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THE RHETORIC OF AUTHENTIC SURFACES: GOLD LEAF IN THE RECENT WORK OF OMA AND MARIO BOTTA.

In 2015, the first stage of O.M.A.'s Fondazione Prada in Milan was opened to the public. Led by O.M.A. founder, Rem Koolhaas, the project consists of a campus of re-purposed industrial buildings to house the art collection and associated cultural activities of the Italian fashion giant. Of all the extant buildings, the visual focus is on an ordinary five-storey structure, which has been covered entirely in gold leaf. While O.M.A. have employed gold leaf on a small number of earlier projects, there are also other contemporary parallels, including Mario Botta's church in Seriate, located just fifty kilometres east of Milan. Completed in 2004, Botta's church establishes a curious inversion of O.M.A.'s gold building: its interior is lined extensively in gilded timber slats.

While both buildings produce seductive atmospheres of reflected light and glowing golden colour, the interest of their association goes beyond their geographic proximity and their surface effects. Rather, this paper will examine how both Koolhaas and Botta seem to be compelled to justify their material choice. For example, Koolhaas has made pragmatic claims that real gold is cheaper than many other 'traditional' cladding materials. He thereby brings together long-standing themes in his work concerning luxury, and the conspicuous use of both cheap and expensive materials for visual and rhetorical impact. By contrast, Botta explains his interior based on the tradition of gilt timber picture frames, reinforcing a pervasive archaising rhetoric that surrounds his practice, and its insistence on historical memory.

Despite it being a mere fraction of a millimetre thick, the use of real gold therefore carries much semantic weight for both architects. By exploring Koolhaas and Botta's representations of the two projects within the broader context of their work, this paper examines what is at stake in their respective use of gold, and will show how both projects rely on the material's authenticity for meaning and rhetorical power.

Introduction

Gold leaf has been used in the art and architecture of Eastern and Western cultures for millennia. Traditionally made by rolling and hammering the ductile precious metal into sheets just a fraction of a millimetre thick, gold leaf has been employed for its conspicuousness as a display of wealth, for its attractive glimmer, and for its remarkable durability. Although known to have been used on buildings in ancient Greece,¹ its early architectural use is often associated with ancient Roman and Byzantine mosaics, such as those that adorn the much-celebrated Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna. In the building practices of recent centuries, however, gold leaf more readily conjures up images of decadence and tasteless excess, ranging from the opulent interiors of royal palaces, to the obscene gilt fantasies that are rumoured of certain twentieth-century oil moguls and political dictators.

Still, gold leaf remains part of the material palette used by architects today - albeit infrequently - including two prominent international practitioners that are the subject of this paper: Rem Koolhaas (O.M.A./A.M.O.), and Mario Botta. In particular, the paper will consider two recent projects that, by coincidence, are both located in the northern Italian region of Lombardy: Koolhaas's ongoing project for the *Fondazione Prada* on the southern outskirts of Milan (begun 2008), and Botta's Pope John XXIII Church and Pastoral Centre in Seriate (1994-2004, with architect Guglielmo Clivati). Situated just fifty kilometres apart, each project makes extensive use of gilded surfaces. Koolhaas's project, which includes three new structures alongside seven repurposed industrial buildings of a former gin distillery, was designed to house the art collection and cultural activities of the Prada foundation. It includes an extant five storey building known as the "Haunted House" that has been covered entirely in gold leaf.² Botta's church, on the other hand, incorporates an almost entirely golden interior: its wall and ceiling surfaces are lined in slats of gilded timber.

