



At the Fifth Triennale of 1933: Ernesto N. Rogers, Enrico Peressutti, Lodovico Belgiojoso, Gian Luigi Banfi.

As they put it, BBPR are prepared to design anything "from a spoon to a city." The chronology of their work, below, is not comprehensive, but is accurate in its indication that over the years they have not tried to specialize. Large and small projects go on simultaneously.

*chronology*

- 1933-6 Newlyweds' weekend house, 5th Triennale; Film set exhibition, Como; Private interiors and workers' housing.
- 1937 Sun Colony for workers' children, Legnano; Italian Marine Show, Paris International Exposition.
- 1939 Form Pavilion, 7th Triennale; 2nd prize National Competition for replanning of Sala Maggiore zone; Replanning Robbio Lomellina educational center, Varese; Post Office, Rome; Restoration of Benedictine Cloisters of St. Simpliciano Milan (location of BBPR offices therein).
- 1945-6 Workers' Housing Project, Via Alcuino, Milan, using prefabricated windows; Memorial to Victims of German Concentration Camps; Tomb of firm member, architect Banfi.
- 1947-50 Roller apartment; Melzi d'Eril apartment; Gennarini apartment (prefabricated, modular storage units); Restoration of Marchese Ponti Palace; Marzoli apartment; Terni Pavilion, Milan county fair.
- 1951 U.S.A. Pavilion, Industrial Form pavilion; Architecture, Measure of Man exhibit; Ozilia apartment, 9th Triennale.
- 1952-4 and on Ina Casa village North Milan, in collaboration with Ablini, Albrici, Gardella; Additions to Nerviano Textile Factories with specially engineered shed roofs; Via Borgomuro skyscraper for offices and apartments, in collaboration with engineer Monti; Art Gallery addition to Palace of the Lions on the Grand Canal, Venice, for Peggy Guggenheim.

This field has reached an interesting—perhaps critical—point of development. The rebel giants who have so greatly changed it are, despite the extraordinary vitality of some, passing one by one from the scene. But we do not see others in their places. The situation is curiously the same in all the arts—among painters, for example, as among architects. It hardly makes any difference whether we refer to Wright, LeCorbusier, or Mies; or Picasso or Matisse (who died the other day). Even the vigorous ones have been with us a long time, and fought their first battles long ago. But whether we realize it or not the successors are here. They are not quite so easy to point out, partly because they are young, partly because their work has been interrupted by the war, partly because they have done less talking than doing, which has been interrupted by the war, partly because they have done less talking than doing, which has been interrupted by the war, partly adhere to the basic principles without in any way using the superficial mannerisms, because they to discuss these individuals in a series of articles which we launch herewith. We propose "person-ality" is unique among all to follow (the second will be Paul Rudolph), because the individual is collective: the architectural firm of BBPR, who lost their first B, but not their identity, to the German concentration camp of Mauthausen in 1945.

# BBPR

gian luigi banfi	1910 Milan—1945 Mauthausen. Matriculate at the Superior School of Architecture, Polytechnical Institute of Milan, 1927; Doctorate 1932.
Lodovico di Belgiojoso	1909 Milan. Matriculate at the Superior School of Architecture, Polytechnical Institute of Milan, 1927; Doctorate 1932. Professorship 1949.
enrico peressutti	1908 Pizzano. Matriculate at the Superior School of Architecture, Polytechnical Institute of Milan, 1927; Doctorate 1932. Professorship 1954. Visiting professor, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1961-62; at Princeton University, 1962-63; currently at Princeton University.
ernesto n. rogers	Trieste 1909. Matriculate at the Superior School of Architecture, Polytechnical Institute of Milan, 1927; Doctorate 1932. Professorship, 1952. Editor of <i>Domus</i> 1946-49. Visiting professor, University of London, 1950; at Harvard University, 1961; at Tucuman, Argentina, 1962. Editor of <i>Casabella</i> since 1953.



