Teatro Olimpico

Huamanistic Detail

Olympic theater, set in the heavens
Transports one to another time and place
Painted sky overhead, one imagines

An infinite extension of the space
Detecting the scent of worn aging wood
Creaks and echoes, wraps the stage in embrace

Behind, stone faces wait as if on guard
The stage reaches back, with clever layers
Statues look ready to move if they could

Are they the audience or the players?
I wonder to myself, the curtain tears

The Teatro Olimpico is a humanistic masterpiece that demonstrates the power of sculpture as architecture. Sculpture around the stage of the theater evokes a permanent sense of activity, highlights the architect's use of human scale and proportions, and preserves memories and messages of the original patrons. The Teatro Olimpico demonstrates that sculpture is more than ornament or decoration, it is architecture.

Constructed in Vicenza from 1580-1585 A.D., the Teatro Olimpico is both a first and a last. It was the first permanent Renaissance indoor theater.[i] It was also the last building designed by Palladio, completed after his death by Vincenzo Scamozzi. Its design recalls Roman outdoor theaters yet brings theater to the audience in an entirely new way. The stage set, designed by Scamozzi, was the first use of perspective in theater and remains in use to this day.

Palladio's varied career and influences led him to his final design of the Teatro Olimpico, a humanistic masterpiece. He was born as Andrea di Pietro in Padua in 1508.[ii] He had early training as a stonemason.[iii] This training allowed him to transition into architecture with the right connections, influences, and patrons. Andrea was friends with diplomat Gian Giorgio Trissino. Trissino was also a poet, and in one of his poems may have given him the name Palladio by which he was later known.[iv] Palladio traveled to Rome with two poets, Giambattista Maganza and Marco Thiene, in 1546.[v] This close association with poets would have reinforced Palladio's budding humanistic ideals, especially how a moment, a time and place, can be captured through art.

On a prominent hill just outside of Vicenza is the Villa Rotonda, one of Palladio's most famous works. After a bus ride and a brief wait in a light drizzle I was rewarded with a perfectly symmetrical building with breathtaking views of the countryside. I visited just when the rose garden was at its peak. Ascending the hills and the stairs I was greeted be a grand space where the central circle in plan interlocks with the orthogonal spaces surrounding it. In this

building, the doorways are carefully ornamented, highlighting the importance of connection between spaces and geometries. Palladio was inspired by the Pantheon in Rome for the design of the Villa Rotunda. The richly ornamented ceilings highlight verticality. For the ancient Romans, this verticality was a connection to the gods. For Palladio and other humanists, this was a connection with virtuous thoughts and a deeper understanding of man's place in nature. While this rural work by Palladio was focused on man's individualistic contemplation, his urban works were focused on mankind's relationships with one another.

Fig. 1. Andrea Palladio, Exterior of the Villa Rotonda, Villa Rotonda, Vicenza, 1571.

The city of Vicenza is filled with works by Palladio, from private palazzos to public works. The City of Vicenza and Palladian Villas of the Veneto is a UNESCO World Heritage site protecting 47 buildings by Palladio including the Teatro Olimpico. Palladio's godfather was a sculptor who lived in Vicenza.[vi] This brought him to the city and he continued to do work there for many decades. His work on Vicenza's "basilica," known as Palladio's Basilica, was a starting point for his work in public architecture.[vii] He designed the drum and cupola of the Vicenza Cathedral.[viii] He also worked on many private residences in the city.

I enjoyed walking through Vicenza, a small, quiet city where one can sense the civic pride and closeness of community. The city square was always filled with people at night. From the steps of the portico of Palladio's Basilica I watched vendors set up one morning. Musicians would play on the streets in the evenings as people walked to and from dinner. One day of my visit there was a bike festival packed with citizens of all ages. The people of the city were always happy to answer my questions in broken Italian. I stayed in the Palazzo Scamozzi hotel, designed by Palladio's successor. Signs throughout the city guided people like me to Palladio's works. Just walking from my hotel to the Teatro Olimpico I could easily stop at ten buildings by Palladio. It is clear that Palladio is himself a point of civic pride for Vicenza, as the main street of the city is called the Corso Andrea Palladio.

Fig. 2. My sketch of the Loggia del Capitaniato from the steps of Palladio's Basilica

In class, one sees the perfectly geometric elevations of Palladian buildings and how neatly they correspond with the plans. However, unlike at the Villa Rotonda, this is not how any of the urban buildings are actually experienced. Walking along the narrow Italian streets, there was no way I could see any of Palladio's elevations head-on. Rather, I was forced to crane my neck upwards or go down the street to see the building at an oblique angle. Only in the town square from the portico of Palladio's Basilica could I see the full façade of the Loggia del Capitaniato. This smaller building seemed itself to be a detail within the larger composition of the square.

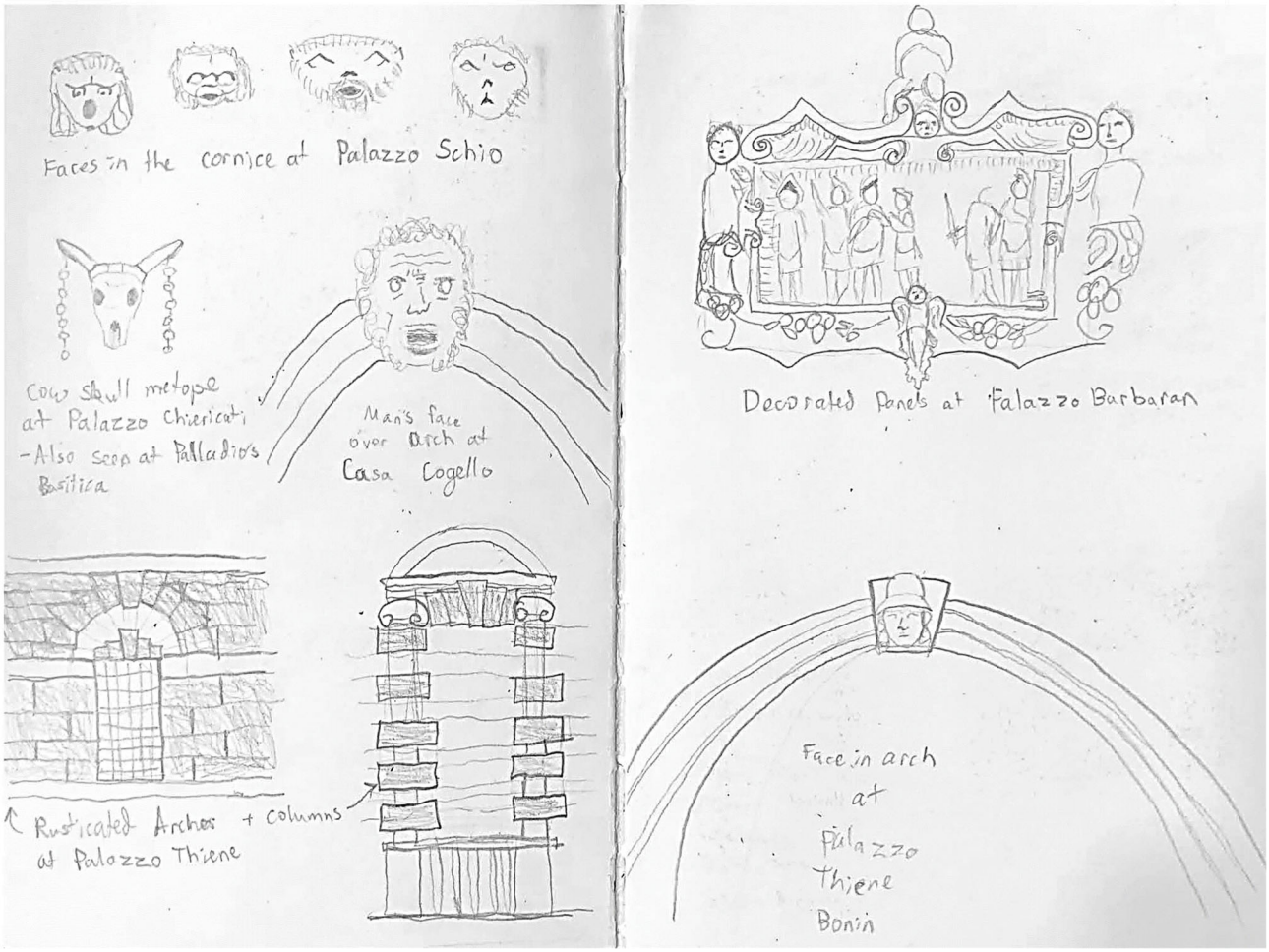

Fig. 3. My sketched analysis of Palladio's details in Vicenza

What I noticed instead of the full effect of the facades was the detail that Palladio incorporated into them. At the Palazzo Schio there were four distinct animal faces in the cornice over each column. Both the Casa Cogello and the Palazzo Thiene Bonin have a man's face in the arch. However, each face has different features and even expressions. The Casa Cogello face has an open mouth as if singing or shrieking, indicating a welcoming or hostile greeting. Contrarily, the face in the arch at the Palazzo Thiene Bonin is in repose. The serious expression and helmet indicate a soldier standing on guard at the

gate. The Palazzo Barbaran is decorated with relief panels below the cornice and between the columns of the ground level. The series of panels adds up to tell a story. The Palazzo Thiene has rusticated arches and columns. When walking along unfamiliar streets, I found my way easily by remembering the series of details, even the different facial expressions on certain buildings.

Sitting just across from the Teatro Olimpico is the Palazzo Chiericati. Palladio designed the Palazzo Chiericati in 1550.[ix] The Palazzo's patron wanted the building to be "ornament for the whole city."[x] This was in harmony with Palladio's ideal that beauty was meant for everyone, "to celebrate citizens and embellish cities.[xi] Exterior ornament was a public feature even if it was part of a private residence. Unlike many of Palladio's other city residences, the Palazzo Chiericati can be seen on its sides and not just its front. This created even more opportunities for public beauty. It fronted the piazza used as Vicenza's cattle market.[xii] This gave an open space to be better appreciated from, though the size of the façade still precludes it from being fully seen from any vantage point. Its position on the public market also made it that much more important as a building for the people, as it would frequently have an audience. The location in front of the cattle market also inspired the cow skull motif in the metopes. This motif is also seen in the metopes of Palladio's Basilica, which Chiericati was a patron of. Palladio's Basilica and the Palazzo Chiericati both have the Ionic order over the Doric.[xiii] This was a hearkening back to classic design of the orders, rediscovered in the Renaissance.

