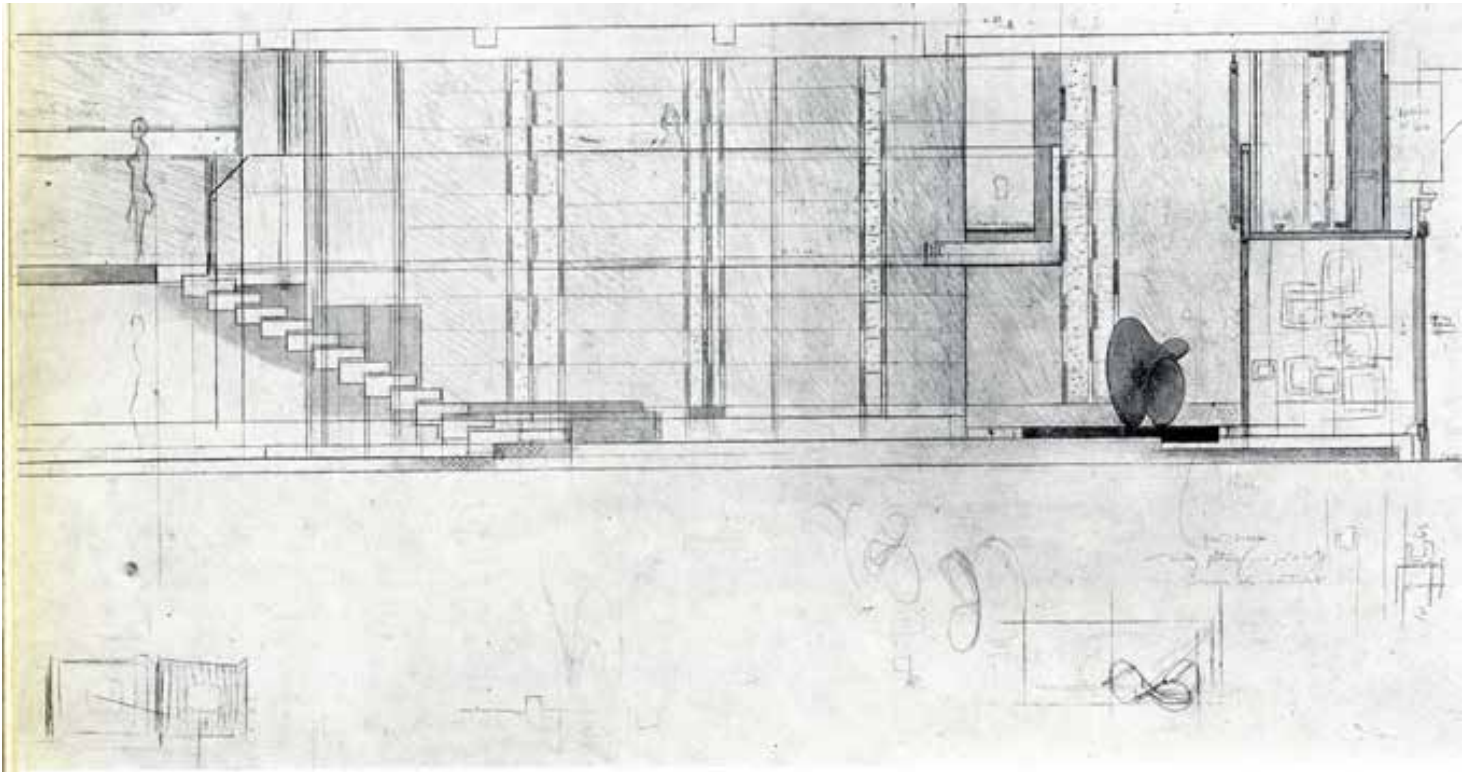
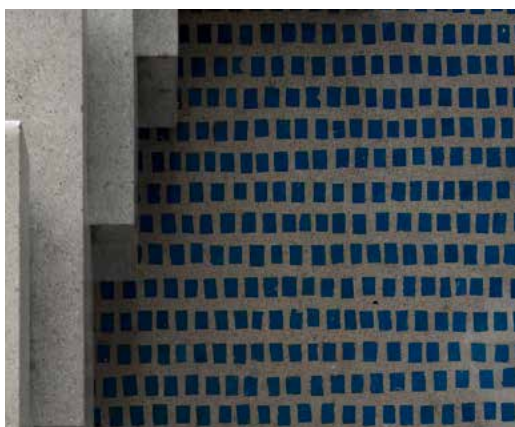


