

CASA-ZINES ARCHITETTURA E STILE DOMESTICI

FRANCESCO SPAMPINATO

Parte del corrente ritorno all'editoria periodica indipendente riguarda architettura, design e interni. La recente rassegna *Clip/Stamp/Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines, 196X-197X* ha presentato un prezioso archivio di riviste, ciclostilati e fanzine che, tra anni Sessanta e Settanta, hanno utilizzato la casa e la città come metafore per una ridefinizione dei concetti di famiglia e società: da *Casabella* ai *Quaderni* dell'Internazionale Situazionista, alle riviste dei collettivi Archigram, Ant Farm e Utopie. Le riviste indipendenti di oggi propongono nuovi stili di vita ma sono disilluse nei confronti dell'industria e del futuro. Priorità, semmai, sono sostenibili-

tà e globalizzazione. Spesso la loro attenzione verte sul ritorno al passato, celebra la quiete casalinga e la vita campestre. È il caso di *Wilder* di Brooklyn, *Club Donny* di Rotterdam e *The Plant Journal* di Barcellona che professano un ritorno alla natura; oppure *Too Much*, journal di 'geografia romantica' concepito nel Giappone post-terremoto. L'ambiente domestico non è un luogo da esibire ma da riconfigurare, adattandolo ai propri bisogni come propone *Inventario* di Milano: la casa rispecchia l'anima di chi la vive. *Apartamento* di Barcellona, 'an everyday life interiors magazine', privilegia interni abitati da intellettuali e artisti, démodé e densi di oggetti dal valo-

re affettivo. Niente di più lontano dal rigore modernista o dai modelli domestici imposti dalla cultura dello spettacolo e dal design di massa. Ironicamente una di queste nuove riviste si chiama *Evil People in Modernist Homes in Popular Films* e come *PIN-UP*, 'magazine for architectural entertainment', è pubblicata a New York e propone uno stile di vita al limite tra realtà e finzione, riprendendo lo spirito di *Nest*, anch'essa newyorkese, che tra il 1997 e il 2004 ha presentato squat sfarzosi, decadenti dimore d'epoca e improbabili *wunderkammer*: la casa resta scenografia ma anche costruzione del sé.

56 |

Part of today's trend to move back to independent periodicals is taking place in the area of architecture, design and interiors. The recent publication *Clip/Stamp/Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines, 196X-197X* presents a priceless archive of magazines, duplicates and fanzines published in the sixties and seventies, which used the house and the city as metaphors for taking a fresh look at the concepts of family and society: from *Casabella* to the *Quaderni* notebooks published by the Situationist International and the magazines brought out by the Archigram, Ant Farm and Utopie collectives.

Today's independent magazines suggest new lifestyles, but do not see industry and the future through rose-tinted glasses any more. If

anything, their priority seems to be sustainability and globalisation. Their attention is often focused on a return to the past, celebrating the quiet of the household and life in the country. That is what we find in *Wilder*, published in Brooklyn, *Club Donny* from Rotterdam and *The Plant Journal* from Barcelona, which espouse a back-to-nature approach, or *Too Much*, a journal of "romantic geography" devised in post-earthquake Japan. The home is not a place for showing off, then, but one for us to alter around and adapt to our own needs, as Milan-based *Inventario* tells us: a home reflects its inhabitants' personality. Meanwhile, Barcelona's *Apartamento*, "an everyday life interiors magazine", has a soft spot for the homes of intellectuals and artists, a little bit out of fashion and crammed with the sort of bric-à-brac we get attached to. Nothing could be further from the modernist rigour and the domestic models imposed on us by show business and mass-consumption design. Ironically enough, one of these new magazines goes by the name of *Evil People in Modernist Homes in Popular Films*: like *PIN-UP*, the "magazine for architectural entertainment", it is published in New York and makes a case for a lifestyle on the borderline between reality and fiction, reviving the spirit of *Nest*, another New York magazine that spent the period from 1997 to 2004 keeping us up to date with the latest over-the-top squats, decadent period homes and unlikely *wunderkammer*: the home as an exhibition, but also as a place where we build and express ourselves.

