

DREAM



In restoring his family's treasured 13th-century palazzo, *CURATOR* and *COLLECTOR* *Edoardo Monti* has crafted an artist residency for *VISIONARIES* in Italy.

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PALACE



THIS PAGE in the exhibition rooms on the first floor of this 13th-century Brescia palazzo in Italy, restored original 1700s frescos; *When the fears have gone, there shall be nothing* oil painting (on left) by Thomas Braida; *Creatives Head Study No. 2* oil painting (at centre) by Ryan Hewett; *Lo specchio* oil painting (on right) by Francesco Cima; *Stendali o riquadro 19 'indecomposti'* sculpture on wood structure by Giuseppe Di Liberto. **OPPOSITE PAGE** homeowner and curator Edoardo Monti in the exhibition rooms on the first floor, possibly circa-1800s bronze bust by artist unknown. *Details, last pages.*

THESE PAGES in the living area, steel and granite **chair** by Fredrik Paulsen, made during residency; Ghost **sofas** by Paola Navone for Gervasoni, enquiries to Anibou; Arco **floor lamp** by Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni for Flos, enquiries to Living Edge; *Capitolium* oil **painting** (on left) by Kadar Brock; *Slick Submissions* **tapestry** by Bea Bonafini; *Unimog Painting Dystopia* (on right) **artwork** by Oscar Giacoma; untitled **sculptures** (on floor, at centre) by Frederik Nystrup-Larsen; *Donkey Boy* bronze **sculpture** by Ambra Castagnetti on wood plinth.





What do you do if, after living abroad your entire adult life, you decide you want to start an artist residency in your home country? Why, set it up in your family's 13th-century palazzo, of course. It may not be an option for many, but luckily enough for curator, collector and self-proclaimed "art cowboy" Edoardo Monti, it was. In 2017 he established Palazzo Monti in Brescia, northern Italy. A string of artists and designers followed, contributing to the spaces with crafty hands and canny eyes, helping to form what must be one of the most beautiful artist residencies, frankly, anywhere.

So what drove Monti to create something so monumental at the tender age of 25? "I was working for Stella McCartney in New York, in communications, but I was invested in the energy and passion of the art world on a personal level. My friends were artists, collectors, gallerists..." he says. "There were three main ingredients that led me to create this project and move back to Italy. The first was nostalgia; I missed my country. The second was to give life back to a space that had incredible potential. And, ultimately, it was about creating an artist community."

The palazzo, where Monti's mother was raised, spans three floors, with three studios and six bedrooms housing up to three creatives (the residency accepts people working across the arts), Monti himself and two staff members. "The ground floor hosts the biggest pieces of the permanent collection, and the first floor is dedicated to exhibitions. The second floor is guestrooms and studios," he says, "but elements are shared across the other floors, so it's very hybrid, very fluid." He stresses that this is not a hotel, nor will it ever be. "It gives people the chance to pretend they're in the 1700s, but it's more like living in a commune — no room is closed off. We really entrust people with a lot of responsibility: each of us becomes a guardian of the palazzo while we are here."

The palazzo was extensively redecorated in 1750, from which the frescoes date. A grand staircase weaves all the floors together and it's this staircase that sports another, more surreptitious detail Monti particularly enjoys. "I really love the corning in the main

staircase," he says. "It looks like marble but it's actually plaster that has been decorated to look like marble. It's an old technique and I like the functionality, and it gives you this illusion that's really fun. These guys were artists."

With the structural beauty and ancient frescos of the palazzo virtually intact, Monti chose to minimise additional interior elements when reimagining this place as a creative residency. "The building is powerful in itself, less is really more," he says. As a result, contemporary pieces are strikingly visible. "Many of the artworks and design pieces are from artists and designers that we have welcomed here. It's like an ever-evolving studio."

The large ground-floor living area sees the most communal activity. A giant steel table designed by Monti and made by local artisans is paired with simple Sklum chairs, flanked by a roaring fire on one side and a cloud-like Davide Ronco bookcase on the other. In the adjoining living room, soft and rumpled white Gervasoni sofas contrast against a metallic pink throne by Swedish designer Fredrik Paulsen.

A warmly toned hanging by Italian artist Bea Bonafini, made up of pieces of carpet recomposed in tactile montage, takes command of the space. "Italians hate carpet!" declares Monti, letting us in on the joke.

Upstairs, Monti's bed is overlooked by a painting by Italian artist Andrea Bocca, its serene blue tones creating an eye-catching, almost painterly glimpse from the first "noble floor" landing. His room serves a dual

purpose of also being his workspace, where he potters away at an early 20th-century desk inherited from his grandfather, on a Philippe Starck chair he found at a now-closed San Francisco hotel.

On the first floor, one of Monti's favourite items of furniture, a 1920s pink tasselled velvet sofa, was found on a weekend away with friends in Paris. "It was acquired at an auction by The Ritz in Paris. It used to be in a suite." Everything here, it seems, has a tale to tell.

