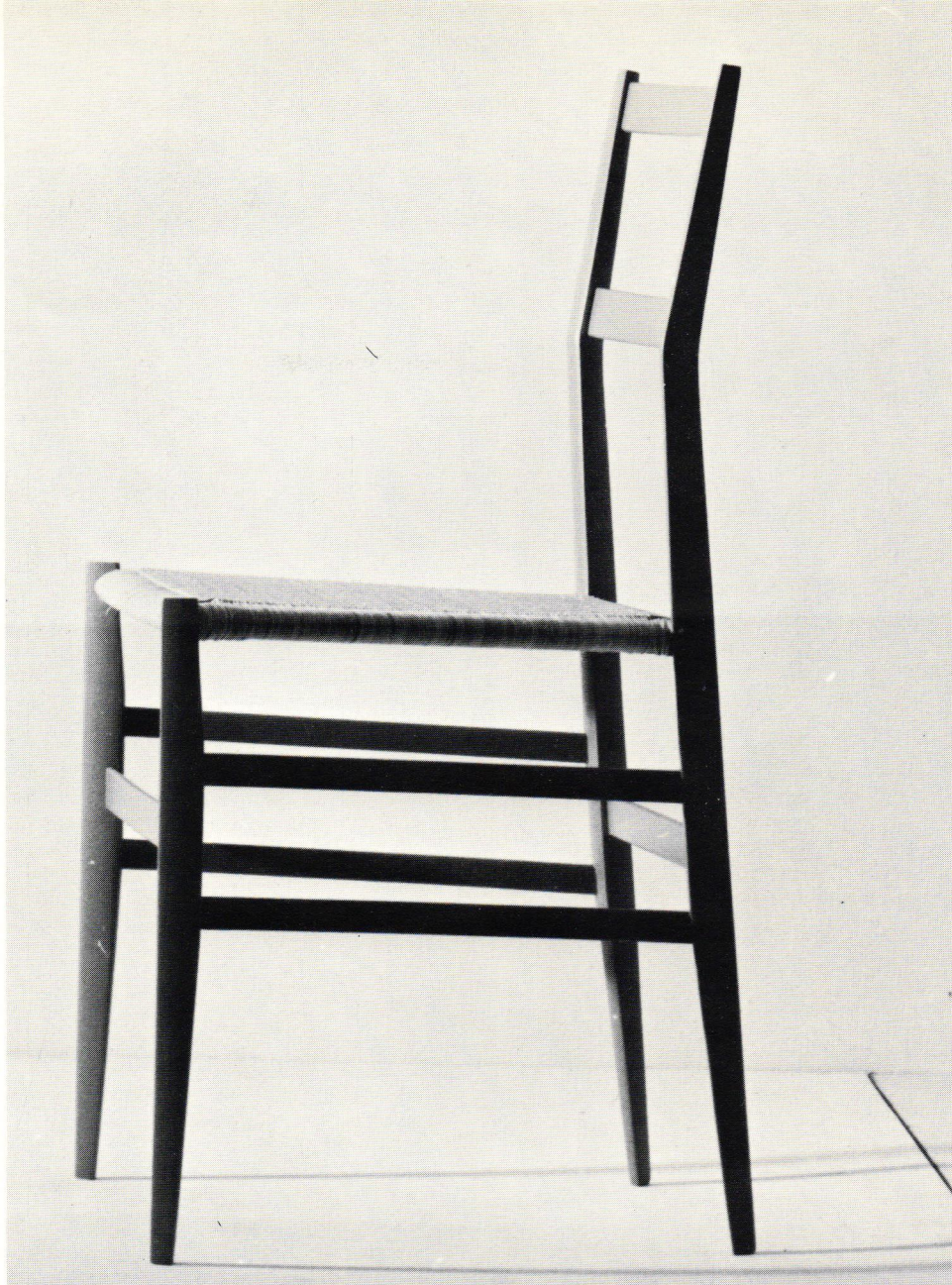
63. Staircase on *Conte Grande* liner, 1950



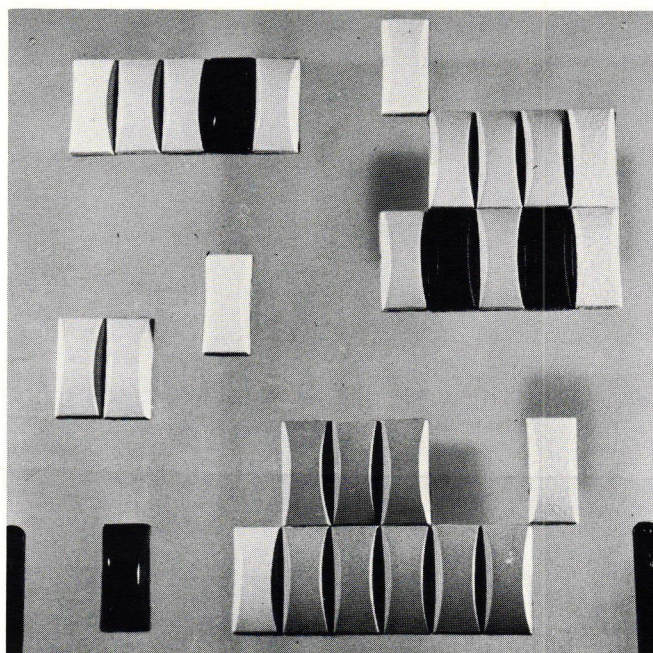
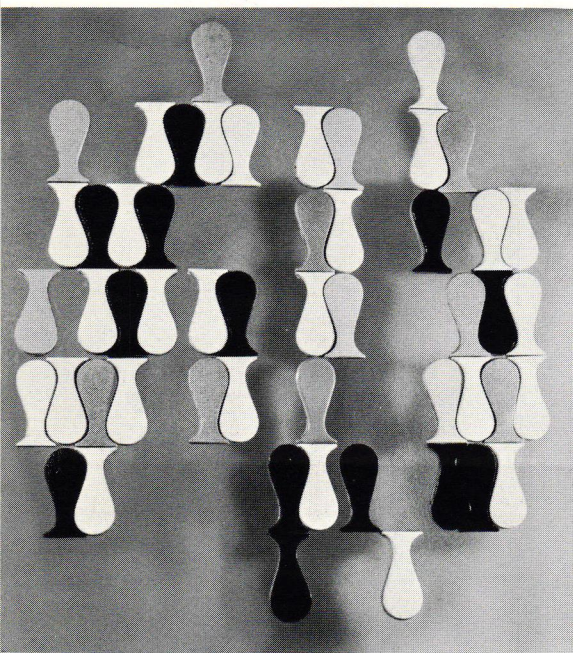
64. Vitreous china sink for Ideal
Standard Company, 1954



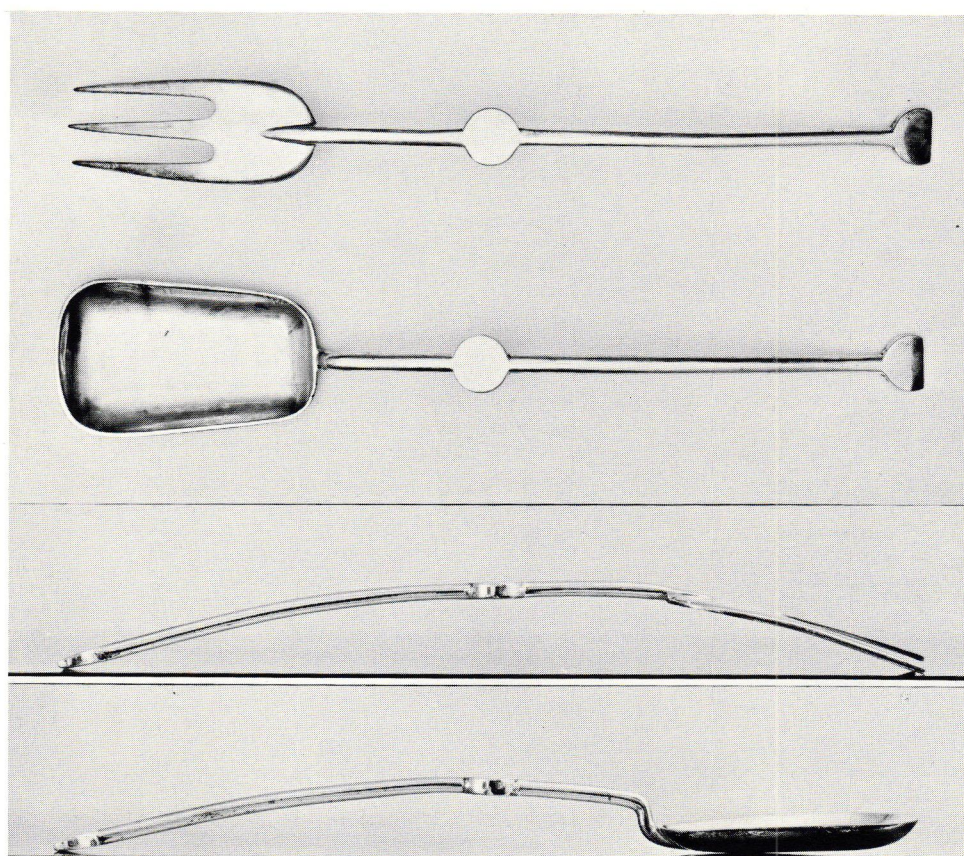
65, 66, 67, 68. Vitreous china sanitary equipment
for Ideal Standard Company, 1954



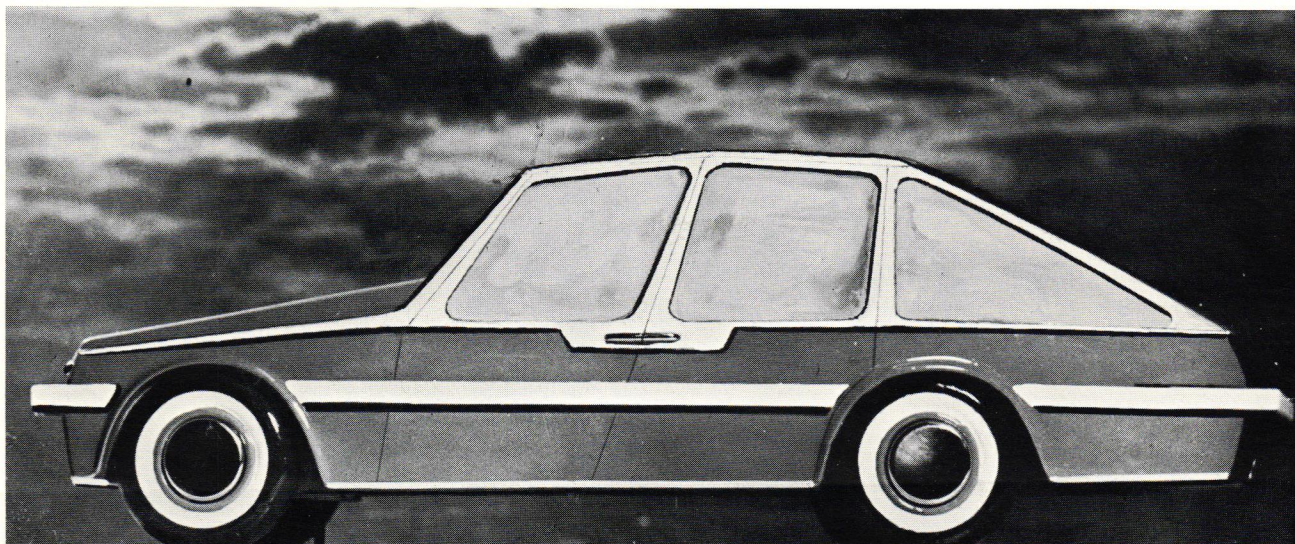
69. *La Superleggera*, chair for
Figli di Amedeo Cassina, 1955



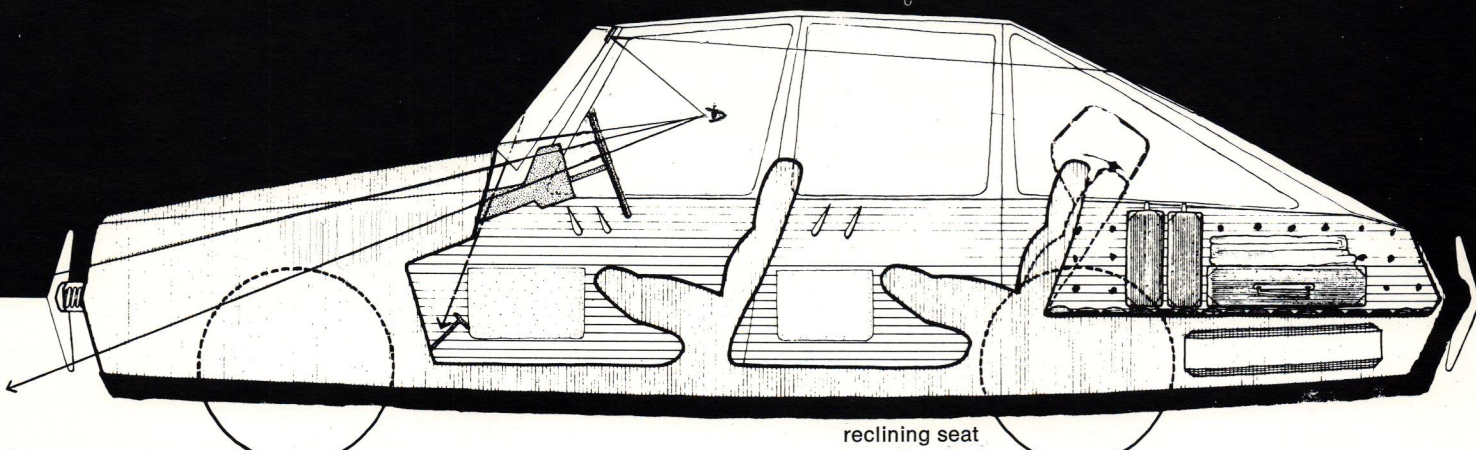
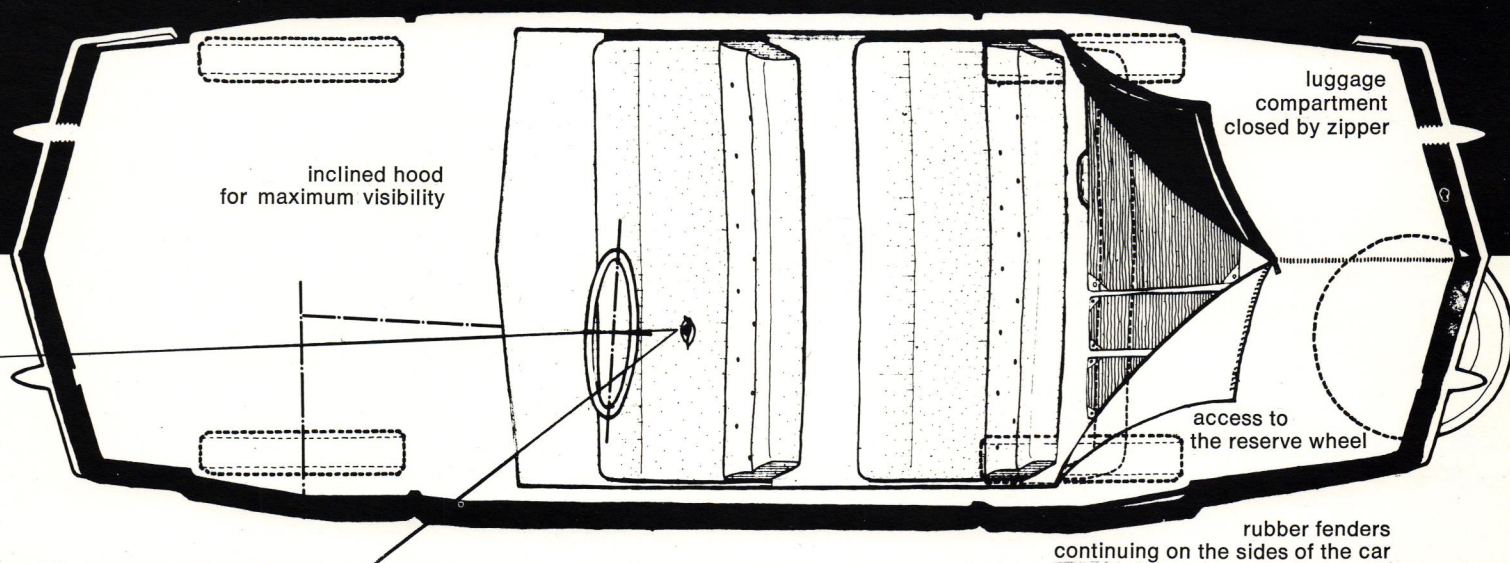
70. Ceramic tiles for
Ceramica Joo, 1956



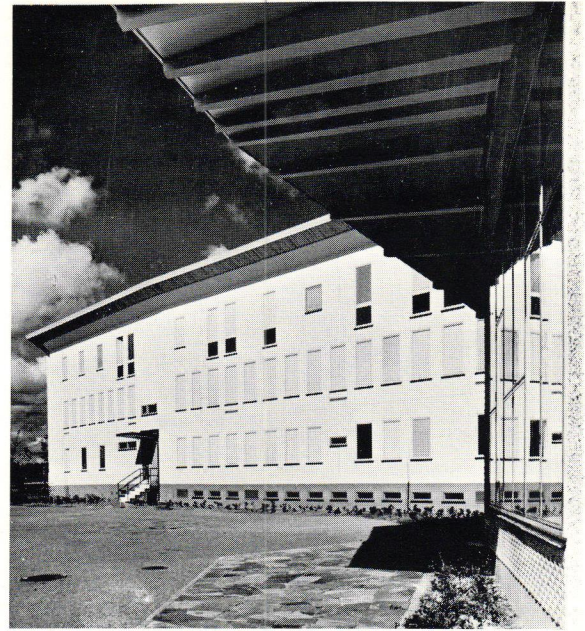
71. Silverware for Christofle,
Paris, 1955



72, 73, 74. Automobile body for Touring
Body Shop, Milan, 1953



76. South view



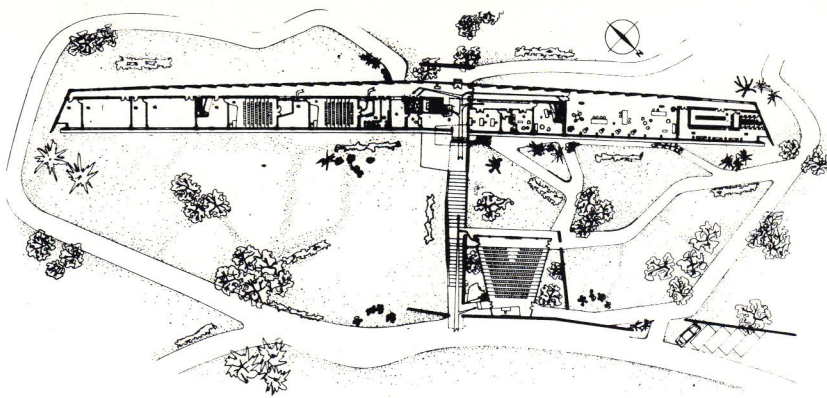
75. Italian Cultural Institute (Lerici Foundation) with Ture Wenerholm, Architect and Pier Luigi Nervi, Engineer, Stockholm, 1954