The Teatro Olimpico was constructed as a monument to civic pride in Vicenza. A theatrical performance in 1539 put Vicenza on the map culturally.[xiv] The citizens considered themselves a culture apart from Venice and Rome. Prominent citizens of Vicenza built upon their theatrical success by founding the Academia Olimpica. The Academia Olimpica was founded in 1555 and hosted the Olympic Games in 1558.[xv] Palladio was an active part of this society. He designed temporary theater constructions for the Olympic Games, where new plays were performed.[xvi] After a few years of temporary constructions, in 1579, the Academy obtained the rights to build a permanent theater in an old fortress, the Castello del Territorio.

Fig. 4. My sketch of the *scaenae frons* of the Teatro Olimpico

The Teatro Olimpico may have been a new theater, but it followed centuries of architectural tradition. Palladio traveled to Verona to study the ancient Roman theatre there.[xvii] He also followed the

teachings of the ancient architecture theoretician Vitruvius. Vitruvius' writings defined the *decorum*, or specific configuration of the theater archetype.[xviii] The Vitruvian theater was a semicircle with distinct parts. The main parts were the *orchestra,* or stage, and the *cavea*, or seats. The *scaenae frons* was the back wall of the stage, supported by columns. The *scaenae frons* is highly articulated on the lower level of the Teatro Olimpico.[xix] The *proscaenium* supported the front end of the stage and was richly decorated. The *cavea* of the Teatro Olimpico is elliptical due to site constraints.[xx] Palladio used a three-opening scene front on the Teatro Olimpico, also prescribed by Vitruvius.[xxi] The ceiling of the theater is painted like a sky at sunset. This hearkens back to the ancient tradition of outdoor theater that continued to be practiced until the construction of the Teatro Olimpico. In the time of Vitruvius, and even in Palladio's earlier constructions for the Academia Olimpico, theater would be performed in open-air constructions. Painting the sky onto the ceiling included the Teatro Olimpico into this tradition. Relief panels at the attic level contain allusions to the story of Hercules, meant to reference the founding of the Academy as well as the authority of the ruling class.[xxii] Hercules was considered the "patron" of the Olimpic Academy. Architecture for Palladio was rooted in history but told the story of the present day.

Fig. 5. Andrea Palladio, Stage lighting at the Teatro Olimpico, Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, 1580-1585.

Palladio, and later Scamozzi, were also influenced by the theatrical needs of the day. Setting the scene was important in Renaissance theater, and different types of plays required different settings.[xxiii] Tragedy was the most popular form among humanists.[xxiv] This is not without irony, as Palladio died before the Teatro could be finished, a tragedy in itself. His successor Vincenzo Scamozzi finished the Teatro faithful to Palladio's design.[xxv] In 1584 Scamozzi designed the urban setting for the first play, the tragedy *Oedipus Rex*.[xxvi] This scenery is still in use today. Additional land was purchased to construct the "streets" of the scene.[xxvii] Despite having additional land, one could not construct a convincing street scene on

land of that size. The ancient city of Thebes, the setting of *Oedipus Rex,* could not be convincingly recreated at such a small scale. In Renaissance and even Roman and Greek theater construction, the open-air theater could "borrow" the views of the surrounding city to create a city scene. However, in the new typology of an indoor theater, the scene had to be fully realized on the interior. Scamozzi ingeniously used perspective to create convincingly long city streets. The city was created by gently raising the floor level as the stage projected back from the audience, while simultaneously lowering and narrowing the set buildings. This created the illusion of three infinitely extended streets, a large city in a small theater. Scamozzi also designed the lighting of the theater.[xxviii] The theater was not just a backdrop, but an active participant in the performance.

Andrea Palladio's humanistic architectural philosophy explains his use of sculpture in the Teatro Olimpico. Palladio, like many architects of his day, was inspired by humanism.[xxix] The relation of a person, mentally as well as bodily, was important in this philosophy. In humanism, it was the human body, human thought, and human agency that generated meaning, especially in art. Palladio believed that buildings "should appear an entire, and well finished body."[xxx] The ideal proportions of architecture, both in Vitruvius's time and in the Renaissance, were based on bodily proportions.[xxxi] Using sculpture as architecture immediately provides a sense of scale to the space. Giving the architecture a "human" face through sculpture would have only reinforced the fact that the architecture was based on human proportions.

Fig. 6. Andrea Palladio, Founder's statue in a wall niche, Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, 1580-1585.

The Teatro Olimpico by Andrea Palladio is plain on its exterior compared to some of his other buildings, such as the Palazzo Chiericati located just across the street. If the Palazzo Chiericati is an extraverted, magnanimous public figure, the Teatro Olimpico is an introverted, yet no less public-spirited, intellectual. Its

exterior is plain brick with a few relief panels. A rusticated arch emerges from the mixed brick and rubble walls, leading to a courtyard filled with sculpture fragments. Small, regular windows do not betray the interior of the building. Entering from the courtyard, one passes through the *odeo* and *antiodeo,* reception rooms painted with allegorical frescoes. Navigating downwards through a plain, tunnel-like hall, one finally reaches the stage.

Fig. 7. Andrea Palladio, Plain exterior of the Teatro Olimpico, Teatro Olimpico, Vicenza, 1580-1585.

Like a geode, the richness in decoration is centered at the heart of the building, the stage itself. The Teatro Olimpico has a wooden stage with a pit in front of it for the orchestra. A semicircle of wooden benches ascends steeply. When I walked in I could smell the aged wood and every step creaked. Even though the theater was nearly empty when I walked in, I felt the sense of being in a crowd. Sculptures sat behind and in front of me. They stand over the columns and fill the aedicules.[xxxii] The theater is so filled with sculpture because each member who founded it donated his own image:

> Each Academician should have his own statue made in stucco at his own expense with his name and motto and coat-of-arms engraved thereon, which statues must be placed on the column pedestals and in the niches in the aforementioned structure.[xxxiii]

The theater is filled with sculptures of its founders, creating a permanent sense of activity. The sculptures on the *scaenae frons*, the permanent scenic architecture of the stage, stand in for actors. The sculptures give the sense of a play scene frozen in time. As each sculpture is modeled after a unique person, it makes one wonder about their name and story, exactly as one would for a character in a play. Meanwhile, behind the steep semi-elipse of wooden seats, more statues crowd the back of the theater. The *cavea* is surrounded by a semicircle of Corinthian columns, with statues between and above. This creates a permanent audience and a sense of a crowd even in an empty theater. This sense of crowdedness reinforces the city setting. The ancient city of Thebes, transported to Vicenza by Scamozzi, is always crowded with people. The *proscenium* was an "architectural and sculptural

eulogy" to Palladio and the Academicians.[xxxiv] The story of their work for the city of Vicenza is permanently captured in the architecture.

The moment that Palladio captures in the Teatro Olimpico is the moment of the curtain rising. The audience, statues in the back of the theater, are in their "seats." Meanwhile, the players at the front of the theater are onstage, yet unknown. This frozen moment evokes the feelings of anticipation and curiosity that one feels at the beginning of a theatrical performance.

[i] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 103.
[ii] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 18.
[iii] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 18.
[iv] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 18.
[v] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 37.
[vi] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 19.
[vii] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 43.
[viii] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 61.
[ix] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 43.
[x] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 43.
[xi] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 21.
[xii] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 43.
[xiii] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 89.
[xiv] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 21.
[xv] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 103.
[xvi] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 104.
[xvii] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 76.
[xviii] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 12.
[xix] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 104.
[xx] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 104.
[xxi] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 104.
[xxii] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 104.
[xxiii] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 103.
[xxiv] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 103.
[xxv] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 104.
[xxvi] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 105.
[xxvii] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 105.
[xxviii] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 105.
[xxix] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 11.
[xxx] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 41.
[xxxi] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 37.
[xxxii] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 104.
[xxxiii] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 104.
[xxxiv] Tavernor, *Palladio and Palladianism,* 104.

Bayard-Condict Building

Freedom of Expression

Hurrying slowly along Bleeker Street
Cool warm rain tapping on my shoulders, I
Pause in the entry for shelter, refuge dry
Against the curtain of rain, and I greet

A building where the past and present meet
In harmony instead of tension, tie
Nature to geometry, under lies
The steel sinews of a structural feat

A cold skeleton softened by the shades
Of textured terra cotta glowing white
A beacon in the rain, hard edges fade
While reaching like a column, tripartite
Base, shaft, and capital, lovely crown laid
On a new democracy earned by height

The Bayard-Condict building was one of the first skyscrapers in the city of skyscrapers, paving the way for other such buildings in New York City. While Sullivan had successfully introduced the steel skeleton frame skyscrapers with the Wainwright building in St. Louis, he did not begin to celebrate the structure architecturally until the design of the Bayard-Condict. The terra-cotta curtain wall expresses

the thinness and the lightness of the steel structure, rather than thickening to disguise it as with earlier buildings. The building also continues to uphold Sullivan's tripartite formula for skyscrapers with a base, shaft, and crown. The Bayard-Condict building by Louis Sullivan is a testament to the American ideal of freedom of expression. To Sullivan, these ideals were upheld by expressing new technologies and materials, epitomized in the new building type of the skyscraper.

Built in New York City in 1899, the Bayard-Condict building plays a significant role in the development of the tall building type. "The Bayard Building at 65 Bleeker street in New York City was financed by the United Loan and Investment Company at some $275,000 to replace a defunct savings bank that burned down in 1895."[i] The desire to replace the old bank with a skyscraper indicates an eagerness at this point in history to try new, monumental projects. The Bayard-Condict Building is Sullivan's only work in New York City.[ii] Sullivan had no history of working in New York but still got the job, either due to positive press on his previous projects, or from his personal connection to Lydon P. Smith, an architect already working with United Loan.[iii] Three years after publishing "The Tall Office Artistically Considered," Sullivan was recognized as the architect to consult for a skyscraper that was as beautiful and expressive as it was functional and profitable.

Sullivan was not the only one who valued ornament. The Bayard-Condict Building was popular, especially for its elaborate exterior decoration.[iv] Sullivan's ornament had commercial value.[v] His clients

believed they would make more money and have better business because of his façade designs.

