House of Dust

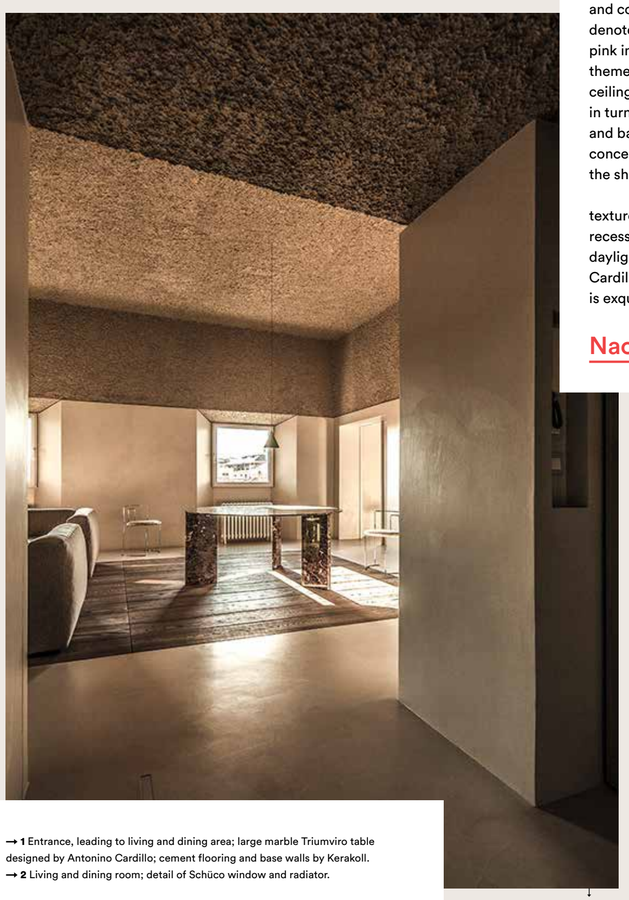
Rome
2013 — Residential
Antonino Cardillo

London-based, Italian-born architect Antonino Cardillo believes that ‘if light is the raw material of architecture […] light, when it encounters a solid material changing its nature and form, reverberates on other surfaces in a game of divisions until [it] decays into darkness’. This is certainly the case for Cardillo’s project House of Dust, located in Rome. And although a lot has been written about it, I was attracted to it at first glance; it instantly brought back memories of the best postmodern, neoclassical architecture that I was revisiting at the time – Bofill, Moneo, Tusquets – but with a more personal and very contemporary view.

In the design for this private apartment, Cardillo used materials and colours to delineate spaces and define uses. Neutral colour tones denote public spaces, as found in the living room, while the colour pink indicates more private rooms. The living room’s neutral-coloured theme is explored through a multitude of textures: a rough-plastered ceiling, smooth grey walls that bend to form the perimeter floor, which in turn frames a carpet-like wooden floor at its centre. The bedrooms and bathrooms sit behind tall, arched doorways with pink knobs, which conceal a pale pink ceiling and walls, while a ghost-like sheet surrounds the shower area.

The room’s layout, dictated by the golden ratio, together with its textured outline give the room a sense of order and proportion. Deep, recessed, tapered windows reveal the surrounding city while streaming daylight inwards, as if illuminating a cavernous space. In this space, Cardillo’s use of texture and colour, natural light, shape and proportion is exquisite and poetic.

Nacho Alegre



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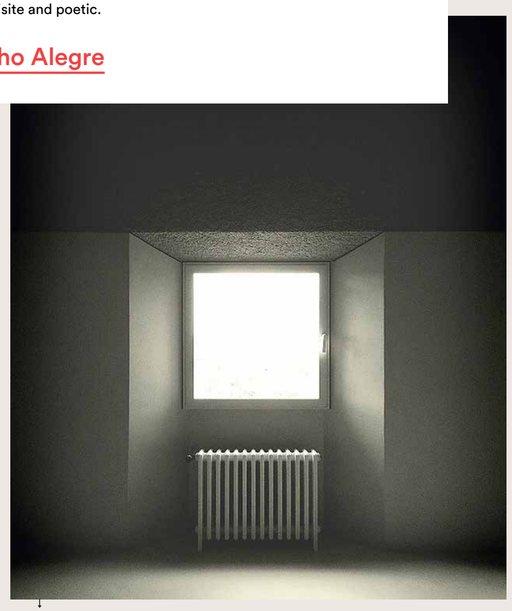

