



VALVIGNA

between architecture and nature

OVER TWENTY YEARS OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE PRADA GROUP AND ARCHITECT GUIDO CANALI

The Prada Group unveils the architecture of the new industrial headquarters in Valvigna, in the province of Arezzo, completed during 2017.

The project was entrusted to architect Guido Canali, author of Prada's plants in Montevarchi (1999) and Montegranaro (2001), and of the new Logistical Pole in Levarella, currently in the process of completion.

The industrial headquarters in Valvigna hosts the production division and the development of the Prada and Miu Miu leather goods collections, the warehouses for raw materials, the historical archives of the leather goods and footwear collections, the offices for general services and industrial administration, an auditorium, systems areas and the Prada Group data processing centre.

For Valvigna, Guido Canali develops and brings to completion several recurrent themes of his work, already partially explored in the two previous projects for Montevarchi and Montegranaro, which, together with the new headquarters, are now frequently defined as "garden factories".

To recover a degraded territory and to mitigate the landscape impact of the planned construction, these are the verbs that tell of the endeavour undertaken by the Prada Group and by architect Guido Canali during their long-lasting collaboration.

For Valvigna in particular, over a number of years, with tenacity, rigour and patience, neighbouring land is acquired, whilst there is planning, building and tree-planting. Activities overlap and are stratified: the project is refined as the building is defined. The architect is a master carpenter; the worksite is the place for the fine tuning.

Architect Guido Canali explains: *"The huge presence of green spaces, enhanced by stretches of water, also with the function of an energy reserve, is an integral part of the factory. Not exhibited as mere decoration, rather it is set as a condition for the wellbeing of the people who work there. An architecture that rejects gratuitous gestures and exhibitionism but rather is faithful to a critical rigour of rationalist origin, in its eliminating and allowing to refine. In this way, the fascinating secret gardens, the shady trellises of vitis vinifera, the gleaming ponds do not represent architects' formal self-indulgence, but rather the respect for the dignity and health - also psychic - of those who, within those walls and those gardens, must work there. And therefore inevitably also toil"*.

"With Guido Canali, we developed a 'common vision' of how to interpret the factory and its work environment, basing it on three fundamental principles: respect for the workers and their labour, a fully synergistic interpretation of the concept of 'quality without compromises'; and recognition of the importance of details as an expression of efficiency as well as a work culture - not aesthetics as an end in itself", affirms Patrizio Bertelli, Prada Group CEO and he adds: *"Prada and Guido Canali were precursors of such ethics, cultivating them together over twenty years of collaboration. Both spontaneously introduced these principles at a moment in history in which awareness of these values had not yet been acknowledged as a moral duty. The industrial headquarters in Valvigna, Tuscany, represent an embodiment of these principles. The building is respectful of the place where it belongs; it generates responsible, sustainable efficiency; and attains balance between its architecture and the natural surroundings"*.

For the occasion, the Prada Group presents the publication of a volume dedicated to the collaboration with architect Guido Canali entitled "Guido Canali Architetture per Prada" [Prada Architecture by Guido Canali], edited and designed by Italo Lupi.

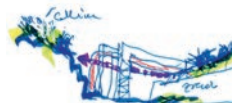
The book illustrates the 'common vision' of the architect and the Prada Group in the design of industrial buildings while respecting the territory and the workers and with the utmost care devoted to quality, industrial efficiency and details.

June 2018

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PRADA GROUP

The PRADA Group - Code HKSE: 1913 - is one of the world leaders in the luxury sector and is active with the brands Prada, Miu Miu, Church's and Car Shoe in the production and distribution of bags, leather goods, footwear, clothing and accessories. The Group also operates in the food sector with the brand Marchesi 1824, and under licencing agreements, in the eyewear and fragrance sectors. Its products are sold in 70 countries worldwide through 625 directly operated stores (DOS) as at 31st December 2017 and a select network of luxury department stores, independent retailers, e-tailers and through franchising.



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IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

The project: to recover a degraded territory and mitigate the environmental impact of the building

In 1998 the Prada Group purchased a plot of about 30,000 sq. m. along the A1 Milan-Rome motorway in the province of Arezzo, specifically in the municipality of Terranuova Bracciolini.

The area was initially the site of an old factory that made concrete roof tiles, Cementegola, abandoned for years. The zoning plan called for its redevelopment.

The Prada Group commissioned architect Guido Canali of Parma to build a plant with warehouses on the ground floor and production labs upstairs, with a separate building for offices and a canteen.

Over time, with the patience and determination of an artisan, Prada acquired bordering properties to give the building space to breathe, and the project proceeded.

The building is designed to exist in relation to the needs of those who work there, to the eyes of the motorists who drive past it, to the surrounding preexisting landscape that will remain as such once construction has concluded.

In continuity with the previous projects in Montevarchi and Montegranaro, before designing the building itself, the architect planned its insertion into the landscape.

The greatest concern was height, determined as 11 metres in all.

The question: how to create harmony?

