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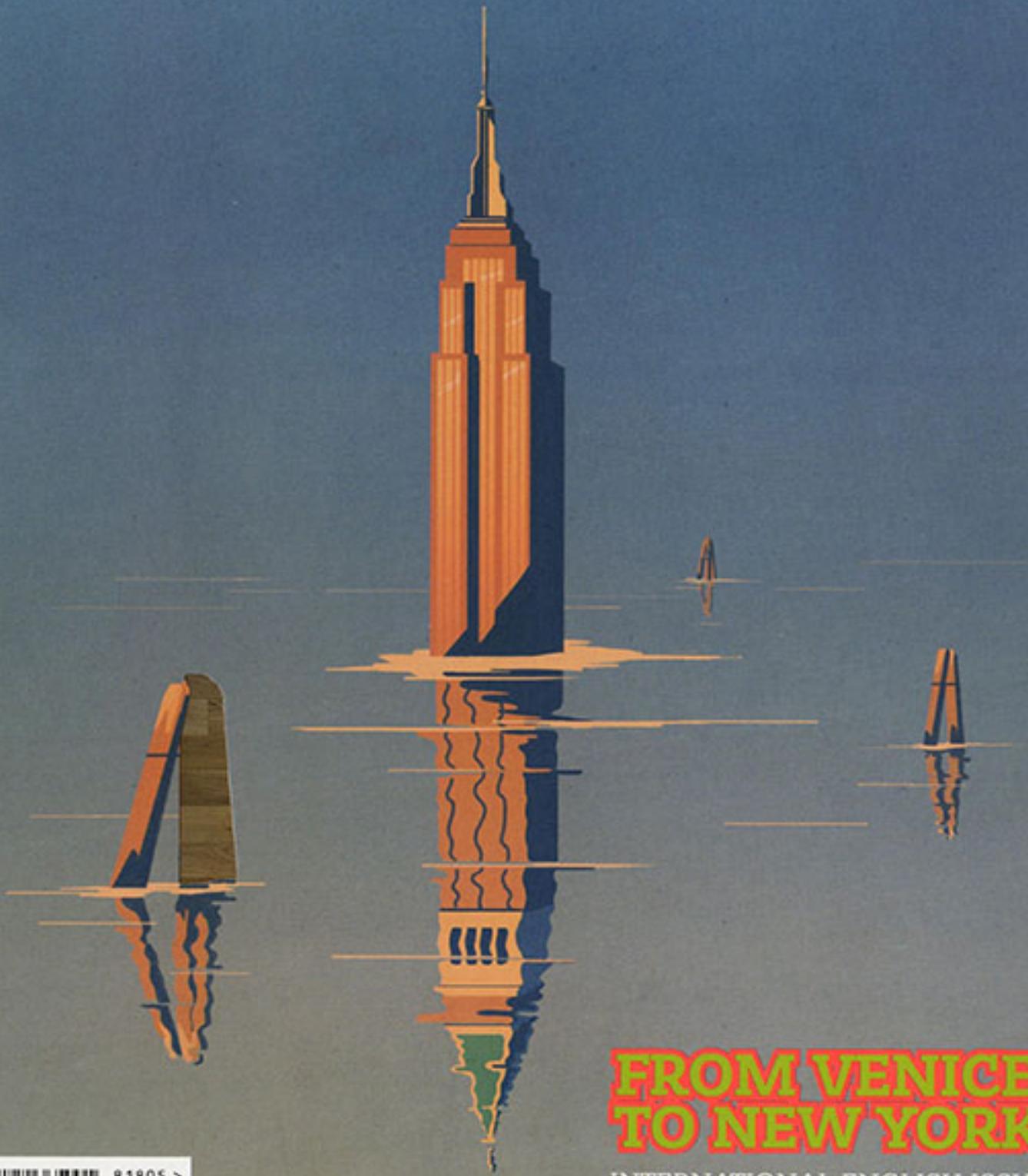
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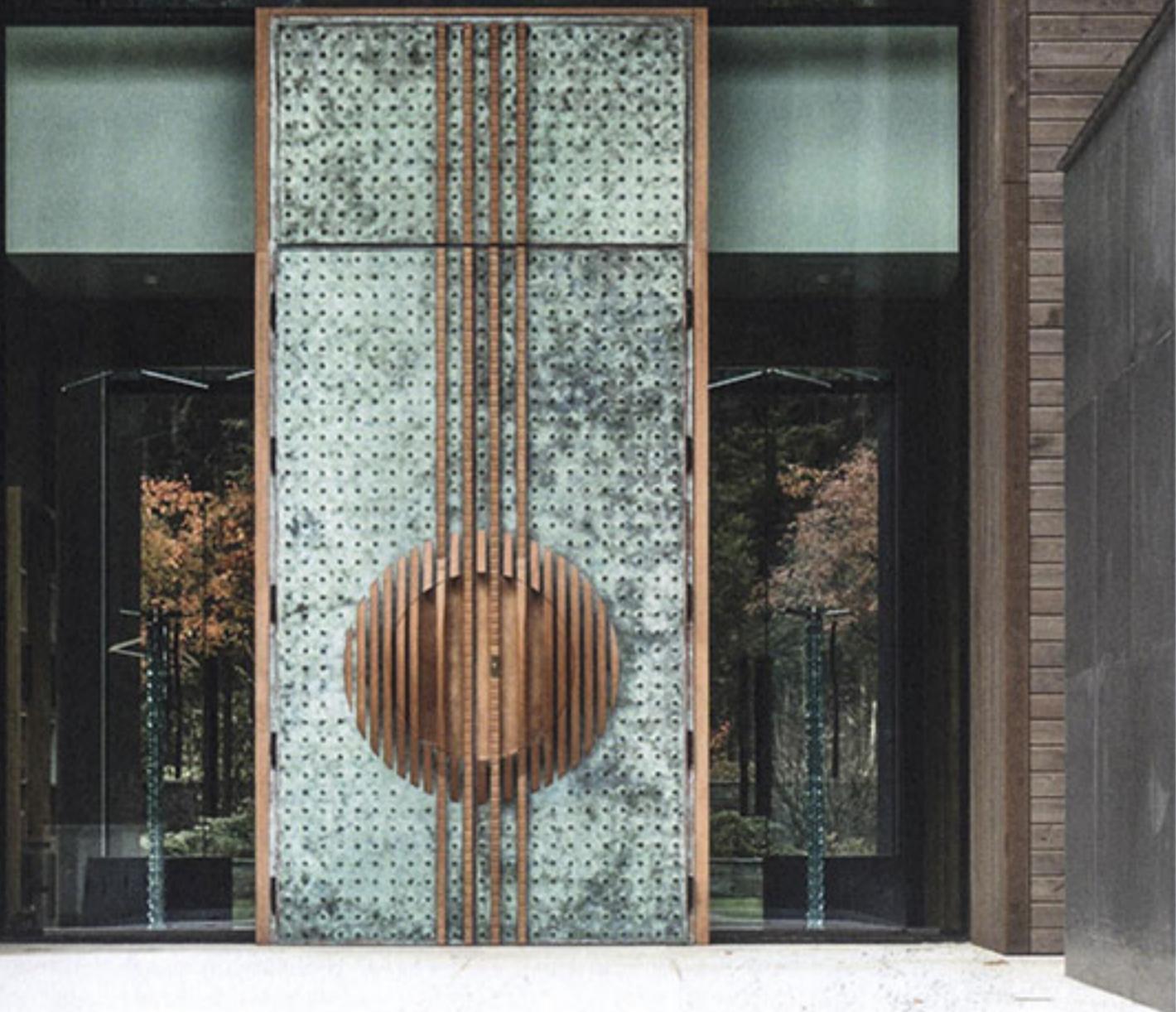
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In the forest north of **Moscow**, a house for an art collector that reinterprets that variegated tradition of the **Russian dacha** in a contemporary way: a project that extends from **architectural design** to **furnishings** in a stringent overall orchestration

