



Mario Botta

"When the Fondazione's director Giorgio Busetto came to Lugano to talk to me about the project to restructure and expand the Querini Stampalia, the years of my Venetian studies reappeared before my eyes in a flash. The spaces were like friends I had shared a lot of aspirations with during my studies. Busetto's proposal immediately felt to me like a moral obligation, a way of at least partly repaying a debt of gratitude"

- Mario Botta

The project began in 1994 with the purchase of the adjacent buildings and was completed in 2013. But the premise goes back to Mario Botta's university years in Venice. Of his supervisors at the IUAV in 1969, one – Scarpa – was the architect responsible for restructuring of the Querini's ground floor and garden; the other, Mazzariol, was the Fondazione's director who had entrusted him with the task ten years earlier. Botta set out a work of 'urban restitching', as he defines it, which is not imposed but is instead inserted into the context of the palace and the city,

with all their stratifications and fragments: a balancing act between old and new in constant evolution, just like the Querini.

The entrance to the Fondazione from the Scarpa Bridge is now used only on solemn occasions.

The one set aside for ordinary use is the one from Campo Santa Maria Formosa, which the new 'grafted' buildings overlook.

Botta reclaimed the seventeenth-century bridge, adding a platform where people can meet and sit. He concentrated the service areas on the ground floor: the reception, ticket office, cloakroom, bookshop, and café. He added another staircase, at once functional and spectacular, alongside the two lifts. He made space for a 232-seater auditorium.

He organised the spaces around a courtyard, the fulcrum of the entire complex. The architect covered it with a velarium that intercepts the light and makes it vibrate in the space like the reflection on the water's surface in a canal.