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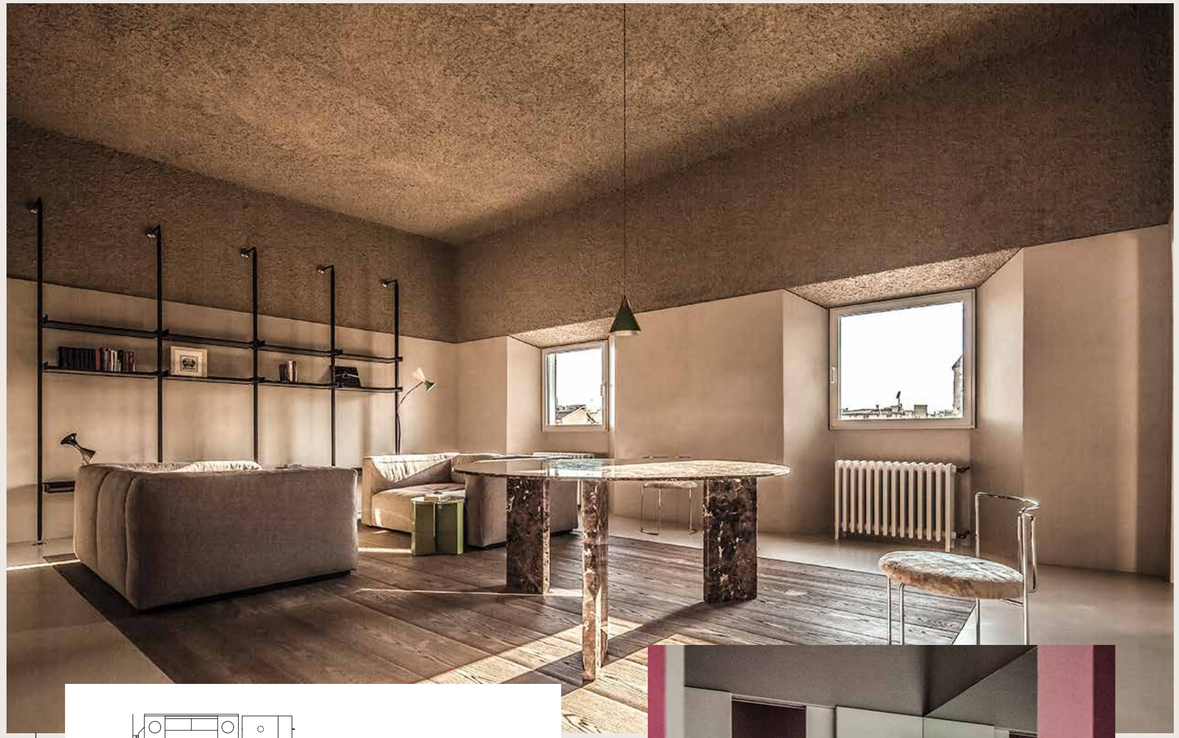
→ **1** Entrance, leading to living and dining area; large marble Triumviro table designed by Antonino Cardillo; cement flooring and base walls by Kerakoll.
→ **2** Living and dining room; detail of Schüco window and radiator.



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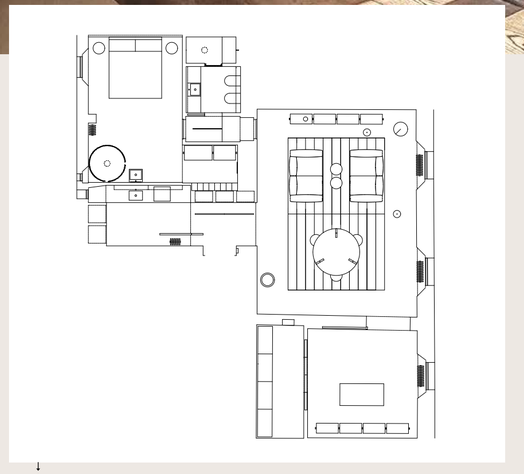