One of my first site visits in New York was to the Statue of Liberty. I found it fascinating that this architectural, sculptural, and engineering masterpiece could be so accurately described by the poem "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus. I also visited Ellis Island and was struck by the beauty and detail of such a utilitarian building. It was also an emotional visit for me because my great-great grandfather had immigrated through Ellis Island from Sweden, and it was very meaningful to me to be able to see what he would have seen. The day continued to be emotional as I visited the 9/11 memorial. It is amazing to me how powerfully architecture and sculpture can capture the memories and meanings of a place.

I visited various landmarks during my visit to New York, especially those with unique and significant ornamental qualities. I appreciated the Art Deco Ornament at both the Empire State Building and the Chrysler Building. I was able to see the insides of these buildings and enjoyed the use of art, stone, and lighting to continue the design ideas expressed on the exteriors. I also visited Grand Central Station and found the ornament more than just attractive, but helpful in wayfinding in the large, unfamiliar space. This is similar to how I experienced ornament in the city itself, both beautiful and useful in understanding my location.

Fig. 1. Reed and Stem, Main Concourse, Grand Central Station, New York City, New York, 1903-1913.

I am drawn to meaningful ornament and quality public space, and I enjoyed that New York had both in spades. I spent a few hours walking through and resting in Central Park. I found it to be a very peaceful space where it was easy to find a comfortable place to sit, a beautiful landscape view, and interesting activities going on all at once. I also enjoyed a pop-up park at Lincoln Square where everything was covered in artificial grass. It was a comfortable place to lounge

while a public orchestra performance occurred. Walking along the coast of Manhattan, I stopped at the Little Island, which offered beautiful views and fun activities.

Fig. 2. Mimi Lien, Concert on The Green, The Green, New York City, New York, 2021.

My time in New York reinforced to me the value of ornament on architecture in a dense, urban setting. The grided streets make the city easily navigable in a rational sense. However, it is the distinct architectural character of the buildings in different neighborhoods that gave me a sense of place as I walked through the city. It amazed

me how many significant buildings I could have easily passed by if I had not been looking up and examining the ornament.

Unfortunately, due to pandemic restrictions, I was unable to access the inside of the Bayard-Condict building. However, this allowed me to study the exterior and its ornament with greater attention. During my visits to Sullivan's New York skyscraper, I realized that it is a building meant to be seen up close and appreciated for its details, as well as acting as a beacon from afar. Its height is highlighted by ornamental details even from a distance. Up close, I was able to appreciate Sullivan's details that evenly combine organic forms and geometric patterns. On one visit, I was caught in the rain and able to shelter in the deep threshold. This gave me a chance to really study Sullivan's ornament at the entry. I found it interesting that the ornament does not begin at the ground level, but closer to eye level. This gives the rest of the building, which is highly ornamented, a floating quality, as if it is suspended from the wings of the angels at the cornice, rather than growing up out of the ground. The ornament at the Bayard-Condict building gives it a sense of flight.

To Sullivan, architecture was a prime way to express the burgeoning American identity. Sullivan desired an American expression of art, based in freedom rather than in the traditions of monarchies. To this end, he challenged the architect to "become a poet, in the sense that he absorb into his heart and brain his own country and his own people."[vi]

The Bayard-Condict Building was constructed at a time when the building type of the tall building, or skyscraper, was in its infancy. Louis Sullivan had already designed a handful of tall buildings by this time. Drawing from these experiences and his personal philosophies, he wrote an essay on how skyscraper design should be approached, "The Tall Office Artistically Considered," in 1896. Sullivan considered the tall office building to be a vital design problem.[vii] At this time, many workers were transitioning from rural, small-scale work to jobs created by new technologies in cities. These new social conditions demanded tall office buildings.[viii] Sullivan wanted to define the basic tall office building type.[ix] As a new type, skyscrapers held the potential to be a unique expression of the American spirit, free from the precedents of European monarchies.

The new building type of the skyscraper would not have been possible without new technology. Innovations in steel construction made tall structures safe and inexpensive.[x] This allowed tall buildings to be more profitable for building owners and more acceptable to community members. Elevators made tall buildings possible.[xi] Floor to floor circulation went from prohibitively tiring and time wasting to easy and efficient. Sullivan was very concerned about sufficient light and cross-ventilation in tall buildings.[xii] Sullivan believed that light courts and elevators were necessary but not generally vital to the aesthetics of the building.[xiii] Sullivan sought to elevate the tall building from a utilitarian building to a beacon of beauty.[xiv]

> "It must be tall, every inch of it tall. The force and power of altitude must be in it the glory and pride of exaltation must be

in it. It must be every inch a proud and soaring thing, rising in sheer exultation…"[xv]

Fig. 3. Louis Sullivan, Details emphasize verticality, Bayard-Condict Building, New York City, New York, 1899.

The ornament of the Bayard-Condict Building demonstrates the extent of Sullivan's claim. Not only do inches matter in height, but the thinness of the columns and the details of the relief sculpture

suggest soaring and reaching upward. Sullivan also claimed that all things in nature have a recognizable shape where "form ever follows function."[xvi] Sullivan justified his tripartite office design with the three functions that it serves.[xvii] The ground floor is public, the middle section is for office work, the attic floor hosts mechanical functions.

The base of a skyscraper was the public, welcoming entrance of the building. Sullivan believed that the ground floor should house shops and other public businesses, "requiring large area, ample spacing, ample light, and great freedom of access."[xviii] The first floor needs the largest structural spacing and window openings.[xix] This allows people on the streets to see into the life and activity of the building. Spaced-out structure provides flexibility for a variety of businesses and shops. The ground floor of the Bayard-Condict building is made of two shops and a vestibule.[xx] This is the welcoming entrance of Sullivan's New York skyscraper.

Entry is the most important function of the ground floor of a skyscraper. Sullivan believed that a tall building should have one main entrance on the ground floor for all of its occupants.[xxi] The main entrance should be noticeable and attractive.[xxii] The ground floor should be the most richly ornamented, treated "based exactly on the practical necessities, but expressed with a sentiment of largeness and freedom."[xxiii] At the Bayard-Condict building, he put an elaborate arched medallion over the entrance. This celebrated the entrance. The Bayard-Condict building was Sullivan's first corner-entry skyscraper.[xxiv] The entry is at the corner of the building itself, not

at the corner of the block. It was also the first of Sullivan's skyscrapers to have a one-story tall base.[xxv] Having a one-story base was a closer following of the motto "form follows function."[xxvi] Sullivan probably made this change because only the first floor is used for entry.

Fig. 4. My sketch of the Bayard-Condict entry portal

In Sullivan's view, the shaft of the skyscraper was the functional, utilitarian part of the building. This meant it was ornamented and expressed in a more restrained way than the other parts of the building. However, it was no less worthy of consideration and care. Sullivan believed in stacking as many identical office floors on top of each other as necessary.[xxvii] This allowed the floors to be treated as a module, able to be expanded to suit the clients' needs. The office floors are uniform, with windows with piers, sills, and lintels.[xxviii] At the Bayard-Condict Building, there are two sixty-five-inch-wide windows per bay.[xxix] There are ten stories of lofts above the ground floor.[xxx] The building was originally a total of twelve floors, but the top floor gallery was later split into two levels, making a total of thirteen stories.[xxxi] The repetition of identical floors allowed Sullivan to make the building "lofty," as was his ideal in the tall building type.

The attic story was interestingly both the most utilitarian and the most expressive part of a tall building. The attic floor was the turning point of the "circulatory system" of the building's mechanical functions.[xxxii] It was never occupied by people, so it had no light or spatial needs beyond those of the mechanical systems. This made it extremely utilitarian on the interior. However, the exterior was free to be as expressive as possible, with no risk of blocking light or views. Not needing windows did not prevent Sullivan from using them as an expressive element. At the attic level, Sullivan used a large arch divided by two smaller arches with a porthole window in between. He

first used porthole windows to visually connect arches in the Guaranty Building of 1894.[xxxiii] The attic crowns the building; it is the culmination of the ideals of freedom and lightness and the ornament that expresses them.

The Bayard-Condict building demonstrates both Sullivan's artistic and technical skill. Sullivan originally designed the walls to be twelve inches thick on the sides and fourteen inches on the front.[xxxiv] Sullivan wanted to use the "Gray" system of steel construction originally developed for bridge construction.[xxxv] He believed in developing innovative solutions to solve the new problem of constructing a tall building. Sullivan's structurally innovative design, which had been used successfully at the Guaranty Building, was rejected by the municipal Building Department.[xxxvi] The structure of the building was still innovatively thin as built, and the terra-cotta façade was also progressive for the city.[xxxvii] Thin columns separate the bays of windows.[xxxviii] The lightness expressed on the façade is a message to the city that skyscrapers can be built taller and thinner.

To Sullivan, ornament was integral to the total design. He always designed in a way that related the part to the whole, the basic tenet of organic architecture. Sullivan used the office room to define the proportions of structure and window divisions, which he then used to define the ornament.[xxxix] Sullivan believed that to design a tall office building "We must now heed the imperative voice of emotion."[xl] Sullivan connected reason to geometric forms and emotion to organic forms.[xli] This is expressed at the Bayard-Condict Building by sculptural leaves emerging from geometric stems, swirls ordered by circles and arcs. The

angelic figures at the top are the culmination of both the emotional expression of flight and the ornamental expression of literal forms. Sullivan believed that emotion was "vital and primary," while logic was "conscious and secondary."[xlii]

When designing, inspiration and emotion came before rationality.[xliii] This means that at the Bayard-Condict building, it was the ornamental expression of height and loftiness that necessitated an appropriately narrow, light structure.

The Bayard-Condict Building has an open floor plan with a grid of columns.[xliv] Therefore, most of the creative design work was focused on the front façade. The decoration at the Bayard-Condict Building rises up from the thick columns on the ground floor, continues on the thin, vertical columns between the windows, reaches its climax in the angels at the cornice, then rounds the arches and continues all the way back down. This may have been a metaphor for the human life cycle or the circulatory system.[xlv] The columns of the ground level have ornate capitals.[xlvi] This attention to detail on the ground floor would be noticeable to all passers-by. Angel relief sculptures resting at the spring points of the arches seem to support the cornice.[xlvii] These winged figures express Sullivan's value of height in a skyscraper. The ornament suggests that the figures could fly upward and extend the height of the building infinitely, up to the heavens.

