

# Minimum Documentation Fiche

composed by regional working party of FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA, Italy

## 01. Picture of building



Depicted item: Canova's Plaster cast gallery, prismatic room internal view

source: photo by Gianantonio Battistella

date: 2006

## 1. Identity of building

### 1.1 current name of building

Canova's Plaster cast gallery

### 1.2 variant or former name

Scarpa's hall

### 1.3 number & name of street

Via Canova 74

**1.4 town**

Possagno (Treviso)

**1.5 province/state**

Veneto

**1.6 zip code**

I - 31054

**1.7 country**

Italy

**1.8 national grid reference**

45°1'16"N 11°52'52"E

**1.9 classification/typology**

REC – Museums

**1.10 protection status & date**

National direct protection – Ministry of heritage and cultural activities

**2 History of building**

**2.1 original brief/purpose**

In 1957 (for his bicentenary of birth), some Canova's works of Possagno found a more suitable accommodation thanks to a new building, built by Carlo Scarpa. This new exhibition space full of sunlight that falls from above, is admired each year by thousands of visitors who want to study the materials, design patterns and the arrangement of the works that Carlo Scarpa has cleverly placed in the Tower room and elongated body which narrows until the vision of the pool which was placed the sculpture of the Graces.

**2.2 dates: commission/completion**

Commission 1955

Completion 1957

**2.3 architectural and other designers**

Carlo Scarpa

**2.4 others associated with building**

Valeriano Pastor

**2.5 significant alterations with dates**

None

**2.6 current use**

Museum

**2.7 current condition**

Good

**3. Description**

### **3.1 general description**

The objective of the project of Carlo Scarpa was to enhance all of Canova's works not exposed, lying in the warehouse, and most importantly, prepare an appropriate exposure for plaster and terracotta sketches. He managed to put in place a scenic representation to have absolute masterpieces of art that a choreographer and distributing them on transparencies split-level placed within an architectural enclosure which allows light to filter down from the top, with the task to dose on stage an amazing, changing brightness, at whose service puts a simplified structural apparatus.

### **3.2 construction**

A deep prism, emptied edges from a withdrawal of glass upward, dialectically opposed to a longitudinal context, characterized by two scenes converged towards the fire wall of the garden. Two connected environments consist of new construction: a cubic, top-lit by four corner windows; the other steps, descendant and narrow progressively, according to the slope and shape of the lot. An open corridor, paved with black and white pebbles, separates the latter environment from neoclassical building, leading to a small garden located at the bottom of the ground.

### **3.3 context**

The lot a provision, attached to the west side of the Segusini basilica (built between 1831 and 1836), is of modest proportions, elongated trapezoidal shape and sloping down to the Valley. Scarpa contrasts to the monumentality and unit of the old building with a small and articulated complex, that gets a distinctiveness from the initial constraints, defining a fragmented and varied space, according to a specific concept of museum.

## **4. Evaluation**

### **4.1 technical**

Carlo Scarpa uses materials of local construction tradition, but in a modern way. Of particular interest are the prismatic skylights placed at the corners of a cubic room, while all of the interior of the museum is played on white on white, highlighted by a few black lines of skirting boards, window frames, iron supports of exhibitors.

### **4.2 social**

The museum is admired each year by thousands of visitors and is one of the highlights of this area.

### **4.3 cultural & aesthetic**

Carlo Scarpa, at the end of 1956, had prepared the project of the new exhibition in its entirety. Here is where the "space and light", essential elements, capable of appreciating a masterful sculptures by Antonio Canova: female figures lying: Dirce, the nymph, the Najade; the Graces and Cupid and Psyche, two Dancers and the historic George Washington representation. In addition to these models, all the sketches in clay and terracotta absolute expression of the genius of Canova.

### **4.4 historical**

Today the Gallery is the only fully completed Museum by the architect. The arrangement of the sculptural models, exhibited with the most minimalist of systems, was entrusted to the compositional intuition that was one of the most extraordinary aspects of Scarpa's architectural work.

### **4.5 general assessment**

The Museum is considered by critics one of the greatest masterpieces of Carlo Scarpa. The same was the subject of a recent restoration that has retained all the characteristics, improving the air-conditioning of the rooms.