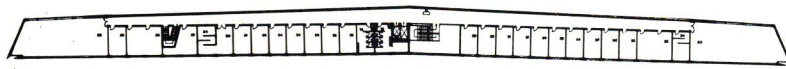


77. Back view





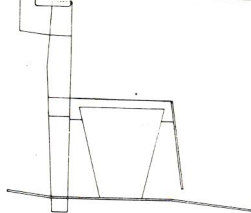
78. Ground floor plan



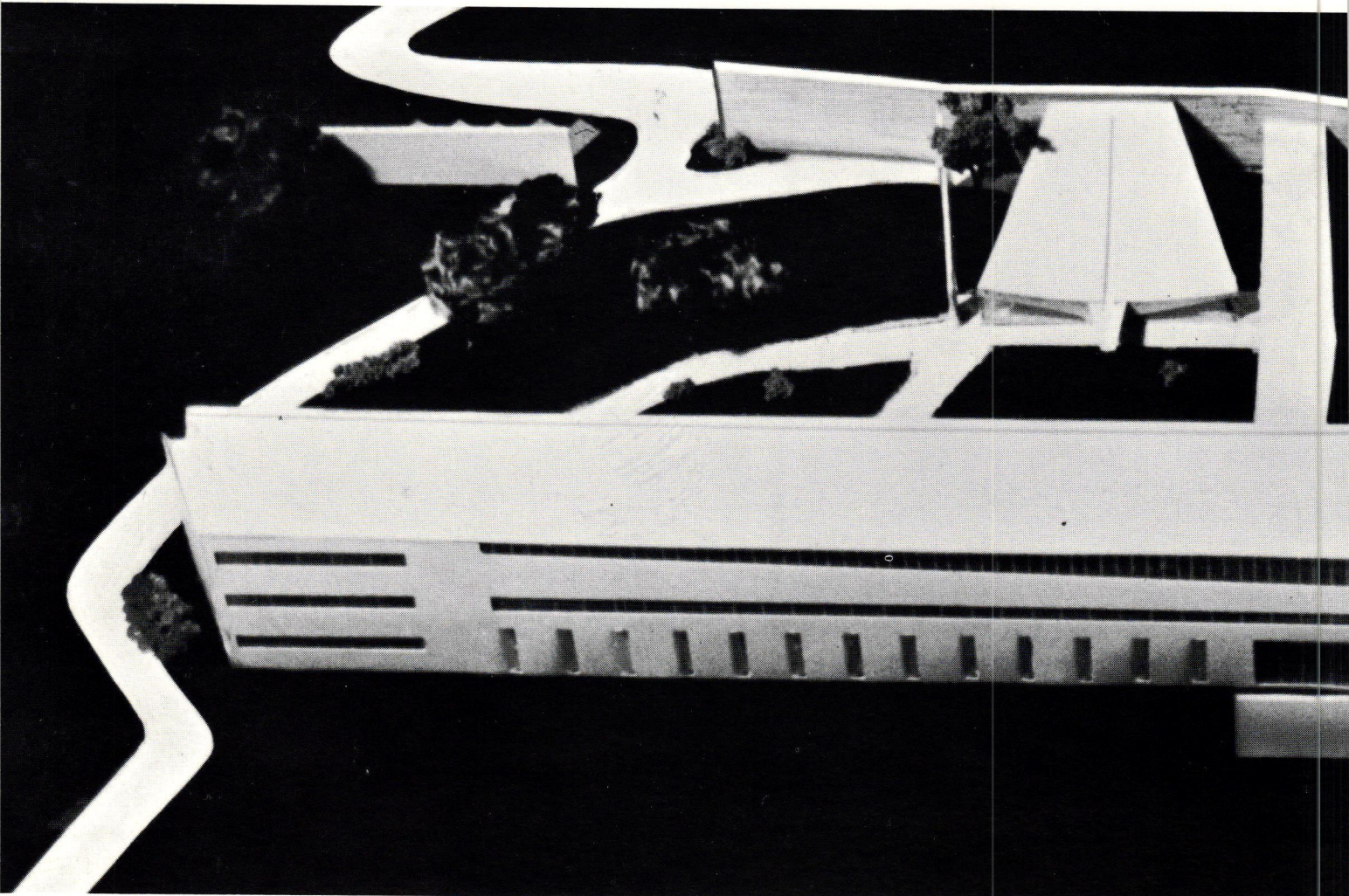
79. Typical floor plan

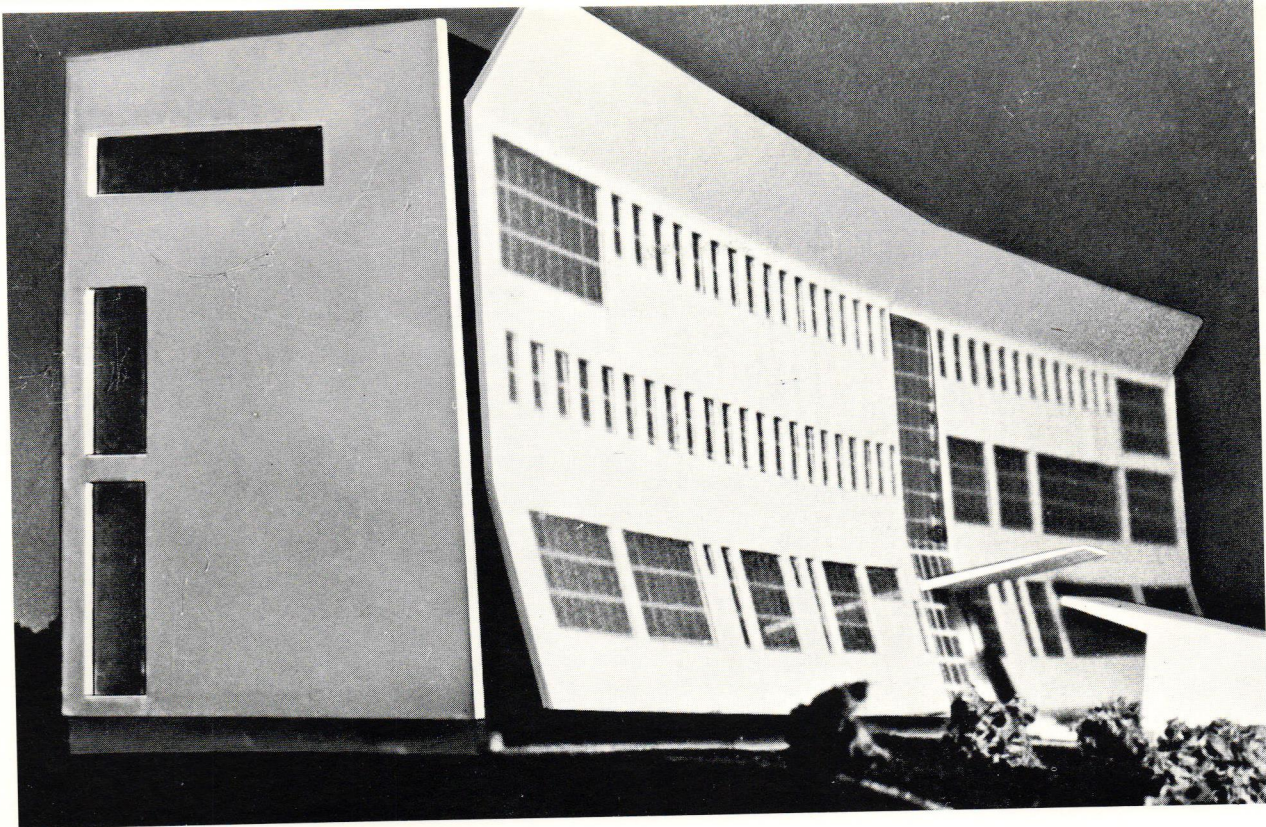


80. First floor plan

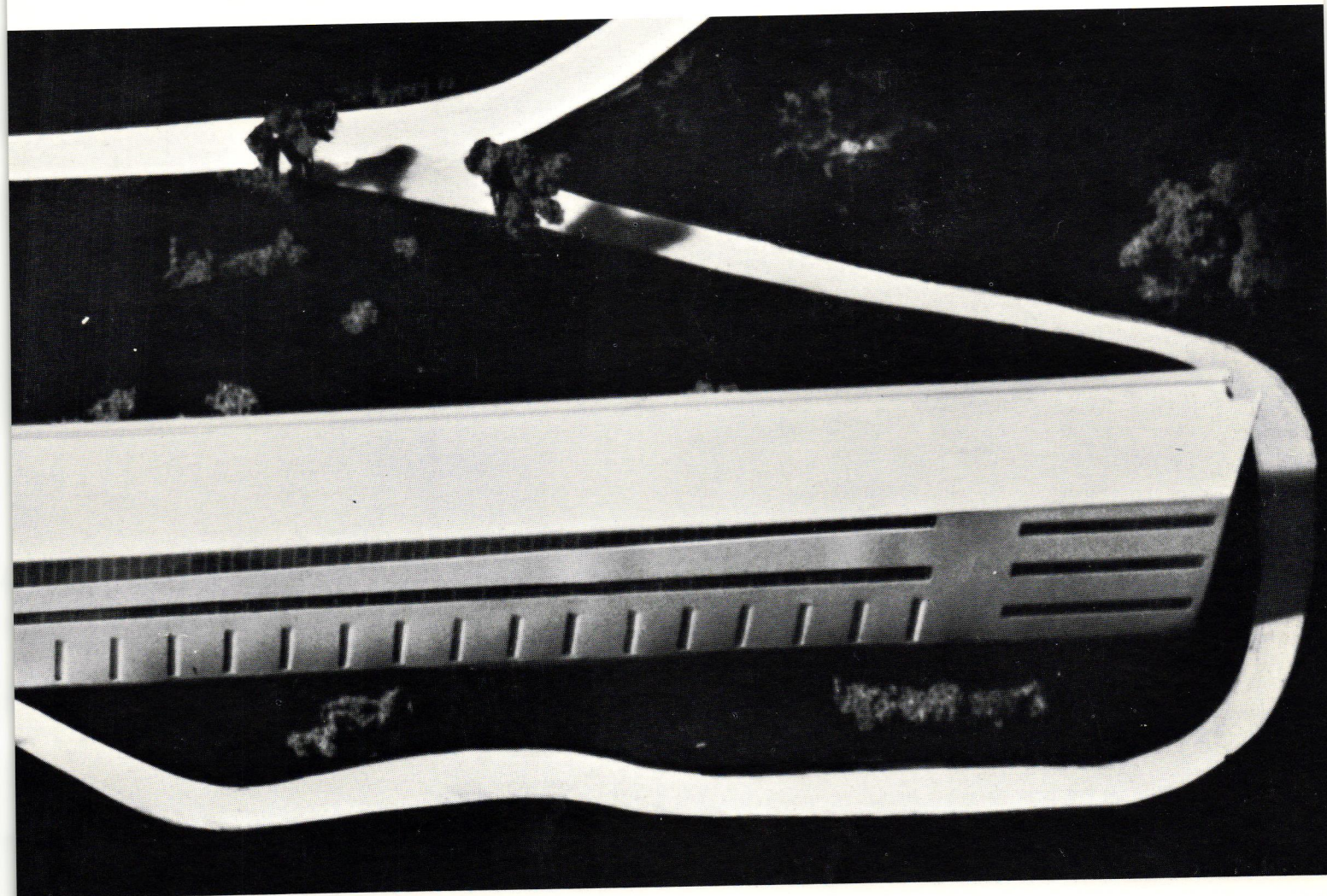


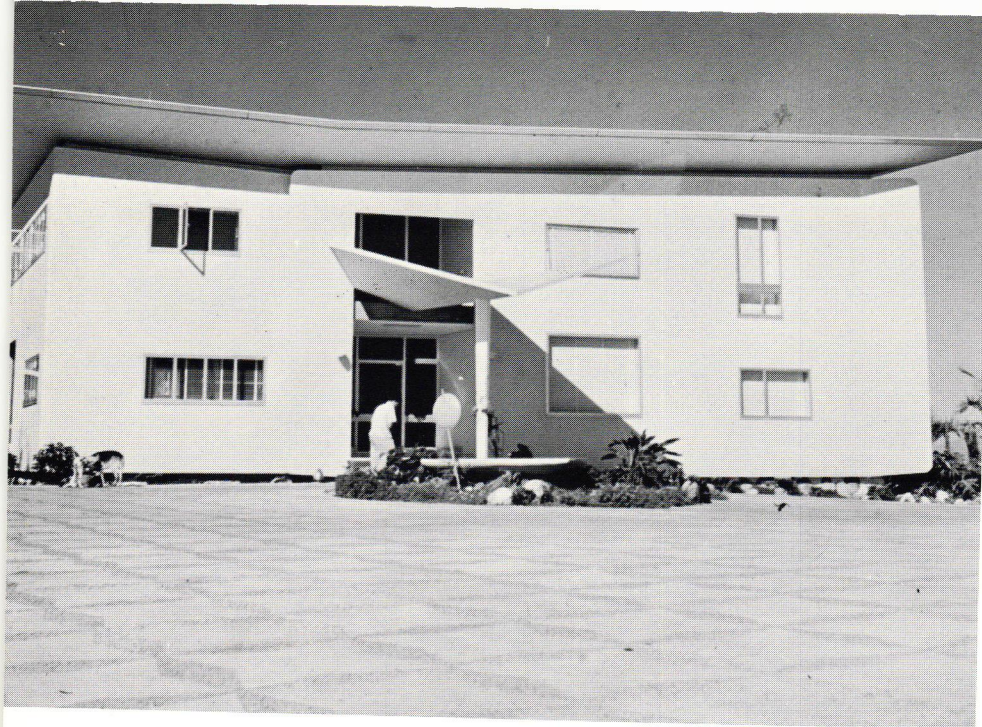
81. School of Nuclear Physics,
University of São Paulo, 1953
Over all view





