

la Biennale di Venezia

11. Mostra  
Internazionale  
di Architettura  
Eventi collaterali

**VILLA FOSCARI LA MALCONTENTA**  
**ANDREA PALLADIO AND CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTS**  
**ZAHA HADID AND PATRIK SCHUMACHER**



The architecture of Andrea Palladio represents the built manifestation of Palladio's utopia of synthesizing all humanistic values by establishing the exact role and relation of each part of his architectural compositions - from the organism as a perfect whole to each single room. The proportion of each room is in fact determined by a specific set of "harmonic" relations that derive from the Euclidian mathematics practiced in the 16th Century.

Zaha Hadid and Patrik Schumacher – when invited to initiate a dialogue between contemporary architects and Palladio in occasion of the 500th anniversary of Palladio's birth – focused their study on three rooms, conscious that exploring the logic and relational system of such room they would have addressed and captured the essence of Palladio's architectural theory.

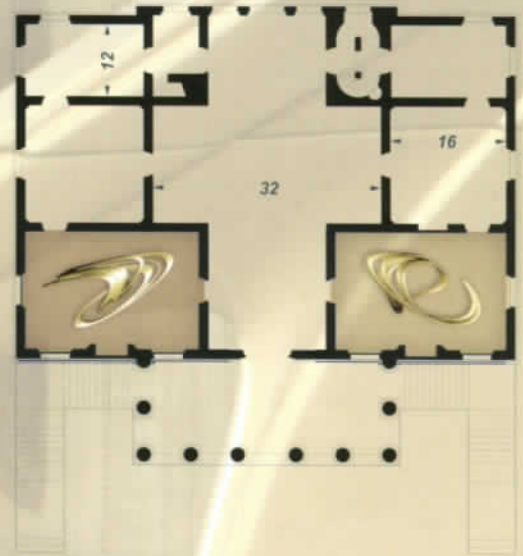
The room chosen is in the Piano Nobile of Villa Foscari La Malcontenta, a building designed by Palladio in 1555 for a site along the Brenta River. This architecture represents the ideal setting for this exploration as it was conceived and built by Palladio as a manifesto to demonstrate the perfection of his architectural theories to the Serenissima Republic of Venice.

The linear proportions of this room thus constitute the starting point for Zaha Hadid and Patrik Schumacher's study. The frequency curves generated by the harmonic proportional system of the Villa are progressively transformed, through mathematical algorithms, to define a "genotypic elementary space that contains in its DNA the whole Palladian set of rules". As a result of this experimentation, multiple complex spatial environments are generated through lawful variations of Palladio's classical proportions.

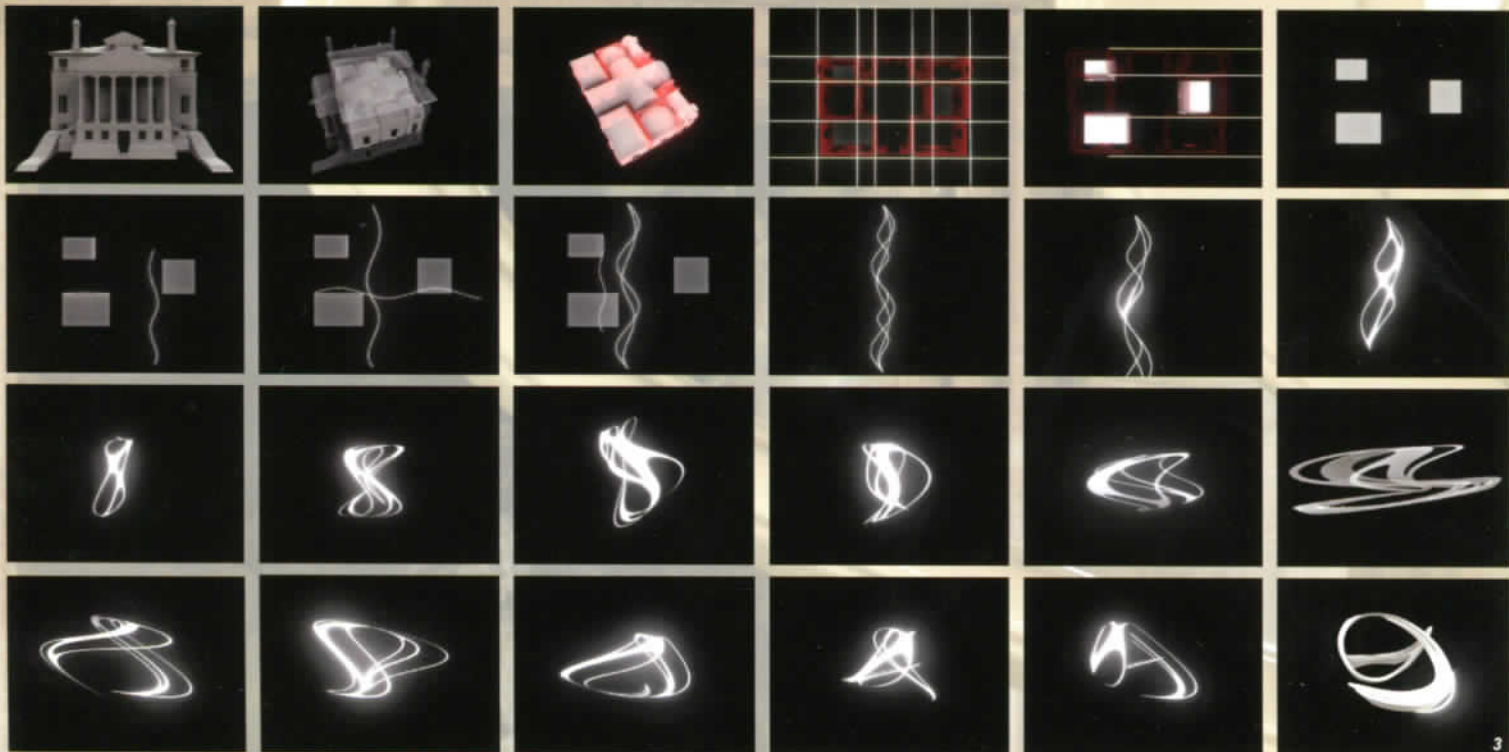
The natural equilibrium achieved by Andrea Palladio in La Malcontenta is thus shaken by the dynamic component introduced by Zaha Hadid and Patrik Schumacher, who have long abandoned the Euclidian mathematics that generated Palladio's proportional theories – that could only lead to the definition of one singular and "perfect" organism – and explore the potentials of advanced digital techniques.