## **5. Documentation**

### **5.1 principal references**

Editorial article, Ampliamento della Gipsoteca Canoviana a Possagno, "Casabelle Continuità", 222, 1958, pp. 8-14  
SCARPA, Carlo, volevo ritagliare l'azzurro del cielo, "Rassegna", 7, 1981, pp. 82-85  
DAL CO', Francesco, MAZZARIOL, Giuseppe, Carlo Scarpa. Opera completa, Electa, Milan, 1984, p. 117  
MARCIANO', Ada Francesca (edited by), Carlo Scarpa, Zanichelli, Bologna, 1984, pp. 86-93  
GHIZZONI, Gianna (edited by), Carlo Scarpa a Possagno. Disegni per l'ampliamento della gipsoteca canoviana (1957), Fondazione Canova, Possagno (TV), 2001  
MARINI, Paola, Ampliamento della Gipsoteca Canoviana a Possagno, in VV.AA., Carlo Scarpa, Electa, Milan, 2000, pp. 136-145  
MIOTTO, Luciana, Carlo Scarpa. I musei, Testo & immagine, Turin, 2004, pp. 48-51  
BELTRAMINI, Guido, ZANNIER, Italo (edited by), Carlo Scarpa. Architecture Atlas, Marsilio, Venice, 2006, pp. 114-121

### **5.2 visual material attached**

01\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, prismatic room internal view  
02\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, internal view of the entrance  
03\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, internal view to the Graces and the garden  
04\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, external view from the garden  
05\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, cubic room external view  
06\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, cubic room internal view  
07\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, cubic room internal view  
08\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, view of the ceiling of the cubic room

photos by Gianantonio Battistella, 2006, published in: BELTRAMINI, Guido, ZANNIER, Italo (edited by), Carlo Scarpa. Architecture Atlas, Marsilio, Venice, 2006, pp. 136-145

