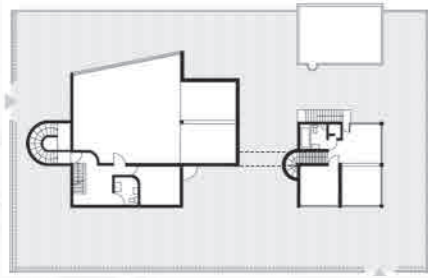
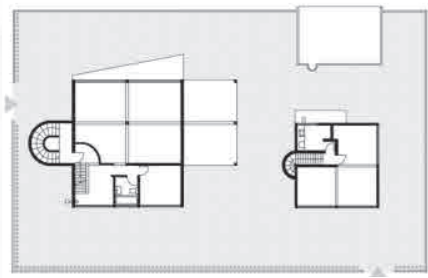
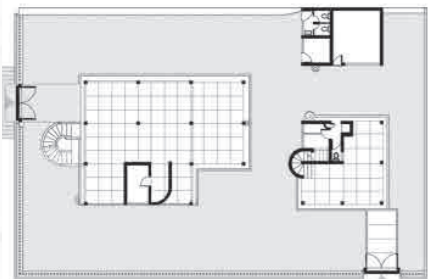


with a massive and imposing physique, and a smaller one, almost small and frail as Frida's physic, linked to the first one only by a bridge at roof height, therefore through a path clearly more symbolic than functional.

Diego's double height studio is only open north, in order to capture the right light for the painter's atelier through a huge sloping glass wall which overlooks the back of the lot, away from roads and noise; Frida's workspace, instead, is open



on three sides and light can enter at any hour of the day. The outside is visible from the studio and privacy and light intensity can be modulated through the curtains hanging along the entire perimeter. The differences between the two houses are obvious, even the main stairs, although within language and stylistic solutions of Modern Movement, are one outside and one inside the house. Therefore one is

clear and blatant and the other is hidden, to be discovered. They are clearly inspired to solidity and plasticity and to lightness and discretion up to the limit of matter inconsistency and unpredictability of the external route which connects to the terrace of Frida's house.

Then the house parts, the two joined blocks, are shaped as the protagonists' lives and characters: one direct, without detours, precise and determined and the other delicate, intimate, internal, constantly

broken by pain, accidents and disease. The bridge is the wonderful materialization of their relationship, the poetic underlining of two lives that to be united needed to be separated, independent. In fact the bridge that unites them is not a direct connection, it is quite an articulated and complex path, the result of a long and weighted choice in which it is necessary to climb through external stairs up to the terrace, passing from one block to the other, being exposed to sun or bad weather in order to



References

- 1 The study on the two houses and on the lives of both artists has been further examined by the authors in: M. SANTANGELO, *Lo spazio del corpo. I templi di Frida Kahlo, LetteraVentidue*, Siracusa 2014 and P. GIARDIELLO, *Narrare con l'architettura*, in AREA, Vol. 108, Milan 2010.
- 2 Hogar, is a term in the Castilian language impossible to translate in English, it indicates much more than a house, it's a person's own place, the intimate space, it can be translated with home, hearth, roof; sin hogar is used to indicate a homeless man instead of sin casa, but hogar beyond being a physical place is a place for the soul.
- 3 Juan O'Gorman, born in 1905, died in 1982 in Mexico City, Mexico.
- 4 Cf. V. JIMÉNEZ, *Juan O'Gorman*, Mexico D. F. 1997.
- 5 Ibidem
- 6 Ibidem

reach the destination, and, at last, slowly descending back to the everyday spaces of the other. In short, far more than sheer functionality was originally intended both from the designer and the clients. The purist language and stereometric forms become the suitable place to house the couple's works, which are complex artistic expressions, articulated, always full of colours and crowded of real and mythical characters, but it is also suitable to preserve the precious memories in form of traditional objects, archaeological artefacts and souvenirs of their travels. Finally the rationalist lexicon is declined in a vernacular tone, made impure and transformed, it therefore adapts to the suggestions of traditional Central American architecture, starting from the colours that, unlike architectures adhering to "international style", in addition to white, used discreetly, adopts red and blue, therefore referencing to Mexican customs. That's not all, in the presence of essential technical solutions, to the limit of "brutalism" - visible electrical and plumbing systems, external tanks and gutters, intrados of the interior floors exposed and without plaster - O'Gorman encloses the lot with a fence of cactus plants, resulting in a stark contrast between house and urban space from which the house separates through the marks of "local nature", tamed and reused.

Not for many years the house will be the stage of the couple's life. In San Angel the two artists live together for a short time and the house also sees their painful, although temporary, separation when Frida becomes aware of the affair between her sister Cristina and Diego and definitively abandons the house: it's 1934 when she leaves forever San Angel and moves to the centre where she lives alone. O'Gorman's work, the bold functionalist architecture that had aroused so much curiosity in public opinion, in later years will be used only by Diego as a studio. Perhaps from all this and from the difficulty to understand and justify Frida and Diego's life today it is possible to attribute the house they wanted for themselves in San Angel the status of icon and symbol. This is a sort of monument to their love, a temple where to live together a nonetheless difficult relationship, marked by Frida's physical pain, in full respect of their independence and needs, passions and daily little quirks, but above all immersed in their art.

Paolo Giardiello

Marella Santangelo

translation by Giovanna Russo Krauss

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Just as in pictures, we can figure some moments of the life of the couple formed by the architect Lina Bo Bardi and the art dealer and critic Pietro Maria Bardi in their house built in 1951, in the city of São Paulo, Brazil.