In such way, within one room of this architecture that stands on the Brenta river since five centuries – within the void of such room – "Aura" is generated as a spatial morphology that reflects the structure of this void, the skeleton of this ethereal space.

As a further demonstration of the generative potential of Palladio's proportional system, a second installation was designed for the symmetrical room. "Aura L" and "Aura S" are thus presented as two "phenotypes" of the complex order generated by a contemporary translation of Palladio's harmonic system.



1. Villa Foscari "La Malcontenta": Main façade elevation (Photo Matthias Schaller).  
 2. Villa Foscari "La Malcontenta": the Piano Nobile plan featuring Aura, courtesy of ZHA.  
 3. Aura, 2008: Form generation, courtesy of Zaha Hadid Architects.







- 4. Aura, 2008, Villa Foscari "La Malcontenta": close up view of the installation in the room of Prometheus, courtesy of Zaha Hadid Architects (Photo "ORCH Studio Fotografico").
- 5. Aura, 2008, Villa Foscari "La Malcontenta": close up view of the installation in the room of Aurora, courtesy of Zaha Hadid Architects (Photo "ORCH Studio Fotografico").
- 6. Aura, 2008, Villa Foscari "La Malcontenta": Photorealistic renders: Aura-L reflects the frescoes in the room of Prometheus, courtesy of Zaha Hadid Architects.
- 7. Aura, 2008, Villa Foscari "La Malcontenta": Photorealistic render: Aura-S bounces lights in the room of Aurora, courtesy of Zaha Hadid Architects.
- 8. Aura, 2008, Manufacturing: The milling process while running on a 5 axis CNC machine (8a). The milled Pu-foam shape is hardened by coating it with seven different layers of fibreglass and polyurethane (8b) and then sprayed with multiple coats of car paint for the finishing (8c). The bringing in of the installation into Villa Foscari "La Malcontenta" (8d). On site dry assembly of the installation: parts are fastened to each other through steel joints: the gaps are filled with silicon to achieve a seamless perception of the whole surface (8e).

**MANUFACTURING**



The image shows the interior of Villa Foscari La Malcontenta. A prominent feature is a modern, curved staircase with a light-colored wooden handrail and balustrade, which curves through the space. The walls are covered in traditional Venetian-style frescoes, including a large one depicting a figure in a red and white garment. The lighting is warm and focused, highlighting the architectural details and the art. A window on the right side allows natural light to enter the room.

**CURATOR**  
**GIULIA FOSCARI**

**EXHIBITORS**  
**ZAHA HADID ARCHITECTS**

**DESIGN**  
**ZAHA HADID AND PATRIK SCHUMACHER**

**DESIGN TEAM**  
**FULVIO WIRZ, MARIAGRAZIA LANZA**

**MANUFACTURING**  
**IDEE AND DESIGN GMBH**

**LIGHTING**  
**ZUMTOBEL SRL**

**VENUE**  
**VILLA FOSCARI LA MALCONTENTA**

**OPEN**  
**14TH NOVEMBER TO 23 DECEMBER**

**OPENING HOURS**  
**Sat. & Sun. 9.00 to 18.00**  
**Mon. Closed, Tue. 9.00 to 12.00**  
**Tue. pm to Fri. Booking required**

**INFORMATION**  
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