The Architectural School of the Polytechnical Institute of Milan graduated a class of seven in 1932. Three presented individual projects for their doctorate. The other four presented a collaborative project, as had been their habit throughout the five years of the course. The firm of BBPR, therefore, grew together 5 years before its members joined their profession. Each is a personality in his own right, physically and temperamentally different from the others. What they have in common are basic ideals about their work. Each has won academic distinctions of his own, has worked on individual projects or in collaboration with architects outside the firm. Two have lived outside of Italy for periods of one and two years at a time, not counting their experiences as soldiers and prisoners of war. The widow of the

one who died in 1945, Banfi, assists another, Rogers, in editing the architectural magazine *Casabella*. It is impossible not to believe that this collective solidarity in which they move so freely and yet so securely has not helped them all. The war and the political disturbances that preceded it made a relative mystery of the work of Italy's architects. We do not know where they "stand." When BBPR design a pavilion for a fashion show, or a housing project, or a factory, or an art collector's apartment, they stand on their own competence, rather than any theories of design. The total personnel at the famous studio in the restored cloister are 15 people. As teachers BBPR declare allegiance to pioneers like Gropius. As architects they find their own solutions to the challenges of a busy practice.



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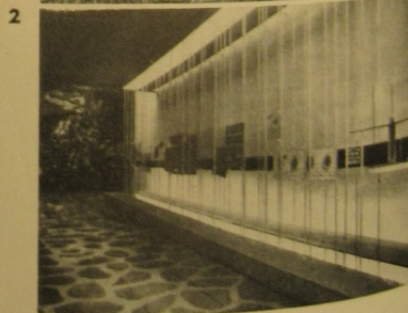
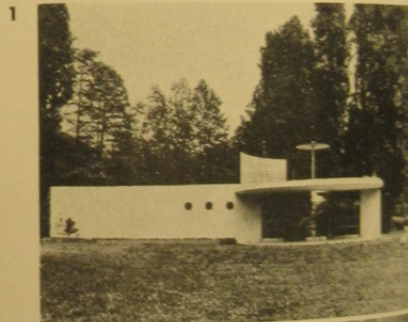
**BBPR: early exhibitions and interiors**



An apartment done in 1935. Rich carpet on a richly-patterned mosaic floor is still characteristic of most Italian interiors. The furniture could not be simpler, and is timeless in its form, although probably larger than any BBPR have done since. The drawers are simple enough to be prefabricated units, although they aren't yet. A few years later BBPR began using prefabricated units in luxurious interiors, because of their adjustability to changing needs. Our photograph does not show the whole room; at the other end is an elaborate crystal chandelier, perhaps like the rug an old property of the client. Combining antique and modern objects has long been ordinary procedure in Italy.

1 Week-end house for newlyweds, an exhibition in the Fifth Triennale of 1935, is temporary with the toppers and tails on page 116. As in all their work, there is no question about what they meant design-wise: circles in contrast to rectangles — spiraling stairs, circular canopy and round stair outside (the stair being glass-roofed) in contrast to the low rectangle at the side.

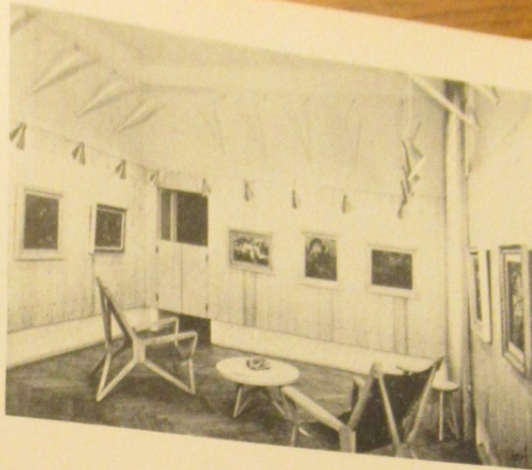
2 An exhibition at the Sixth Triennale of 1936 shows absolute security of expression. The subject matter is placed in a dramatic setting — a wall of light dropping from a pierced ceiling to a pierced floor, lines of white piping escorting it and supporting a black display strip. The delicate vertical design of the display area contrasts effectively with the blobby stone floor.