The moment that Sullivan captures in the ornament of the Bayard-Condict Building is taking flight. He captures the excitement of opportunity and the freedom to pursue it. Sullivan goes beyond expressing the function of various parts of the building and suggests

the optimism of an era of new technologies. The skyscraper, representative of the American identity at the turn of the century, is lofty, innovative, and reaching upward for more.

[i] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 339.
[ii] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 339.
[iii] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 339.
[iv] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 342.
[v] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 353.
[vi] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 354.
[vii] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[viii] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[ix] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[x] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xi] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xii] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 339.
[xiii] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xiv] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xv] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xvi] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xvii] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xviii] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xix] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xx] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 339.
[xxi] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xxii] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xxiii] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xxiv] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 340.
[xxv] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 340.
[xxvi] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 352.
[xxvii] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xxviii] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xxix] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 339.
[xxx] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 339.
[xxxi] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 339.
[xxxii] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xxxiii] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 321.
[xxxiv] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 340.
[xxxv] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 340.
[xxxvi] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 340.
[xxxvii] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 340.
[xxxviii] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 340.
[xxxix] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xl] Sullivan, "The Tall Office," n.p.
[xli] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 400.
[xlii] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 400.
[xliii] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 400.
[xliv] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 350.
[xlv] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 352.
[xlvi] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 340.
[xlvii] Twombly, *Louis Sullivan,* 340.

Taliesin West

Embodying the Desert

Winter refuge perched on the mountain's brow
Lizards scurry by on the hot stones chipped
In winter refuge, hands clasp in friendship
And build what human strength and wit allow

Asking the question, not of why, but how
Red and blue, desert and sea, the roles flip
Canvas billows like the sails of the ship
With a bold captain standing at the prow

Creative and demanding in command
Yet for dreamers and poets, fertile ground
A spring is called forth from barren land
Bubbling forth, offering musical sound
Fellowship and friendship are built by hand
But community with nature is found

Taliesin West was the home base of Frank Lloyd Wright's late career. Not only did many architects significant in their own right emerge from Taliesin West, but other schools such as Arcosanti are clearly rooted in its ideas of self-sufficiency and apprenticeship to a master designer. Riffing off of his earlier Prairie Style yet grounded in the desert landscape, tilted roofs overhang to create

shade and allow natural light. Made of local materials and handcrafted by Wright's apprentices, each element was thoughtfully designed.

Taliesin West was built near Scottsdale, Arizona, in 1938.[i] It was Wright's winter refuge, the winter home of the Taliesin Fellowship. Taliesin's site was remote.[ii] This meant that the land was less expensive, and that Wright could live out his individualist philosophies. It was a place for the apprentices of Taliesin to learn new skills, and a blank slate for Wright to test new ideas in the Arizona landscape. Wright was inspired by the desert landscape, saying, "Arizona seems to me the most beautiful part of this earth and the most unspoiled."[iii] Wright sought to embrace and enhance this natural beauty.

A precursor to the camp-inspired architecture at Taliesin West was Wright's earlier Arizona campsite Ocatilla, created in 1929 and named after the desert plant.[iv] The design principles practiced there, especially the way that buildings and major axes were arranged in harmony with the landscape, were later carried into the camp at Taliesin West. Unfortunately, Ocatilla was destroyed by fire in June of 1929.[v] However, its lessons lived on at Taliesin.

Taliesin West acted as a winter refuge for the aging Wright, who struggled with pneumonia.[vi] Taliesin East, in Wisconsin, was considered "home" to Wright. Wright lived in Arizona during the winter from 1938, returning to Wisconsin in the summers.[vii] He made this pilgrimage with the whole Taliesin Fellowship, not only continuing their creative development but providing new grounds to test ideas. Wright, his family, and the Taliesin Fellows moved to Taliesin West every winter

from November to April.[viii] The complex was a camp, a laboratory where he could develop his architectural ideals.

During my time in Arizona, I was struck by the consciousness of place reflected by the architecture. The colors of the buildings were predominantly red, tan, orange, and brown, fitting with the desert landscape. I saw many stone, earth, concrete, and weathered metal structures. These seemed to both withstand the desert environment while demonstrating its effects. The buildings I saw embraced interesting angles in their construction, mimicking jagged rocks or the distant mountains. Many buildings appeared quite solid with only small openings, indicating or imitating traditional desert masonry. Even the details of buildings were reflective of the desert environment. Some buildings were etched or carved, similar to the stone artifacts of the Hohokum people found at Taliesin and at Deer Valley. Some buildings and elements appeared woven like the baskets of the indigenous tribes, or like the tangled brush of the desert.

I stayed at the Arizona Biltmore during my visit. Frank Lloyd Wright provided technical advice for the Arizona Biltmore in early 1928.[ix] He worked with his former apprentice Albert Chase McArthur and Warren McArthur.[x] The Arizona Biltmore was intended to set a new standard of luxury for the Phoenix area.[xi] Wright consulted on the concrete block system of the hotel, which he called textile blocks.[xii] There was one standard block used throughout, but at times it was used in halves, or punctured to allow light through. The balconies outlining the lobby space and the glowing quality of light through some of the textile bricks reminded me of photos I have seen of

Wright's Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, completed six years earlier. The hotel felt like an oasis in the desert. The low, glowing light on the interior is a welcome refuge from the desert sun. Water features on the interior, as well as exterior pools, enhance the oasis-like atmosphere. Balconies in the rooms look out onto the desert. I could watch the sun change the color of the landscape, or watch the summer storms blow in, from the balcony of my room.

Fig. 1. My sketch of a textile block column at the Arizona Biltmore

An interesting offshoot of the Taliesin fellowship is the Cosanti Foundation of Paolo Soleri. A former Taliesin apprentice, he founded the concept of "arcology," based on creating a thriving, self-supporting ecosystem that fostered creativity and preserved the natural environment. This was a philosophy of combining architecture with ecology. The architecture of this movement was pedestrian, dense, and three-dimensional. Even so, the movement sought to preserve personal space while fostering social connections.

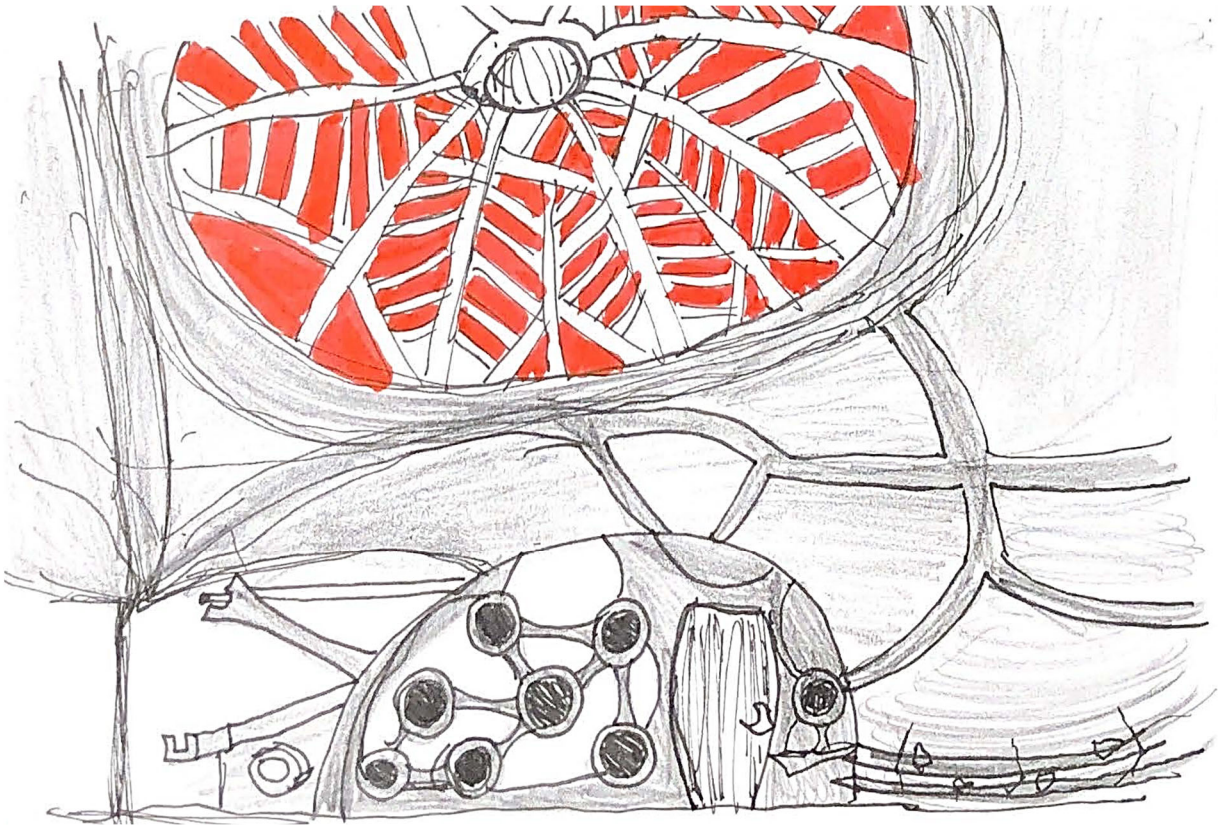

Fig. 2. My sketch of a ceramics dome at Cosanti Originals

I visited Cosanti Originals, the site of Soleri's bell-making foundry. It looked to me like an ancient ruin, or possibly a futuristic one. The buildings had innovative forms, yet also looked so

in place in the desert that they could have been there for eons. The buildings also portrayed a strong sense of shelter and attention to necessity. No materials seemed excess or wasted, yet each building was unique. They offered shelter from the sun, while also serving their purposes as individual creative spaces. The buildings, despite being forms of necessity, were richly and beautifully decorated with different colors, carvings, and etchings. The forms were organic and dynamic, rather than geometric and static. The space seemed to state that decoration, ornament, and detail are in fact necessities as much as shelter is. Certainly, for the creative mind, artistic consideration would create a shelter for the mind and spirit as much as for the physical space would shelter the body.

Fig. 3. Paolo Soleri, Silt-cast Ceramics Dome, Arcosanti, Arizona, 1970.

I also visited Arcosanti, now also the home of the Taliesin Fellowship, as well as families, artisans, staff, and volunteers. It well embodies the arcology ideals of building in harmony with nature. The buildings face south for passive heating and cooling in the desert climate. The compound is densely built with mixed-use structures. One of the most fascinating expressions of the arcology philosophy is in how the domes of certain vaults were created. Just as the artisans cast the signature Cosanti bells in the desert silt, the domes were created on massive silt forms and cast. In some places, the silt was even tinted in artistic patterns to "paint" the concrete of the vault as it absorbed the pigment.

