

## Communiqué/Press Release

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### **ROOMS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED: UMBERTO RIVA, BIJOY JAIN** **THIS FIRST NORTH AMERICAN EXHIBITION OF THE ITALIAN AND INDIAN ARCHITECTS** **EXPLORES TWO DISTINCT APPROACHES TO CONCEIVING AND BUILDING RESIDENTIAL SPACES.**



Ahmedabad House, view of the courtyard with marble lined pool  
Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India, 2014. Studio Mumbai Architects  
Photograph by Srijaya Anumolu. © Studio Mumbai



Casa Insinga, view of shelf in the kitchen,  
Milan, Lombardy, Italy, 1990. Umberto Riva Architetto  
Photograph by Giovanni Chiamonte.  
© Giovanni Chiamonte.

Montréal, 23 October 2014 — The Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) presents the work of architects **Umberto Riva** (1928–) and **Bijoy Jain** (1965–) in its forthcoming exhibition **Rooms You May Have Missed**. Curated by CCA Director Mirko Zardini, the exhibition explores how the room as an elemental unit of architecture has been reevaluated by two architects from different generations and cultures—late-twentieth-century Italy and present-day India. The exhibition is on view in the CCA's Main Galleries from 4 November 2014 **until 19 April 2015**.

*Rooms You May Have Missed* interrupts the CCA's long-term investigation of the role of digital tools in architecture (manifested in the ongoing exhibition series *Archaeology of the Digital*) to examine alternative architectural strategies and specific, regionally influenced production methods. The drawings, models, and materials included in the exhibition illustrate the respective forms of authorship that emerge from the processes Riva and Jain put into place. While Riva designs everything himself, devoting attention to all scales of a project from schematic and construction drawings to furniture details, Jain engages the specialized knowledge of traditional craftsmen and sources local methods and materials to shape the distinct character of each project.

Umberto Riva dismantles traditional ideas of spatial organization based on distinct rooms by designing sequences of interconnected spaces to accommodate inhabitants and their activities. The renovated plan of the one-person apartment Casa Insinga (Milan, Italy, 1987), for example, directs the occupant's progression toward a large living room at the apartment's centre through the careful placement of oak partition walls set at different angles. Custom furniture, such as a wooden dining table attached to the wall marking the beginning of the living area, organizes the space according to a careful consideration of its potential use.

Working within the existing Indian construction system, Bijoy Jain collaborates with locally trained craftsmen and uses regional materials and methods that arise from each project's specific constraints. The courtyard plays the role of a versatile room and is a recurring component in Jain's designs in the Ahmedabad House (Ahmedabad, India, 2012–14), for example, courtyards serve as semipublic "interior" zones that provide shade in a hot and dry climate and are regularly used for large family and business gatherings.

The title *Rooms You May Have Missed* reflects the exhibition's exploration of interior spaces shaped by the user's habits, but also suggests the need to look beyond common North American references. In that vein, the exhibition points to other models that are based on considerations of climate, social customs, the role of artisans as collaborators, and a targeted and sophisticated integration with local resources and traditions.

The installation is designed by the architects for the CCA in a way that extends the curatorial interest in "rooms." Riva and Jain alter the character of the museum space by reshaping the galleries as spaces that both present and embody their approaches to architecture. Each design displays a large variety of drawings and plans, archival and recent photographs, working models, material studies and color samples, sketches and notes by collaborators, furniture, and lamps. The accompanying graphic design is by the New York-based firm Common Name.

In addition to creating the installations, Jain and Riva have generously donated a large part of their work from the exhibition to the CCA. The acquisition of these projects further enriches the contemporary European and Indian holdings of the CCA's international research collection.

Mirko Zardini will expand the investigation into "rooms" initiated by the exhibition in an accompanying publication, which will include many of the materials presented at the CCA as well as documentation of the installation. The publication, which is co-published by Lars Müller Publishers in Zurich, will be available in Spring 2015.