In the Spiga and Corra... original style of handli... design with the back... panels of nailed pine b... as strong and wood-tes... which are echoed again... suspended lamps out... pine half door ove... tivity of the paneled... esting variation on t... quite different from t... In a 1933 apartment... dining table consists... white verticals is repe... which has a glass top

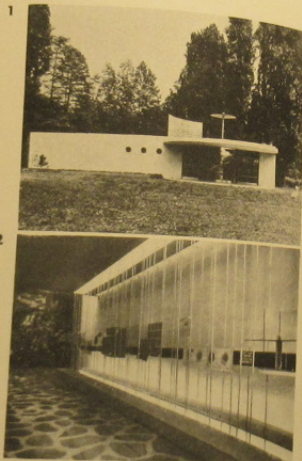


... in the Spain and Corrente Art Gallery, done in 1936, an  
... of handling furniture and of integrating its  
... with the background, is clearly expressed. The  
... of walled pane boards used for hanging pictures are  
... and wood-textured as the chairs and table base,  
... are echoed again in the wooden arms that hold the  
... lamps out from the wall. Note the swinging  
... door over the real door, establishing the con-  
... of the paneled expanse. The chairs are an inter-  
... variation on the African campaign chair though  
... different from the more common Hardoy offshoot.  
... a 1935 apartment for a family of nine (below), the  
... table consists of 5 separate units. The motif of  
... verticals is repeated in the frame of the commode,  
... which has a glass top placed over two of the divisions.

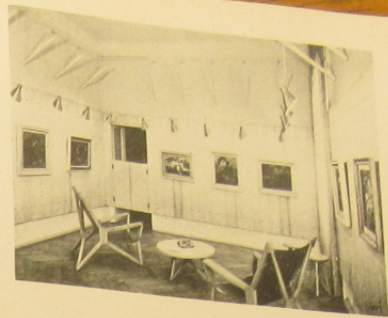


BBPR: early exhibitions and interiors

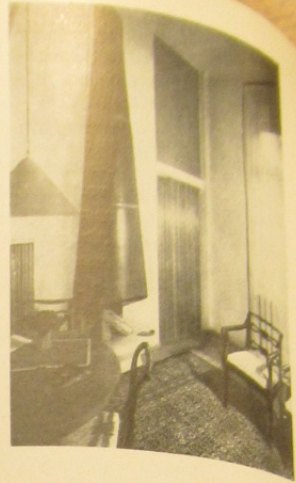
1. Week-end house for newtycoons, an exhibition in the Fifth Triennale of 1933, is contemporary with the toppers and falls on page 116. As in all their work, there is no question about what they meant design-wise: circles in contrast to rectangles — spiraling stairs, circular canopy and round stair handrail, the low rectangle and round stair handrail, the low rectangle at the side. 2 An exhibition at the Sixth Triennale of 1936 shows absolute security of expression. The subject matter is placed in a dramatic setting — a wall of light dropping from a pierced ceiling to a pierced floor, lines of white piping escorting it and supporting a black display strip. The delicate vertical design of the display area contrasts effectively with the bobby stone floor.



In the Spiga and Corrente Art Gallery, done in 1936, an original style of handling furniture and of integrating its design with the background, is clearly expressed. The panels of matted pine-textured as the chairs and table base, as strong and echoed again in the wooden arms that hold the which are echoed again from the wall. Note the swinging suspended lamps over the rear door, establishing the complete half door over the rear door, establishing the continuity of the paneled expanse. The chairs are an interesting variation on the more common Hardou offshoot, quite different from the African campaign chair though. In a 1935 apartment for a family of nine (below), the motif of dining table consists of 5 separate units. The motif of white verticals is repeated in the frame of the commode, which has a glass top placed over two of the divisions.



An apartment done in 1935. Rich carpet on a richly-patterned mosaic floor is still characteristic of most Italian interiors. The furniture could not be simpler, and is timeless in its form, although probably larger than any BBPR have done since. The drawers are simple enough to be prefabricated units, although they aren't yet. A few years later BBPR began using prefabricated units in luxurious interiors, because of their adjustability to changing needs. Our photograph does not show the whole room; at the other end is an elaborate crystal chandelier, perhaps like the rug an old property of the client. Combining antique and modern objects has long been ordinary procedure in Italy.



2



3

Three fireplaces, each a variation of a cone that becomes a dominant form in the room, and each used to a different spatial effect.

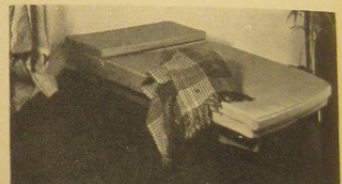
1 In the Melzi d'Eril apartment, 1948, an opening has been cut in a wall to accommodate the fireplace, which thus serves two rooms.

2 Mrs. Banfi's apartment, 1947: the fireplace against a wall.

3 The Oxilia apartment, 1951-52. Among the devices which make this very tiny apartment meet the needs of a family of five: fireplace acts, with a post, as an axle for traffic. Note brass rail embracing post and cone, holding bowls.