82. Entrance view

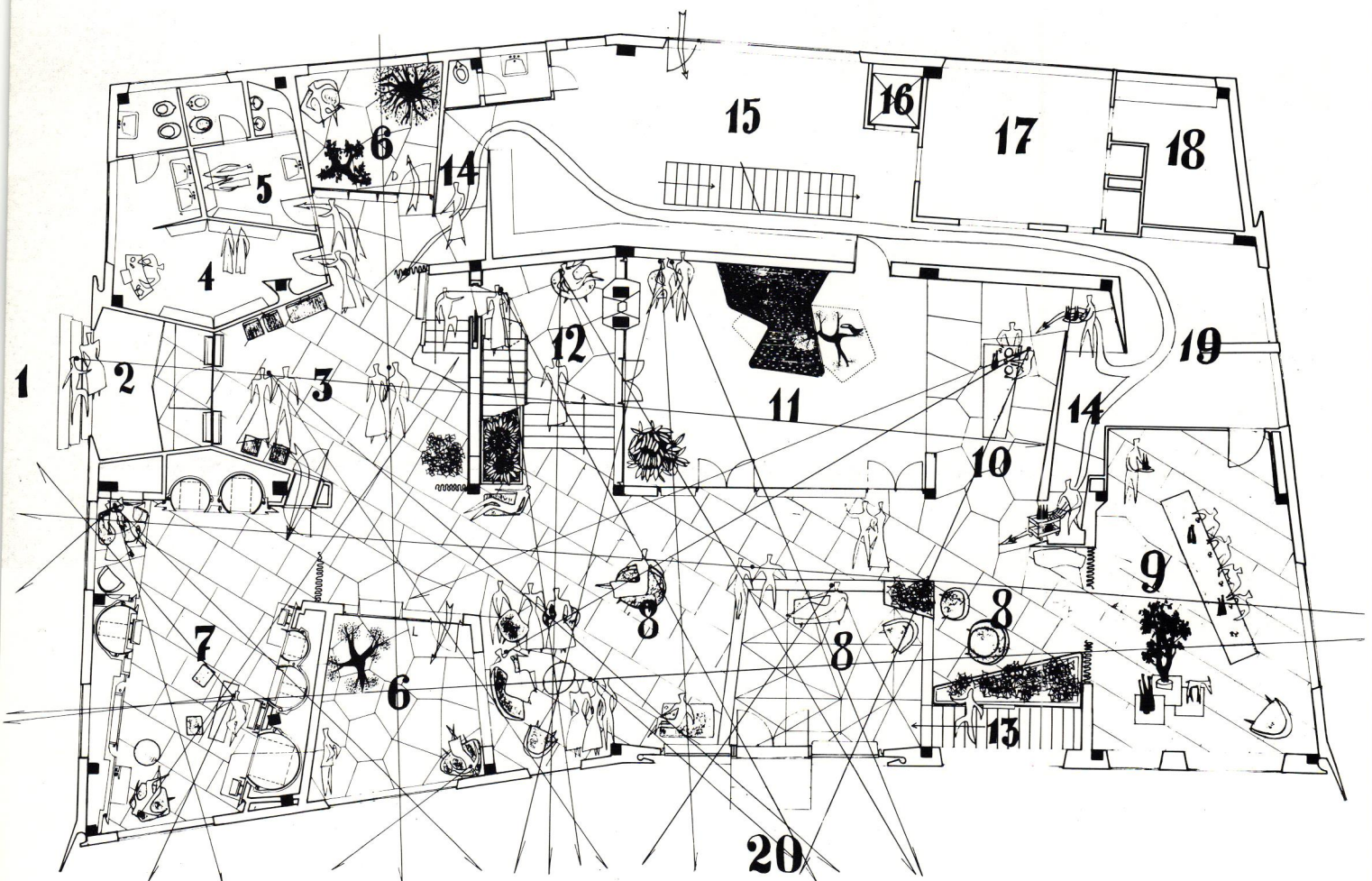


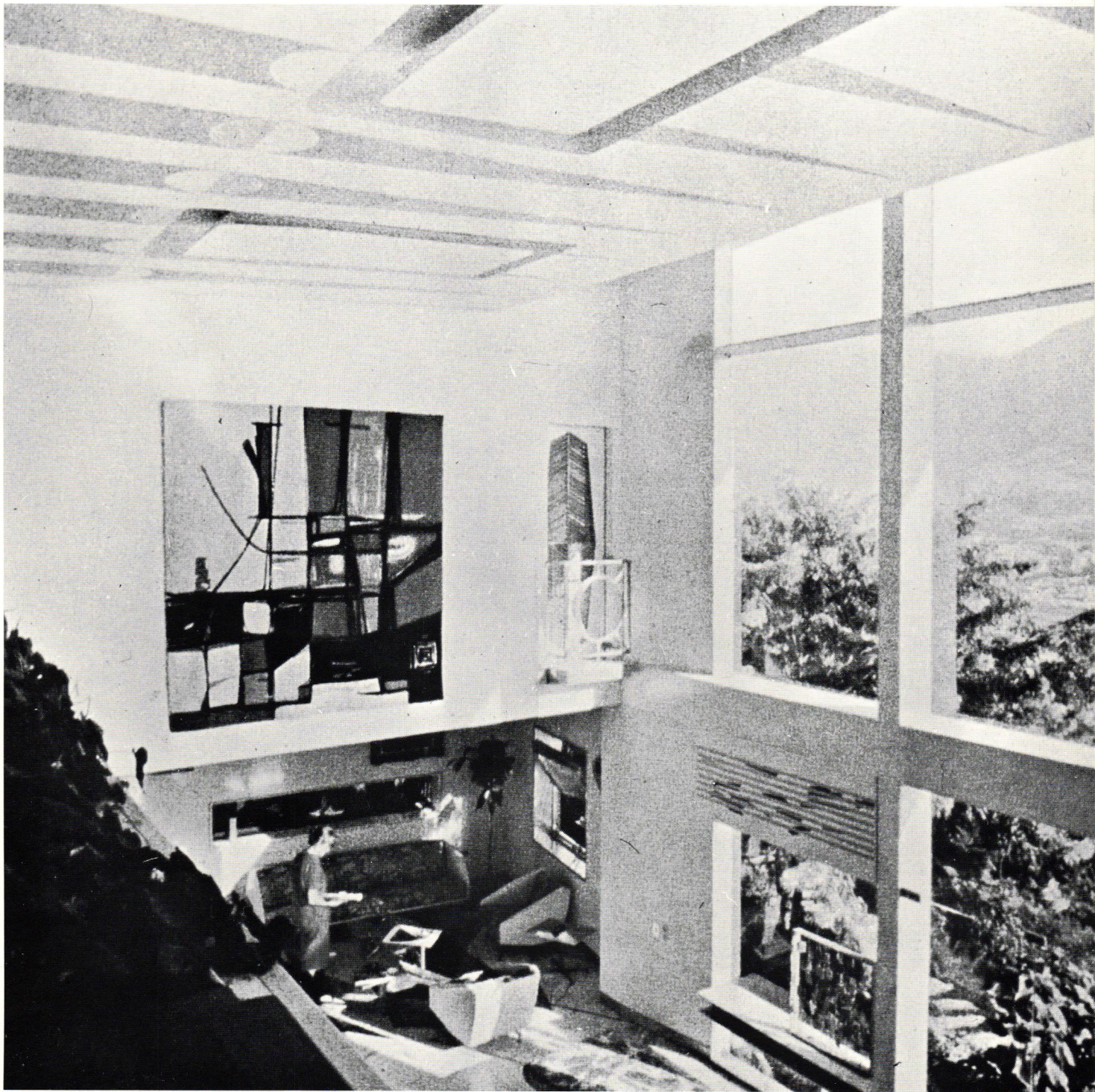


83. Planchart House, Caracas, Venezuela, 1954

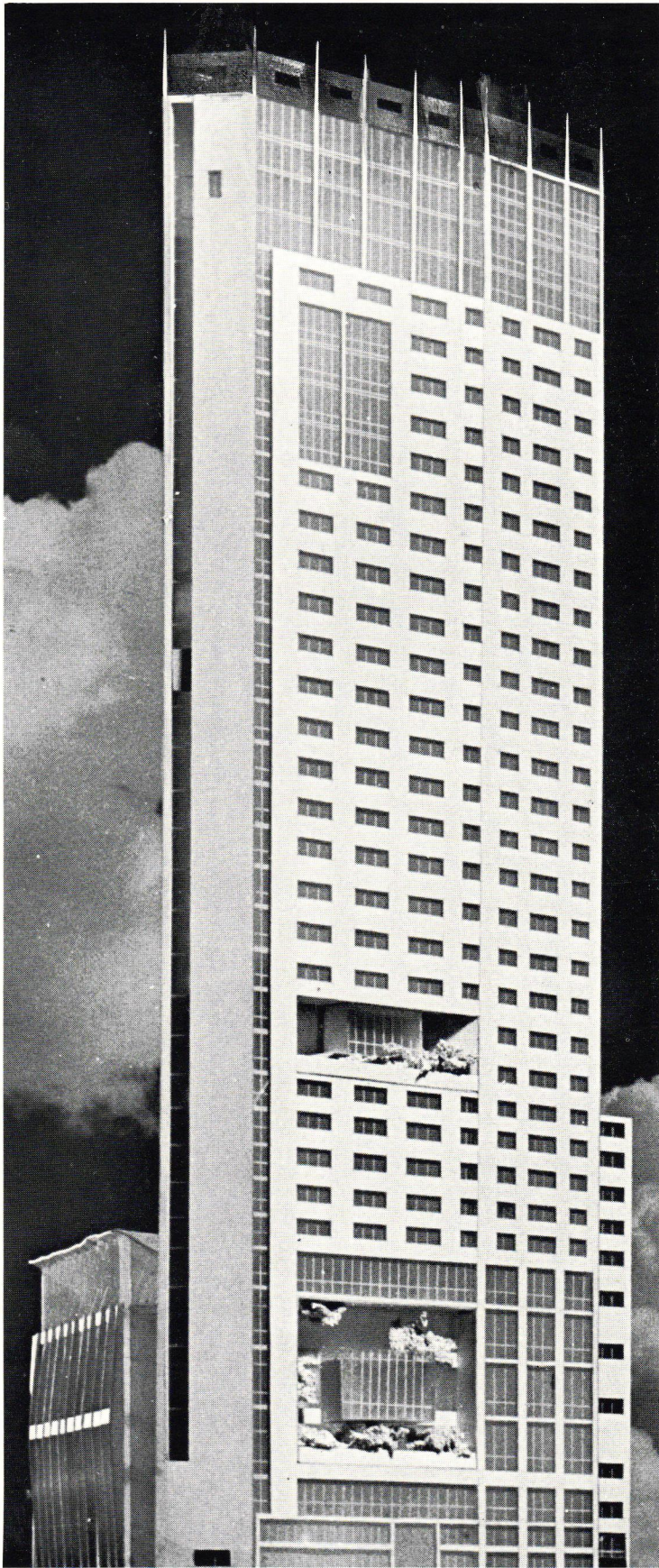
84. Floor plan with study of visual angles

1. entrance under canopy
2. entrance steps
3. two-floor-high lobby
4. dressing room for ladies
5. dressing room for men
6. two interior gardens with views from one to the other
7. library-studio with separate entrance (view through the living room, the entrance and the dining room)
8. two-floor-high living room
9. main dining room (*comedor grande*)
10. dining-room open to patio (*comedor tropical*)
11. patio which is connected by two-floor-high windows with living room and interior staircase
12. staircase accessible from the lobby and from the living room
13. staircase which descends from the living room to the game room in the basement
14. Separate entrance from outside. Two doorless interior passages from service area to living room
15. kitchen
16. storage
17. office; remaining services in the basement.

