

## GAGOSIAN

# Wallpaper\*

### Gagosian brings a taste of Casa Malaparte to London

*London's Gagosian Gallery presents a collection of furniture reproductions from Casa Malaparte, Curzio Malaparte's legendary villa perched atop a promontory on the island of Capri*

Ali Morris



*A view of Casa Malaparte, Capri. Photography by Sebastiano Pellion Di Persano*

Perched atop a limestone promontory jutting out into the Tyrrhenian sea, Casa Malaparte on the island of Capri is regarded as one of the most spectacular houses in the world. Its enigmatic design was dreamt up in the 1930s by the Italian writer, film-maker, war correspondent and controversialist Curzio Malaparte, who built the house on a plot of land he bought in 1937, following his five-year internal exile at the hands of Mussolini.

Malaparte, who was an active participant in the avant-garde artistic and literary circles of his time, was known for facilitating between religious and political extremes and was said to refer to the house as 'casa come me', meaning a house like me.



*Original walnut and pine table conceived by Curzio Malaparte, in situ at Casa Malaparte, Capri. Photography: Dariusz Jasak*

His design for Casa Malaparte, which blends classical and modernist influences, is dominated by a tapering exterior staircase that leads to a roof deck where a curving white windbreak arcs across the terrace.

To date, the easiest way of experiencing this architectural gem for most has been through Jean Luc Godard's 1963 film *Contempt*, in which it was prominently featured. However a new exhibition at Gagosian's Mayfair gallery brings London residents one step closer to the real thing. Malaparte's youngest descendant and current owner of the house, Tommaso Rositani Suckert, has created a transportive exhibition that sees the Davies Street Gallery adapted to resemble the Casa's main room – a spartan stone-floored living room with breathtaking sea views. 'The salone, where the original pieces are located, is the "heart" of Casa Malaparte, and the most intense space in the house,' explains Rositani Suckert. 'The large windows on each side of the room create a light which continuously changes and adds movement and shadow throughout the day.'

In Mayfair, the sea views are captured in a spectacular image taken by Thomas Lannes which can be seen through the gallery's Davies Street windows. The image has the same dimensions as the window in the Casa's living room and is intended to recreate the sensation of being in the house.



*Walnut and carrara marble bench by Curzio Malaparte, in situ at Casa Malaparte, Capri. Photography: Dariusz Jasak*

Within this set, Rositani Suckert has recreated an edition of three of the Salone's most important furniture pieces – a bench, table, and console with thick, sensual walnut tops and wide cylindrical legs sculpted in Italian pine, Carrara white marble, and travertine.

'Much of my youth was spent amongst the pieces, but it was not until I matured and was surrounded by friends and guests of the house, many of whom are great artists and architects, that I truly came to feel and understand their importance,' says Rositani Suckert. 'Our goal throughout the process has been to develop modern recreations of the pieces, while paying respects to the essence and spirit of Casa Malaparte.'

All originally designed by Malaparte and made by local craftsmen, the reproductions are also crafted in Italy using locally-sourced materials. Each piece has been produced in an edition of sixteen, plus two artist's proofs.



*Production of the editions of Casa Malaparte furniture. Photography: Dariusz Jasak*

In addition, a series of Baroque-styled porcelain pieces formerly owned by Malaparte, who had a passion for Meissen ceramics and Baccarat glasses, will be on show. These include floral-studded mirrors, candelabras and freestanding sculptures that were collected by Malaparte on his travels. They were originally displayed in the 'favorita' bedroom but in 1963, Jean-Luc Godard moved them to the salone to use them as part of the scenography for his film.

'It's absolutely perfect,' enthuses Rositani Suckert ahead of the opening. 'The frame of the window is made from the exact Italian walnut used in the construction of the pieces. As you enter the space, you can feel the dialogue between the pieces, and you experience the quality of the Italian manufacturing and how solid and powerful the pieces are. The Gagosian team did a beautiful job in creating a harmony between them, which brings the visitor into another world.'



*Original Walnut And Carrara Marble Bench Conceived By Curzio Malaparte In Situ At Casa Malaparte Capri*



*Production Of The Editions Of The Casa Malaparte Furniture. Photography by Dariusz Jasak*



*Original Walnut And Tuff Console Conceived By Curzio Malaparte In Situ At Casa Malaparte Capri. Photography by Dariusz Jasak*



*Production Of The Editions Of The Casa Malaparte Furniture. Photography by Dariusz Jasak*



*A Walnut And Tuff Console. Photography by Dariusz Jasak*



*A walnut table top from Casa Malaparte furniture at the workshop. Photography by Dariusz Jasak*



*A view of Casa Malaparte's roof deck. Photography by Dariusz Jasak*