4 A piece of furniture to accommodate several human postures.

4



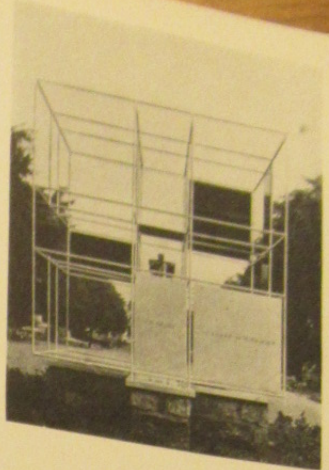
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1

BBPR's acute concern with form, which holds even in their most poetic works, is evident in the structures here. 1 Memorial to those who died in the German concentration camps, 1946, Milan, is a cube drawn in metal and subdivided around a crystal cube a spadeful of earth from Mauthausen, faced with rectangles of black and white marble bearing inscriptions, and simultaneously delineating a cross; the letters, seen across the depth of the cube, emphasize the sadness of the stark object.



2



3



4

2 Visitor Gropius measures himself against one of the Form Pavilion humans by sculptor Fausto Melotti.

3 The Peace Pavilion for UNESCO and 4 Form Pavilion for the 9th Triennale (the forms of nature vs. the forms made by man), are both applications of the spiral, path of the golden section expressed mathematically by Fibonacci's series — which expresses a progression pattern evident, also, in the growth of all living bodies. BBPR used the spiral more recently in the children's labyrinth at the current Triennale (page 112)



5



6

5 Showers at the Heliotherapeutic Colony in Legnano (1937), a circular structure in contrast to the colony's main building 6, whose elevations, volumes, and floor plan are rectangular. Openness is characteristic of the whole project, and all units—for the administration, the kitchen, the solarium, etc., are slightly separated from each other, each group of rooms being in a separate building, as it were.





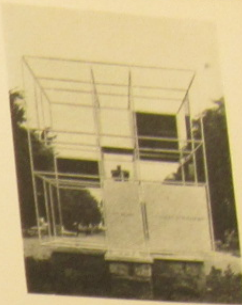
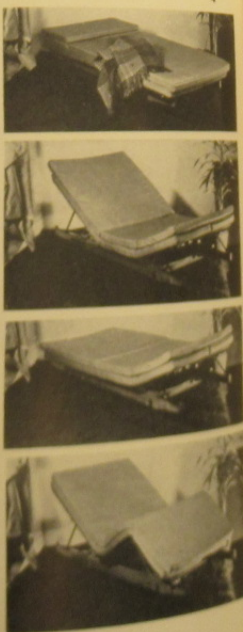
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The BBPR New Year's cards are as well known as the small world of architecture, as well known as this one was sent at the beginning of 1960, marking which the three architects collaborated on the Cinema Roma (below) despite Rogers' visiting professorship in London, which absented him part of the time.



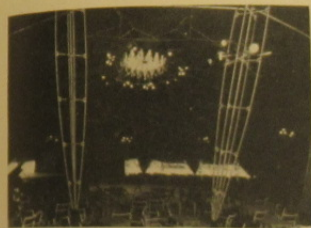
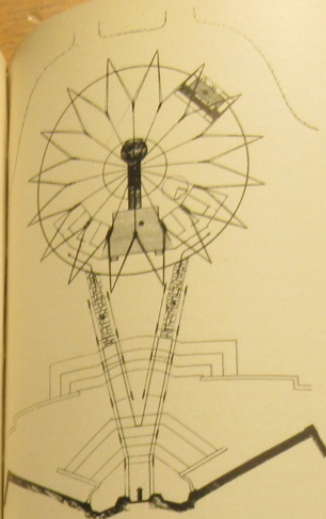
In the Cinema Roma, gaily decorative effects were obtained with the basic materials required for such requisite functional purpose: steel structural supports painted black accent the acoustically patterned ceiling. Four great lamps are buds of metal wrapped around wax coils, and shedding indirect light.