Lowering. Based on the example of Montevarchi, where the road level is aligned with the top of the building through a series of descending green 'stairs'.

Screening off. Based on the example of Montegranaro, where walls and wings create scenic views.



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In front of the factory is a wide strip (40 metres) of parking and roads for public use. The plan thus displaces the building further back and adds an intermediary curtain composed of three earthen steps covered by large planters that host rows of vines. The ground floor disappears from view and the factory seems to rest upon this new floor, 8 metres above the level of the plaza.

Terracing. The horizontality of the steps defines the entire length of the lot, becoming visible where the heavy volume of the building disappears.

The upper floor seems to be made of air and light: large sheds, 36 metres long, frame the sky from the interior while projecting surfaces provide privileged viewpoints to admire the hills and the Arno River. These same views are offered by the hanging gardens, which complete the illusion of being at ground level, above a natural terrace.

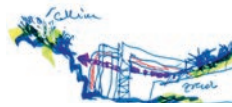
The design of the rear façade was more difficult because the space is limited, the hill is in disarray and unsightly preexisting buildings loom over the area from just a few metres away.

For this reason, the office and canteen buildings are closed to the outside by high walls, with courtyards and patios on the inside.

In the end, the original gentleness of the hills is reconstructed, smoothing out the slopes to reduce the risk of landslides and to preserve the integrity of the terrain's water and geology.

A system of ultra-lightweight trellises covered in grape vines and punctuated by mulberries, pomegranates and jujubes and alternating with ample beds of lavender is the context in which the reinforced grass parking lot, which filters all water run-off, is set.

While the factory was being built, the hill was recomposed in a dialogue with the rediscovered landscape.



VALVIGNA

**The vision of architect Guido Canali
A workplace where wellbeing is combined with productivity
in a natural equilibrium**

The Valvigna plant is designed for the wellbeing of the people who work there.

The project expresses a quasi religious respect for nature, which is safeguarded and restored, and for the value and dignity of work that is performed therein.

The underlying inspiration is the conviction that workplaces should not respond only to the demands of functionality and productivity, but must also be human places, made for humans.

The presence of gardens and green areas and the luminosity of the interiors are intended as an effective source of relief from the exertions of work.

The continuous quest for balance between garden and building, between architectural rigour and the freedom of the natural elements.

The factory reveals itself in secret patios, in hallways suffused by light filtering in through unexpected apertures, in the spacious, open and luminous laboratories of the upper floor.

The project is the fruit of the perfect mastery of a trade and of a method, the roots of which are shared with the trade and methods of the artisan.

In sum, the rejection of the creative gesture as an end in itself; continuous fine tuning and rereading of what has already been done as a departure point for new ideas; meticulous attention to every detail; the conviction that the building site is itself a factory where ideas take form and change, looking for new forms.



VALVIGNA BY NUMBERS:

4

BUILDINGS

The main building, two storeys with a prefabricated reinforced concrete bearing structure at ground level for the warehousing facilities, and a steel bearing structure on the first floor for the production labs, divided according to brand and product family (Prada Donna, Prada Uomo, small leather goods and Miu Miu);

The physical plant, which hosts the electrical, heating and water plants, with terracing above for long-stalk vegetation;

Office building, three storeys with metal cladding, situated behind the main building. Located on the ground floor of the building are the General Secretariat, an Auditorium and Multimedia and Telepresence Rooms;

The canteen, a vast bright area characterized by a glass roof surmounted by a pergola, is attached to the office building.

32,431 m²
Total built area

19,000 m²
Covered area

26,606 m²
Main building

3,157 m²
Office building

93,125 m²
Total area

2,960 m²
Physical plant

1.708 m²
Canteen and kitchen

THE STRUCTURE

20 ton/year
CO₂ absorbed

8,700
Climbing plants

29,000
Bushes

8,000 m²
Reinforced grass
parking

297
Trees

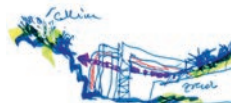
74,000 m²
Ground cover and
grassy plants