Fig. 4. Frank Lloyd Wright, Approach to Taliesin, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Arizona, 1938.

I was able to visit Taliesin West twice during my time in Arizona. Approaching by car provided an amazing view of the mountains. Decorative elements were incorporated throughout. To me, these elements were not merely aesthetic additions, but essential elements that reflected the landscape. Even the broken and patchwork-reassembled Chinese opera figures that Wright used as entry markers seemed to symbolize the spirit of Taliesin West: to take what nature provides and give order and meaning.

I found Taliesin West to be a place where art and life were indistinguishable. There were living and dining spaces, a drafting room, and even a "cabaret." This embodied Taliesin's ideal that every action was an act of art and an opportunity to learn. Every detail was thoughtfully considered. Wooden chandeliers hug from stone ceilings like stalactites. Small, red-painted shutters indicated windows in thick desert masonry. Angled walls and stepped platforms gave the impression of a jagged mountain range at human scale. Hohokum petroglyphs discovered by Taliesin apprentices placed throughout the site are allowed to remain, though the best practice for the discoverers would have been to leave them in their original locations. Water, always a sacred element, but especially in the desert, was celebrated with sculptural fountains and pools scattered throughout the site. These, as well as lance-like wooden elements pointed skyward, were designated with Wright's wife, Olgivanna's, favorite color, blue. Horizonal elements and other features "of the earth" were painted with Wright's favorite color, red.

Fig. 5. Frank Lloyd Wright, Left: Blue water, Right: Red shutters set into desert masonry, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Arizona, 1938.

When I visited Taliesin the second time, I was able to speak with Fred Prozillo, the Vice President of Preservation at the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation. He said that Taliesin West was an exemplar of Organic Architecture. Organic Architecture is both intrinsic and interconnected, designed upon relationship of the part to the whole. This architecture is responsive to both site and time. In this case, the architecture embodies the desert, where the smallest pebble in the desert masonry wall reflects the distant mountains of the landscape as a whole.

Taliesin West also captures the moment of its creation. It was constructed during the Great Depression when Wright had little money, but plenty of free labor at his disposal. It truly was a camp, shelter constructed by Taliesin apprentices rather than skilled labor.

Wright held a deep respect for natural beauty. He wrote, "A struggle against nature never appealed to me. The struggle for and with Nature thrilled me and inspired my work."[xiii] At Taliesin West, Wright took the picture that nature had already painted, and framed it through architecture. Two deep runoff washes define the site.[xiv] Wright oriented major axes of Taliesin West to significant features in the landscape, especially the surrounding mountains.[xv] The complex is organized along a linear spine at the intersection of an orthogonal and a diagonal grid.[xvi] The intersection of the orthogonal and diagonal grids has accommodated expansion and change over the lifetime of the complex.[xvii] Like a campsite, Taliesin has been altered and added to by subsequent users.

Taliesin West makes use of the desert topography. Taliesin West is a patchwork of buildings, courtyards, and gardens built into the landscape.[xviii] Wright meticulously planned the topography of Taliesin West, indicating what areas to "cut" and "fill."[xix] In this, he was not fighting against nature, but rather doing with human ingenuity what processes like erosion do by chance. Wright's wife Olgivanna described Taliesin West as "something we had been excavating, not building."[xx] Buildings, paths, and gardens are built at-grade, behind retaining walls, and onto elevated platforms.[xxi] A prowlike platform overlooking the desert landscape was one of Wright's favorite spots. Wright uses the Japanese technique of borrowed views to the landscape in his layout of buildings and paths.[xxii] In the living room, there is a view of the mountains over an exterior wall, but only when one sits in the built-in couch. Wright choreographed such reveals throughout the

complex. The structures of Taliesin embrace the hilltop with a "campfire" just below the crown of the hill.[xxiii] The enclosed hilltop provided privacy for the camp while giving a view out to the desert landscape.[xxiv] This is one way that Wright worked with the landscape, and even celebrated it through architecture.

Fig. 6. Frank Lloyd Wright, Borrowed view of mountains can only be seen when seated in the Taliesin West living room, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Arizona, 1938.

Due to the campground typology of Taliesin West, local materials were used to create the architecture. This included rustic materials such as rubble stone, poured concrete, rough sawn wood, and fabric.[xxv] These materials were celebrated. Wright especially valued the desert stone, saying

> "Stone is the frame on which Earth is modeled, and wherever it crops out – there the architect may site and learn…As he takes the trail across the great Western Deserts – he may see his

buildings -rising in simplicity and majesty from their floors of gleaming sand – where organic life is still struggling for a bare existence: we see them still, as the Egyptians saw and were taught by those they knew…For in the stony bonework of the Earth, the principles that shaped stone as it lies, or as it rises and remains to be sculptured by winds and tide – there sleep forms and styles enough for all the ages, for all of Man."[xxvi]

Fig. 7. Frank Lloyd Wright, Desert Masonry, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Arizona, 1938.

The fellows of Taliesin "took the materials of the desert and reordered them."[xxvii] Desert rocks were mixed with sand to create concrete.[xxviii] Therefore, the walls were like the desert floor stood up in the vertical plane. Different types of desert rocks were used throughout the complex, including boulders, sharp-edged stones, and rounded "goose eggs."[xxix] Large stones were set with their flat side out, boulders were used as fill, and smaller stones and thin concrete were poured into wooden forms to create the trapezoidal walls of Taliesin West.[xxx] Wright called the walls at Taliesin West "desert masonry."[xxxi] Cement that covered large stones was chipped away by hand.[xxxii] Stones in the walls at Taliesin West were acid-washed.[xxxiii] Wright did not only use local materials as a matter of practicality, but intentionally celebrated them. He allowed the material to act as detail, highlighting what the desert had provided. These details rooted the architecture firmly to its site, so that it seems to grow out of the desert ground, or to have been eroded from a mountain.

Color is essential in the experience of the desert, and in the design of Taliesin West. Eugene Masselink, part of the Taliesin fellowship, wrote,

> "Magically we came from the mountains as the sun was nearing the horizon and we rode out upon the Arizona desert. Tall ancient saguaro and graceful waving ocotillo and the vivid green on the floor of the desert and the purple mountains beyond. A garden like none I had ever seen. A desert like something I had never dreamed. The mountains were softened by the distance and the

> fading light and the desert plants stood out strong in the long low streaks of sunlight. The new forms, the vivid green, the purple shadowed rock masses and the blue sky and the movement of the car winding in and out and around."[xxxiv]

The desert ground at the foot of McDowell Mountains is black and red.[xxxv] The stone used for the rubble walls was volcanic rock. This type of rock was colorful, with tones of umber, blue, and purple.[xxxvi] In the evening, the sunset paints the entire desert red. Inspired by this, Wright used a shade of red paint mixed on site throughout the project.

Fig. 8. Frank Lloyd Wright, Angled roofs simulate mountains, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Arizona, 1938.

All of the forms of Taliesin were truly of the land. The entire complex acts as a detail itself in the expanse of the desert. Taliesin West had unique geometry among Wright's work, using triangles and trapezoids.[xxxvii] Wright sought forms that reflected the desert's beauty and provided scale to its seemingly limitless expanse.[xxxviii] He instructed his apprentices to study the geometry of the surrounding plants and landscape. These elements were then abstracted to supply the forms of the buildings and their parts. The low profiles of the buildings are like the low desert plants that hug the ground. Steps approached at their corners are reminiscent of mountain slopes. Sloped rooflines create a mountain range in miniature.

The moment that Wright captures at Taliesin West is sunset in the desert. Though the use of material, form, and color, he creates the desert in miniature. This was Wright's gift of admiration back to the landscape which was his winter home.

[i] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 117.
[ii] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 151.
[iii] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 111.
[iv] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 111.
[v] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 111.
[vi] Howard, *Wright for Wright,* 110.
[vii] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 155.
[viii] Howard, *Wright for Wright,* 111.
[ix] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 100.
[x] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 100.
[xi] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 100.
[xii] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 101.
[xiii] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 9.
[xiv] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 151.
[xv] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 117.
[xvi] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 152.
[xvii] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 152.
[xviii] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 151.
[xix] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 152.
[xx] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 152.
[xxi] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 152.
[xxii] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,*152.
[xxiii] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 150.
[xxiv] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 150.
[xxv] Howard, *Wright for Wright,* 121.
[xxvi] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 110.
[xxvii] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 152.
[xxviii] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 154.
[xxix] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 152.
[xxx] Howard, *Wright for Wright,* 122.
[xxxi] Howard, *Wright for Wright,* 122.
[xxxii] Howard, *Wright for Wright,* 122.
[xxxiii] Howard, *Wright for Wright,* 122.
[xxxiv] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 149.
[xxxv] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 151.
[xxxvi] Howard, *Wright for Wright,* 122.
[xxxvii] Howard, *Wright for Wright,* 128.
[xxxviii] De Long, *Designs for an American Landscape,* 66.

Brion Cemetery

The Edge of Time and Space

Gray mountains hear the mournful cry of doves
As frogs leap into flowered golden ponds
Kissed by agile koi and sunlight, two loves

Witnessed by cool monument, how they longed
To break through worry, as through concrete
Bridge and windows witness a life beyond

Man and earth, gold and gray, life and death meet
In a garden carved by a sculptor's knife
Living and dead find their work is complete

In cool shade or bright field laying down strife
And swing wide the gates between death and life

The Brion Cemetery is a masterpiece of Scarpa's creative ideas and influences, demonstrating his sensitivity to place and to human emotions. A monument to the dead, he carefully incorporated landscape and especially water as reminders of life. Scarpa's influences, including Wrightian and Japanese architecture, are clearly present though not copied. Scarpa developed unique details in this mostly concrete structure that he would continue to use throughout his work.