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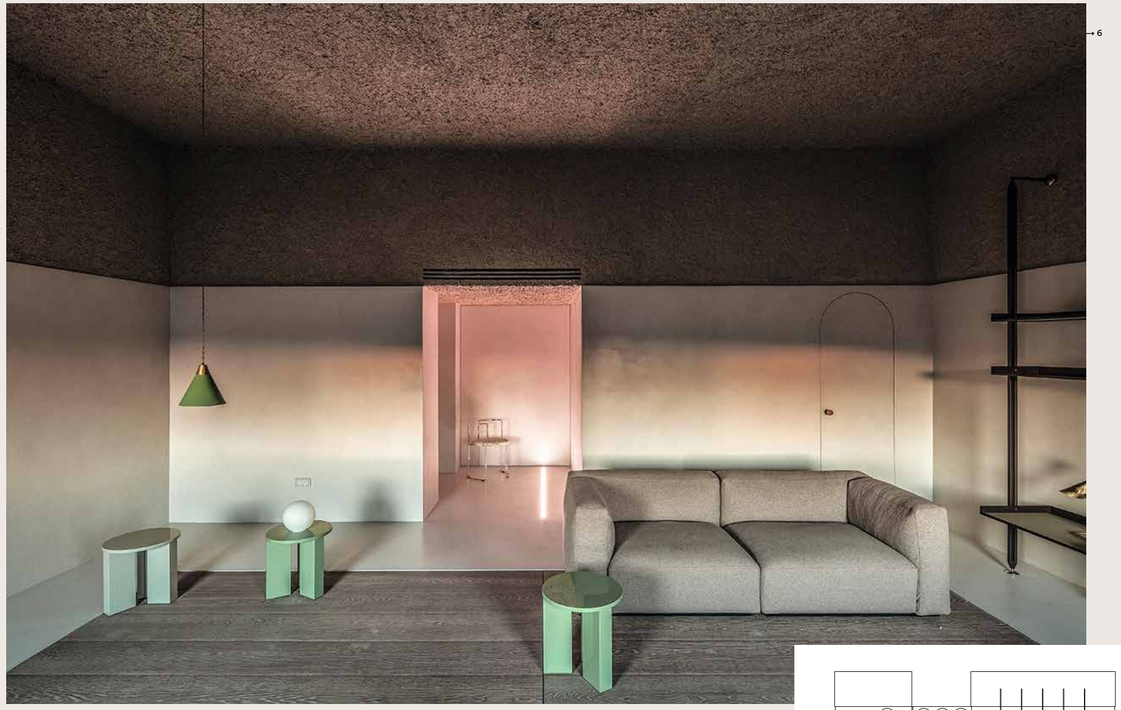
→ **3** Living and dining room; the golden ratio divides the sides of the room, a light grey base supports a ceiling of rough-grain plaster the colour of the bare earth. → **4** Floor plan. → **5** Bathroom with pale pink lighting; marble and stone fittings designed by Antonino Cardillo.



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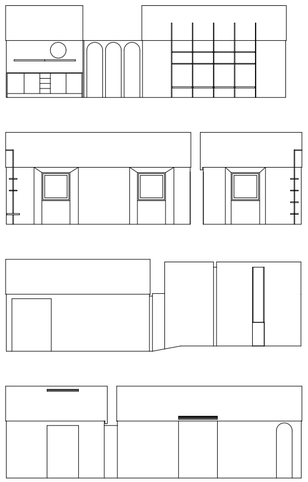

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→ **6** Living room and dining room; parquet flooring by Mardegan Grey Castle resembles a large rug; small green Triumviro tables designed by Antonino Cardillo; an arched doorway with a pink glass doorknob marks the entrance to the master bedroom. → **7** Living room and dining room; windows and radiators sunk within deep recesses. → **8** Interior elevation diagrams; from top to bottom: kitchen and living room, looking south; living rooms, looking west; living room and bedroom, looking north; living rooms looking east.

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→ **9** Kitchen, looking through to living and dining room; the kitchen surrounds the perimeter of the bedroom and can be screened behind a pivoting wall; arched doorways conceal both rooms and cupboards. → **10** Living room; sofas by Cassina, Mexcube; bookshelf by Rimadesio, Zenit; artisanal lamps by Lumieres. → **11** Bedroom; a porphyry washbasin stands next to a cylindrical shower concealed behind a ghostly white curtain.