HOUSE-ZINES ARCHITECTURE AND DOMESTIC STYLES





2

58 |



3



4

INVENTARIO

Tutto è Progetto / Everything is a Project

1 *Apartamento #9*, Spring/Summer 2012, Barcelona.
Editore/Publisher: Nacho Alegre, Omar Sosa. Design: Omar Sosa
2 *Club Donny #3*, Spring 2009, Rotterdam.
Editore/Publishers: Samira Ben Laloua, Frank Bruggeman, Ernst van der Hoeven. Design: Ben Laloua / Didier Pascal

3 *Evil People in Modernist Homes in Popular Films #1*, 2010, New York. Editore/Publisher: Benjamin Critton.
Design: Benjamin Critton
4 *Inventario #1*, 08/2010, Milan.
Editore/Publisher: Corraini Edizioni.
Design: Alberto Moreu / Designwork

5 Nest #12, Spring 2001, New York.
 Editore/Publisher: Joseph Holtzman.
 Photo: Jason Oddy. Artwork: Fabio Almeida

6, 7 PIN-UP #1-10, 2006-2011, New York.
 Editore/Publisher: Felix Burrichter.
 Design: Dylan Fracareta



CARMEN SPERA

BY MARSHA BRADY

[Carmen Spera's Capri Bar were a person, I'd have proposed marriage to it on the spot. Unfortunately, up until a few months ago, a photo in Richard Horn's 1986 book, *Memphis: Objects, Furniture, and Patterns*, was all I had. I'd

artist of the same name at the Santa Monica Gallery of Functional Art (SMGFA). However, the work bore no resemblance to the Capri Bar, involving a lot of tarot cards and some Day-of-the-Dead iconography. Still, I wasn't ready to give up. On



Carmen Spera's work from the early 1980s, like the Capri Bar, shares similarities with the Italian Memphis movement. But unlike their often mass-produced Italian counterparts, Spera's pieces always bear witness to their creator's unique individual craftsmanship.

A quiet genius's long-hidden treasures.

6

PANORAMA

looked at it so often that the pages would automatically fall open to the zigzag-faced cabinet with its airbrushed colors, striped flying poles, and oversized conical legs. Since seeing this image for the first time seven years ago, I'd been determined to find out more about Carmen Spera's work. The Internet wasn't much help: other than the depressing discovery that I had missed an auction (by a couple of years) at which some of Spera's pieces quietly went under the hammer, there was absolutely nothing. That is, until I found out about an

the off chance that they might have heard of the other Carmen Spera, I flew out west and drove to the gallery. The SMGFA was filled with, well, "functional" art: plates, chimes, candlesticks, floor mats, and the like. I asked for Carmen Spera work, and the owner, Lois Lambert, pointed to a wall piece comprising of a few paintbrushes fixed to some pieces of cardboard. I think there might also have been a wooden paint stirrer stuck to it. "There is another Carmen Spera who made furniture — Postmodern, airbrushed pieces. Are you

114

PANORAMA

115



8 *The Plant Journal* #1, Spring/Summer 2011, Barcelona.
Editore/Publishers: Cristina Merino, Isabel Merino,
Carol Montpart. Design: Isabel Merino, Carol Montpart



9 *Too Much* #2, Summer 2011, Tokyo.
Editore/Publisher: Yoshi Tsujimura. Design: Akinobu Maeda
10 *Wilder* #2, Winter 2012, Brooklyn, New York.
Editore/Publisher: Celestine Maddy. Design: Monica Nelson

Over the course of the summer, I took several trips to West Virginia. Along with Sophia Belkin, Willie Nordstrom and Nicholas Gottlund, I spent several days backpacking through Dolly Soda Wilderness in the Monongahela National Forest. Dolly Soda is a high-altitude plateau with flora and fauna resembling something you'd find in Alaska or Canada, but it is in West Virginia. The landscape is entirely unique to the region, which is one of the reasons why I find myself there every chance I get.