2,800 m²
Green carpeting

980
Grape vines

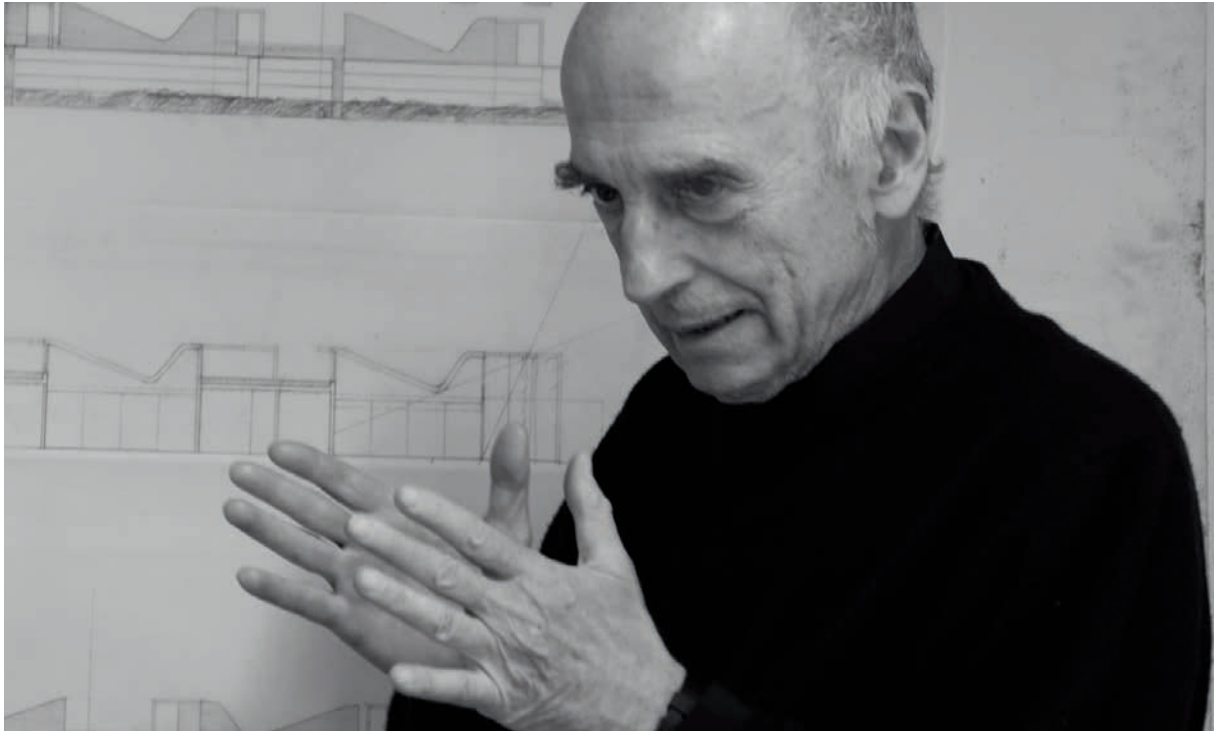
3,275 m²
Lawn

THE GREENERY



VALVIGNA

GUIDO CANALI



Museums and industrial plants, in addition of course to dwellings, are the key features of Guido Canali's project research.

In the former Canali is the recognised heir to the glorious tradition of the Modern in Italy, between the 1960s and 1980s, when masters such as Franco Albini and Carlo Scarpa gave the world impeccable layout designs. His specific personal obsession is with transforming the museum itinerary into spectacle. Some of the most unique Italian historical complexes have been reinterpreted in this way: Palazzo della Pilotta in Parma, where for over thirty years, since 1970, he reinvented the National Gallery, in which obsolete stables and other spaces that had been set aside for decades were turned in fascinating exhibition rooms; the fourteenth-century hospital of Santa Maria della Scala in Siena, a transformation in progress since the 1990s, in one of the most important Italian cultural poles with the Archaeological Museum, moved into the medieval bowels of the complex and the Congress Centre;



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the new Museum of Milan Cathedral (2014), traversed with subtle fascination on the ground floor of Palazzo Reale; the Museum of the Stele Statues in Pontremoli (2016), rethought according to a rapid narrative rhythm within the unique meanderings of Piagnaro Castle. His restructurings are consistent with the same research method: among the many, that (following a restricted international competition in 1987) of an entire nineteenth-century block in the heart of Munich as the headquarters of the HypoVereinsbank.

Almost at the same time, two large cruise ships for Costa Crociere (1988-1992), where "seafaring", by now trivialised by commercialisation, was refined in the vein of a joyous rationalism.

In the field of residences, multiple variations on the theme of the "Po valley house" in a number of housing complexes (in Parma, Reggio Emilia, Sassuolo, Noceto...), but also demanding challenges such as a busy district of one thousand four hundred inhabitants at Il Portello, Milan (presented at the Venice Biennale of Architecture in 2010).

Finally, workplaces (industrial and artisan establishments, offices). Always, if the context permits this, they are surrounded by greenery, almost like farmhouses in the countryside (Smeg in Guastalla, Pinko in Fidenza, Gran Sasso near Teramo). And built around internal gardens and well-lit patios, with subtle references to the Classical archetypes of antiquity, such as the industrial headquarters designed for Prada.

Guido Canali. Accademico di San Luca, graduate from the Accademia di Belle Arti in Parma, Partner of the Committee of Honour of the Italian Association of Landscape Architects and of the National Institute of Architecture. Formerly Professor of Architectural Composition at Venice and Ferrara. Numerous awards, including INARCH Prizes 1989/90, 91/92, 2007; Constructa Preis Hanover 92; Fritz Schumacher Preis 2004, Career Award; Compasso d'Oro 2004; Dedalo 2007; Brick Award 2008; Piranesi Prix de Rome 2011, for restoration; INARCH/ANCE 2014 Career Award ("one of the main protagonists of the Italian architectural culture of the last fifty years"), Brand&Landscape Award 2016.