This use of real gold in contemporary architectural design is highly conspicuous: the perceived cost of the material inevitably attracts attention, which is only intensified by its eye-catching visual effects. But, as this paper will argue, its appearance in the architecture of Koolhaas and Botta also reinforces some long-standing ambitions and themes of their respective practices. Curiously, however, neither architect offers much insight into its selection. Koolhaas remains dismissive of its cost, and describes his decision to clad the tower in gold as a capricious one. Botta, on the other hand, says that the use of gilded timber is akin to a tradition of gilt picture frames. But, what Botta and Koolhaas both make clear is that the gold is authentic, and not an imitation—a point that is also frequently made in the various publications of these projects, but generally left unexamined. The limited critical discussion of such an attention-grabbing material is intriguing, and compels a closer and more careful interrogation of the statements each architect uses to present and position these works. To be clear, what is of interest to this paper is not Koolhaas and Botta's use of gold leaf. Instead, it is their insistence on the authenticity of the gold, and the seemingly incomplete or inadequate arguments that each architect has put forward to explain its selection from myriad other options. What follows is an attempt to understand how these two examples of gold-covered architecture fit into the broader practices of their respective architects. It also examines why both architects repeatedly draw attention to their use of real gold, and speculates on what is at stake in this rhetoric of authenticity. Ultimately the paper asks what, if anything, these two works might reveal about the persistent notion of material authenticity in early twentieth-century architectural discourse.

Koolhaas's Gold Tower

Of the two projects considered in this paper, Koolhaas's gilded tower at the *Fondazione Prada* is not only the most recent, but also the most emphatic. With the exception of its window glazing, every exterior surface is covered by gold leaf. (Fig. 1) Dubbed the "Haunted House" by Koolhaas due to its poor state of repair, the refurbished tower forms part of the first stage of works which opened to the public in 2015.³ Like a golden death mask, the metal takes the precise shape of the existing tower, while preserving and protecting the underlying fabric for its next life. The result

is both striking and strangely alluring, casting a warm golden glow over much of the precinct. In Koolhaas's words, "To me the most exciting and now visible effect of it is how the gold and the reflected light of the gold contaminates the whole environment."⁴ He has also conceded his surprise at such distributed effects, saying that the gold "has benefits we didn't anticipate."⁵ While Koolhaas may not have expected its full impact, this is not the first time O.M.A. have employed gold leaf. Its precedents include a small number of projects, most notable of which is the interior of the *Casa da Musica* in Porto (1999-2005). In that project, the plywood walls of the Grand Auditorium are embossed with an enlarged woodgrain pattern in gold leaf,⁶ creating a shift in scale between the actual timber surface and the applied graphic.⁷ Compared to its precise handling in that project, the all-over application of the gold on the Prada tower seems almost crude.



FIGURE 1 OMA. Exterior views, Fondazione Prada, Milan, 2008-
Photographs: Paolo Gamba, 2015

Source: www.flickr.com/photos/abukij/18863475399/; www.flickr.com/photos/abukij/19084778846/

Not surprisingly, coverage in the popular press and architectural media has often focused on the metrics of the gold. For example, Tim Abrahams in *The Architectural Review* has quantified the material by: its weight (four kilograms); its cost (around £75,000); and, of course, the authenticity of the gold ("Not gold paint you understand. But gold leaf [!] ... hammered on painstakingly over three months").⁸ Indeed, it is elsewhere reported to be 24-karat, no less.⁹ Curiously, however, Koolhaas says little about the gold and its selection. He presents the use of gold as an incidental decision, made late in the design process.¹⁰ He has also argued that it is a cost effective material selection: "It was actually a last-minute inspiration, to find a way to give value to a seemingly mundane and simple element.... But we discovered that gold is actually a cheap cladding material compared to traditional claddings like marble and even paint."¹¹

Matters of sequence and relative cost aside, Koolhaas says little else about the gold leaf. Even OMA's website mentions the gold just once in a factual description of the tower, buried at the end of the near six hundred and fifty word project description.¹² It makes no mention of its cost, selection, or visual impact, and contains no discussion on its design intent. Yet, despite the largely uncritical discussions of the gold leaf by commentators, and arguably superficial discussion from Koolhaas, it is hard to be convinced that the use of such a salient material is quite as incidental or capricious as it is made out.