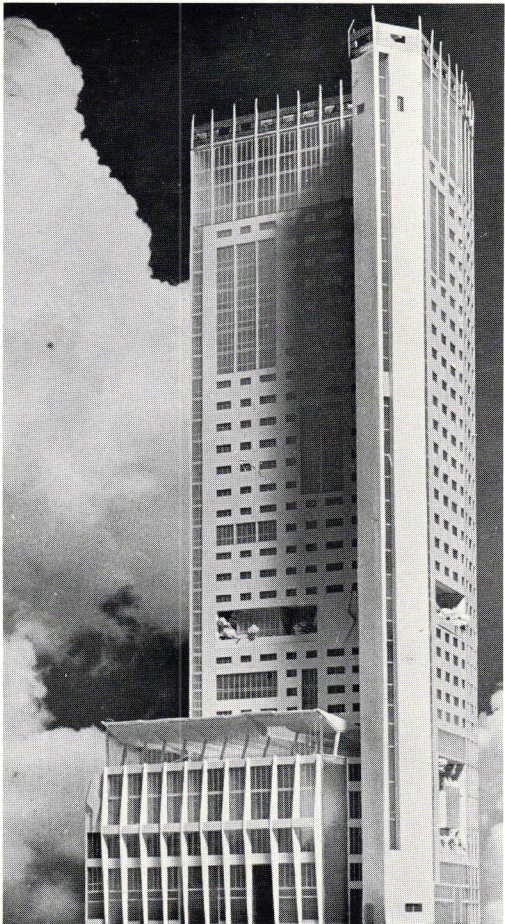




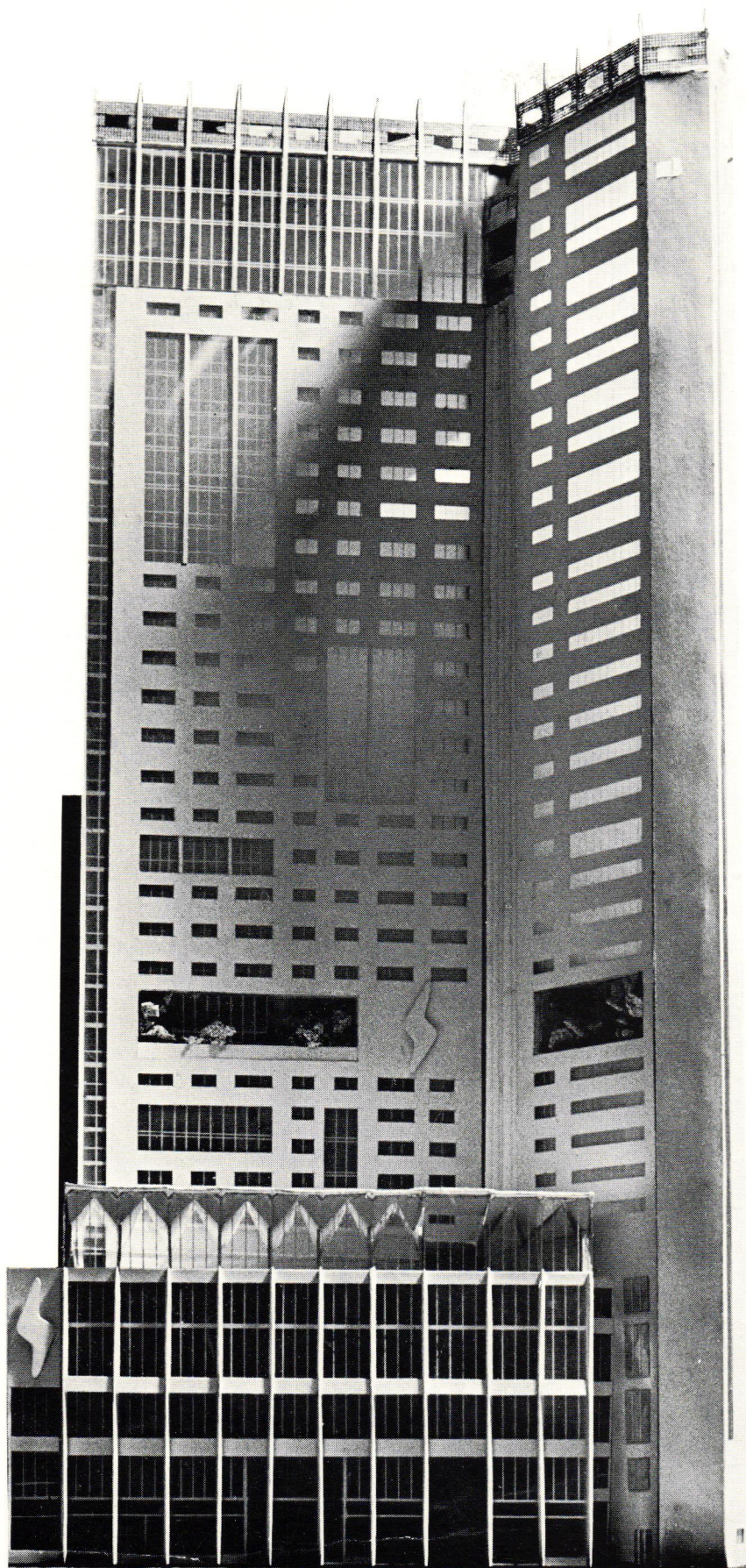
85. View of the living room



86. Italian-Braslian Center
with Luiz Contrucci, Alberto Rosselli
and Antonio Fornaroli,
São Paulo, 1953



87. Main entrance to the Italian Center



PENTHOUSE RESTAURANT

ELEVATOR SHAFT

ONE-FLOOR AND TWO-FLOOR
APARTMENTS

39

ARTISTS STUDIOS

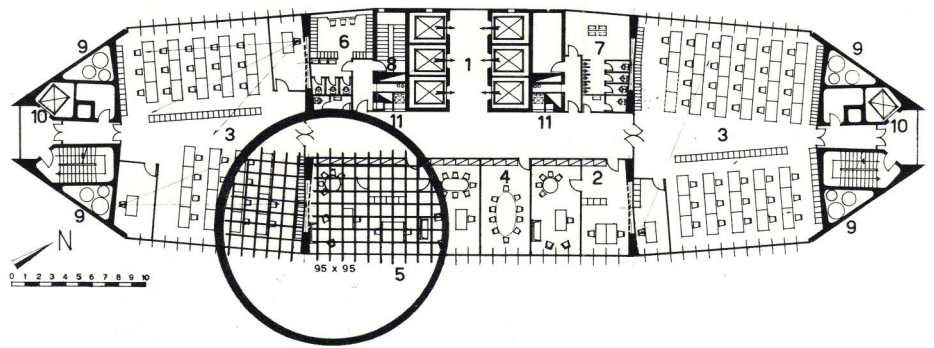
PUCCI FASHION BOUTIQUE

OFFICES

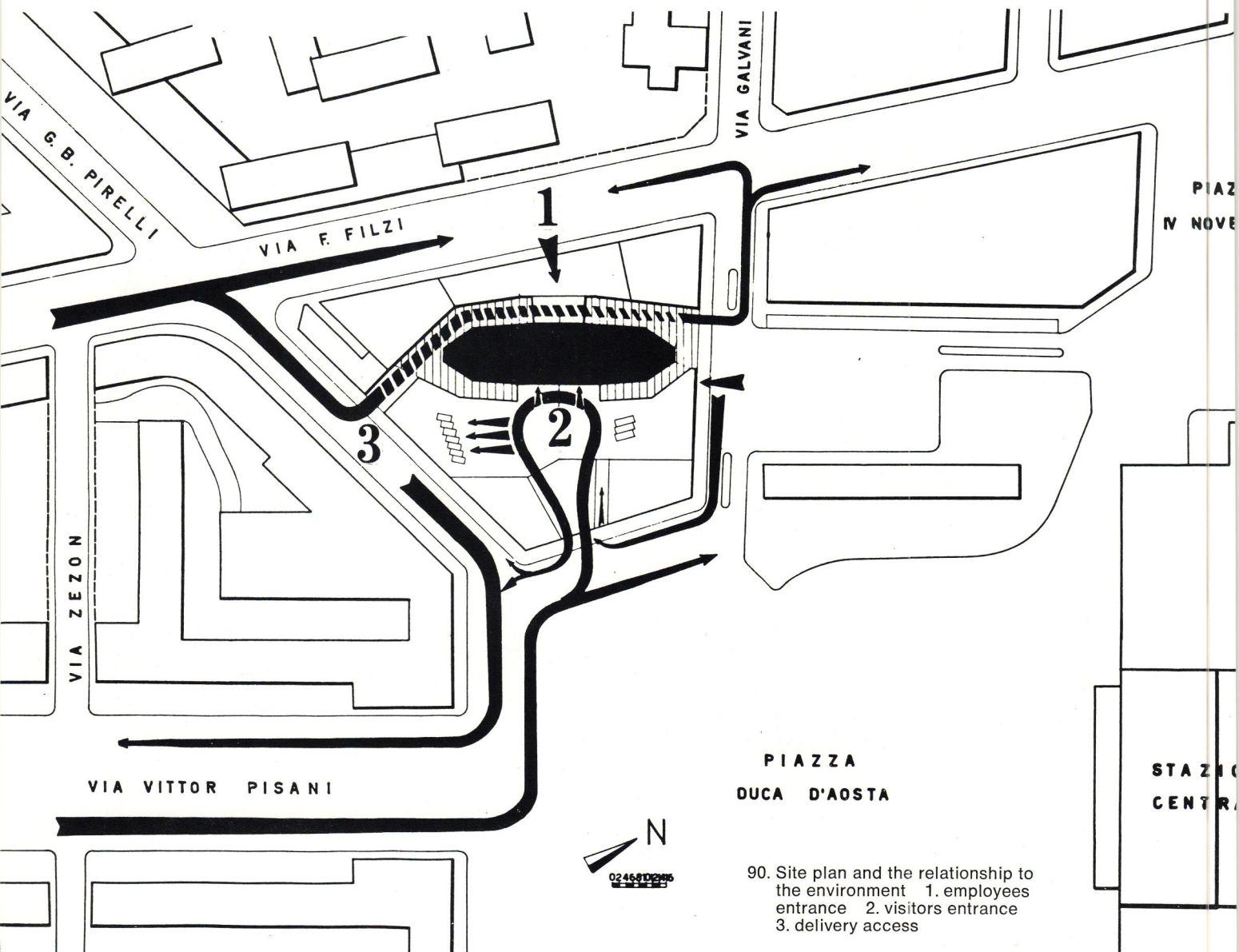
RESTAURANT

ITALIAN CENTER

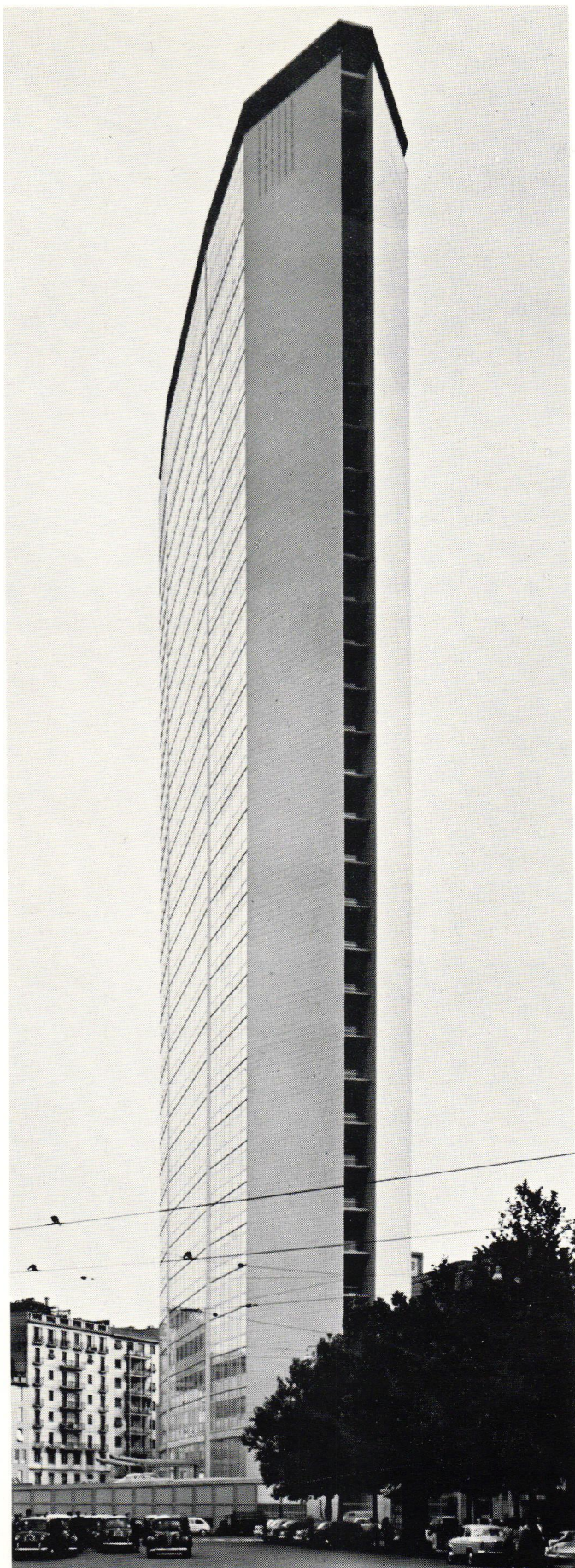
AUDITORIUM-LIBRARY



89. Typical floor plan

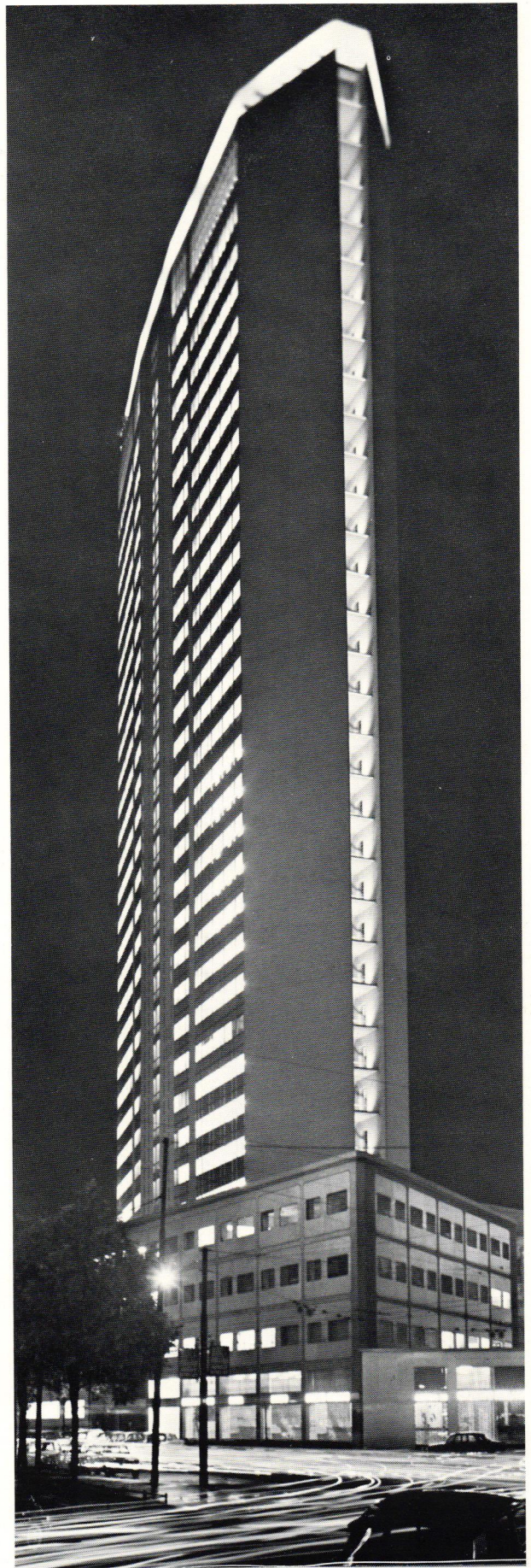


90. Site plan and the relationship to the environment 1. employees entrance 2. visitors entrance 3. delivery access



91. The Pirelli Tower, 1956
with Alberto Rosselli, Architect
Antonio Fornaroli, Giuseppe Valtolina
and Egidio dell'Orto,
Pier Luigi Nervi and Arturo Danusso,
Structural Consultants

Day view



92. Night view

94. Executive office



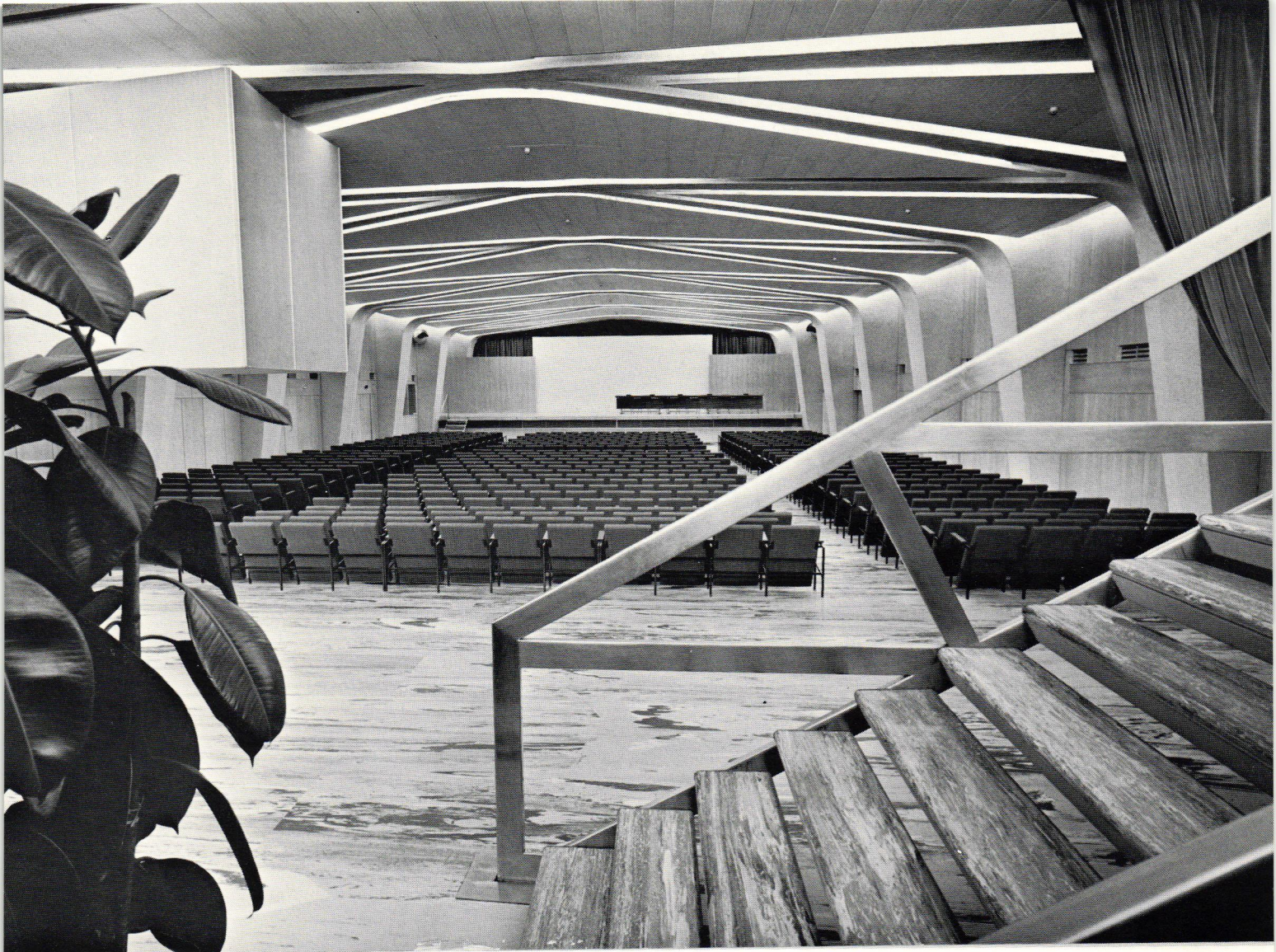
93. Board meeting room (31st floor)

95. Main lobby

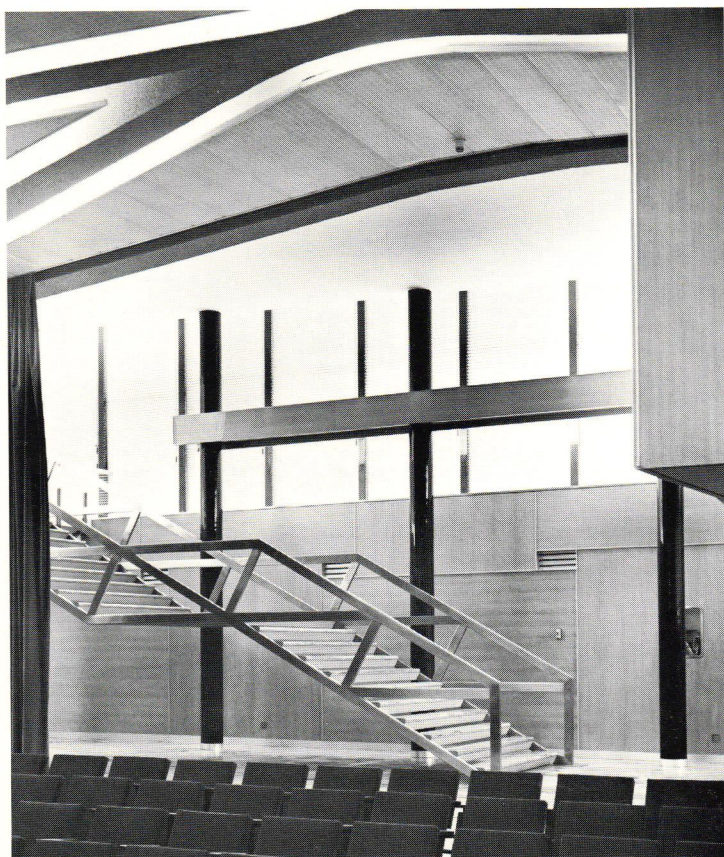


96. Main entrance canopies

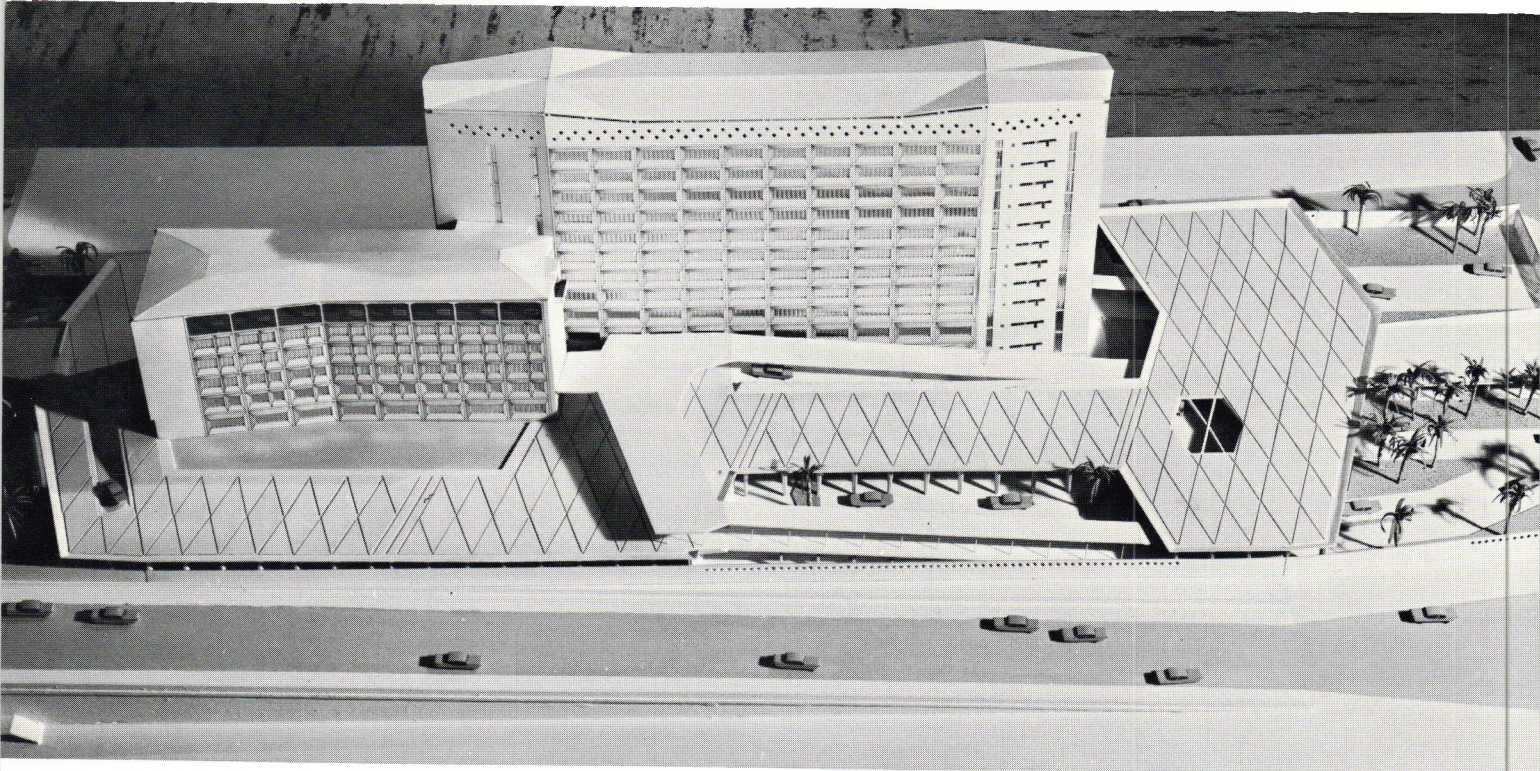




97. Auditorium

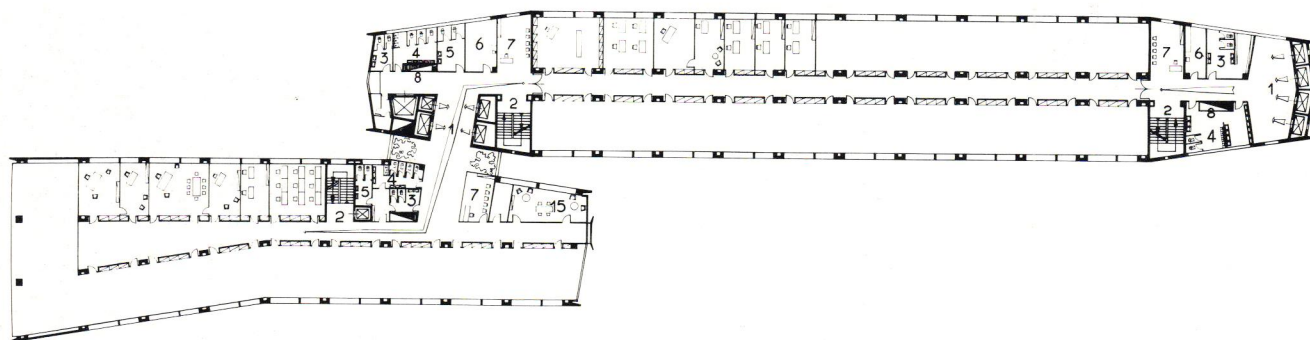


98. Auditorium staircase

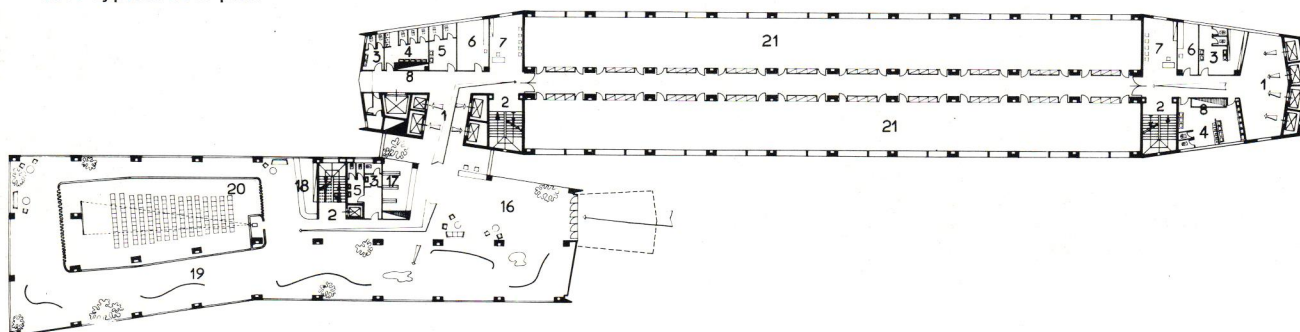


99. Government Development Board, Baghdad, 1958
 Alberto Rosselli, Architect;
 Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer and
 Studio Valtolina-Dell'Orto