Well, out of this, I am always going back and forward between the traditional way of growing plants together. There's a variety, even a seasonal variety, next to another, it is not a sequence, a repetition, in another harmony. Sometimes I work more on the idea, a big one or a little one, the mood, or the dynamic, or how people experience my design. There might be only five or six different plants or the opposite, there is not too much happening or complex, but it stands on its own. My work has also become more naturalistic through the years, although it has never lost the quality of design. Ecology becomes more and more part of it, but since ecology itself doesn't mean beauty, you have to design.

"I work on the idea, a big one or a little one, the mood, the dynamics, how people experience my design."

PS You find inspiration in nature. How would you describe a scene in nature from one of your designs?

PS I try to teach people a way that reminds them of something they think they know from nature. That works, you know? It is psychological, I don't have anything to do with nature. Automatically what that connects with nature but it is a completely directed, controlled, it is designed. You can never say it is nature because nature is freedom, the stronger nature, and nature is ecology coming to the world of all that happens by coincidence, but plants grow well together and create balance. My work shows ecology must design or better said, when design means

PS How do you go to the point?
PS I guess I am more interested in plants and the ways of using them than a general landscape

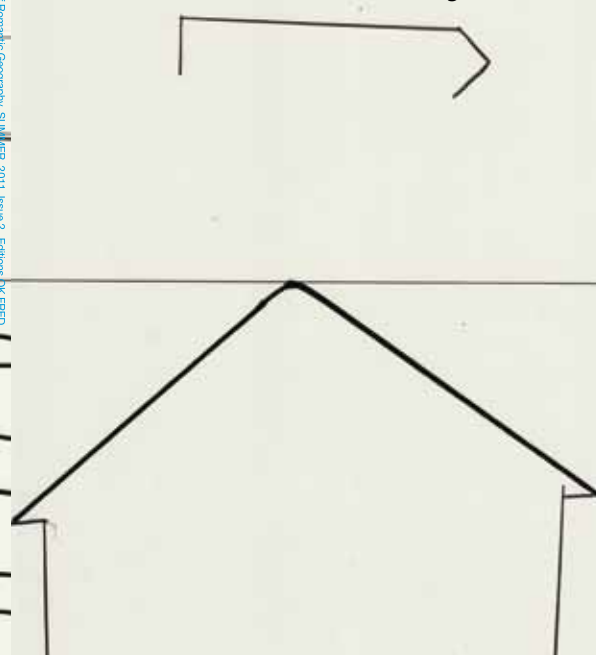
designer or architect, who are mostly focused on hard surfaces. If you are creative, you evolve and your work evolves, it is more subtle, even if you use the same plants it looks different all the time. Because you always want to go a step further or break boundaries, always trying to go beyond your capabilities and break them. As a good designer you always want to go further, and then that is a path.

PS Do you design in a way that requires a low level of maintenance?
PS Ecology makes it easier because you have to consider time, it is about working materials. You also come to a point where things and plants get a little bit more freedom. That happens if you work with plants that grow well together, don't show too much and you put, and you cover the ground, which is very important. Then you need less maintenance than in traditional planting. In all of the plants that I use are long-lived whereas in the traditional garden, you are worried about a plant and it is something that will die after a year and need to be replaced. But when you work with plants that are based on decoration, to look good for a particular moment in the year, and after that it doesn't really matter. If it looks bad they put something else in between, a few years, and then it looks good for the rest of the year. But with my way of working, you put plants you can't do that. It has to look good from the beginning until the end.

PS Does it ever happen? Because you work a lot with a small of maintenance, like you want to really fully controlling the reactions of the plants.
PS It looks random but it's not. I like things to be more spontaneous, allowing plants to get a little bit freedom, a little bit of freedom, but then, naturally, the more random it looks, the more people like it. If you experience the garden in a more classical way, the more it will be for the garden to be understood. So when you create a naturalistic kind of planting, where you are in the balance between control and non-control, then you need someone who knows



TOO MUCH Magazine of Romantic Geography SUMMER 2011
Takashi Homma, Nohiko Hino, Item Idem, Take Hirakawa, Hima, Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Zak Kyes, Anders Edström, C.W. Winter, Jun Aoki, Kyohei Sakaguchi, Ron Eglash, Tomoo Gokita
Issue 2 Editions OK FRED



10