In a first picture the couple is accommodated in front of the fireplace in the wide living room of their house. The two are surrounded by friends, many of them artists and intellectuals, and are also in the company of their dogs and cats. Around them are arranged armchairs, chairs, stools, tables, shelves and lamps with modern, classical and popular features. Visitors can lounge on a Le Corbusier Chaise-Longue, sit in a 16th century Italian armchair or squat on popular Brazilian footstools. In the room there are also many pieces of furniture designed by Lina Bo Bardi, among them the Bardi's Bowl, specifically made for the house. There are also works of art of different types, origins and historical periods: a Roman statue, an oriental Buddha, Baroque saints, *candomblé* pieces, all among other everyday objects. On the walls there are abstract, figurative and primitive paintings. In the corners of the room there are popular toys and utilitarian objects such as oil lamps, mugs, bowls, etc. Some visitors are taking a look at the couple's records and books, or rooting around their desks in search for papers, pens, pencils and many other junks. Others are seated at the dining room table tasting some appetizers and drinking a *caipirinha*.

In a second one Lina and Pietro are in the kitchen of the house. In front of them there's a strip window that allows them to observe the nature around. On the side wall there is an abstract painting, while on the upper wall there are modern ceiling lamps. On the aluminium counter there is a vase



Bardi's fusion: the house as a museum, the museum as a house



with flowers and a ceramic chicken egg holder. The dishes can be found in a closet with fabric curtains. Lina is a very good cook and prepares a dish that gathers tastes, colours and textures, made in an industrial oven. There are several modern accessories around to make the kitchen's routine easier. Meanwhile breads are being baked in the wood-burning oven that stands outside the house, in the vicinity of the kitchen.

In a third picture the residents appear in the garden of the house. They walk through some paths delimited by low walls, the surfaces of which are covered with broken coloured ceramic tiles and pebbles. There's also a cement plate with an engraved cat, probably drawn by Lina. Around them, there is a Brazilian forest with lots of trees and flowers. On their way they find armadillos, sloths, turtles, parrots and many other animals. They pause to admire the fish pool that contains some Victoria Regias. They proceed all the way down to the architect's atelier, conceived as a small hut.

The house is built in a newly opened allotment located in the Morumbi neighbourhood in the industrial city of São Paulo. It has a prominent position in a sloping terrain that is partially deforested in its frontal part, calling the attention of the inhabitants of the surrounding area, who named it House of Glass. This denomination corresponds to a part of the house, the one that assumes a modern characteristic, composed by a large prismatic block suspended on metallic pilotis, surrounded by glass panels, pierced by a delicate staircase. This is the social part of the house, where there are the living room, the dining room and an office, all arranged around a patio. The other part of the house is placed directly on the ground, with brick >

walls painted in white, small windows with green shutters and adopting more traditional features. In this block there is the private part of the house, with rooms for residents, visitors and bathrooms that open to another patio. There's also the service area with the kitchen, laundering space, bedrooms and bathrooms for the servants, directly connected to the garden.

The House of Glass is a fusion of Lina and Pietro's personal and professional lives. The visitors of the house and the objects placed in it are connected to the couple trajectories. It was built in 1951 when they settled in São Paulo, after arriving in Brazil in 1946 from Italy. Pietro Maria Bardi was born in La Spezia in 1900 and worked as an art critic and dealer. Achillina Bo was born in Rome in 1914 and graduated in Architecture in the same city in 1939. She soon start working as a designer and magazine publisher. In 1946 they get married and travel to Latin America where Pietro wants to expand his art business. One year later he is invited by Assis Chateaubriand, in those days the owner of the largest communications



network of Brazil, to found and direct the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo (MASP), where he works until 1996. Lina is in charge of structuring its temporary premises and also designs the permanent building. In 1958 the architect is invited to direct the Museum of Modern Art of Bahia (MAM-BA), located in the city of Salvador. She restores an old colonial complex named *Solar do Unhão* to be its venue. In late 1970, the architect completes the restoration of an old factory in São Paulo to host a Commercial Institution (SESC) that promotes recreation and art activities. In the mid-1980s, Lina returns to Salvador, where she carries out architecture and urbanism projects, some with cultural aims. The architect is also constantly responsible for the design of the furniture of these institutions. In all these cases, Pietro and Lina organize permanent and temporary exhibitions, with objects from different places and times, with erudite, popular or ordinary characteristics. They might be organized separately or simultaneously and are constantly arranged without temporal or stylistic hierarchies, with easels that are often designed by Lina.





From the pictures already exposed it's possible to understand what a house represents to the couple. It's mainly a space that embraces the measure of human life in its full experience. A space carefully created and maintained for themselves and for their friends in order to share their existences. A space that is intertwined with nature, which accepts and incorporates it as a fundamental element. A space that presents art as a necessary aesthetic expression of men, including its most canonical spheres and its most ordinary ones. Between the house and the museums coordinated by the couple during their lives, a continuity is established, allowing works of art and objects to circulate between these places, often maintaining the same kind of disposition that allows breaking orders of times, places and styles.

In this sense, Bardi's home resembles the houses of other famous architects, especially the one designed, built and used by Ray and Charles Eames in California in 1946, which also resembles the owners personal and professional lives, nature and art, through the incorporation of objects designed and collected by them during their lives.



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The Glass House currently hosts the Lina Bo and Pietro Maria Bardi Institute. It has a permanent exhibition of itself and displays other temporary ones. In this sense, the house is a museum and the museum is the house, completing the fusion between these places that the couple started during their lives. With the death of Pietro Maria Bardi part of the furniture, works of art and objects were removed from the house. As time has passed, many other objects that constituted Bardi family's daily life have also been removed from the scene. For those who visit the house nowadays, it's still possible to perceive the power of its architecture, but that full dimension of domesticity that articulated inhabitants, visitors, animals, nature, art and everyday objects - fundamental for its perception and understanding - cannot be noticed anymore.

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