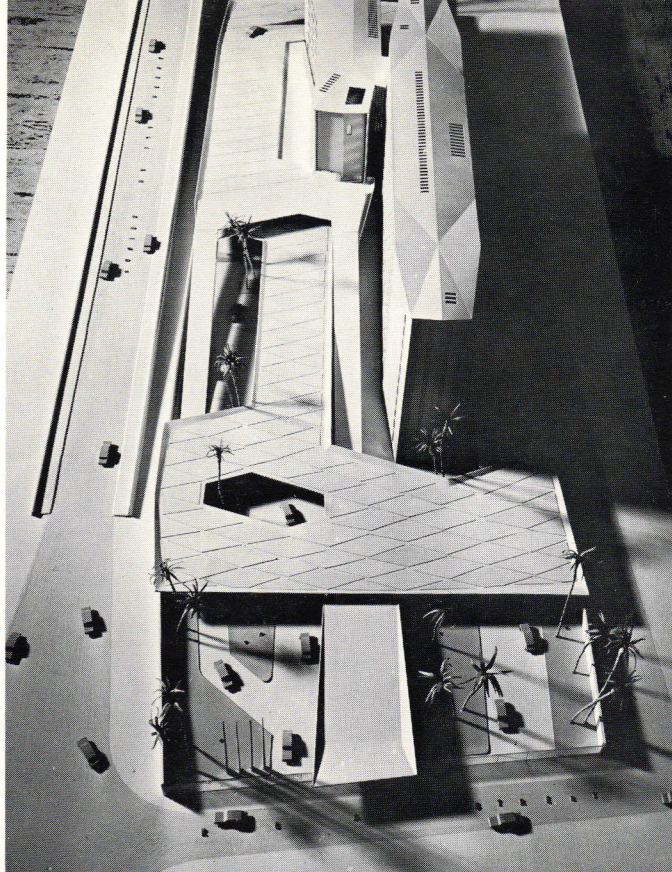
44



100. Typical floor plan



101. Ground floor plan



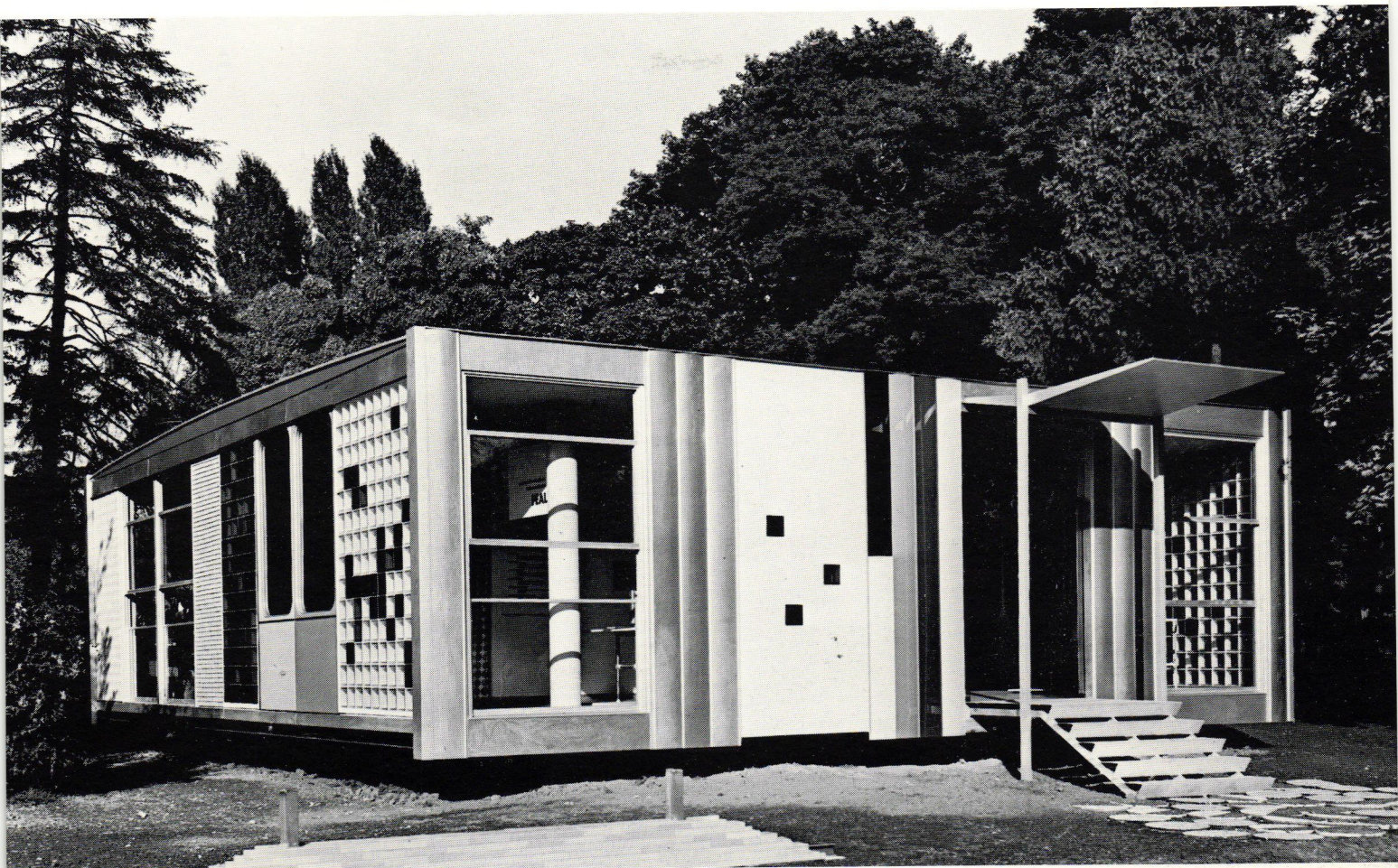
102. Over all view



103. View of the Development Board
from South



104. Gorrondona House
Caracas, Venezuela, 1960



105. Prefabricated House for F.E.A.L.
XI Triennial Exhibition, 1957

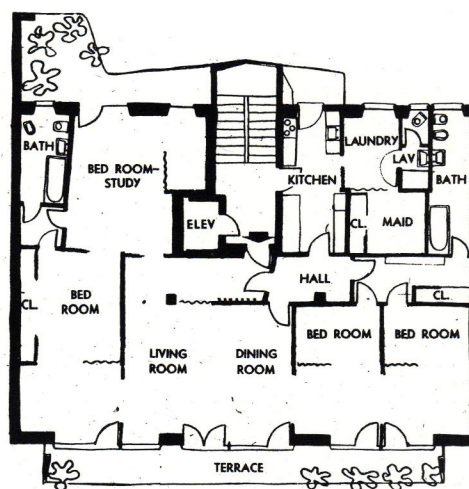


106. Proposal for mass-produced house
(Anguissola House), Lido di
Camaione (Massa Carrara) 1964



107. Ponti Apartment
Milan, 1953

108. Floor plan





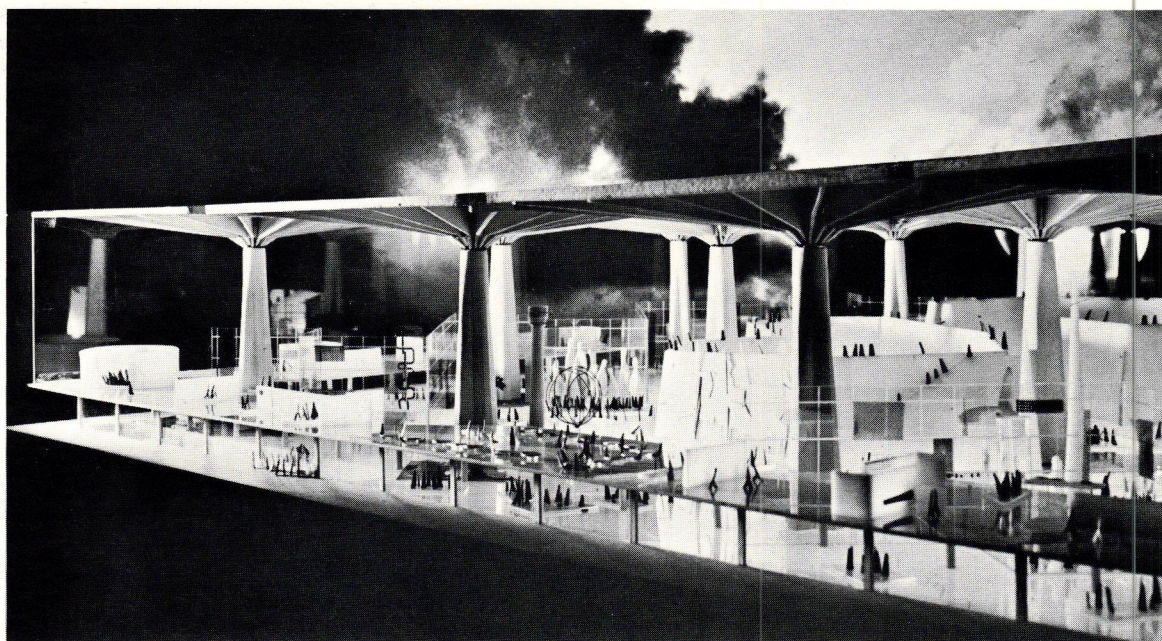
109. Entrance to living room



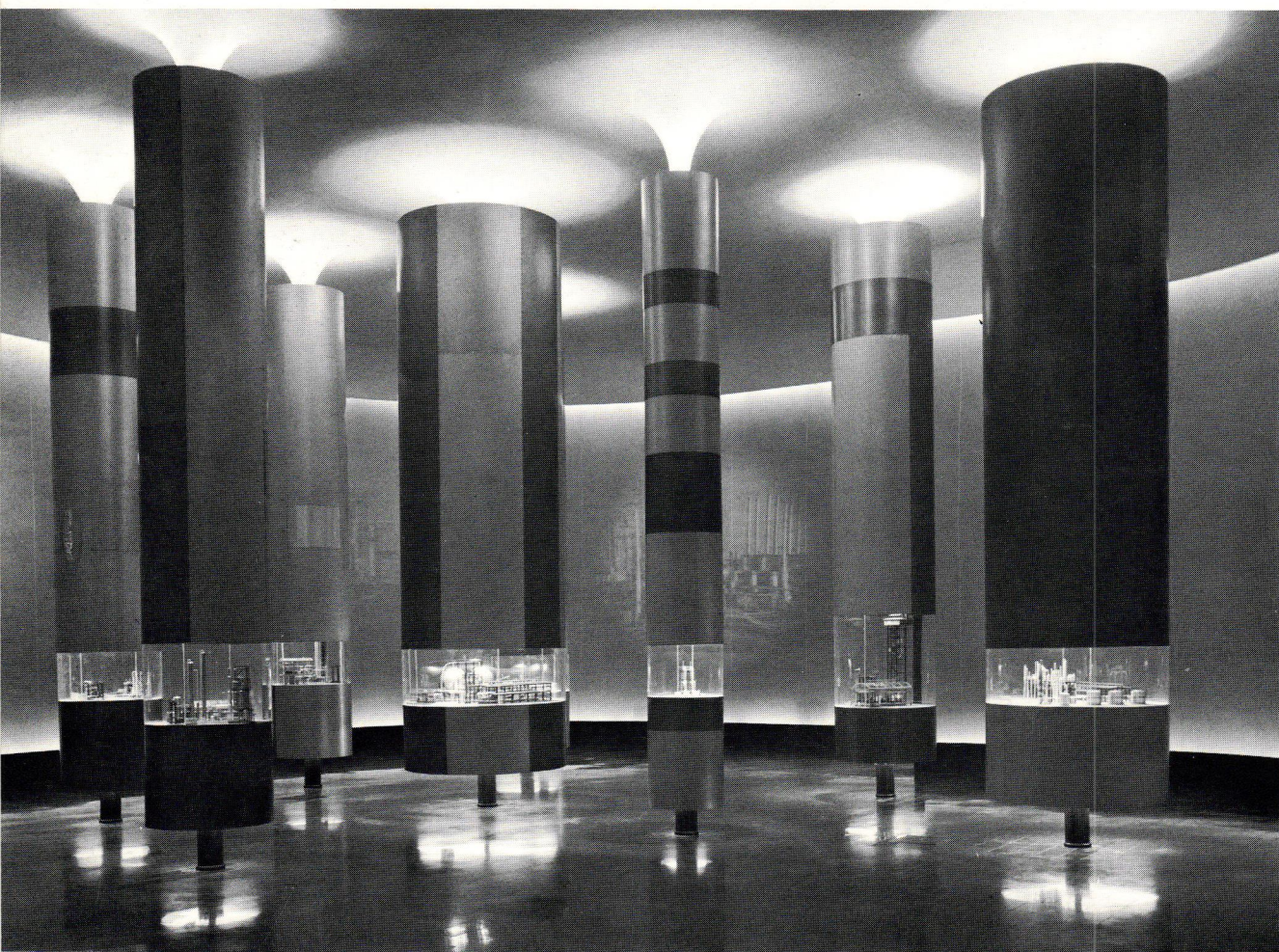
110. View of the vestibule



111. Reading area adjacent to the bedroom



112. Interiors for Italia 61
International Labor Exhibition,
with Pier Luigi Nervi,
Turin, 1961



113. Exhibition for Montecatini Chemical
Corp., Milan, International Samples
Fair, 1962

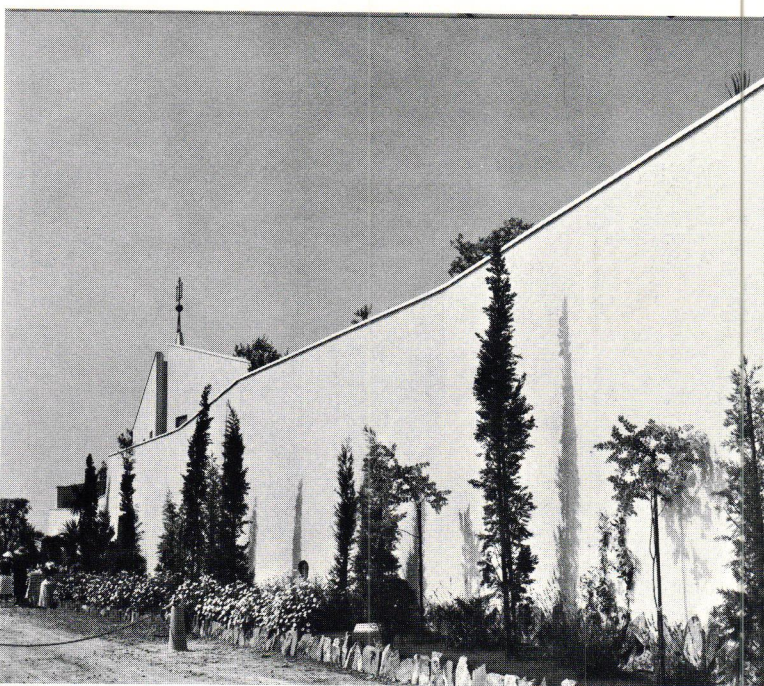
114. Office Building for Riunione
Adriatica di Sicurtà (R.A.S.) with
Alberto Rosselli and Piero
Portaluppi, Architects and Antonio
Fornaroli, Engineer, Milan, 1958-19





115. The Convent of Carmel with
Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer
Bonmoschetto (San Remo), 1956

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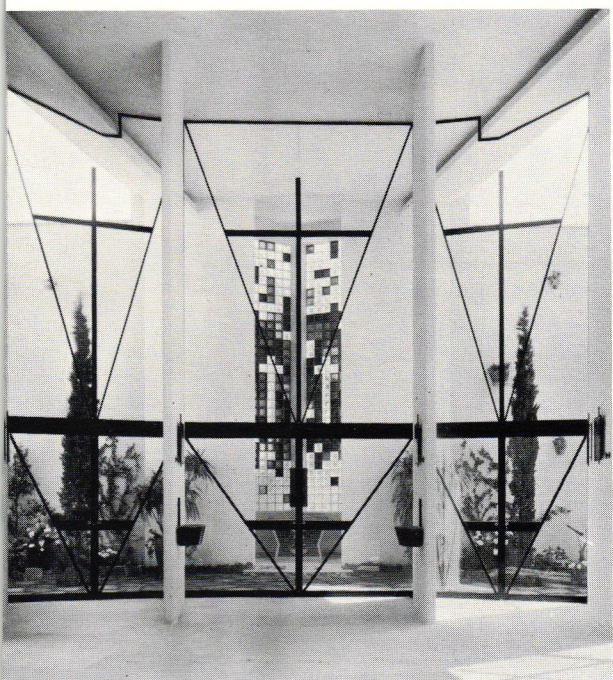