Instead, the use of gold on the Prada tower can be seen as reinforcing one of the longstanding interests of Koolhaas's practice. That is, a conscious engagement with issues of luxury, wealth and precious materials—marble, fine timbers and so on—that are frequently counter-posed with the very conspicuous use of cheap, ordinary building materials—such as plastic sheet products, unfinished concrete, and industrial steel grating. This material interest is clear from a very early stage of Koolhaas's career, including his 1972 competition entry and graduation project at the Architectural Association, 'Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture' (completed in collaboration with Madelon Vriesendorp, Elia Zenghelis and Zoe Zenghelis). In it, Koolhaas and his collaborators describe a monumental "Strip" construction cutting through central London, inhabited by "Voluntary Prisoners" that have escaped the old, undesirable city seeking a new, collective and hedonistic existence between its walls. Inside, the urban fugitives live on tiny allotments that each

receive alarmingly small but beautiful homes made of the finest and most expensive materials: “The houses on these Allotments are built from the most lush and expensive materials (marble, chromium, steel); they are small palaces for the people.”¹³

Such unexpected material uses also occur throughout O.M.A.’s built works, notably including the Kunsthal art museum in Rotterdam (1987-92), where high art meets Koolhaas’s predilection for ordinary materials and modest formal gestures. While the use of more precious or high end materials is familiar, if not expected, in a place of culture, at the Kunsthal, Koolhaas seems to revel in the introduction of cheap and ordinary ones. Indeed, much of the visual interest and power of the project lies in these unexpected contrasts, and the shock of the “conspicuously cheap.”¹⁴ For many commentators, Koolhaas’s particular interest in ordinary materials and conventional construction is an act of resistance—a resistance to the unnecessary excess and self-indulgent expression he perceives in much contemporary architecture. This, it has been argued, has some basis in the architect’s childhood experience of poverty in post-war Amsterdam,¹⁵ or simply in his Dutch disposition.¹⁶ Others, such as Jeffrey Kipnis explain it differently: “Koolhaas generally disdains designs that are unusually costly, especially where money is spent on exotic form or expensive materials. In part, he sees such tactics as senseless extravagances, whatever other claims are made for them. Mostly, however, his contempt unfolds from self-interest. When the exorbitant costs of a building make headlines or bankrupt the client, it is the celebrities of the profession that suffer the backlash.”¹⁷

Not surprisingly, the same ideas emerge in the *Fondazione Prada* project, and throughout Koolhaas’s collaborations with the fashion house over more than a decade. In fact, the continuing relationship between O.M.A. and Prada, and the wide range of resulting built works, is significant because it demonstrates - perhaps more clearly than any single project - many of these longstanding interests. Indeed, the Prada projects have come to exemplify the collision of luxury and conspicuous expense, with Koolhaas’s equally conspicuous fascination with the obviously cheap and overtly everyday. In fact, the *Fondazione Prada* maintains and intensifies this aspect of Koolhaas’s practice. It is, as many have commented, a project of oppositions—between old and new, between private money and public space, and between the types of spaces it makes available for the exhibition of art.¹⁸ But the gold tower makes a particularly startling contrast—arguably the most astonishing here or anywhere in the oeuvre of O.M.A. As a material selection, the gold sits in direct contrast to Koolhaas’s use of a largely grey colour palette elsewhere on the site. Significantly, this palette includes the use of a new and unusual material: an aluminium foam cladding originally developed as protective filler for use between the steel plates of armoured vehicles.¹⁹ Here, the temporal contrast of new and old could not be starker. Not only has the previously ordinary and broken-down industrial building been “exalted to the highest degree by being covered in gold”,²⁰ but its timeless and enduring metal skin is set in opposition to a highly engineered aluminium product invented for contemporary military applications.