# The architecture



Longitudinal section of the Negozio Olivetti

In 1938 Olivetti has already a shop near Piazza San Marco: designed by Marcello Nizzoli in Bacino Orseolo, it was later renovated under the supervision of Emilio Lepscky. Adriano Olivetti has something grander in mind: a showroom that should transmit the meaning of the enlightened program of the company and in which history and modernity live side by side. In the new store, between 1957 and 1958, Scarpa offers an original view of Piazza San Marco by opening two large windows. Light is the “material” utilized by Scarpa to shape the space and to cancel the distinction between inside and outside. Negozio Olivetti, in fact, should be a “business card” in the words of Olivetti. Scarpa proves to be highly sensitive in treating the materials by playing, for example, with the contrast between the stone’s roughness and smoothness. The details are extraordinarily elegant: the floor is in white, blue, and red (the favorite colors of Paul Klee), the floating staircase, the mezzanine with the Oriental-inspired screened windows. The Negozio is a symbol of outstanding construction, balanced between tradition and modernity.



## Did you know...?

Carlo Scarpa is a modern heir of the Venetian tradition. An obvious reference to the city’s past is the **floor** realized with a mosaic of colored glass tesserae placed with deliberate irregularity. The architect aimed at an effect of movement as if the surface was covered by a **veil of water**. The colors are different depending on the area: the entrance is red, the main area greyish-white, the side entrance blue, and the back yellow.



Alberto Viani, Nudo al sole (Nude in the sun), 1956



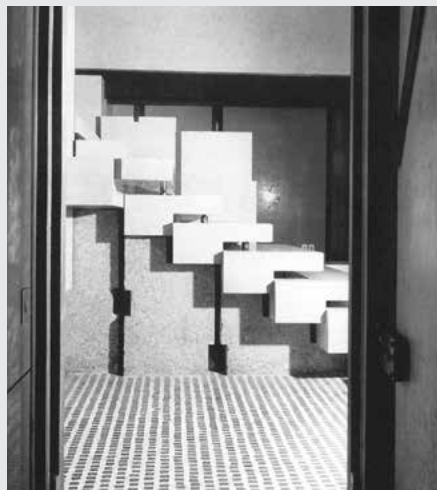
Carlo Scarpa, Brion cemetery surrounded by water, San Vito d'Altivole

The theme of water is key in the work of Scarpa. It is present in the Negozio, too, more precisely in the fountain and the basin where the sculpture by Alberto Viani is installed. The theme is dear to the architect who employed it in different ways. In 1978, speaking of the **Brion Cemetery** (San Vito d'Altivole, Treviso), he said: "I like water very much, probably because I'm from Venice".

A crucial choice was to place the **monumental staircase** in the middle of the Negozio. By doing so, a functional accessory turns to be a spatial fulcrum, the ground floor becomes an open area while the upper floor is more compact and snug. The magnificence of the element was recalled by Scarpa who, hinting at the Negozio, said: "For a king, a royal palace is mandatory". The staircase is a chef-d'oeuvre: the staggered steps look like floating and the pivots are exposed.



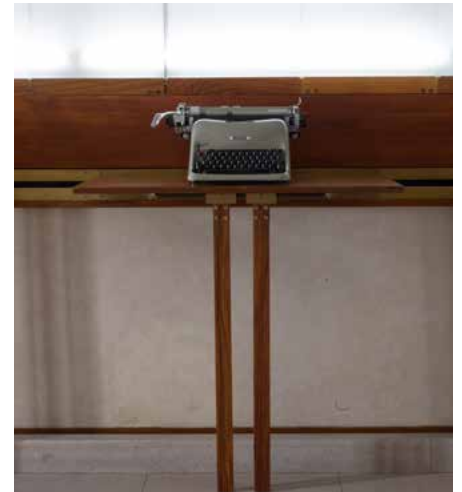
The central staircase



Detail of the stone steps of the staircase



The pillar clad with chipped marble



A shelf in rosewood with the Lexicon 80 typewriter

Few and recherché are the **materials**: slabs of Aurisina marble clad the pre-existing central pillar, with rough-hewn edges according to a typical formula by Scarpa. Rosewood is employed for the shelves where the machines are on display, supported by steel rods while African teak is used for the balconies. The walls in Venetian stucco contain fluorescent lights hidden behind opaque glass; ebony lamps, with steel cables, are other sources of lighting. Finally, the windows in cut glass have exposed lead screws.