116. Exterior wall

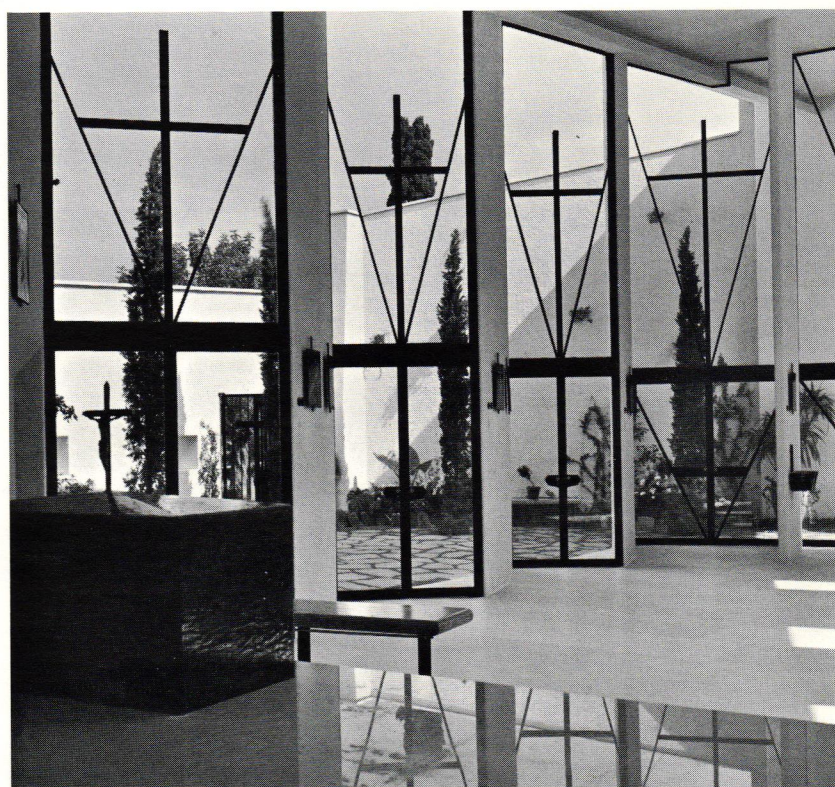
117. Nun's choir



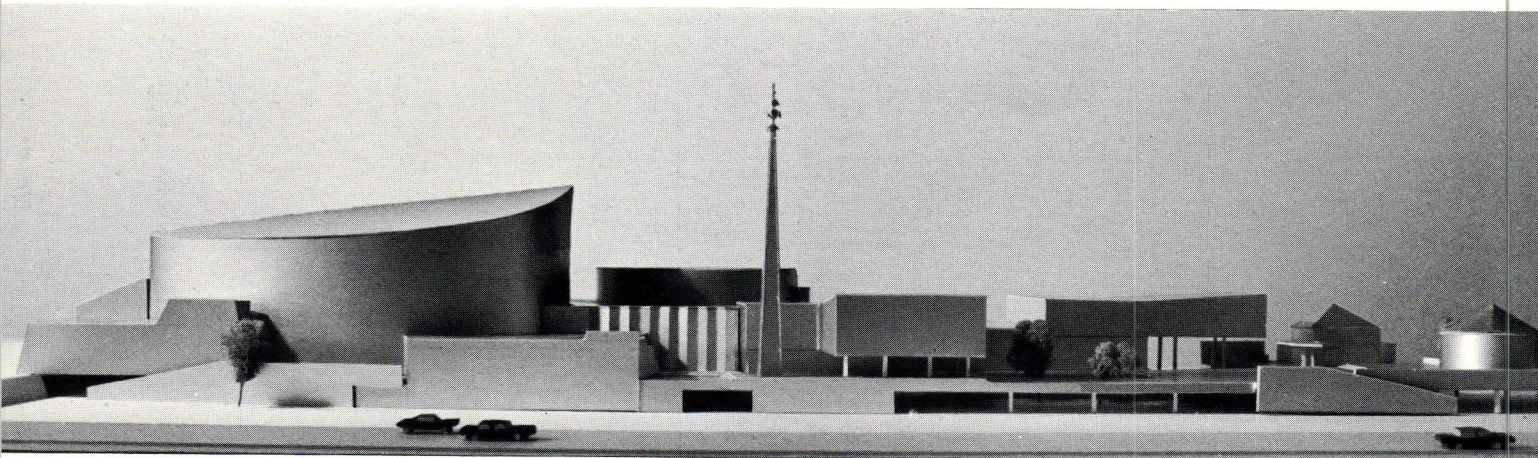
53



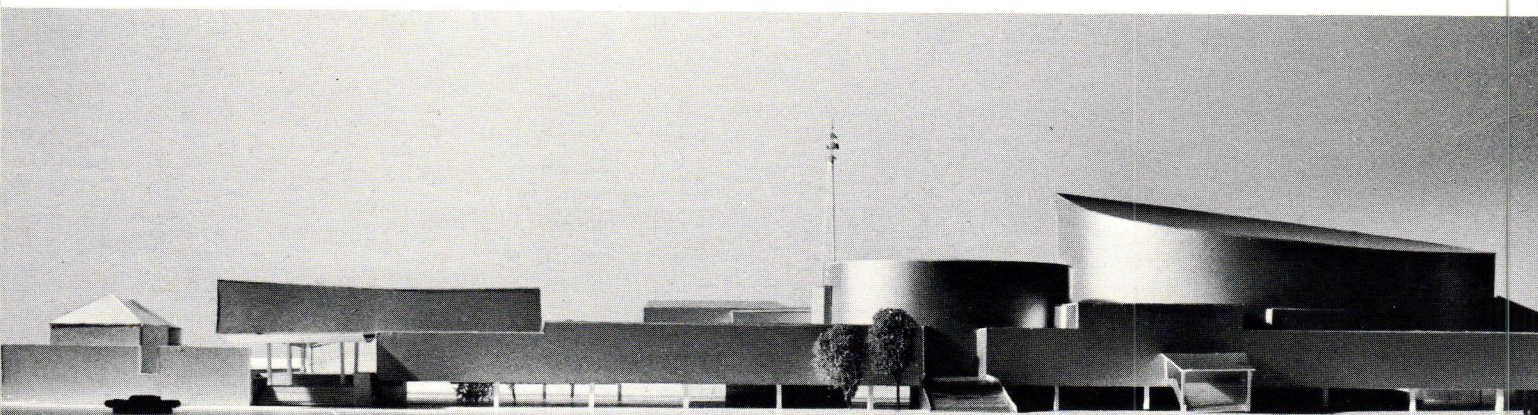
118. View to the chapel



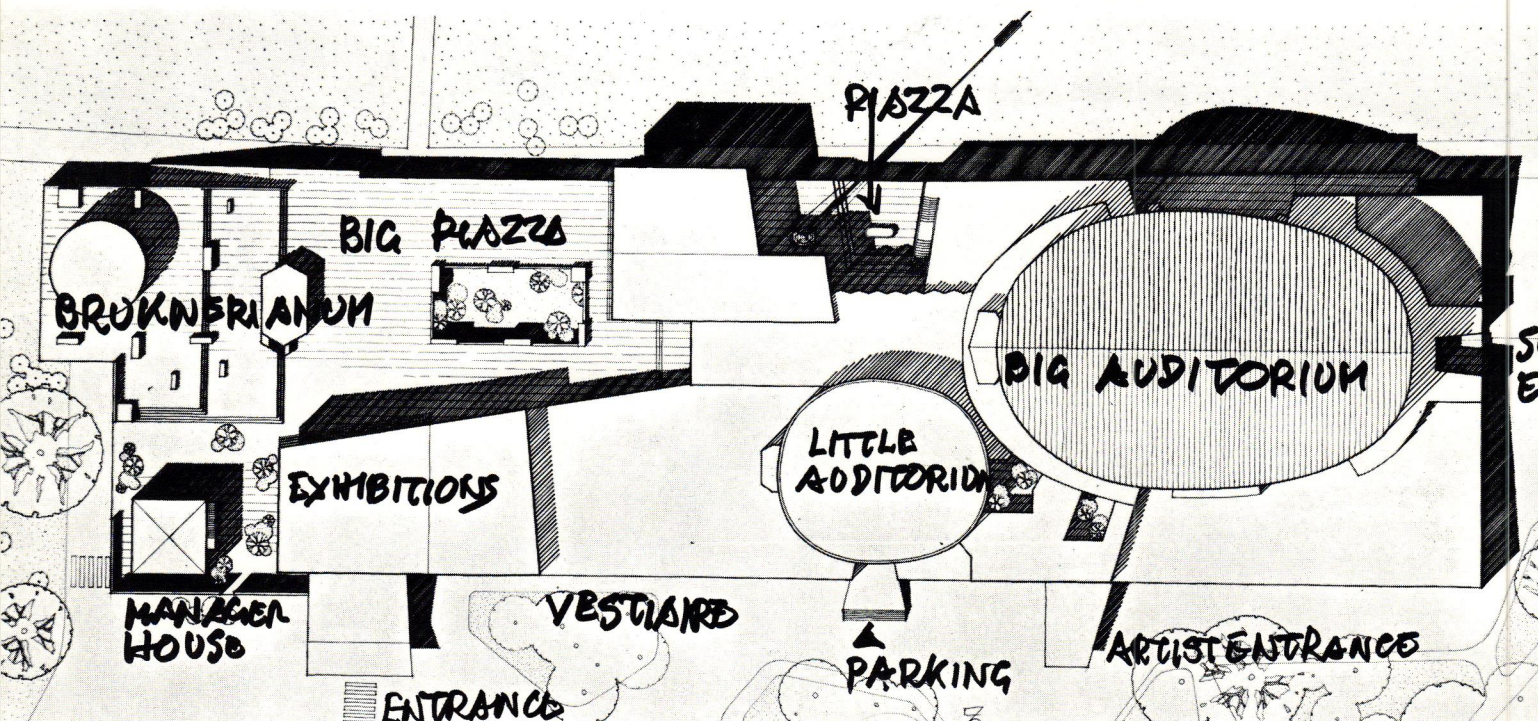
119. Entrance from the chapel's court



120. Competition for Cultural Center with
Concert Hall, Linz, 1963, with
Costantino Corsini and
Giorgio Wiskeman
View from the Danube



121. View from the municipal garden

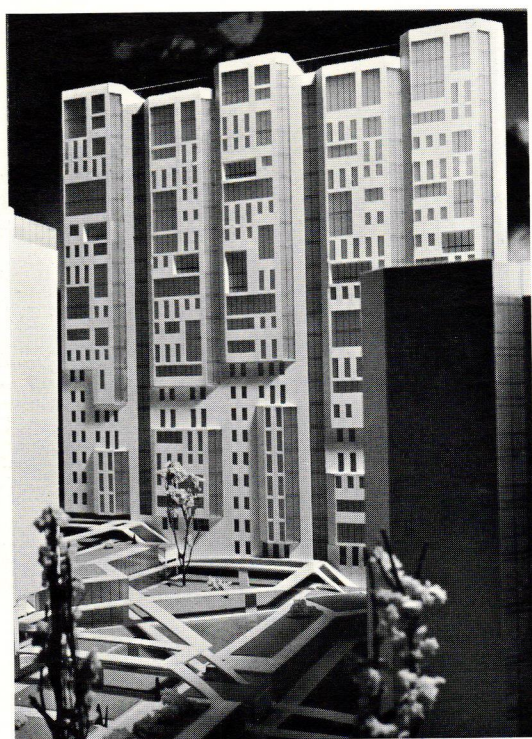


122. Site plan



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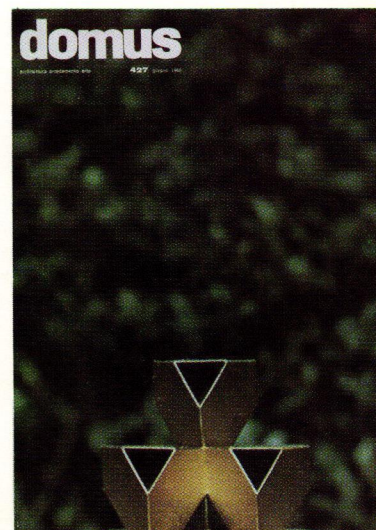
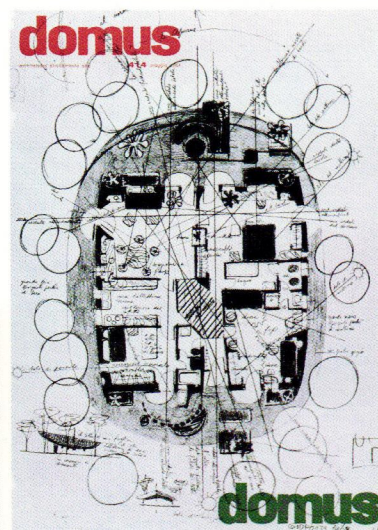
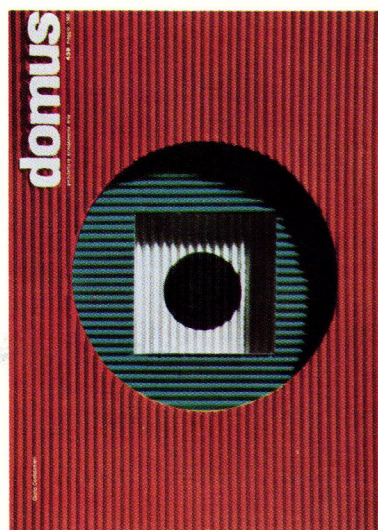
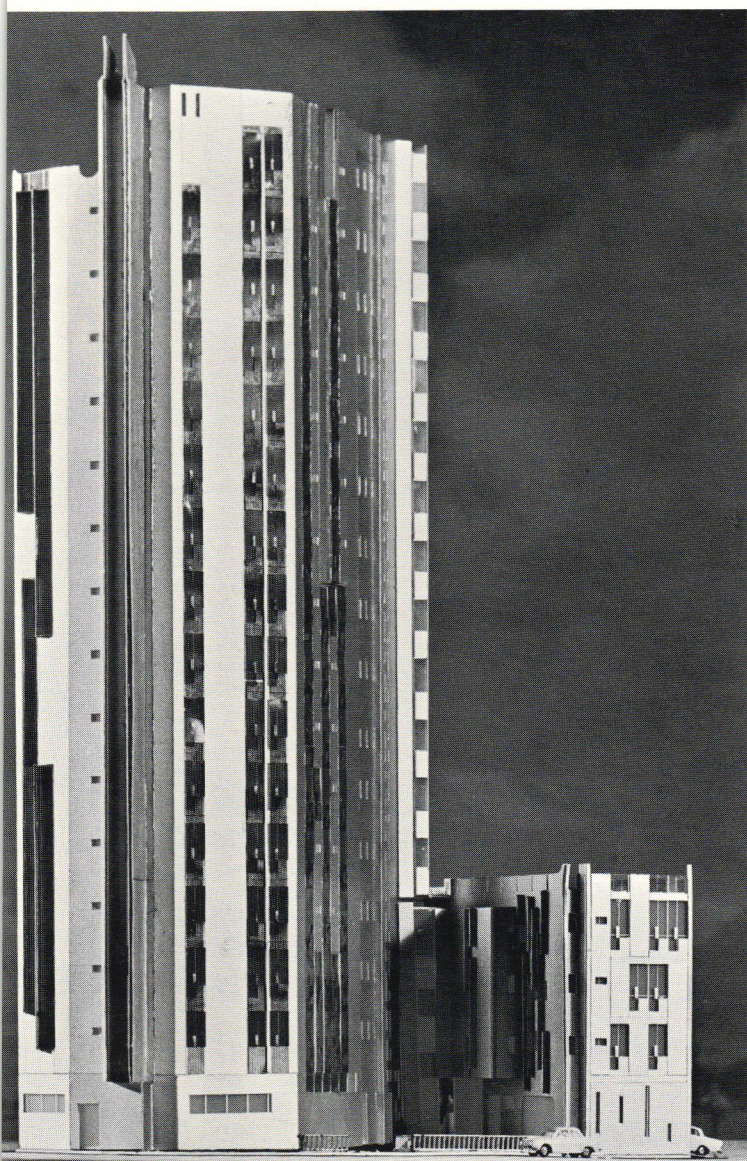
123. View at night



124. Proposals for high-rise apartment building, Montreal, 1961

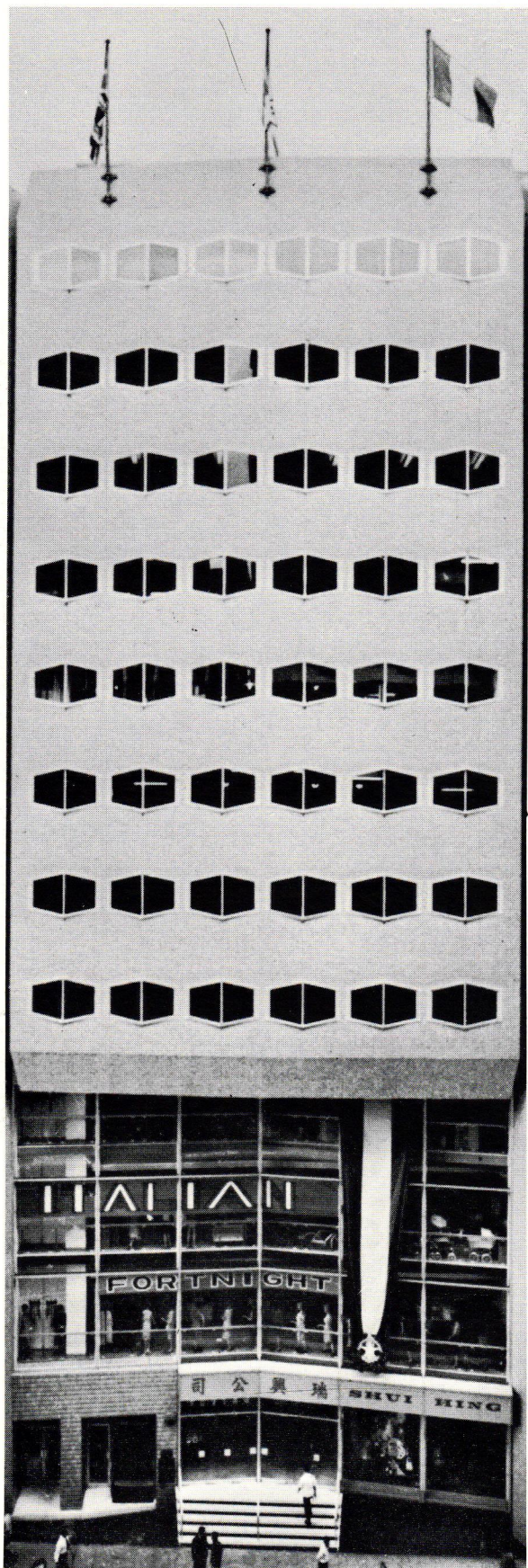


125. Proposal for High-rise Apartment Building, Beyrouth, Lebanon, 1965

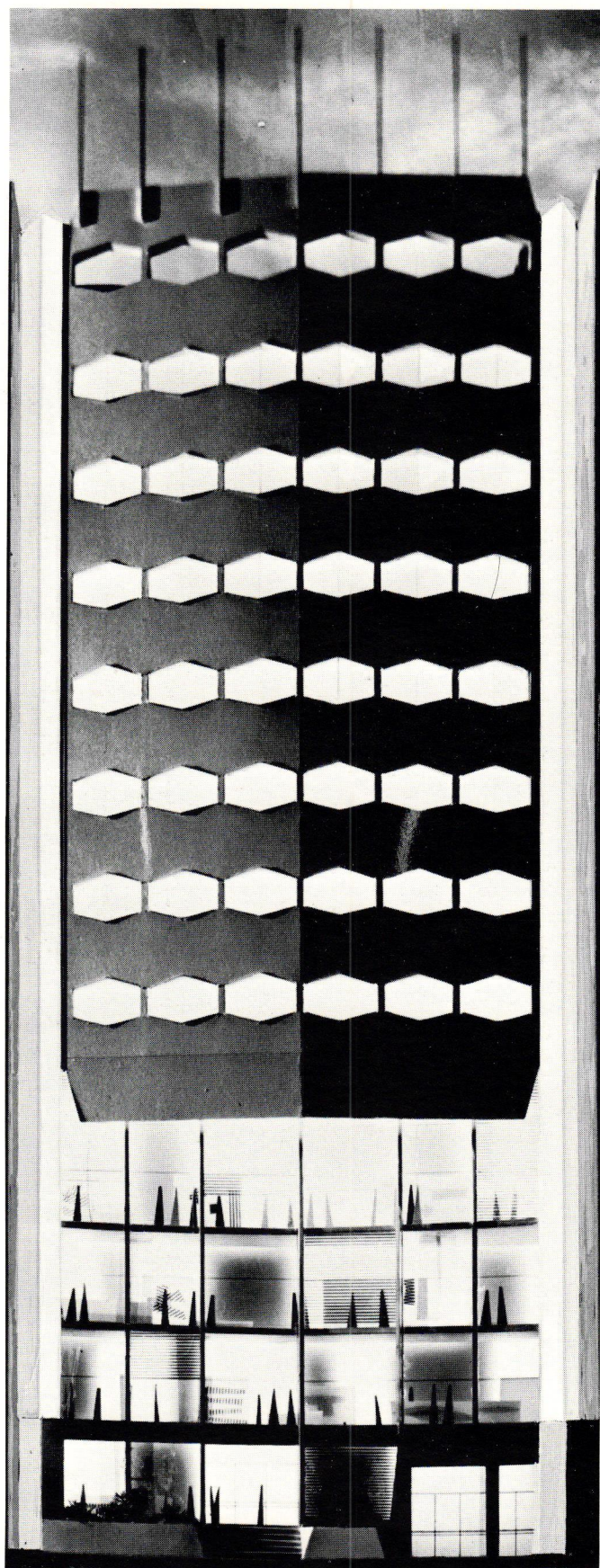


126. Covers of various recent issues of *Domus*

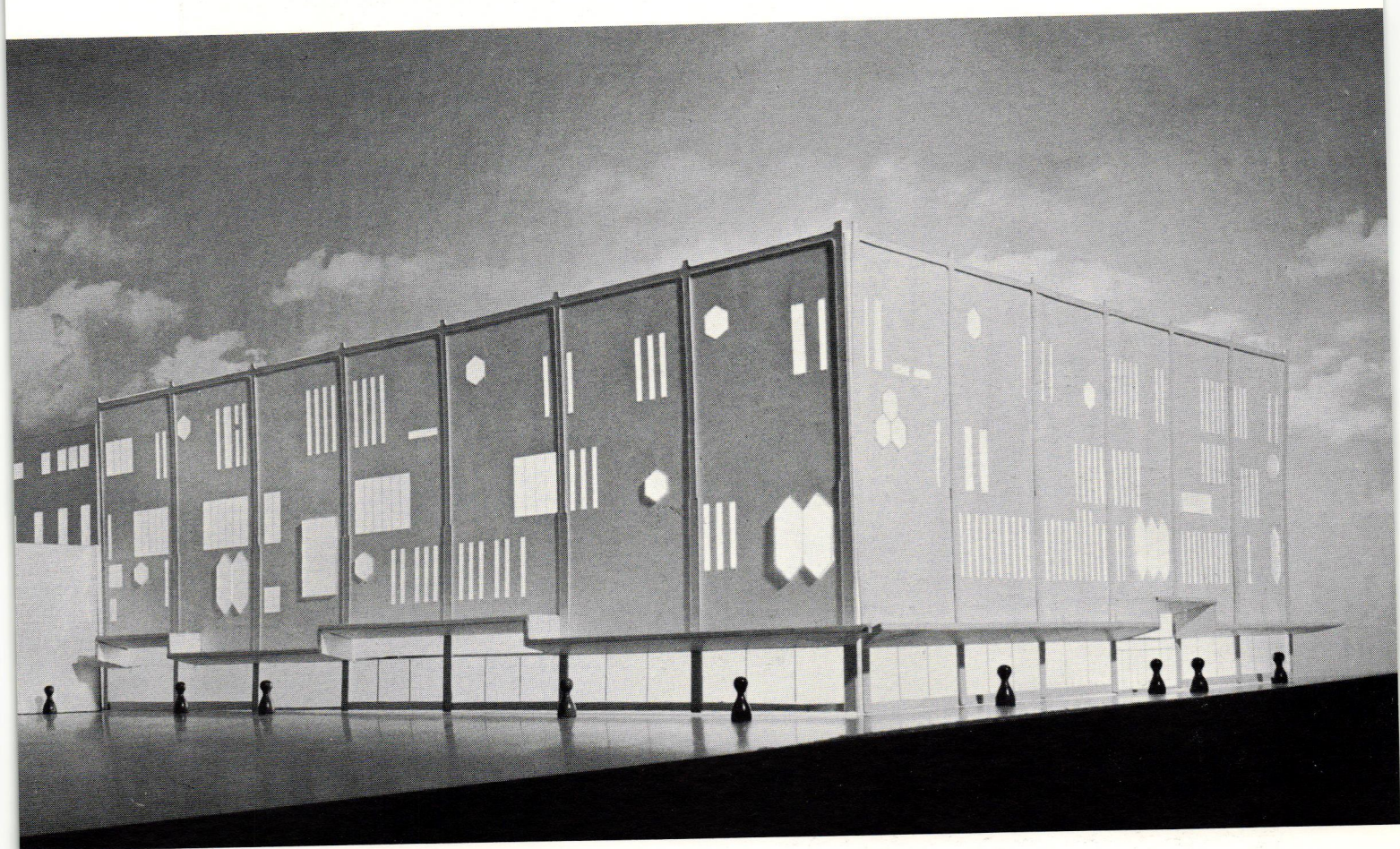
127. Proposal for High-Rise Office and Apartment building, Milan, 1964