Among the BBPR projects now in construction is a multi-storey building in the center of Milan, on a spot gouged out by wartime bombing, and among 19th Century buildings of some historic and architectural value. The new building is to contain offices and apartments, the offices on the lower floors, the apartments above. In addition to the necessity of designing an intrinsically valid architectural form, and planning interiors, assuring desirable vistas to the piazza, the project involves the additional problem of respecting the character of this historic section of the city—which does not mean reproducing or imitating vanished buildings, but harmonizing the new structure with the piazza. The project has in addition the aspect of a problem in industrial design, since the windows and some of the facing panels are prefabricated.

The lower, office, part of the building rises straight. The apartments above, however, have balconies projecting beyond the wall line. The whole living portion of the building expands, expressing and accommodating its more relaxed function. Further up a few stories recede slightly. It is the function and meaning of the building, therefore, rather than any preconceived idea of its shape, that has determined its architectural solution. The result is one of the few major multi-storey buildings of the day which ignores the sugar cube outline of Lever House, the U.N. Secretariat, or the Mies apartments. BBPR have no particular antipathy for that shape, but do not find that it solves the problem in this particular case.

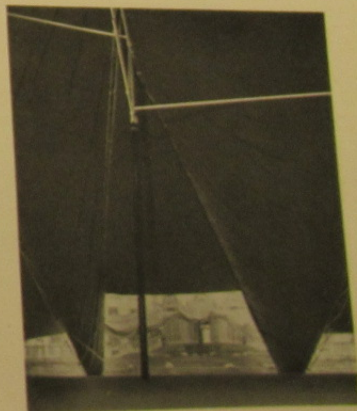
The word for the profession which embraces everything "from a spoon to a city" is architecture. As BBPR practice it, it is living architecture, constantly developing in response to new situations though certain of its basic principles have not changed in 2,000 years. How lively an art it can be in their hands is demonstrated by the Olivetti shop overleaf.

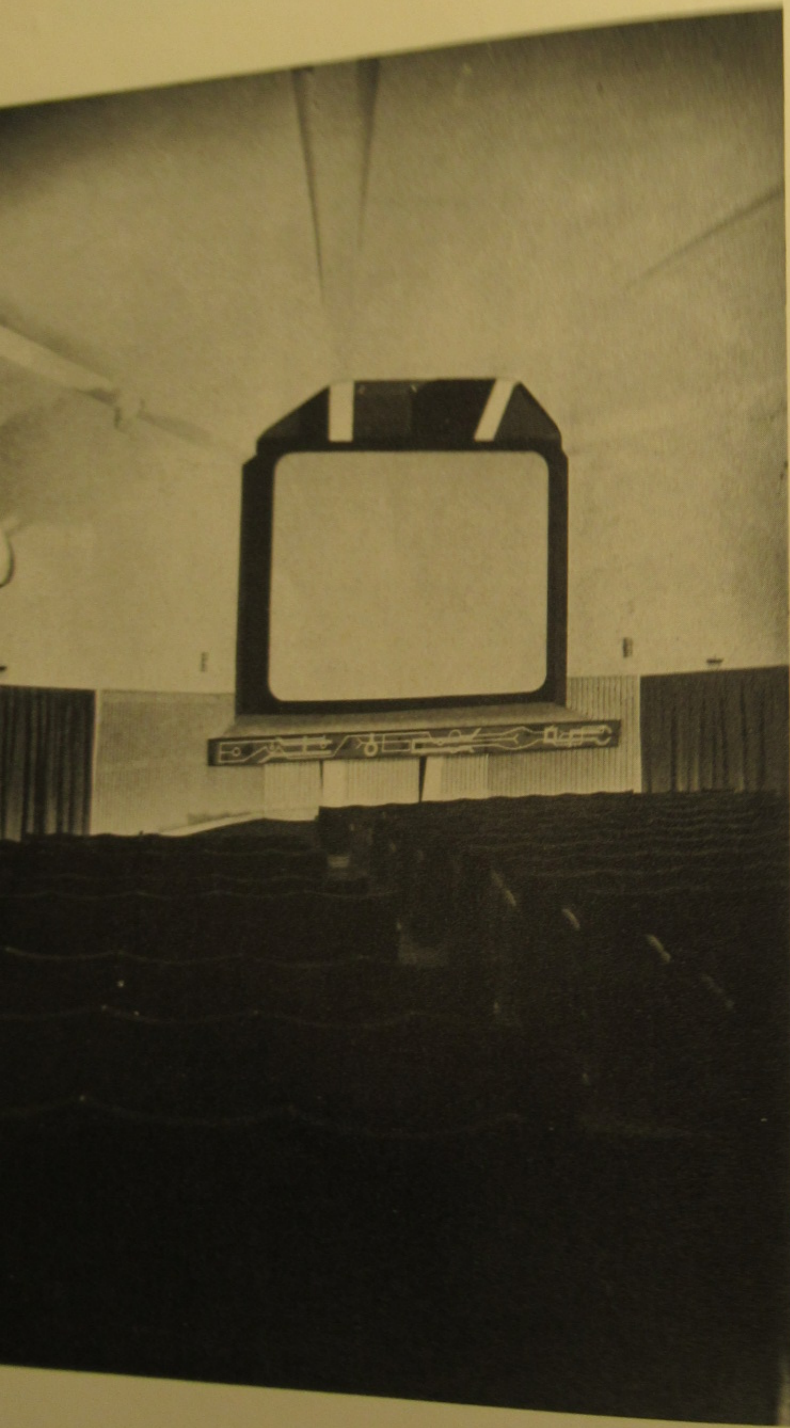
—O. G.