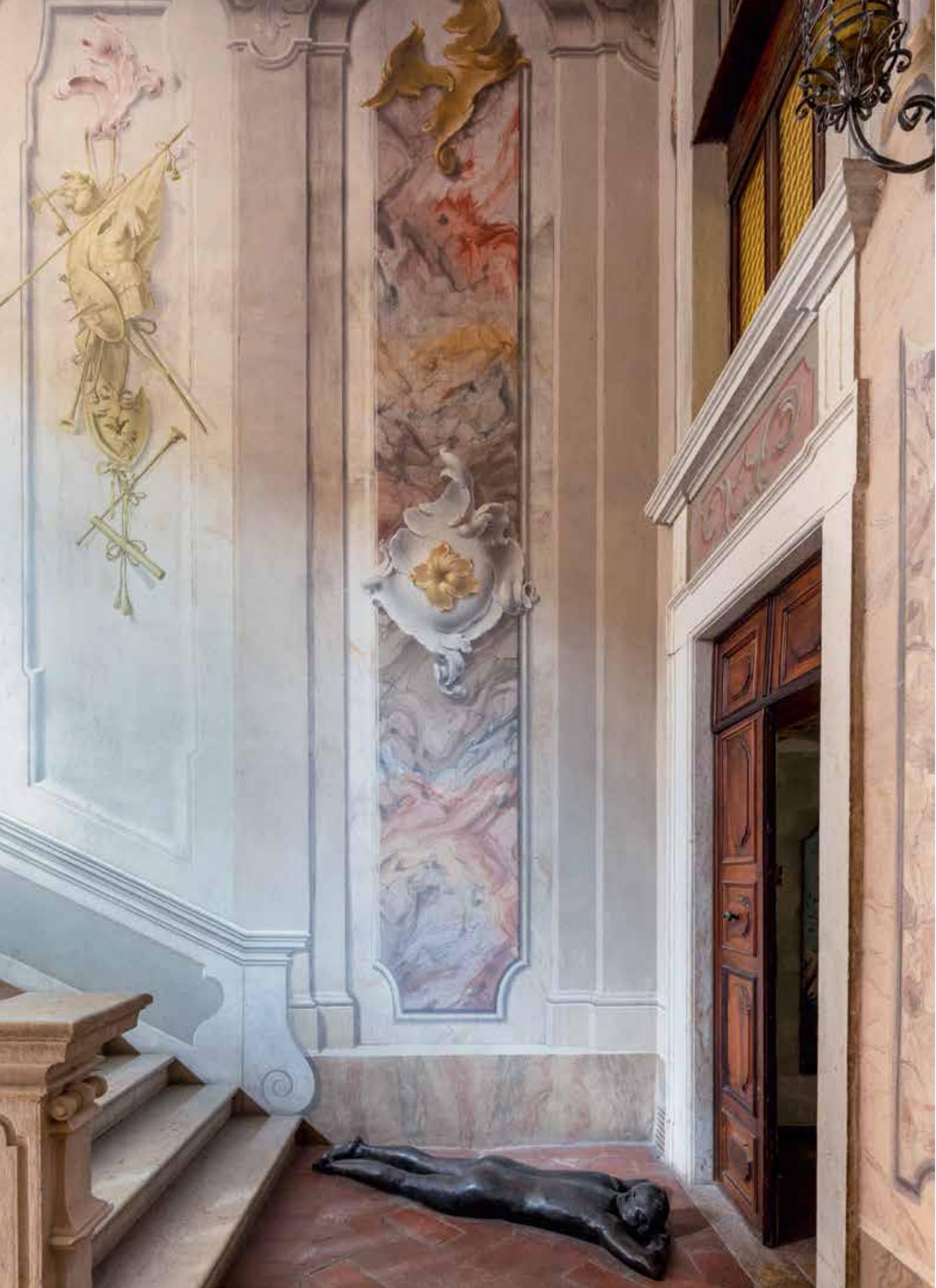
"You can tell there have been a lot of families living here, it's crazy how you can see the historical layering," says Monti. "It's almost like you are taking on something that has been started but can never be completed, and you know that eventually you will pass it on to someone else." [@edoardomonti](http://VL.palazzomonti.org)

"Many of the artworks are from artists and designers we have welcomed here. It's like an ever-evolving studio"

EDOARDO MONTI

OPPOSITE PAGE in the entry hall with a view of the ensuite, **wall sconce** from Flos, enquiries to Living Edge; **Tamed Passages artwork** by Barbara Prenka; **Edoardo photograph** by Lady Tarin.





THIS PAGE in the main bedroom, Taccia table lamp by Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni for Flos, enquiries to Living Edge; 1988 chair by Philippe Starck for the Royalton Hotel, New York; painting by unknown artist found at a flea market; *This is my body* photograph (on right) by Torbjørn Rodland. **OPPOSITE PAGE** on the mezzanine between the ground and first floors, restored original 1750s frescos; *The Sleep* sculpture by Antonio Fiorentino.



THESE PAGES in the dining area, steel **dining table** designed by Edoardo Monti, produced by local artisans; Sklum **chairs**; original built-in **storage unit**; vintage **factory lights** found at a flea market; *Towel Snake* **sculpture** (on table) by Oren Pinhassi; **vases** by Ettore Sottsass for Bitossi, enquiries to Hub Furniture; face **vase** by an artisan in Puglia; 1960s cotto **flooring**; untitled **photograph** by Roberto Patella; *Untitled (Umbrella)* **artwork** (on right wall) by Oren Pinhassi.







THIS PAGE in the main bedroom, steel and timber **bed** designed by Edoardo Monti, produced by local artisans; Glo-Ball **light** by Jasper Morrison for Flos, enquiries to Living Edge; brass **table lamp** found at a flea market; untitled **artwork** (above bed) by Andrea Bocca; *No echo to the laughter* **artwork** (on floor) by Barbara Prenka; Puffy Bricks **stool** by Soft Baroque; *The Fall* oil **painting** (on right, top) by Stefano Perrone; *Star Maps* oil on wood **artwork** (on right, bottom) by Brad Greenwood. **OPPOSITE PAGE** on the mezzanine of the first floor looking into the main bedroom, restored original 1750s **frescos**. *Details, last pages.*