Therefore, despite his well-documented preference for modesty in material and form, his interest in subverting the appearance of materials and re-coding their semantic associations, and his ambivalence to the notion of authenticity more generally, there seems to be more at stake in the use of real gold at the *Fondazione Prada* than Koolhaas lets on. It epitomises an interest in his work that has been maintained for more than forty years. More importantly, these ideas only become operable because of the authenticity of the gold. In other words, the building had to be gold to achieve such a striking rhetorical impact: to paint an ordinary building in gold colour would have had identical visual and formal interest, but it would also have reduced the gesture to mere surface effect. It may therefore be speculated that this is precisely why Koolhaas chooses to draw attention to issues of its value (even though he obfuscates about its relative cost), for it is only through the emphasis of its authenticity as real gold, that his conceptual rhetoric can be brought into play. While this is not an entirely surprising conclusion, the golden tower is a powerful manifestation of Koolhaas’s rhetoric through a shocking contrast of ordinariness and preciousness, of extreme newness and quintessential agelessness.

Botta’s Gold Church

In contrast to Koolhaas’s gold tower, the gilt timbers of Botta’s Seriate church have a somewhat more subtle effect, despite covering the greater part of the interior—walls and ceiling. (Fig.2) The gold surfaces reflect and diffuse the light from four large skylights to produce a warm and luminous glow. But, just like Koolhaas’s Prada tower, the discourse generated by the project and its use of gold is surprisingly limited. In fact, the discussion of Botta’s gilded timbers is almost entirely confined to two reductive conversations: one concerns its attractive light-responsive effects; the other

is based on the architect's association of the gilt surfaces with traditional timber picture frames. The latter is an idea that appears on Botta's website when he describes the project's material palette: "The bearing structure is in reinforced concrete, the facades are clad in natural stone slabs ... while the interior walls are covered with panels of gilded wood (similar to the technique of gilded frames)."²¹



FIGURE 2 Mario Botta (with Guglielmo Clivati). Interior view and detail, John XXIII Church and Pastoral Centre, Seriate, 1994-2004
Photographs: Ashley Paine, 2012

This statement has been repeated widely and uncritically, even though Botta never makes clear what picture frames might have to do with the interior of his church. For instance, Botta's description is copied almost verbatim by Alessandra Coppa who writes that "inside, there are wooden panels in horizontal bands covered with gold leafing, produced with a technique similar to the one used for the surfaces of the pictures frames."²² Elsewhere, references to more generic traditions are made: the catalogue accompanying a survey exhibition of Botta's fifty-year career states that: "the wall panels made of gold-plated wooden lath ... evoke an ancient technique and tradition."²³ In each case, the correspondence between Botta's gilt-timber slats and traditional gilding techniques, is ostensibly raised to describe the materiality of the church, rather than to explain why gold was used in the first place. Admittedly, the interior contains a small number of artworks including, most notably, a figurative relief depicting the crucifixion, by artist Guiliano Vangi that has been carved into the depth of stone-clad twin-apse. It is possible therefore that Botta imagined the building as a colossal three-dimensional 'frame' for Vangi's work. Leonardo Servadio lends support to this idea, when he writes that "within this vast resplendent frame, the space of the altar is set like a jewel."²⁴ But if Botta's intention was to relate the gold covered timbers to a literal frame, it is never obvious when looking at the church interior and he certainly does not say so. The emphatic expression of pure geometry (a square with a side of twenty-five metres) rising dramatically with gilded surfaces towards the zenithal light ultimately dominates, rather than frames, everything else. It therefore seems more likely that there are other motivations behind Botta's gold surface.

Surprisingly, almost no writers have examined what alternative meanings and functions might have compelled Botta to create the gold interior. Gianni Contessi is one exception. He argues that the sparkling walls and ceiling of Botta's interior do not refer to the gold mosaics of past civilisations. Rather, he suggests that the coating of gold operates to reinforce and exalt the dignity of the place and congregation.²⁵ This is interesting because it is one of the few commentaries on the project (and on Botta's practice more generally) that rejects history and tradition as an important source. For the most part, there is a hegemony of archaising discourse—seemingly promoted by Botta himself—that presents his work in simple and reductive historical terms. In particular, his work is routinely framed as an evocation of the past. It is said to be an architecture of historical memory, but precisely which part of architectural history it relates to is never adequately explained.