When the backdrop is raised, it is the facade of the Stupinigt palace itself which becomes the setting, closed in by the arms of the twin canopies leading to the palace. The architects have used the baroque device of a strongly symmetrical scheme varied by an unexpected deviation—all is true to the formality of the tree-lined road—except the height of the tent, which varies. Spotlights, handled in circles and clusters, generate as much splendid festivity as tapers. A plastic umbrella is poised above the central hole.

Partition for fashion shows and concerts spreads out below the steps of the Stupinigt palace in Turin. Draped in violet-purple, with a scarlet lining showing through at the folds, the elegant structure holds its own against the baroque composition of the little jewel of a palace. The structure is put together of standard steel tubing by means of adjustable joints. The tubes are painted yellow and orange, with black leg posts. The metal furniture inside is lacquered blue, the canvas rug natural. There is room inside 111-foot diameter for stage, bar, orchestra, runway.





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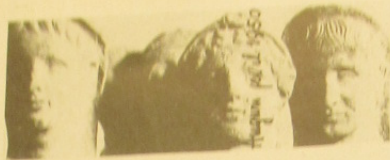
Among the BBPR projects now in the center of Milan, on a spot razed by wartime bombing, and among the century buildings of some historic architectural value. The new building is to contain offices and apartments, the offices on the lower floors, the apartments above. In addition to the necessity of designing an intrinsically solid architectural form, and planning interiors, assuring desirable vistas to the piazza, the project involves the additional problem of respecting the character of this historic section of the city—which does not mean reproducing or imitating vanished buildings, but harmonizing the new structure with the piazza. The project has in addition the aspect of a problem in industrial design, since the windows and some of the facing panels are prefabricated.

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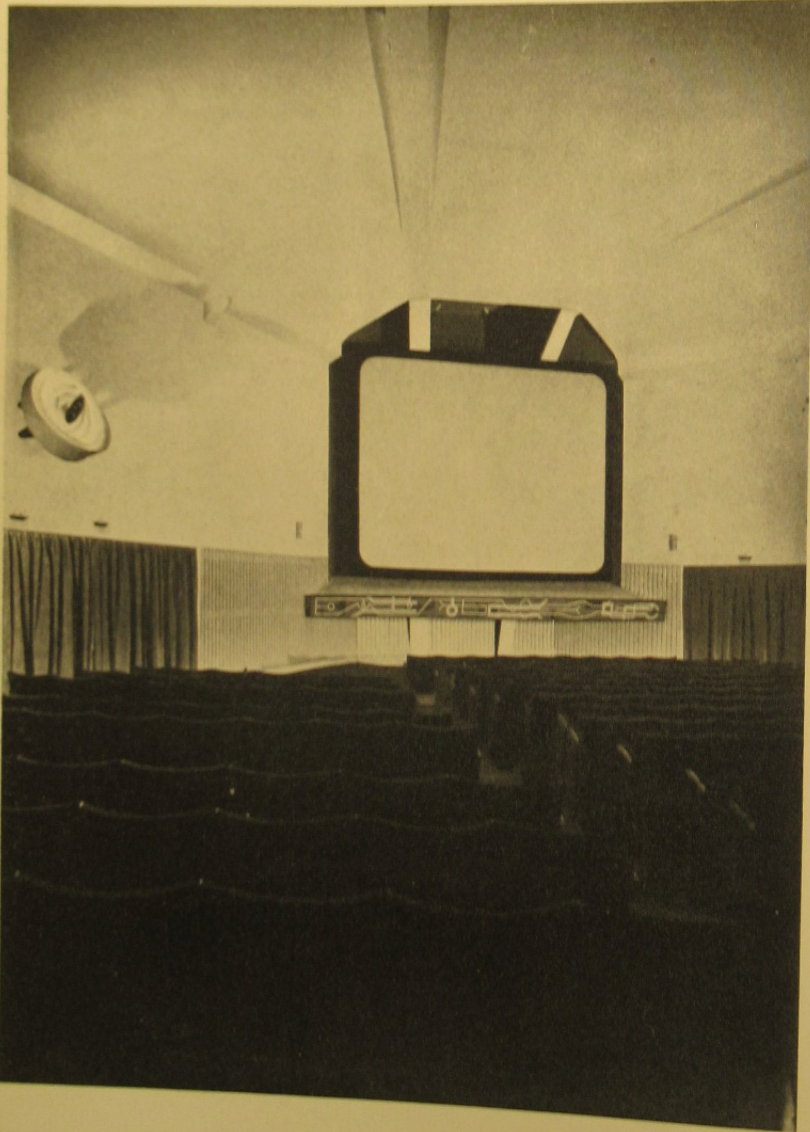
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When the structure... (text is partially cut off)