Scarpa was born in 1906 in Venice, Italy.[i] His family moved to

Vicenza in 1908.[ii] As a child, Scarpa played in the Palazzo Chiericati, the Teatro Olimpico, and Palladio's Basilica.[iii] As a child, he would have seen and experienced firsthand the value of decoration, ornament, and detail in Palladio's work. Scarpa was admitted to Venice's Royal Academy of Fine Arts at age fourteen.[iv] This experience allowed him to understand the arts and the beauty of the city of his birth. He was deeply embedded in the history of Venice, while also being a key figure in the second-generation of Modern architects.[v] Scarpa's works were unique in Modern architecture in that they were so experientially dense. Every part is articulated and layered so that there is always more to discover.[vi] Unlike many Modernists, Scarpa highlighted and honored the history of buildings, rather than rejecting it. Scarpa redefined Modern architecture through restoration and renovation, introducing new structures integrated into their historical context.[vii] Time and detail are essential to Scarpa's work. Time is "the way in which the rituals of everyday life act to inextricably intertwine the past, present, and future within the charged context." Detail is "that condensation of the boundless while into the precise part, the articulate joint."[viii] This layering of history is what gives so much richness to his works.

I visited the city of Venice for two days to see Scarpa's work there and to get a better understanding of the city that was so influential to him. I arrived by train at night and was instantly struck by the city's beauty. The moonlight reflected off of the water where small boats gently swayed. As I experienced the city, I found it very navigable despite being crossed by canals. I found that people

generally flowed towards the Rialto Bridge or the Piazza San Marco, and I would either walk towards or away from the crowd depending on my destination. The narrow canal-streets were punctured by open squares and views to the water, creating a dynamic experience no matter where I was in the city. Every bridge seemed to have its own distinct character, yet they also had a consistent profile. My second day in Venice I took a gondola ride through the city. The city is truly meant to be experienced from the water, with the facades of most buildings facing the water.

Fig. 1. My first view of Venice

Scarpa's design thinking was heavily influenced by his early work and innovations on the Venetian island of Murano. In the 1920's Scarpa supervised the construction of several buildings on the island of Murano.[ix] He began working as a glass designer in Murano in 1926.[x] In his work, he would learn common glass techniques, then revive lost techniques and use this foundational knowledge to invent his own.[xi] This is similar to how he thought about architecture. He mastered the basics of construction, but also sought to recall the history of place. This allowed him to create innovative designs built upon the past. Scarpa's design process was deeply integrated with the act of making. He was guided by the quote by Giambattista Vico: *Verum Ipsum Factum*, meaning "the truth is in the made," or, "we only know what we make."[xii] Scarpa's glass designs used transparent, opaque, and colored glass, as well as gold and silver.[xiii] This later found its way into his architecture, where he juxtaposed solid and void, often emphasized by colored or metallic details.

On my first day in Venice, I took the ferry to Murano. I spent the morning walking the island, crossing bridges and enjoying the colorful architecture. I also visited the many glass shops on the island and even saw a few artisans at work. I was amazed at the elaborate chandeliers and glass sculptures. I was also impressed by the *millefiori* glass technique.

Fig. 2. A sign for a glass factory on the island of Murano, with an overlapping circle motif similar to Scarpa's

I took the ferry from the island of Murano to the Bienalle Arsenale. The theme of this year's Bienalle was "How will we live together?" I was intrigued and challenged by the many projects throughout the exhibition. I especially appreciated the many projects that considered "together" to be inclusive of more than just humans, but also animals, plants, and ecosystems.

After visiting the Arsenale I visited the Bienalle Giardine. I enjoyed seeing the various pavilions designed by different countries. It allowed me an interesting perspective on how each country values the role of design and presents itself to the world. The United States pavilion created a wood-frame façade to its Palladio-inspired structure. I was delighted to see this, because to me it felt very

much in the spirit of American ideals to freely reinvent itself. It also well represented a common American building typology, which was also the subject of the displays inside. For an American who had been away from home for nearly two months, it gave me a small taste of home. The Nordic Pavilion and Denmark Pavilion also gave me a strong sense of home. The Nordic Pavilion was filled with a singular furniture piece. The large wood installation transitioned from storage to seating to beds and tables as it wound through the space. The Denmark Pavilion had water running throughout, even on the floor. Herbs grown in boxes on the exterior wall were used to make tea. I was offered a free mug of tea, and there was a place to refill my water bottle, a blessing on a June afternoon. Each pavilion I visited gave me a sense of its country's hospitality. Unfortunately, the Scarpa-designed Venezuelan Pavilion was closed.

As I walked through the Giardine, I kept an eye out for the Scarpa-designed courtyard. The Italian Pavilion Courtyard was the first example of Scarpa's typical garden courtyards.[xiv] After searching on maps and asking the Bienalle volunteers, I finally discovered it. The reason I had so much trouble finding it was that it is a small, intimate, contemplative place tucked away in the main pavilion. However, every picture I have seen of the space makes it look much more expansive. I spent some time sitting and resting in the cool garden, listening to the bubbling fountains. A few people peeked in, but for the most part the space seems to be a hidden jewel.

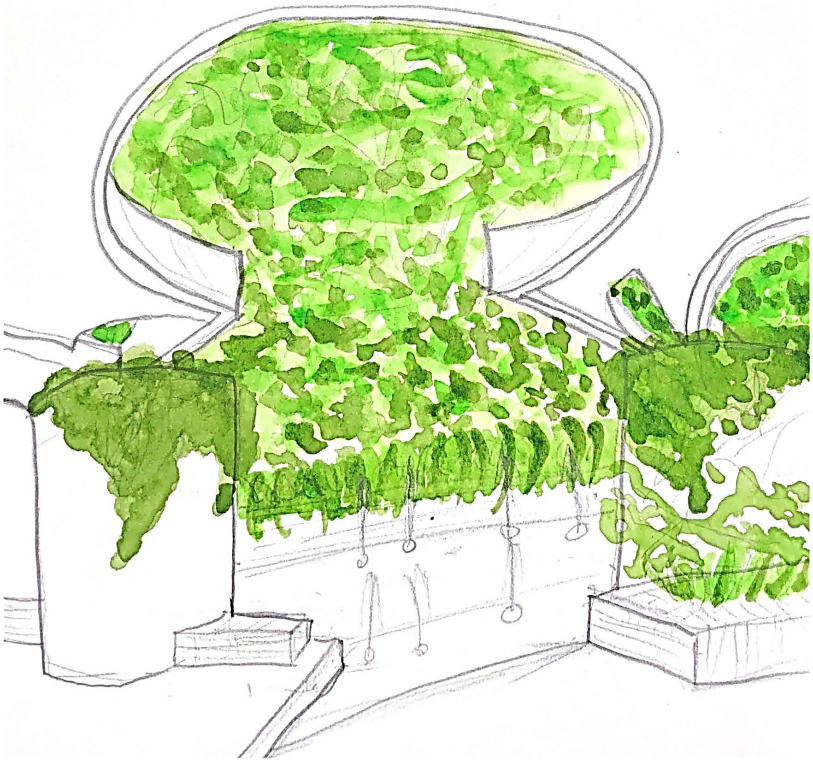

Fig. 3. My sketch of Scarpa's Giardine courtyard

Leaving the Giardine, I passed Scarpa's Monument to the Partisan Woman, designed to honor the women that contributed to the fall of Fascism in Italy. Scarpa designed the base for the bronze statue by Augusto Murer. This base is made of cubes stepped at various heights. This was another surprisingly hidden work. The monument is in the water and can only be seen from the land at certain angles.

On my second day in Venice, I visited the Fondazione Querini Stampalia. The Fonzazione is a library and art collection donated to the public in 1869.[xv] Scarpa began designing the ground-floor renovation of the sixteenth-century building where it is housed in 1959.[xvi] I was delighted by the various details Scarpa had incorporated

throughout. I began playing a game looking for Scarpa's hidden doors. I found one hiding a mechanical panel and one made of travertine separating two rooms. I also found Scarpa's signature overlapping circle motif in a lighting fixture and over the museum stairs. I found this interesting because he seemed to add a third circle to the motif in this location. Embracing the site's location directly on the canal, Scarpa created geometric travertine steps down to the water. There were also stairs in the courtyard similar to those at the Brion Cemetery, that played different tones with each step. A concrete wall defining one edge of the courtyard was decorated with a mosaic tile band, similar to some walls at the Brion Cemetery. I also saw the influence of Japan in the courtyard design. There was a pool with multiple depths, similar to one I had seen when I visited Japan at the Okayama Castle gardens. There were also two miniature fountains that added to the relaxing atmosphere of the gardens.

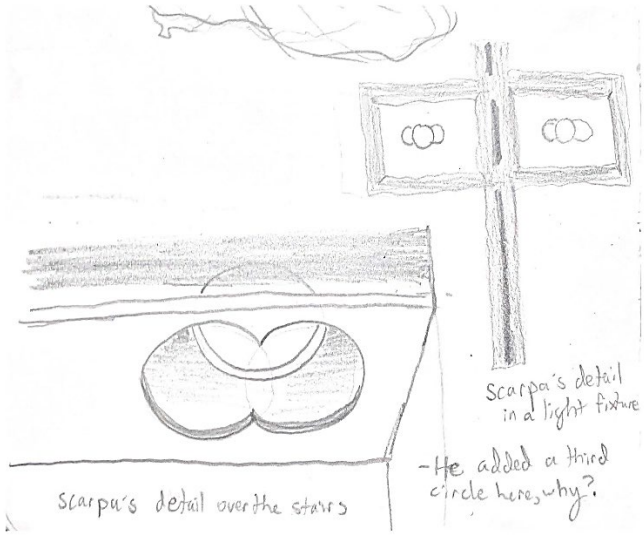

Fig. 4. My sketches of Scarpa's "third circle" at the Fondazione Querini Stampalia