## ABOUT THE ARCHITECTS

**Umberto Riva** was born in 1928 in Milan, Italy, where he continues to live and work. He received his degree in architecture in Venice in 1959. Since the 1960s, Riva has interpreted and given new shape to contemporary ways of living while purposefully maintaining a marginalized position in the field of architecture. In his lengthy working process nothing is taken for granted; through a close observation of everyday living, Riva tries to find the essence of even the most banal details in order to imbue them with new forms and meaning. As Zardini writes, for Riva, "Everything is the subject of discussion; even stable, ordinary objects and buildings become fragile and insubstantial. He uproots elements from their traditional context, presenting them once again only after having duly dismantled them and reassembled them, and conferring on the final result a subtle unease." [*Umberto Riva*, foreword by Mirko Zardini and Pierluigi Nicolin, *Umberto Riva*, Gustavo Gli Publishers, Barcelona, 1993; p. 6].

*Rooms You May Have Missed* presents hand drawings by Riva as well as photographs of important residential projects realized throughout his career, including Casa Di Palma (1) and Case di Palma (2) in Sardinia (1959–1960 and 1970–1972); Casa Ferrario, on the outskirts of Varese (1975); Casa Frea in Milan (1980–1982); Casa Insinga, an apartment in Milan (1987); Casa Miggiano in Otranto (1990); and Casa Righi in Milan (2002–2003). Also on display are Riva's lamps, among them the Veronese and Tesa, in which bulbs are suspended inside blown-glass globes.

**Bijoy Jain** was born in Mumbai, India, in 1965 and received his MArch from Washington University in St. Louis (Missouri, US), in 1990. He worked in Los Angeles and London between 1989 and 1995 and returned to India in 1995 to found his practice, Studio Mumbai Architects. In his studio, architects and skilled craftsmen collaborate to design and build using an iterative process, advancing ideas through large-scale mock-ups, models, material studies, sketches, and drawings. Jain's projects are developed through careful consideration of place and by engaging the local environment, culture, techniques, and materials. The resulting work is characterized by the integration of the building with its environment and the ingenuity that arises from a savvy use of readily available resources.

*Rooms You May Have Missed* presents materials related to Jain's research, such as a series of photographs of building demolitions in Indian cities and a speculative proposal for migrant workers' housing, as well as documentation of typical construction methods and representations of particular landscapes and climates. The exhibition highlights Jain's most recent projects, several of which are currently under construction: the Weavers' Studio, a live-work complex in the Himalayan foothills; Saat Rasta, a project that converts a refurbished industrial compound in Mumbai into apartments and workspaces; and a still-evolving house in Chennai. Other projects on display are the Ahmedabad House, including original examples of the pressed-dirt brick used for its construction, and Copper House II.

## ABOUT THE CURATOR

Curator and Architect **Mirko Zardini** is the Director of the Canadian Centre for Architecture since 2005. Exhibitions by Zardini—or in collaboration with Giovanna Borasi, currently Chief Curator of the CCA—include *Asfalto: Il carattere della città* (2003), *out of the box: price rossi stirling + matta-clark* (2003), *Sense of the City* (2005), *1973: Sorry, Out of Gas* (2007), *Actions: What You Can Do with the City* (2008) *Other Space Odysseys: Greg Lynn, Michael Maltzan, Alessandro Poli* (2010), and *Imperfect Health: The Medicalization of Architecture* (2011). Zardini has taught design and theory at architecture schools in Europe and the United States, including Harvard University GSD, Princeton University SoA, Mendrisio Architecture Academy, Swiss Federal Polytechnic University (ETH) in Zurich, and the Federal Polytechnic in Lausanne (EPFL).

## EXHIBITION SERIES

*Rooms You May Have Missed* is part of a CCA series that pairs distinctive architectural cases in order to investigate and interrogate current ideas in thinking and practice. In developing an installation within the context of the CCA galleries, participating architects are given the opportunity to contribute to and shape a larger conversation on concepts with particular relevance for the CCA. Previous exhibitions in the series include *Other Space Odysseys: Greg Lynn, Michael Maltzan, Alessandro Poli* (2010), *Some Ideas on Living in London and Tokyo by Stephen Taylor and Ryue Nishizawa* (2008), and *Environment: Approaches for Tomorrow – Gilles Clément, Phillipe Rahm* (2006).

## ABOUT THE CCA

Celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its opening in 2014, the CCA is an international research centre and museum founded on the conviction that architecture is a public concern. Based on its extensive collection, exhibitions, public programs, publications and research opportunities, the CCA is a leading voice in advancing knowledge, promoting public understanding, and widening thought and debate on architecture, its history, theory, practice, and role in society today.

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