

PURE ILLUSION. THE RENOVATION OF A PRIVATE APARTMENT



Location: Milan, Italy
Year: 2013
Type: Interiors
Client: Private

*"...in the most clever way Cipelletti directs the visitor's eyes and draws them to details." (Kerstin Rose, **AD** Germany)*

*"The work of Ugo Mulas as epicentre of the restructuring. The project of his Milanese home's interiors started off from there, says architect Luca Cipelletti. "I didn't want to alter its sober, formal atmosphere, yet I wished to introduce some vitality, a breath of fresh air." Hence the pierced walls. Responding to a desire: to look beyond" (Claire Bingham, **CASE DA ABITARE**)*

*"Art and Architecture in conversation. A triplet of mirrors seemed to reflect into infinity, although, in fact, it was cutouts in the walls bringing the three rooms together" (Suzy Menkes, **The New York Times**)*

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LUCA CIPELLETTI

The renovation of the apartment in a late 1920s building is based on three key points: reversibility, connectivity and re-interpretation. The main objective was to reinterpret a typical bourgeois interior of that period in a more contemporary way without compromising its intrinsic qualities and the graceful elegance of the past. The identity of each room is preserved to guarantee a certain intimacy, while the openings in the walls create a uniform sense of visual continuity. These openings establish new relations between the rooms and allow the observer an optimal view of the design objects that express the eclectic personality of the owner.

The line of perspective that extends from the lounge through the dining room to the bedroom leads to, and is conceived for, "L'Attesa" by Ugo Mulas, a photographic work representing Lucio Fontana working on his famous cut canvasses. The same applies to the proportions of the opening cut in the wall of the living room designed to accommodate the table for Galtruccio's head office in Milan by Guglielmo Ulrich to one side and, on the other, a prototype by Norman Foster for Tecno, lighted by a Bohemian chandelier from the '20s. The first "cut" holds a electronically controlled projection screen which reveals, in its opening movement, all the work on the perspective and the real depth of the space.

The relationships between the environments are based on the visual logic of perspective, foregrounding significant details, sight lines and proportions. Special care was taken to ensure that the sunlight that passes through the large windows into the environments and rooms and creates a mirror effect through the play of light and shadows. The eye is fooled by the great openings in the walls emphasized by iron frames and vases made of transparent glass which are filled with water and situated on the supporting surface of the cut.

The lightly polished white glaze of the iron frames stands out against the matt white color of the walls, emphasizing the identity of each space and paying attention to the volumes and cut intersections designed by Kees Goudzwaard in his work "Stratified", hanging on the sofa in the living room. The design elements are carefully selected in keeping with the original intention to bring the past in line with the present: an 18th century Venetian cabinet coexists harmoniously with a carpet by Altai and prototypes by Ico Parisi for Cassina.

A strong emphasis was placed on preserving all the original features of the apartment as the floor in seminato, the moldings on the ceiling, the tiles and sigots of the master bath and all the wooden window frames. This, too, made it possible to bring out the new spatial elements of the project while maintaining the sober and formal identity of a historical past which, rather than being forgotten, is enhanced and brought up to date.

CASE DA ABITARE 166 testo by Claire Bingham - foto by Chris Tubbs

AD Germany - text by Kerstin Rose photo Christian Schaulin