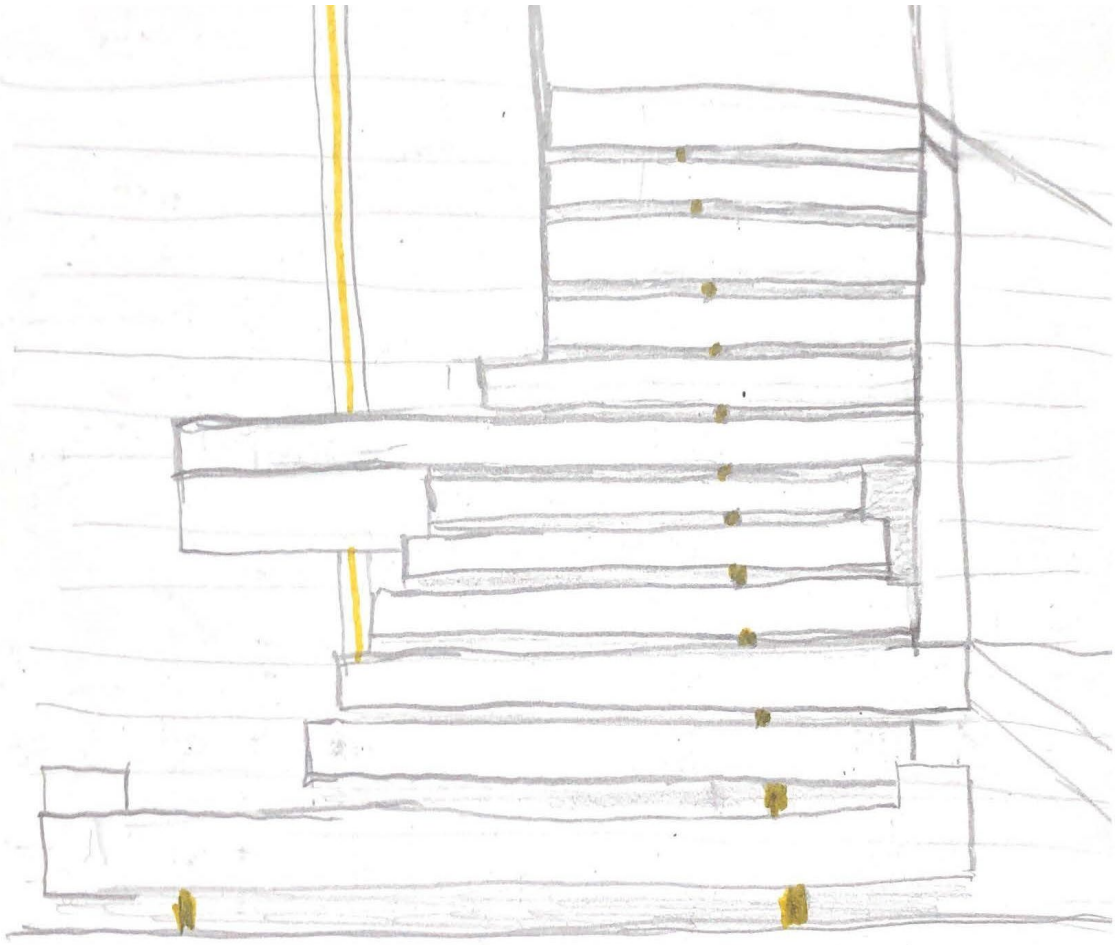

Fig. 5. My sketch of the staircase at the Olivetti Showroom

Later that afternoon I visited the Olivetti Showroom on the Piazza San Marco. The Olivetti Company was one of the world's leading industrial design firms in the 1950s and 1960s.[xvii] Scarpa received the Olivetti Prize for design excellence in architecture in 1956.[xviii] In 1957, he was hired to design the new Olivetti showroom on the Piazza San Marco, the most important public space in Venice.[xix] Now a museum, the space staddles the difficult intersection of high functionality and luxury, much like the Olivetti products themselves. Again, a Japanese influence is apparent in the space. A bubbling

fountain creates a courtyard-like effect on the inside of the building as soon as one enters. Layered wooden screens on sliding windows reminded me of Japanese *shoji.* I also found it interesting that the window shades were the shape of the intersection of two circles. However, some of Scarpa's design solutions were thoroughly modern. Situated on the Piazza San Marco, the Showroom shares walls on both sides. Scarpa used frosted glass with electric lights behind them on these walls to give the illusion of windows. The lowercase lettering that Scarpa designed for the Olivetti Showroom was adopted by the company for all of its literature and signs.[xx] The star feature of the showroom, however, is the cascading stairs at its center. Some steps extend out to create ledges to sit or display. Scarpa elevates a functional element to a standout design feature, while only increasing its functionality.

Fig. 6. Carlo Scarpa, Sliding screen door in front of bridge, Castelvecchio Museum, Verona, 1959.

Part of my pilgrimage was a day trip to Verona. I visited the Castelvecchio Museum. This was the lightest touch that I had seen Scarpa use in a space. I think this shows Scarpa's respect for the history of the castle. I also visited the Banca Popolare, but was unable to visit the interior. Most of the work seemed to occur outside of the Scarpa-designed part of this building. This made me wonder if the architecture is too good for common purposes. Many people come to see the architecture, not to bank. This is not a problem in museums, where the purpose is to look and appreciate beauty. However, in a functional space like a bank, this can be a distraction at best and a security risk at worst. However, I found that in all of Scarpa's other works, the architecture elevated the experience into something transcendent.

No architecture was more transcendent of purpose than at the Brion Cemetery. It is located in the small village of San Vito d'Altivole, in sight of the Dolomite Mountains.[xxi] To get there from Vicenza, I would take the regional train to the city of Castelfranco Veneto, and then a taxi to the site. I had arranged ahead of time to meet with the groundskeeper, who opened up the chapel and pagoda to me, as well as showing me various other hidden gems throughout the site. San Vito d'Altivole was the birthplace of Giuseppe Brion, founder of Brionvega Electronics.[xxii] After his death in 1968, his wife Onorina commissioned Scarpa to design a memorial to him. Instead of adopting the typical small tombs and mausoleums of the village, the Brion family wanted something special. They purchased an L-shaped plot of land wrapped around the existing cemetery for Scarpa to design.[xxiii]

This space was Scarpa's masterpiece, and Scarpa himself was buried in a secluded corner of the complex after his death in 1978.

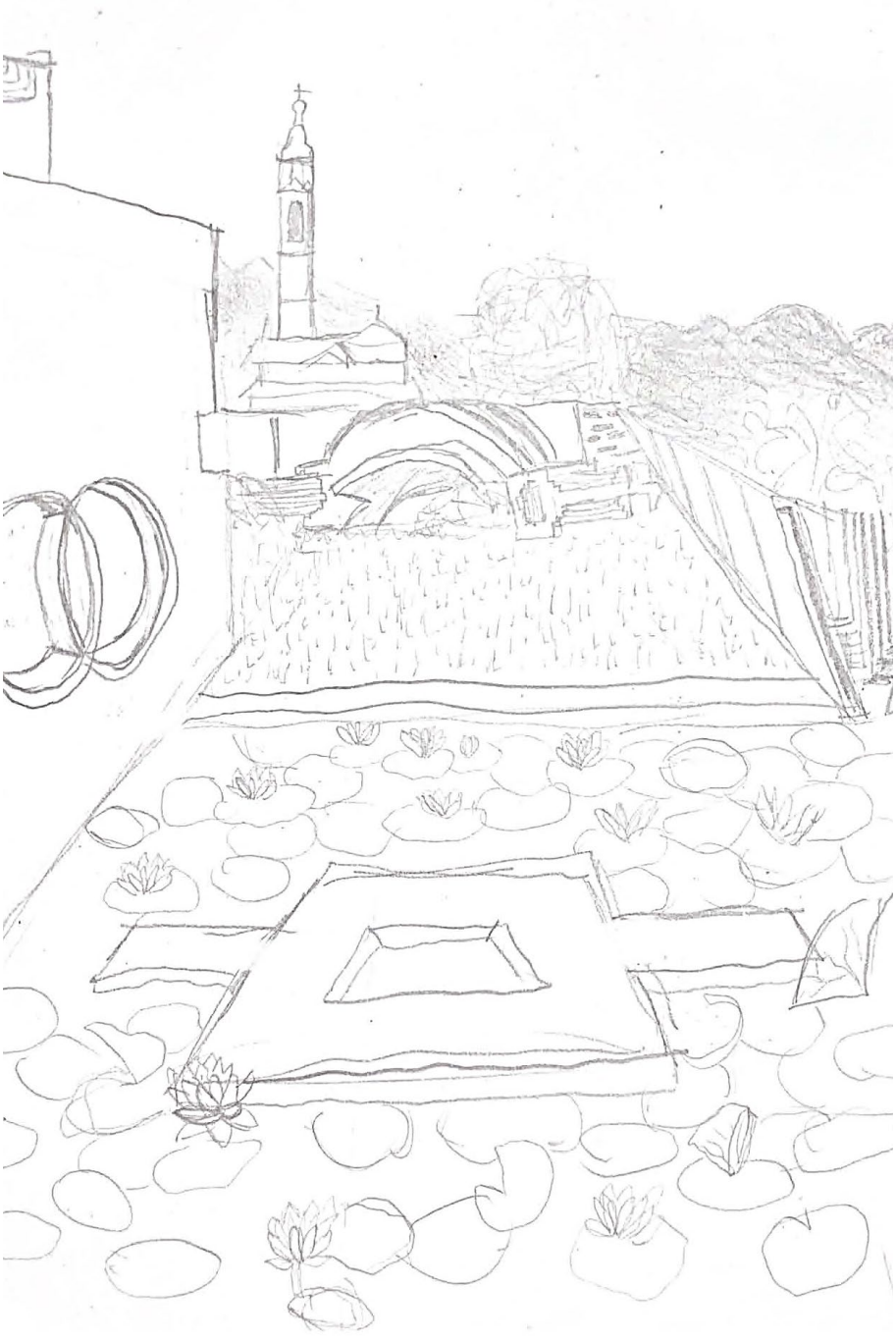

Fig. 7. My sketch of the Brion Cemetery lawn seen from the Pagoda, with borrowed views of the church and the mountains in the distance

Walking through the Brion Cemetery, I was struck by the feeling that it was not a cemetery, but rather a garden. The height of the walls obscured the midground of the surrounding fields, so my view was foreshortened to the architecture in front of me and the mountains in the distance. This is another Japanese technique of "borrowing views" from the surrounding landscape.

The Brion Cemetery engages the senses. Steps from the sunken path up to the lawn intentionally echo in different tones. Purposefully unbalanced tiles as one passes the iconic overlapping circles create a rhythmic beat as one walks towards the pagoda. Water trickles in the canals, and at certain times flows over the steps and creates a dripping melody. Even the mournful call of doves is part of the place. The Brion Cemetery is peaceful, but not quiet.