photos Santi Caleca
article Matteo Vercelloni



MODERN DACHA

Project by WILLIAM SAWAYA
SAWAYA & MORONI ARCHITECTS MILANO

View of the main entrance facing southeast with large windows on the private park, facings in Siberian large planks, marble slabs and copper panels. On the facing page, the entrance door in solid teak and studded copper, inserted in a large two-story window.





Age-old trees surround the new construction like a natural protective curtain; a modern dacha, a large house in the woods with a contemporary tone that assertively enters a clearing with its figure. In the history of Russian architecture, the dacha (from the Russian verb meaning "to give") represents a way of life, more than just an archetype. Consolidated during the reign of Peter the Great (1672-1725), over time the dacha became known as a place in which to escape the rigid protocol of life at the court, a refuge in nature. In this sense, in Russian culture the dacha is an 'otherplace,' which even after the October Revolution and the fall of the Czar has continued to play a role as a 'parallel' domestic space in which to live in total freedom. This cultural and behavioral dimension is explored in the project by William Sawaya for the residence of an art collector; a dacha of the new millennium, set down in a landscape of pines and birches, with which it establishes a direct relationship, between inside and outside, while introducing new figures and layout innovations. The construction is a balanced sum of volumes featuring geometric forms of strong impact, connecting the facades and the roof in a single seamless synthesis.



The outdoor fireplace in chased bronze, with a texture like tree bark, extends on both levels of the open-air spaces. With its height of 12 meters and width of 3, it becomes a sculptural feature in the right part of the main facade. Above, the main front formed by volumetric additions.



Detail of the custom cast bronze fireplace, the central feature of the portico on the ground floor, custom-made by an Italian art foundry. The parts were assembled and finished at the site.

Below, view of the two-story bookcase on three sides, creating an alcove for a 'partners desk' from the 1930s originally installed on a cruise ship. The chandelier designed by William Sawaya fills the space of the room. Patty Diffusa chairs by William Sawaya for Sawaya & Moroni



Compact figures, enhanced by the raising of the platform with respect to its surroundings and the precise use of facing materials (Siberian larch, oxidized copper and olive stone with high resistance to frost), organized with alternating fields. The architectural composition rejects any sense of the vernacular revival much in vogue in 21st-century Russia, especially when it comes to the dacha, projecting on all sides towards the surround forest to open up perspectives that frame the colors of the landscape, like paintings that change colors across the seasons and the various lighting conditions of the day. Terraces and loggias face the woods, featuring the invention of an outdoor living area, a sheltered



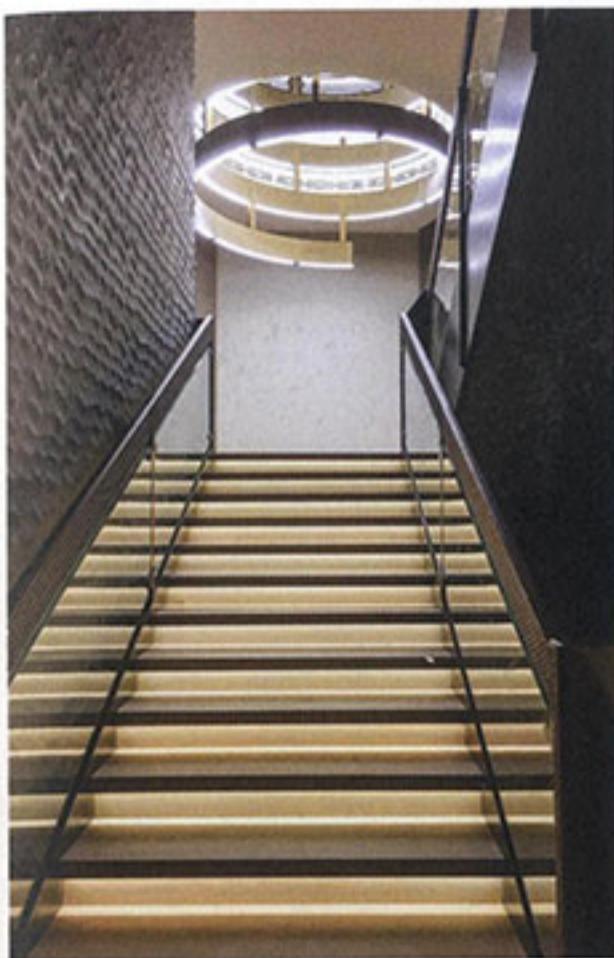
Above, view of the main entrance of the house, a two-story space that connects the private zone to the study. Large windows offer a view of the greenery of the private park on both sides.