An essay on the building, written by Botta and published upon its completion in 2004, provides a useful demonstration of his predilection for this loose kind of historicism. In it, the object of Botta's discussion repeatedly shifts back and forth between the church in particular, and various arguments about church building and architectural history more

generally. This is a recurrent trait in Botta's writing, in which he seems unwilling to discuss the specific genesis of any one project, preferring to instead to speak about the generalities of a type, about a collective memory of building form, or of certain ambiguous historical concepts and ambitions for his architecture. Not surprisingly, he only makes broad or indirect references to the use of gold in the Seriate project, especially when it comes to explaining its particular meaning and selection for this building. For example, he writes that: "the exceptional aura and richness of the interior of a church are constraints that are part of the great Christian tradition,"²⁶ presumably referring to the church's luminous gold surfaces. Elsewhere, he writes even more generically, that: "The materials used throughout the history of architecture, as well as their richness, reflect the special attention that has been paid to interior surfaces, whose paintings, stuccowork and decorations have marked church history."²⁷

When it comes to discussing the effects of the gold, Botta's writing becomes more direct and more descriptive, shifting back to the particular conditions of the church: "In the Seriate church, a large plinth rises from the floor ... As visitors lift their eyes, they find a seamless surface composed of layers of wooden planks ... These horizontal planks, covered entirely with extremely fine gold leaf, catch the natural light coming from above and silently illuminate the space."²⁸ In this excerpt, it is clear that Botta is comfortable describing the material and optical qualities of his gold interior. This is also evident in Botta's writings more generally in which he typically discusses the operative effect of his building surfaces, while neglecting to examine their specific meaning. It is no surprise then, when reflecting on the whole of Botta's contribution to the discussion of his gilt interior, one still does not receive a complete picture. The sum of his comments explains only the construction technique and its surface effects. Botta gives almost nothing away of any intended meaning behind his use of gold, except for a few hints at its generic historical precedents in the traditions of Christian architecture and gilded timber frames.

However, Botta's limiting of his discussion to the effects and techniques of the church's gold interior actually reveal more than may first be apparent. It is the argument of this paper that, much like Koolhaas's gold tower, both aspects of Botta's discourse on the Seriate church highlight, and insist upon, the authenticity of the gold surface. Through its association with gilt timber frames, Botta not only assures us that the wall cladding follows a traditional (rather than capricious or attention-seeking) use of the material, but he is also using the connection to tell us that it is made of genuine gold leaf. Similarly, in his discussion of the effects of the church, Botta identifies the gold as not only being authentic, but also of a very high quality.

These may appear to be unimportant issues, but Botta's insistence on the use of real gold leaf on the church walls warrants closer scrutiny. In fact - as it also did for Koolhaas - the use of gold here reinforces some known, longstanding themes in Botta's practice. These largely concern the archaising and historicising tendencies already described, wherein Botta apparently wants his architecture to be seen as a reinterpretation of historical forms and ideas, but without relying on the reproduction of, or reference to, particular precedents, times or places. It might even be said that Botta wants his architecture to be perceived as existing outside of time. Certainly, to acknowledge specific building examples (such as the Ravenna mosaics) to explain his interior, would be to fix its origins in a particular time and place. For Botta, this risks exposing the latent historicism of his work. Worse still, it might render his work Post-Modern—a categorisation that the architect would surely reject. This is perhaps why Botta obscures and hides his references: he wants us to know that the glittering gold surface is real precisely because it evokes the golden mosaics of early Christian and Byzantine cultures, without having to ever nominate them as a source. Similarly, he wants all to know that the gilding technique is a traditional one because it tells everyone that it is real gold, without ever having to declare particular architectural precedent.

Hence, there appears to be much at stake for Botta's architecture in its use of real gold: its perception and place in history; its pretensions of establishing a continuity with the past; and its capacity to evoke a shared cultural memory. The gold is also critical in creating a real and material connection between the past and our experience of his work in the immediate present. Clearly, a coating of imitation gold or gold-coloured paint could never achieve such ambitions. Rather, it is the authenticity of the gold that secures Botta's archaising intentions, adding weight to, and perpetuating, his rhetorical agenda of a generic and unspoken historicism. It may even be argued that, for Botta, the authenticity of the gold is a testimony or proof of the authenticity of the architecture itself.