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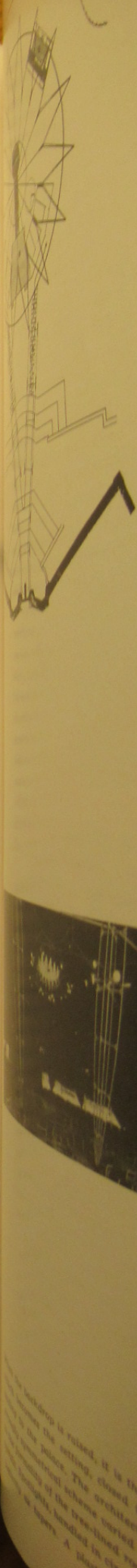


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—O. G.

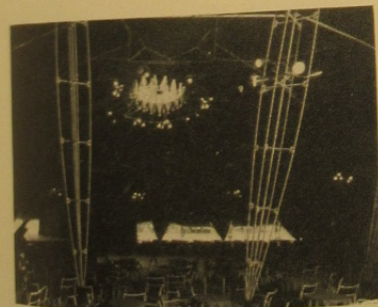
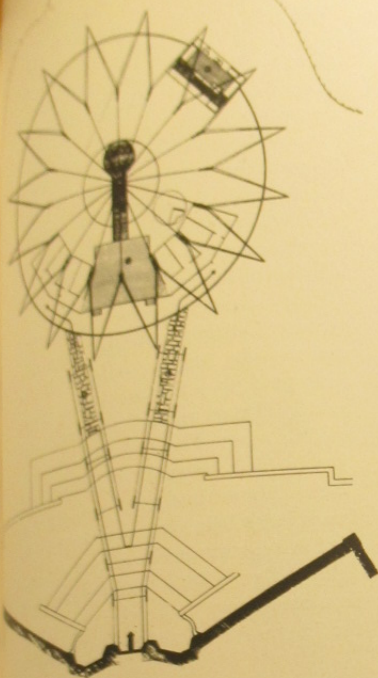


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Pavilion for fashion shows and concerts spreads out below the steps of the Stupinigi palace in Turin. Draped in violet-purple, with a scarlet lining showing through at the folds, the elegant structure holds its own against the baroque competition of the little jewel of a palace. The structure is put together of standard steel tubing by means of adjustable joints. The tubes are painted yellow and orange, with black leg posts. The metal furniture inside is lacquered blue, the canvas rug natural. There is room inside 111-foot diameter for stage, bar, orchestra, runway.

When the backdrop is raised, it is the facade of the Stupinigi palace itself which becomes the setting, closed in by the arms of the twin canopies leading to the palace. The architects have used the baroque device of a strongly symmetrical scheme varied by an unexpected deviation—all is true to the formality of the tree-lined road—except the height of the tent, which spirals. Spotlights, handled in circles and clusters, generate as much splendid festivity as tapers. A plastic umbrella is poised above the central hole.