128. Shui Hing Stores
Hong Kong, 1961



129. View at night



130. Bijenkoff Department Store
with J. Boosten, Architect
Eindhoven, Holland, 1965



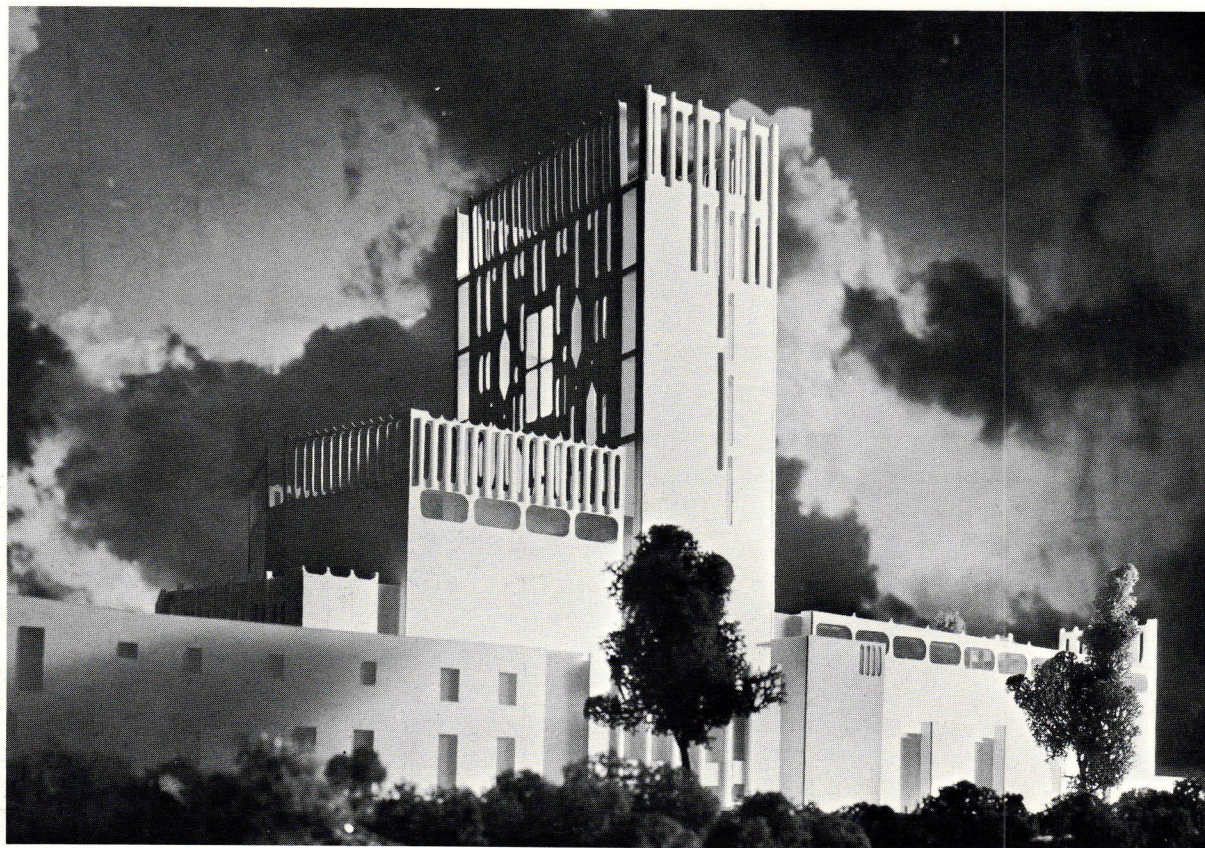
131. San Carlo Borromeo Hospital
Chapel, Milan, 1965



132. View at night

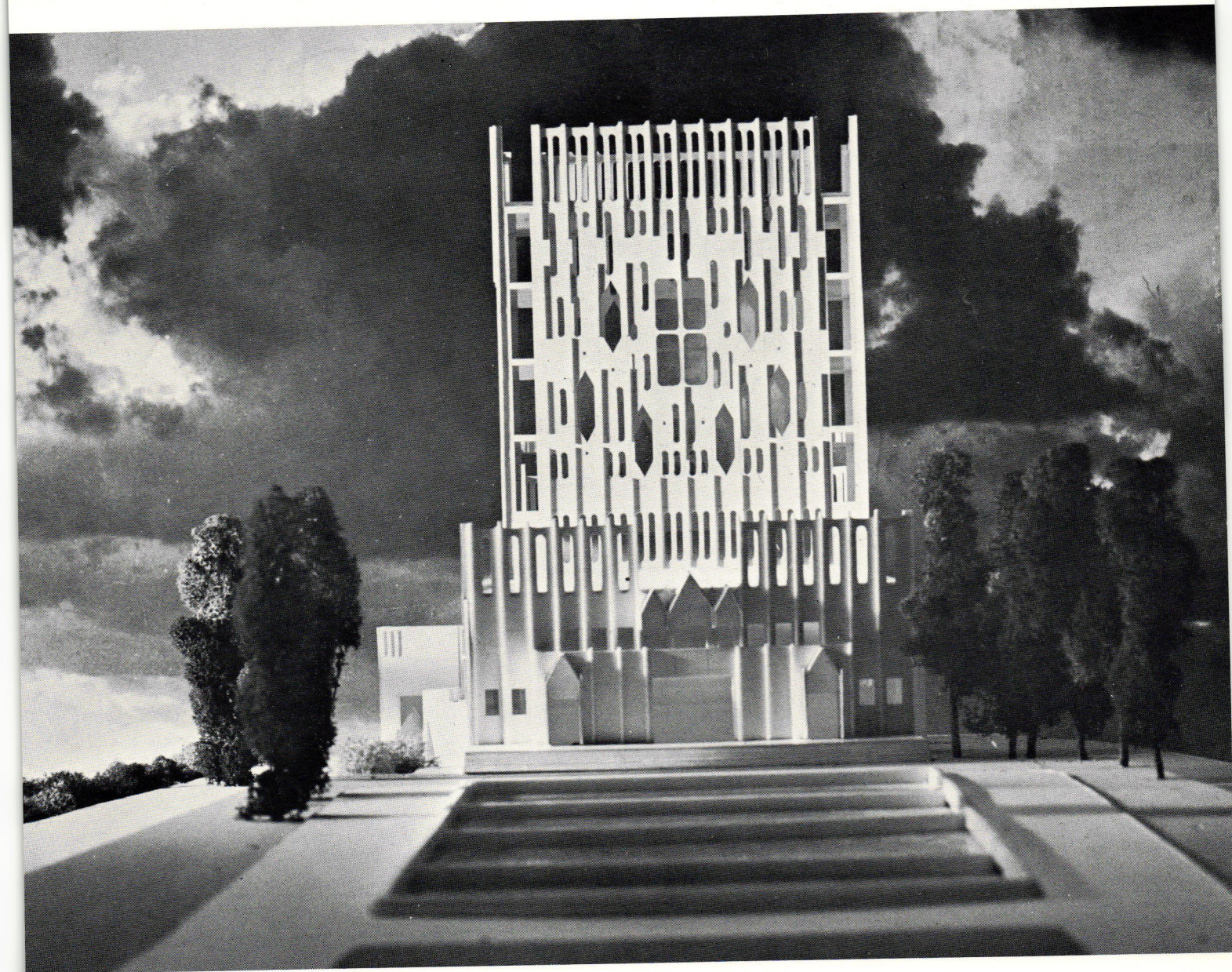
133. Interior view



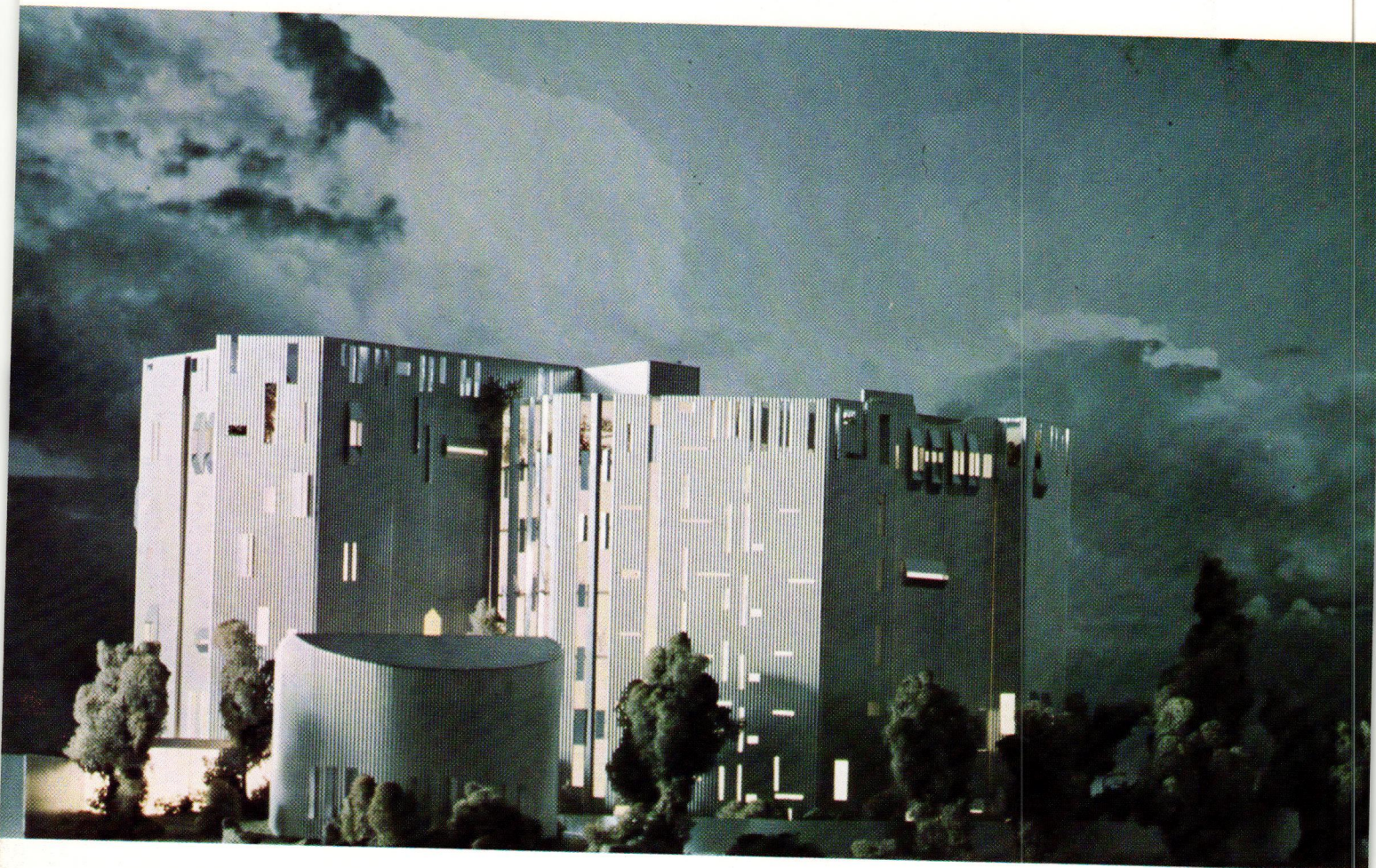


134. Procathedral, Taranto, 1966

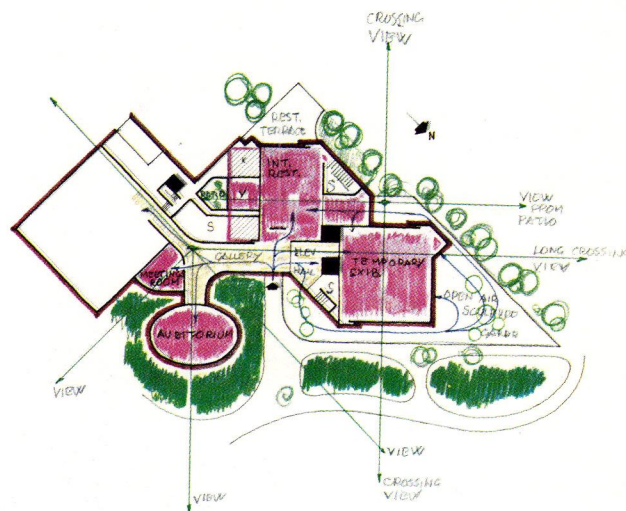
135. View from street



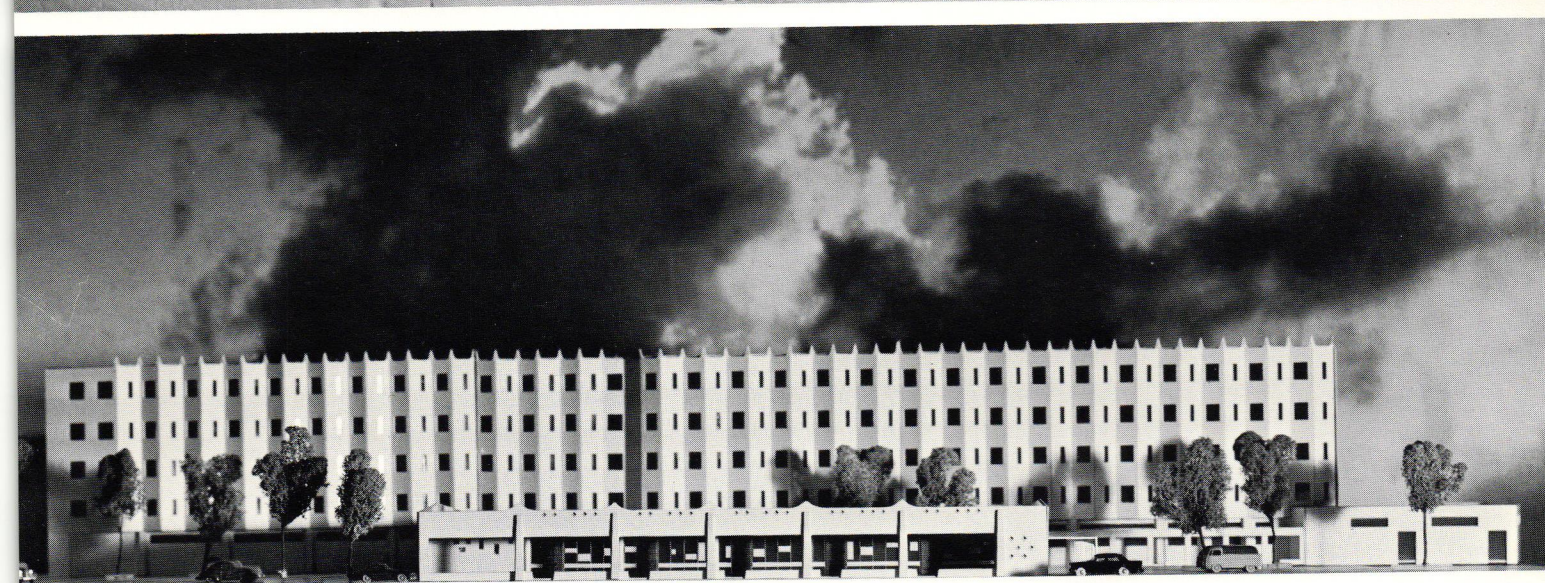
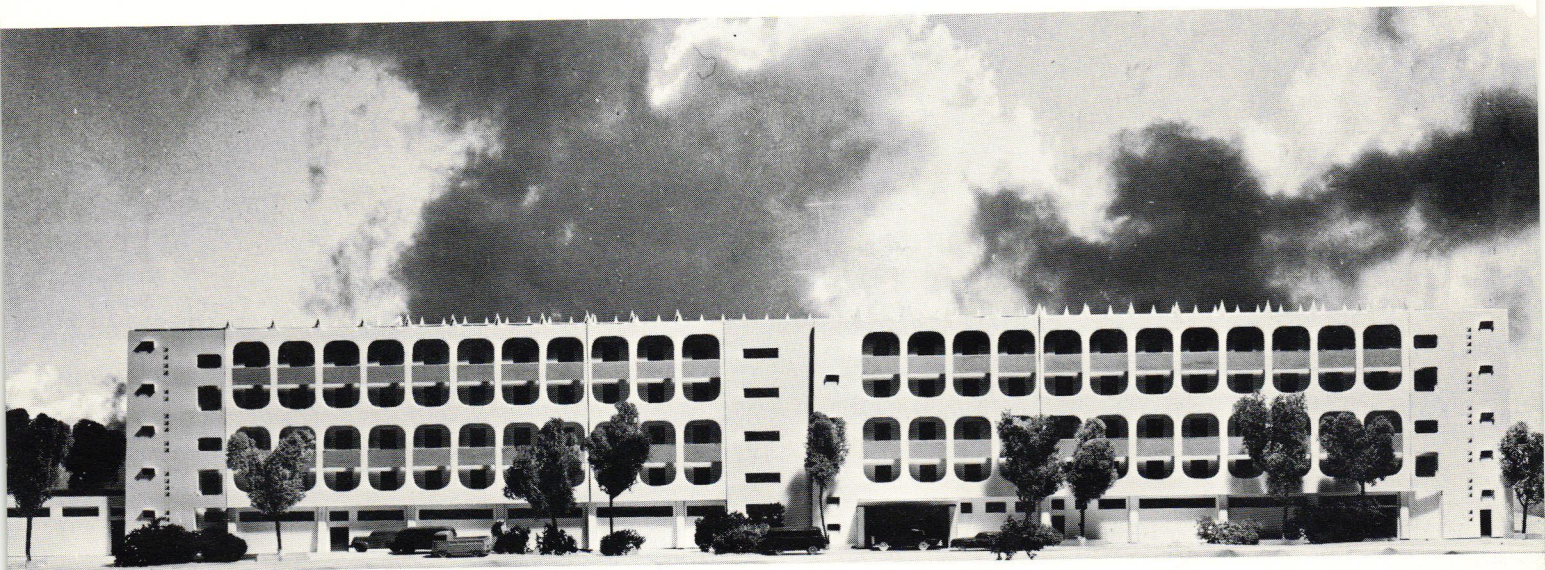
136. The main access



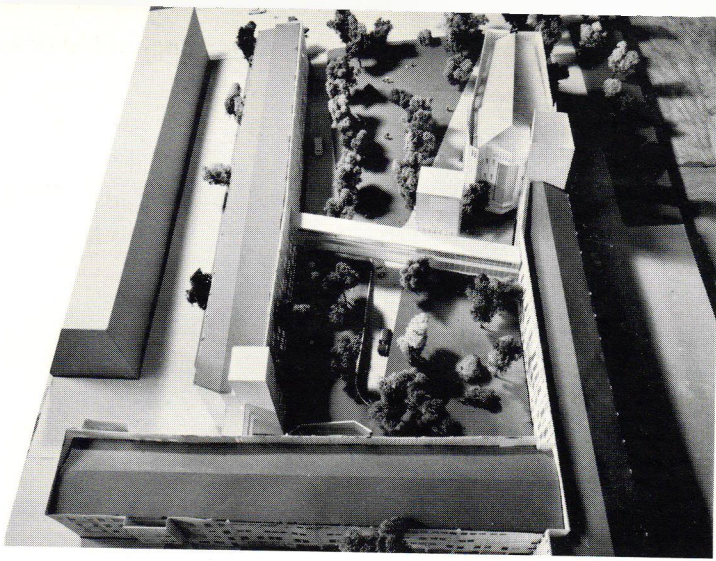
137. James Sudler Associates
and Gio Ponti
Preliminary proposals for
an Art Museum, Denver, 1966