The Rhetoric of Authenticity

For Botta and Koolhaas alike, the use of real gold to clad the surfaces of their architecture offers an unexpected and intriguing addition to their typical material palettes. Equally curious is the limited critical attention that this very salient material choice has received from commentators and from the architects themselves. Yet, as this paper has argued, there appears to be more at stake in the use of real gold leaf than either Koolhaas or Botta are willing to admit. While few parallels may be drawn between the gold-covered architecture of Botta and Koolhaas, their respective projects in Seriate and Milan each rely heavily on the authenticity of their gold. This is not for ontological nor moral purposes concerning the material 'truth' of construction but, rather, for rhetorical ones. In fact, neither project would operate as effectively, or as completely, if the gold were not real. This is because neither project relies on surface affect. Instead, the primary artistic interest of these works is conceptual rather than visual, bound up in the rhetorical power that their gold surfaces mobilise in their architecture.

These arguments have already been made elsewhere in this paper. However, what is yet to be said is that while the introduction of gold leaf in these recent projects by Koolhaas and Botta may be unexpected, it doesn't actually announce the arrival of anything new in their practices. Rather, when looking closely at the shiny metal cladding, what one sees reflected is the repetition and reassertion of existing themes, albeit manifest in a most attractive and precious way. These are unacknowledged but clearly important ideas—ideas that run much deeper than a beautiful golden surface. What also becomes clear is that, despite Post-Modernism's attempts to dismantle Modern ideas of 'honesty' and 'truth' in architecture, a desire for authenticity remains strong.

While it would be ambitious to suggest that the two works considered in this paper can say anything definitive about the status of authenticity in contemporary architectural discourses, they nevertheless expose the difficulty of the discussion: a tangled web of associations, particularly regarding material use, that are inevitably read against the enduring legacy of nineteenth- and twentieth-century concepts of truth.²⁹ Indeed, Koolhaas's gold tower and Botta's Seriate church make for loaded entries into the debate, and invite some broad speculations. For example, Botta's insistence on the gold's authenticity demonstrates the persistence of Modernist ideas, and a conscious resistance of Post-Modern ones. But Botta's use of the gold leaf cannot be dismissed simply as a pious adherence to Modern principles: it also embraces ancient tradition, ornament and surface affect that connect the use of gold to traditional Christian decoration as well as a contemporary enthusiasm for the elaboration of architectural surfaces. As such, the authenticity of Botta's church lies not only its material use, but also in its use of traditional techniques and historical references, its invocation of Christian religion and the genuine optical effects of the gilt surface. By contrast, in Koolhaas's project these kinds of authenticity have little purchase. Instead, the use of gold raises more specific questions on material authenticity at a time when new composite products and high performance materials are being constantly researched and produced. Hence, it brings into question the very possibility of these new materials being 'authentic', and the criteria against which that authenticity might be measured: performance, durability, fitness for purpose, or resource and energy efficiency? Thus, while it invites interpretations as a representation of wealth and luxury within the terms of Koolhaas's practice to date, the focus on the pragmatics and relative cost of the gold, as well as its juxtaposition with high-tech military-use aluminium, brings these issues of contemporary authenticity to the fore. While the two very different projects considered in this paper cannot offer any precise answers, both provide opportunities to question and reassess the value and relevance of material authenticity in twenty-first century architecture.

Endnotes

- 1 See, for example: Leon V. Solon, *Polychromy: Architectural and Structural: Theory and Practice* (New York: Architectural Record, 1924).
- 2 "Fondazione Prada," accessed 28 January, 2016, <http://oma.eu/projects/fondazione-prada>.
- 3 Fred Bernstein, "Fashion Forward: Prada Foundation, Milan, O.M.A.," *Architectural Record*, 203, no. 7 July (2015): 58. Ongoing works include a ten storey tower for the exhibition of the foundation's permanent collection.
- 4 "O.M.A.'s Fondazione Prada Art Centre Opens in Milan," accessed 29 January, 2016, www.dezeen.com/2015/05/03/oma-fondazione-prada-art-centre-gold-leaf-cladding-wes-anderson-cafe-milan/.