View of an area facing the double height of the entrance with direct access to the upper part of the bookcase; Boa sofa by Fernando & Humberto Campana for Edra

space open on three sides that contains a cone of solid bronze that bursts through the copper roof to act as a large fireplace, capable of warming the entire adjacent zone. An element associated with indoor space, like the fireplace of the living area, is transformed here into an architectural figure that generates a convivial space outside, a way of breaking out of the canonic confines of the rooms. A 'space-paradox' with the domestic hearth brought into the open, suggesting the enigmatic grassy living area Le Corbusier created in 1929 on the roof of an apartment in Paris on Avenue des Champs Elysées, for the Mexican art collector Charles de Beistegui.





At the landing of the staircase, a chandelier/balustrade, a custom piece by William Sawaya, descends from a circular opening in the ceiling, forming a ribbon that twists in a spiral with a diameter of 3 meters, becoming a parapet on the upper level (facing page). Above the staircase, a faceted oak ceiling with built-in lights creates a suspended sculptural volume. A graphic variation by John Maeda covers the wall of the elevator on each level.

The same tension and compositional intensity of the overall architectural figure and the complexity of the facades are translated in the interiors on two levels organized with paths of connection, the design of the furnishings and the refined surfaces of the enclosures. Various types of stone and marble, and wooden planks, cover the floors and add character to the monumental staircase with dark walls, which on the first floor encounters a vortex of light from a large spiral chandelier, an effective setting from which to observe the geometric matrix of the suspended ceiling above. The dizzying interlock of tetrahedra of different sizes links back to a reinvented deconstructivism, a direct suggestion of architectural geometry translated into interior figures, repeated in wood, with luminous portions to generate a suspended sculptural surface in the circulation routes of the first level, emphasized by the daylight captured by the openings in the facades.



View of the suspended route of the first floor of the house, located at the position of the main entrance. The route connects the southwestern zone (bookcase, terrace, studio) to the northeastern area towards the bedrooms. Parapet in glass, burnished steel and wood.



View of the external staircase in stainless steel and stone, connecting the garden to the entertainment zone complete with wine cellar, cinema and spa in the basement. A small Zen garden is located in the open area facing the cellar, conceived to bring air and light to the underground spaces.



To reach the dining room wrapped by a cowhide wall (to the side), one crosses the bar and recreation zone. The Bar Code counter and the dining table are by William Sawaya. On the right, the dining zone faces a large curved window with a view of the private park. Bombo stools by Stefano Giovannoni for **Magis**, armchairs by **Maxalto**, chairs by **Cassina**, Vortex lamp by Zaha Hadid for **Sawaya & Moroni**, in partnership with **Zumtobel**, custom table by William Sawaya with base formed by three eggs in solid acrylic, supporting a wooden top.

The design of the interiors establishes a rapport with that of the custom furnishings and lights, like the 'pick-up-sticks' chandelier at the entrance, where the sticks in glass and steel are masterfully 'activated' by LED tubes with colored sides, clustered together in an apparently random way. Solid acrylic, in a formal embodiment of its material properties, is used in the egg-shaped supports for the monumental circular table, gauged to establish a relationship with its host space. In the round overhanging corner space towards the right side of the house with respect to the entrance, underlined by an internal red partition that frames the nearby birch forest, the three large solid acrylic supports of the wooden table top reflect, overturn and capture, as in a magical bubble, the nature outside, transforming it into an indispensable 'material' for a dacha of the new millennium. ■