138. Relationship to surrounding
environment



139. Studies for Administrative Buildings
in Islamabad, Pakistan, 1964 with
Alberto Rosselli, Architect and
Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer



140. Palace of Justice, Verona, 1965



141. View from above

Ceramics and porcelains for the Richard-Ginori Company Milan and Sesto Fiorentino (Florence) Tony Bouilhet House Garches (Seine & Oise) France Condominium Apartment House Milan, Via Randaccio 9 House with Emilio Lancia, Architect Milan, Via Monte Rosa Pavilion at Samples Fair with Emilio Lancia, Architect Milan Apartment House with Emilio Lancia, Architect Milan, Via San Vittore 40 Young Lady's Room Decorative Arts Biennial Exhibition Monza (Milan) Malagoli Barber Shop with Emilio Lancia, Architect (destroyed during World War II) Milan Apartment House Milan, Via Domenichino 1 Tapestry for Ospedale Maggiore Milan, Ospedale Maggiore Union Bank with Emilio Lancia, Architect Milan Chapel for the Borletti Family Milan, Cimitero Monumentale Daho Shop Milan, Via Carlo Alberto Piccoli Apartment (interior) Milan Apartment House (Domus Fausta and Domus Julia) with Emilio Lancia, Architect Milan, Via de Togni 21-25 Apartment House (Domus Livia) Milan, Via Caravaggio 25 Apartment House (Domus Honoria) Milan, Via Letizia 10 Apartment House (Domus Serena) Milan, Via Privata Letizia 8 Apartment House (Domus Aurelia) Milan, Via Letizia 2 Apartment House (Domus Carola) with Emilio Lancia, Architect Milan, Via de Togni 23 Cima Candy Factory with Luciano Baldessari, Architect Milan, Via Crespi Countess Vittoria Contini Bonacossi Residence (interior) Florence Proposals for Railway Car (interior) with Paolo Masera, Architect 3- Ida Pozzi Apartment (interior) 5 Milan, Via de Togni 25 5 Liviano Building, School of Archeology, University of Padua, with frescoes by Massimo Campigli School of Mathematics, University of Rome Apartment House Milan, Via Ceradini 12 Marmont Apartment House Milan, Via Gustavo Modena 36 Siebanek House Milan, Via Hajech Buffa House Milan, Viale Regina Margherita 42 Apartment Milan, Corso Venezia 6 Office Building, Ledoga Drug Company, Milan, Via Carlo Tenca 32 Hotel Val Martello (Bolzano) Apartment House (Domus Adele) Milan, Viale Coni Zugna 27 Sissa Apartment House Milan, Corso Italia 9 La Porte Apartment House Milan, Via Benedetto Brin 12	Two de Bartolomeis Villas Aprica (Sondrio) Minister's Reception Room Ministry of Corporations, Rome, Via Veneto Italian Cultural Institute (interior) Furstenberg Palace Vienna Cellina Apartment (interior) Milan, Via de Togni 23 1936 Office Building for Montecatini Chemical Corporation with Antonio Fornaroli and Eugenio Soncini, Engineers Milan, Via Moscova & Via Turati Office Building for Ferrania and Vetrococo with Antonio Fornaroli and Eugenio Soncini, Engineers Milan, Corso Matteotti 12 Apartment House (Domus Alba) Milan, Via Goidoni 63 World Exhibition of the Catholic Press, Rome, Vatican Palace Donegani Villa Bordighera (Ventimiglia) Marchesano Residence Bordighera (Ventimiglia) Residence for Count Marzotto (Proposal) with Francesco Bonfanti, Engineer Valdagno (Veneto) Vetrococo Executive Offices (interior) Milan, Corso Matteotti 12 Stadioma Office Building (Proposal) Milan, Via Legnano & Via Mantegazza Proposals for a small residence (interiors) Milan, VI Triennale Exhibition 1936- Master plan for Addis-Ababa 1937 (Ethiopia) with Giuseppe Vaccaro and Enrico Del Debbio, Architects 1937 Tataru Residence with Elsie Lazar, Architect Cluj, Roumania Furniture and ceramics Italian Pavilion, Paris, International World Fair Lotus Armchair for Figli Di Amedeo Cassina Manufacturing Company Meda (Milan) 1938 Columbus Medical Clinic for the Sisters of the Holy Heart Mission (completed 1942) with Antonio Fornaroli and Eugenio Soncini, Engineers Milan, Via Michelangelo Buonarroti 48 Proposal for an Italian Institute Buenos Aires, Argentina Proposals for Albergo Del Bosco with Bernard Rudofsky, Architect Capri The Exhibition of 1918 Victory Padua 1939 Stage designs for "Pulcinella" by Stravinsky Milano, Teatro della Triennale Proposal for the Marzotto Building with Francesco Bonfanti, Engineer Milan, Corso Vittorio Emanuele & S. Babila Headquarters for the Italian Radio Corporation (R.A.I.) with Nino Bertolai, Antonio Fornaroli and Eugenio Soncini, Engineers Milan, Corso Sempione 27 Salvatelli Apartment House Rome Borletti Apartment (interior) Milan, Via Annunziata 23 Palazzo Bo University Administration Building (interior) University of Padua Houses of S. Babila with Arch. De Min, Ing. Casalis, Arch. Rimini; Antonio Fornaroli and Eugenio Soncini, Engineers Milan, Via Cerva	Scalo Sempione Neighborhood (urban planning) Milan Competition for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Building with Guglielmo Ulrich, Architect; Antonio Fornaroli and Eugenio Soncini, Engineers Rome Staircase for Main Hall of University of Padua with frescoes by Massimo Campigli 1939- Apartment House 1940 Milan, Via Appiani 19 1940 Proposals for Apartment House for National Housing Institute (I.N.A.) with Antonio Fornaroli and Eugenio Soncini, Engineers Milan, Via Manin Proposal for Giustiniani Apartment Milan, Foro Buonaparte 35 Proposal for Eden Roc Bungalow Hotel 1940- Proposals for Mondadori Printing 1945 Plant and Publishing House Rho (Milan) Proposals for Railway Station and Hotel for Italian Northern Railways Milan 1945 Ponti's Summer House (1st version) 1946 Brustio Apartment (interior) Milan, Via Marchiondi 7 1947 Villa Plodari Rapallo (Genoa) 1948 Dr. Lepetit Memorial for the common grave, concentration camp victims Ebensee (Austria) Condominium Apartment House with Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Milan, Via Lamarmora 19 1949 Swimming pool for Hotel Royal San Remo Cremaschi Residence (interior) Milan, Via Alberto da Giussano 12 Dr. Gianni Mazzocchi Studio (int.) Domus Publishing House Milan, via Monte di Pietà 15 Stage design for "Orpheus" by Gluck Milan, La Scala Espresso coffee machine for La Pavoni Company Milan "Visetta" sewing machine for Visa Company Voghera (Pavia) 1950 Low-income Apartment House for National Housing Institute (I.N.A.) with Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Milan, Via Harrar-Dessie Interiors for Casino of San Remo Low-income Apartment House for National Housing Institute (I.N.A.) with Gigi Gho, Engineer Milan, Via Harrar-Dessie Marchesano Residence San Remo, Via del Tiro a Volo Office Building Riunione Adriatica di Sicurtà with Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Milan, Corso Vittorio Emanuele 32 Ceccato House (interior) Milan, Via Monferrato 14 Dulciora Candy Shop (interior) Milan, Via Cantù 1 Vembi (Burroughs) Offices (interior) Turin, Genoa, Florence Villa Cremaschi (interior) Carate Urio (Como) Low-income housing development scheme for National Housing Institute (I.N.A.) with Luigi Figini and Gino Pollini, Architects Milan, Via Harrar-Dessie	Interiors for <i>Conte Grande</i> with Prof. Nino Zoncada Italia Steamship Company Genoa Edison Office Building with Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Milan, Via Carducci 5 1951 Interiors for <i>Giulio Cesare</i> Italia Steamship Company Genoa Interiors for <i>Andrea Doria</i> with Prof. Nino Zoncada Italia Steamship Company Genoa Interiors for Vucano Apartment Milan, Via Washington 5 Interiors for <i>Conte Biancamano</i> Italia Steamship Company Genoa Proposal for a hotel room prototype Milan, IX Triennale Exhibition Second Office Building for Montecatini Chemical Corporation with Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Milan, Largo Donegani 2 Silver trays and stainless steel cutlery for Arthur Krupp Manufacturing Company Milan Lamps for Greco Lighting Company Milan Chair <i>La Leggera</i> for Figli di Amedeo Cassina Furniture Manufacturing Corp. Meda (Milan) 1952 Interiors for <i>Oceania</i> Lloyd Triestino Steamship Company Trieste Interiors for <i>Africa</i> Lloyd Triestino Steamship Company Trieste Electric Power Central for Edison Corporation with Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer and Alberto Rosselli, Architect Mera (near Chiavenna) Sondrio Technical School for Gonzaga Inst. with Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer and Alberto Rosselli, Architect Crescenzago (Milan) Table for Singer Furniture Company New York, U.S.A. Arata House Naples, Via Petrarca 1953 Hotel Royal (interior) designed by Chiaromonte E. Lattino, Architect Naples, Via Partenope Institute of Italian Culture (Lerici Foundation) with Ture Wennerholm, Architect Stockholm Furniture for Altamira New York Sanitary accessories for Gallieni, Viganò & Marazza Co. Milan Proposal for Italian-Brazilian Center with Luiz Contrucci, Alberto Rosselli and Antonio Fornaroli, São Paulo, 1953 Proposal for School of Nuclear Physics São Paulo, Brazil Proposal for Taglianetti Residence São Paulo, Brazil Proposal for Office Building for Lancia Automotive Industry with Alberto Rosselli and Nino Borsani, Architects and Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Turin Furniture for Nordiska Kompaniet Stockholm Power Plant for Edison Corporation with Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer and Alberto Rosselli, Architect Santa Giustina (Trentino) Proposals for a mass-produced automobile body for Touring Body Shop Milan
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Chronological List of Works

68

- Power Plant for the Edison Corporation with Alberto Rosselli, Architect Liro (Trento)
- 1954 Hotel and Center for the Garzanti Foundation with Giulio Bosio and Antonio Fornaroli, Engineers Forlì
- Power Plant for the Edison Corporation with Alberto Rosselli, Architect Cimego (Trento)
- Planchart House Caracas, Venezuela
- Proposal for mass-produced house Milan, X Triennale Exhibition
- Sanitary equipment for Ideal Standard Company Milan
- 1955 Villa Marmont Zoagli (Genoa)
- San Luca Church Milan, Via Ampère
- Ponti's Summer House (2nd version) Civate (Como)
- Superleggera* chair for Figli Di Amedeo Cassina Furniture Manufacturing Company Meda
- Town Hall Cesenatico (Pesaro)
- Philips Building with Alberto Rosselli, Architect and Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Rome, Piazza Monte Grappa
- Auditorium Time and Life Building New York, Avenue of Americas
- Summer Residence Arenzano (Genoa)
- Luminous Paintings* (Light Fixtures) for Lumi Company Milan
- Alitalia Airline Ticket Office (int.) New York, Fifth Avenue
- Silverware for Christoffle Paris
- Supermarket with Alberto Rosselli, Architect Milan, Viale Zara
- Arreaza House Country Club Caracas, Venezuela
- Metal desk for Rima Manufacturing Company Padua
- Shop for "National" Calculating Machines with Alberto Rosselli, Architect Milan, Piazza San Fedele 2
- Lady's desk for Chiesa Furniture Company Milan
- Cow skin floor carpet for Colombi Company Milan
- Power Plants for Edison Corporation with Alberto Rosselli, Architect Vinadio (Sondrio) Pantano d'Avio
- Interiors for Galleria del Sole Milan, Via Sant'Andrea
- 1956 Door handles for Olivari Manufacturing Company Borgomanero (Novara)
- Pirelli Building with Antonio Fornaroli, Giuseppe Valtolina and Egidio Dell'Orto, Engineers Pier Luigi Nervi and Arturo Danusso, Structural Consultants Milan, Piazza Duca D'Aosta
- School of Architecture, Polytechnic Institute with Giordano Forti, Architect Milan
- The Convent of Carmel with Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Bonmoschetto (San Remo)

- Silver tables accessories and tableware for Christoffle Paris
- Stainless steel cutlery for Arthur Krupp Company Milan
- Hexagonal table with folding leaves for Chiesa Furniture Manufacturing Company Milan
- Bedsprad for a double bed for I.S.A. Company Busto Arsizio (Varese)
- Apartment House for Riunione Adriatica di Sicurtà with Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Milan, Via Nievo — Monti
- Folding chair for Reguitti Company Agnosine (Brescia)
- Power Plant for Edison Corporation with Alberto Rosselli, Architect Stura Demonte
- Blocks in marble and pebbles for Fulget Manufacturing Company Milan
- Single bed board with accessories for Chiesa Furniture Manufacturing Company Milan
- Ceramic tiles for Ceramica Joo Limito (Milan)
- Round Easy Chair* for Figli Di Amedeo Cassina Manufacturing Company Meda (Milan)
- 1957 *Two Leaves* settee for Figli Di Amedeo Cassina Manufacturing Company
- Proposals for Gorrondona House Caracas, Venezuela
- Prefabricated House for F.E.A.L. Milan, XI Triennale Exhibition
- Tableware for Reed & Barton Company Newport, Massachusetts
- Printed fabrics for I.S.A. Busto Arsizio (Varese)
- Melandri Apartment House Milan, Viale Lunigiana 42
- Head board for a double bed for Chiesa Furniture Manufacturing Company Milan
- Garden lamps (Plastic and Brass) for Arredoluce Lighting Company Milan
- 1958 Regional Industries Association Office Building with Alberto Rosselli, Architect and Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Milan, Via Pantano 12
- Proposal for Guzman — Blanco House Caracas, Venezuela
- Gallini Center with Alberto Rosselli, Architect and Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Voghera
- Tableware for Christoffle Paris
- Nemazee House Teheran, Iran
- Office Building for Government Development Board with Studio Valtolina-Dell'Orto Alberto Rosselli, Architect and Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Baghdad, Iraq
- 1958-1963 Office Building for Riunione Adriatica di Sicurtà with Alberto Rosselli, Piero Portaluppi, Architects and Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Milan, Via Santa Sofia & Corso Italia
- 1960 Interiors for Alitalia Terminal Milan, Railroad Central Station
- Parco Dei Principi Hotel Sorrento (Napoli)
- 1961 Shui Hing Stores Hong Kong, Nathan Road
- Proposals for High-Rise Apartment Building Montreal, Canada

- Fabrics for I.S.A. Busto Arsizio (Varese)
- Italia '61 International Labour Exhibition (Interiors) Turin
- 1961-1965 San Carlo Borromeo Hospital with Artura Braga and Antonio Fornaroli, Engineers; and Alberto Rosselli, Architect Milan, Via S. Giusto
- 1962 2 Villas and Tourist Development Scheme with Cesare Casati, Architect Capo Stella, Elba Island
- Storione Hotel Padua
- Antoniana Bank with Alberto Rosselli, Architect Padua
- 1962 Textile Printing Industrial Workshops for I.S.A. Company Busto Arsizio (Varese)
- Montecatini Exhibition Milan Samples Fair
- Padua Savings Institute and Rovigo Bank with Alberto Rosselli, Architect Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Padua
- 1962-1964 House for Mother Superior Nôtre Dame de Sion Rome, Via Garibaldi 28
- 1963 Modena Savings Bank with Alberto Rosselli, Architect and Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Modena, Piazza Grande
- Pakistan House Hotel for Parliament Members Islamabad (new Capital), Pakistan
- Government Administrative Buildings with Alberto Rosselli, Architect and Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Islamabad (new Capital), Pakistan
- Competition for Concert Hall and Cultural Center with Costantino Corsini and Giorgio Wiskeman Linz (Donau), Austria
- Proposal for Housing Development for Varese Shoe Company Varese, Italy
- 1964 Proposal for Anguissola House Lido di Camaiore (Masa Carrara)
- Parco dei Principi Hotel Rome, Via Mercandante
- Chair for Knoll International Milan
- Montedoria Office Building Milan, Via Andrea Doria corner Piazzale Calazzo
- Monte di Pietà — Bank and Apartment Building with Alberto Rosselli, Architect and Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer
- National Housing Institute Office Building with Alberto Rosselli, Architect and Antonio Fornaroli, Engineer Milan, Via San Paolo
- 1965 San Francesco Church Milan, Via Paolo Giovio 31
- Palace of Justice Verona
- Bijenhoff Department Store with J. Boosten, Architect Eindhoven, Holland
- San Carlo Borromeo Hospital Chapel Milan, Via S. Giusto
- Proposal for Office and High-Rise Apartment Beyrouth, Lebanon
- 1966 Procathedral Taranto (Taranto)
- Proposal for Denver Art Museum James Sudler & Associates
- Armchair for Frau Furniture Co.
- Armchair for Arflex Milan

Exhibitions

- Painting and drawing**
- 1937 Florence
- 1939 Galleria Gianferrari Milan
- 1950 Galleria dell'Obelisco Rome
- 1951 Galleria Gianferrari Milan
- 1955 Galleria la Bussola Turin
- 1956 Galleria del Sole Milan
- 1959 Galleria del Disegno Milan
- Design and Architecture**
- 1954 U.S. traveling exhibition organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, Massachusetts
- 1956 A. B. Ferdinand Lundquist Göteborg
- 1957 Christoffle Paris
- 1957 Liberty Stores London
- 1966 UCLA Art Galleries University of California Los Angeles

Books by Gio Ponti

Italiani

(with Leonard Sinisgalli)
Documenti d'Arte Grafica Domus, Milan

Il Coro

Edizioni Uomo, Milan

Cifre Parlanti

Edizioni Vesta, Milan

Politica dell'Architettura

Garzanti, Milan

L'Architettura e un cristallo

Edizioni Italiane, Milan

Ringrazio Iddio che le cose non

vanno a modo mio

Antoniazzi, Milan

Verso la casa esatta

Edizioni Italiane, Milan

Paradiso Perduto

Daria Guarnati, Milan

Amate l'Architettura

Vitali e Ghianda, Genova

Translated into English by

Giuseppina and Mario Salvadori as

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F. W. Dodge Corp., New York

Published in Japanese

By Bijutsu Shuppan-sha, Tokio

Books on Gio Ponti

Gio Ponti with a foreword by

James Plaut

Aria d'Italia Editions,

Daria Guarnati, Milan

Articles by Gio Ponti

La casa all'italiana,

Domus n. 1 (p. 7)

Villa del signor Barettoni in Padova,

Domus n. 1, p. 16-17)

Pitture murali,

Domus n. 3 (p. 24)

Fiori in casa,

Domus n. 5 (p. 22)

Il mobile antico,

Domus n. 6 (p. 12)

Un saggio di novissima gastronomia,

Domus n. 6 (p. 39-49)

La machine à habiter,

Domus n. 7 (p. 10)

La casa di moda,

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