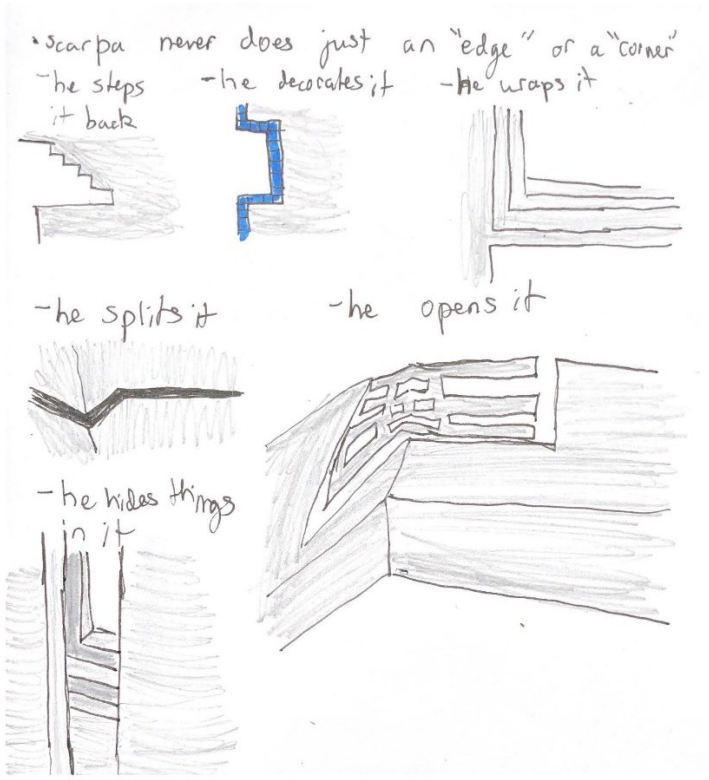

Fig. 8. My sketched analysis categorizing different edge conditions

Each edge is celebrated, creating an opportunity for pause. Some edges are stepped, some are decorated with tile or paint, some wrap around, some are opened and diffused, some are split, and some conceal more detail within them.

When an edge is large enough, it becomes a threshold, and Scarpa treated these with an intriguing combination of solemnity and whimsy. There is a door into the chapel, but the wall that it sits in can also be opened, acting as a door itself. A series of pulleys allows the glass door to the pagoda to sink into the pathway.

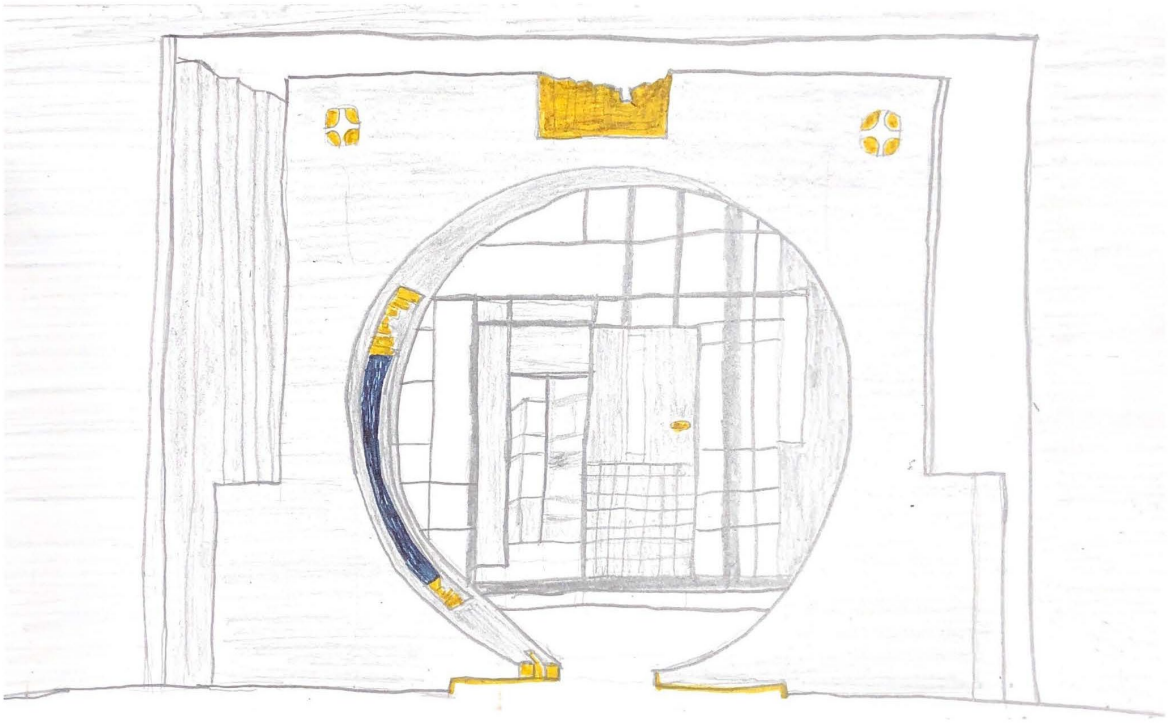

Fig. 9. My sketch of the chapel portal looking at the moveable wall

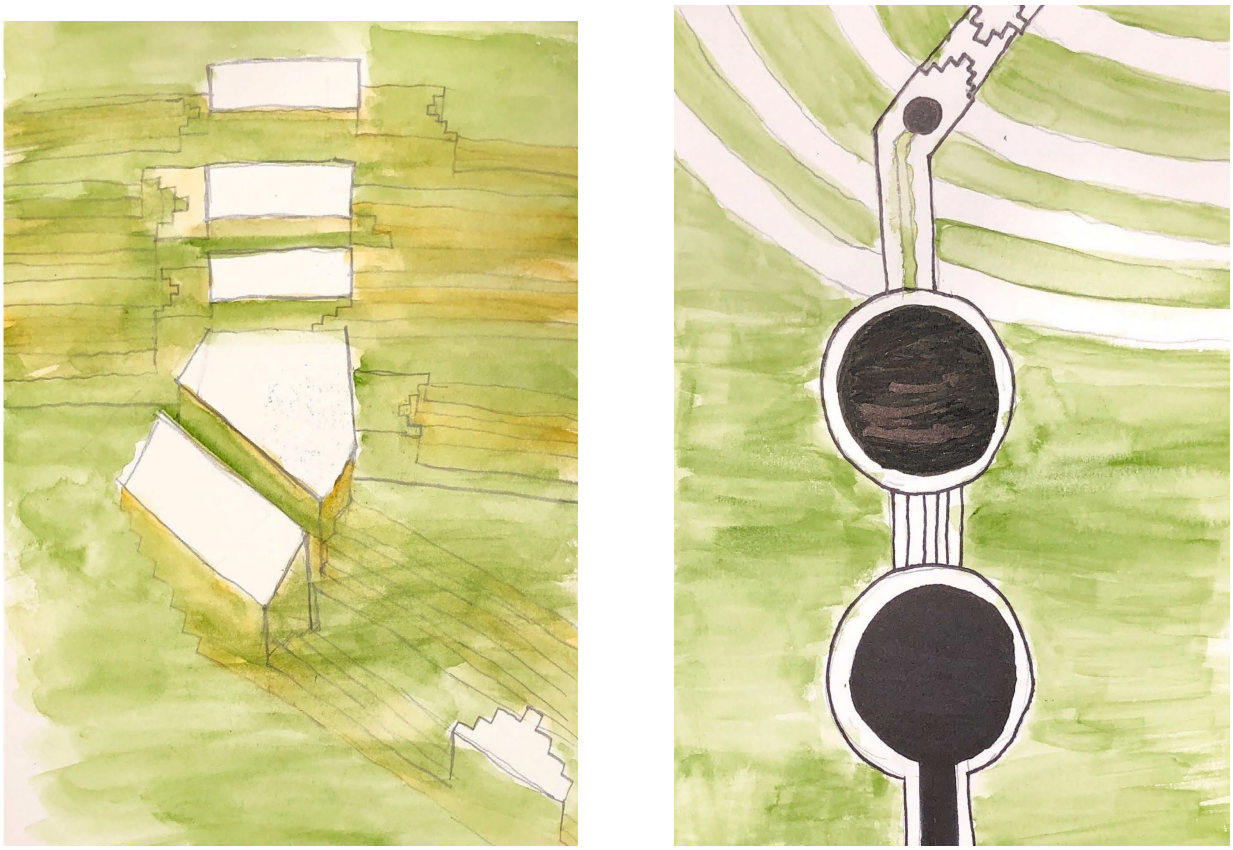

Fig. 10. A pair of sketches of water features at the Brion Cemetery

Left: Sunken concrete emerges to become stepping stones

Right: Top view of the Canal leading from the Pagoda to the Arcosolium

My second trip to the Brion Cemetery was after a weekend in Venice to visit the Querini Stampalia, Olivetti Showroom, and other notable buildings. Venice is a city like no other. The canals make for a beautiful wander through the city. Light in Venice does not come from the side, but from above and below, reflected by the water.[xxiv] Water provides powerful imagery throughout. After visiting Venice, it was no wonder to me that Scarpa included water features in so many of his projects, such as the miniature fountains at the Fondazione Querini Stampalia or the fountain at the Olivetti Showroom. Sitting on

a lily pond at the Brion Cemetery, the pagoda offers a place for contemplation, with a framed view of the arcosolium for Giuseppe and Onorina Brion. Connecting the arcosolium and the pagoda is a small canal that fills and trickles to and from the pond. I noticed it the first time I was there as I heard it fill and begin to flow, but on my second trip I realized its meaning. Canals were connections in Scarpa's experience. Living in Venice, he saw the way that water connects not only spaces, but also time and people. Water is dynamic, the source of life, and makes the Cemetery and arcosolium not places of death, but of growth and life. Scarpa even applied his sculptor's hand to the water itself, creating pools with concrete elements that reminded me of a sunken city.

The way that Scarpa highlights edges and thresholds at the Brion Cemetery captures the duality of life and death. They are often seen and experienced as separated and worlds away from each other. However, Scarpa's surprising thresholds and spatial connections are a reminder that we are not as separated from those who have passed as it might seem, because their memories endure.

[i] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 8.
[ii] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 8.
[iii] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 8.
[iv] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 10.
[v] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 4.
[vi] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 5.
[vii] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 4.
[viii] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 4.
[ix] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 11.
[x] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 17.
[xi] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 17.
[xii] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 4.
[xiii] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 17.
[xiv] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 45.
[xv] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 162.
[xvi] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 162.
[xvii] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 114.
[xviii] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 114.
[xix] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 114.
[xx] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 114.
[xxi] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 240.
[xxii] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 240.
[xxiii] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 240.
[xxiv] McCarter, *Carlo Scarpa*, 12.

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