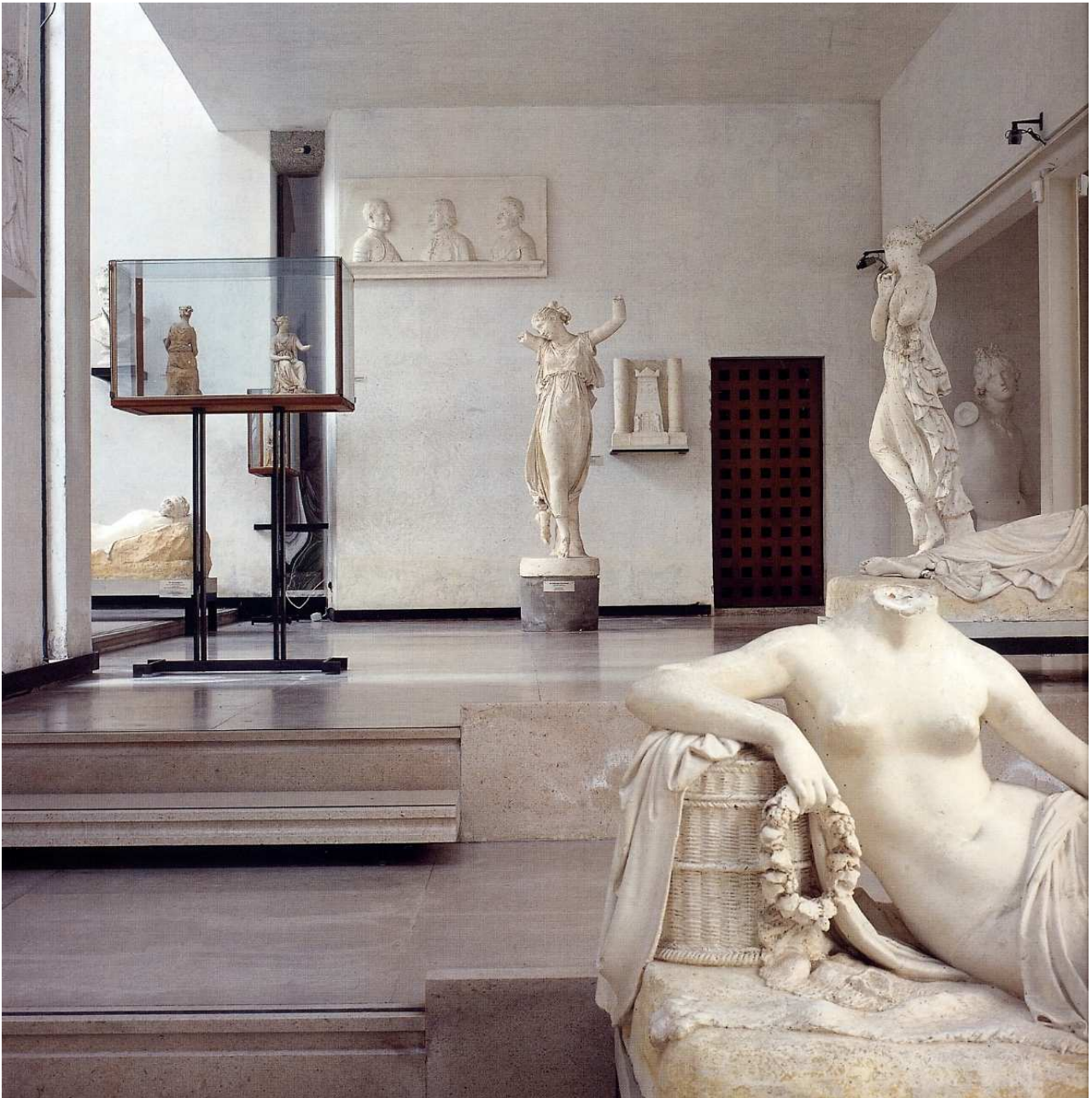
### **5.3 rapporteur/date**

Sergio Pratali Maffei / April 2015

## **6. Fiche report examination by ISC/R**

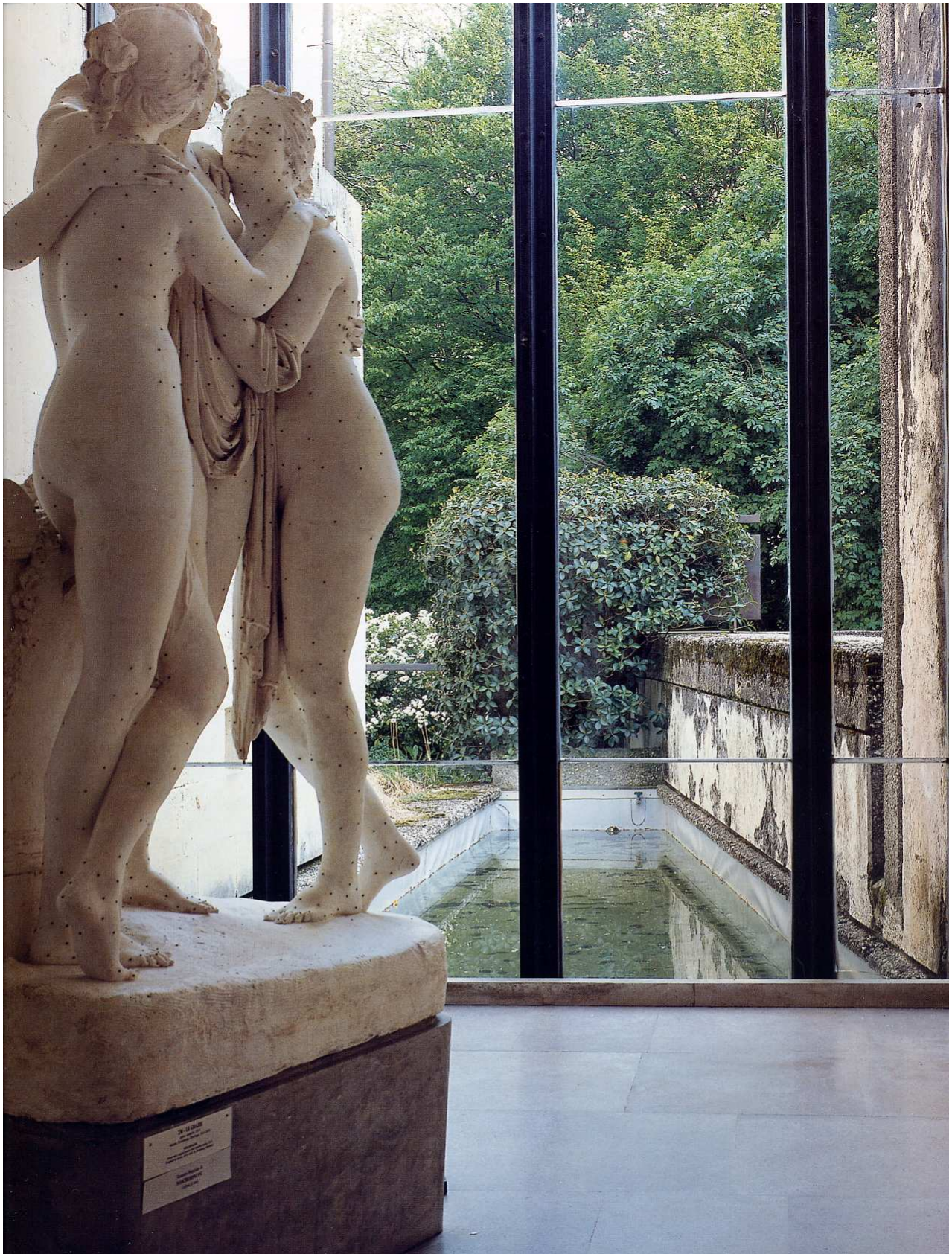
name of examining ISC member: date of examination:  
approval:  
working party/ref. n° NAI ref. n°  
comments:





