

Workspaces/Offices & Studios/Restaurants/Bars/Clubs/Hotels/Cultural and Public Buildings

# INTERNATIONAL INTERIORS



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# Fernando Salas Roberto Verino

Barcelona, Spain

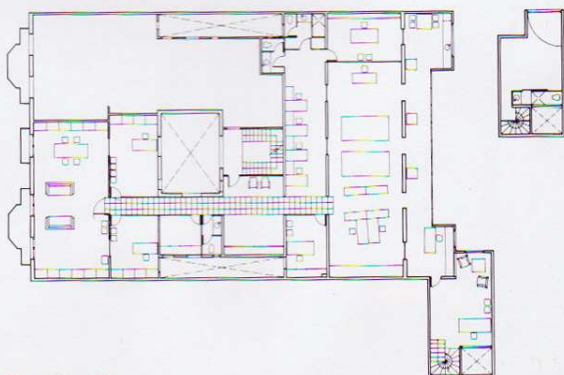
Roberto Verino's new fashion showroom in Barcelona is located away from busy shopping streets in a nineteenth-century building in the most select part of the Eixample. Close to Barcelona's industrial district with its bustling textile industry, it also benefits from the quiet seclusion of the district's many patios and garden terraces. What used to be a notary's office has been completely remodelled to encompass a showroom, sales offices and styling rooms. All the non-structural walls and divisions have been taken out to create as great a sense of transparency as possible within a calm and serene environment, intentionally detached from its urban context.

Two massive wooden doors open into a hallway with walls made of maplewood sections arranged in a jigsaw pattern. Soft-toned Jurassic marble walls lead the visitor towards a central corridor. Their plainness provokes the impression of an interior stripped down to its essentials - Salas even hides the light sources, switches and doors.

This main corridor, with its strong axis through the entire space, acts as a central spine, connecting the different rooms of the showroom. The showroom floors are covered with smooth Canadian maple parquet, but this route is paved with flagstones of oxidized brass with a greenish patina, marking it out as a transitional zone. Salas has inserted a navy-blue ceiling slab in wood and stone, slotted into brickwork at each end and hiding the services. At opposite ends are larger spaces for the workshop and sales area.

The showroom itself has windows opening on to a balcony. However, Salas does not really make much of this feature, preferring to focus attention on the interior space. Garments and fabrics are stored in a bank of aluminium cabinets on castors incorporating large mirrors, which also serve as screens. When these are moved, a photoelectric cell is triggered, and ceiling spots automatically light up their interiors. At the other end of the room there are fixed units, finished with more 'appliqué' maplewood panels, which hold air-conditioning units. The suspended,

Right: The entrance to the main corridor with its flagstones of oxidized brass and walls clad in soft-toned Jurassic marble and interlocking maplewood panels. The navy-coloured wood and stone slab (which Salas sees as the sky) lines the ceiling of the passageway.



Floor plan of the showroom and the upper floor of the executive suite.

Above: The working spaces of the executive suite, with burnished teak stairs leading to the living areas. A Tolp lamp stands on the table in front of the light.

Far right: The showroom walls are clad with maplewood panels arranged in a jigsaw pattern below aluminium cabinets.

The suspended, anodized aluminium ceiling has electrified (for hanging projectors), fire detection and loudspeakers. The offices on either side of the corridor are open, glazed spaces, lined with grey Jurassic marble and bare of all but the most selected amount of furniture, including teak worktables, anodized aluminium lighting and Richard Sapper's 'Tizio' lamps. The gallery is used as the prototype and styling room, a utilitarian space without mirrors in which Salas felt the presence of the model would be the main animating force. The executive suite at its rear consists of a two-bedroom apartment reached by a winding staircase. Continuing the theme of the showroom, this private territory is again defined by 'a few essential items to help create a stage from the scene below'.