- 5 Bernstein, "Fashion Forward": 62.
- 6 "Casa da Musica," accessed 28 January, 2016, <http://oma.eu/projects/casa-da-musica>.
- 7 Likewise, it was used in smaller quantities for the interior of the now demolished Netherlands Dance Theatre (1981-7).
- 8 Tim Abrahams, "Fondazione Prada in Milan by O.M.A.," *The Architectural Review* (21 September 2015). www.architectural-review.com/today/there-is-inherently-a-play-between-the-idea-of-private-wealth-and-public-display/8687397.fullarticle.
- 9 Bernstein, "Fashion Forward": 58.
- 10 Bernstein, "Fashion Forward": 58.
- 11 <http://www.dezeen.com/2015/05/03/oma-fondazione-prada-art-centre-gold-leaf-cladding-wes-anderson-cafe-milan/>
- 12 "Fondazione Prada."
- 13 Rem Koolhaas, Bruce Mau, and Office for Metropolitan Architecture., *S, M, L, XL*, new ed. (Köln: Benedikt Taschen Verlag GmbH, 1997), 19.
- 14 Richard Weston, *Materials, Form and Architecture* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2003), 222.
- 15 Arthur Lubow, "Rem Koolhaas Is Not a Starchitect," accessed 2 February, 2016, www.wmagazine.com/culture/art-and-design/2014/06/rem-koolhaas-venice-architecture-biennale/photos/.
- 16 Belinda Luscombe and Daniel S. Levy, "Making a Splash: Rem Koolhaas Shows What Can Happen When a Visionary Finally Gets to Put up a Building or Two," *Time International (South Pacific Edition)*, no. 15 (1996).
- 17 Jeffrey Kipnis, "Recent Koolhaas," *El Croquis* 79: O.M.A./Rem Koolhaas (1996): 28.
- 18 Koolhaas says, perhaps facetiously, in relation to the unfinished tower and the variety of spaces provided for the exhibition of artwork, that: "For some reason art feels different on the ground than it feels on the 10th floor." See "O.M.A.'s Fondazione Prada Art Centre Opens in Milan."
- 19 Abrahams, "Fondazione Prada in Milan by O.M.A."
- 20 Abrahams, "Fondazione Prada in Milan by O.M.A."
- 21 "Church in Seriate, Italy," accessed 22 February, 2016, [www.botta.ch/Page/Re%202004_265_ChiesaSeriate_en%20\(Sa\).php](http://www.botta.ch/Page/Re%202004_265_ChiesaSeriate_en%20(Sa).php)
- 22 Alessandra Coppa, *Mario Botta*, trans. Clarice Zdanski (Milan: Motta, 2009), 59.
- 23 Paola Pellandini and John Boyer, eds., *Mario Botta: Architecture and Memory* (Milan: Silvana, 2013), 177.
- 24 Leonardo Servadio, "The Golden Gate to Heaven: Seriate, Botta's New Church," in *Mario Botta: Architetture del Sacro: Prayers in Stone*, ed. Gabriele Cappellato (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2005), 111.
- 25 Gianni Contessi, "La Consacrazione della Casa," in *Mario Botta: Chiesa a Seriate*, ed. Luca Molinari (Milan: Skira, 2004). I am grateful to Dr Cecilia Bischeri for her translation of this text.
- 26 Mario Botta, "Building a Church," in *Mario Botta: Architetture del Sacro: Prayers in Stone*, ed. Gabriele Cappellato (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2005), 194.
- 27 Botta, "Building a Church," 195.
- 28 Botta, "Building a Church," 195.
- 29 See Adrian Forty, "Truth", *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), 289-303.