02\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, internal view of the entrance





03\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, internal view to the Graces and the garden





04\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, external view from the garden





05\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, cubic room external view



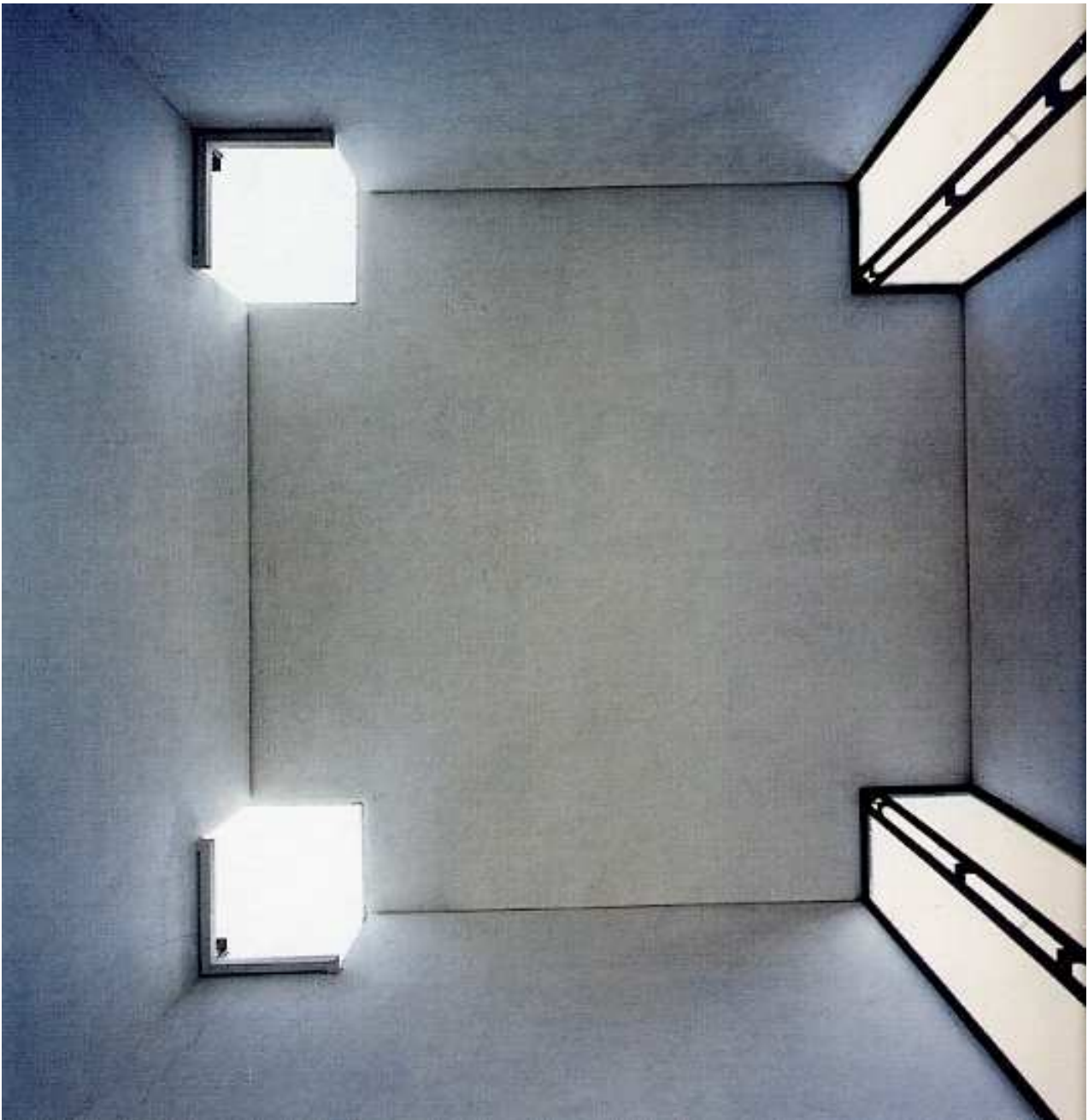


06\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, cubic room internal view



07\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, cubic room internal view





08\_Canova's Plaster cast gallery, view of the ceiling of the cubic room