# The Building of a Society

■ A young man went to an industrialist and told him: « I am a designer who can make your products more beautiful and useful so you will sell more ». The manufacturer laughed. « Silly boy », he thought. « Doesn't he know about the powers of persuasion publicity already provides? » He went to another industrialist and told him: « I am a problem-solving designer. I can avoid production problems by designing better conceived products. I propose more efficient uses of your manufacturing resources and distribution capacity ». « That sounds interesting, come in ». The industrialist's engineers met him, but after 10 minutes they could hardly contain their sneering smiles. « Sad case », they thought. « Hasn't he yet realized the poverty of the intellectual and methodological equipment with which he has been provided at design school? » « What is a designer to do », he asked himself. « Didn't Gropius promise », he seemed to remember, « that a talented and ethical designer would inexorably find an enlightened industrialist, and that together they would create products which the people would hail approvingly, recognizing in them their own Zeitgeist justly expressed? It has not been true at all », he concluded. « Many facts upsetting the purity of design's ideology have been swept under history's rug ».
« Didn't Hector Guimard own an iron foundry? And as for the alternative but only satisfactory as long as it concerned itself with producing small-scale simple objects? »
He had conceived a mechanically advanced chair to be used by convalescents and the elderly at home. Should he publish the idea? It would raise the designers' level of consciousness which, he presumed, was already quite high, but would certainly not move the hearts of the manufacturers ...
from Emilio Ambasz's tale « The designer and the producers »
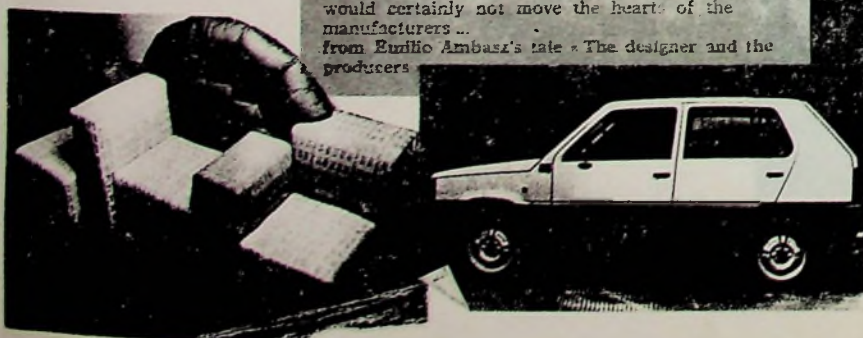
A SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENTS IN

ITALIAN DESIGN SINCE THE

2ND WORLD WAR.

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4th Yr. Industrial Design,
N.C.A.D., Dublin.
April, 1985.

CONTENTS

The Begining

"Among the many and far-reaching effects of the industrial
revolution – effects which continue to define our lives today
both as individuals and, collectively, as society – is the
separation in time and space of the act of design from the
act of production." 1.

Cars by Pininfarina, furniture by Cassina, plastics by Kartell, office systems
by Olivetti, clothes by Armani, ... a long list of well known names, synonymous
with style, quality and innovation, traits which have become well associated with
Italian design. But it was not always so. It was a climb to the top – some
may say they got there by sheer luck, others may say they haven't got there yet.
Nonetheless, they have earned themselves a high position in the world of fashion,
in all aspects of design, and who's to say whether or not they deserve it?

Before the 2nd World War, Italian design, if it could even be defined, was pretty
mundane. There were a number of restricting factors including politics, a public
which didn't welcome change and a lack of the necessary self-confidence to
step-out. At the time, Italy was under Fascist rule, a regime which looked
upon the backwardness of the working class as a guarantee of it's own stability.
It didn't like the idea of advanced research and opposed the study of a system
of design which could be applicable on any scale, regarding it as an outcome of
democratic ideology with possibilities of 'social progress', therefore suspect,
to say the least. The Fascists boycotted foreign products, obstructed the
transmission of information from the rest of Europe concerning artistic movements
of the time – they favoured a low type of academic art – and considered figures
such as Gropius and Le Corbusier as 'dangerously subversive'. It was difficult
to get anything done. Indeed, the magazine 'Casabella' was forced to stop
publication in 1943 by order of the government and the artistic world became so
disillusioned that most of the Rationalists joined underground political groups,
many paying dearly for their beleifs with some such as Raffaele Giolli,
Gianluigi Banfi and Giuseppe Pagano ending their lives in German concentration
camps in 1945 while others, such as Giuseppe Terragni, 'died prematurely'.
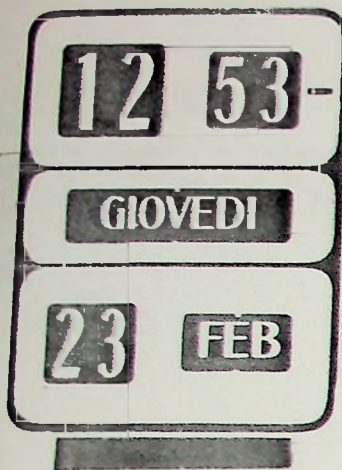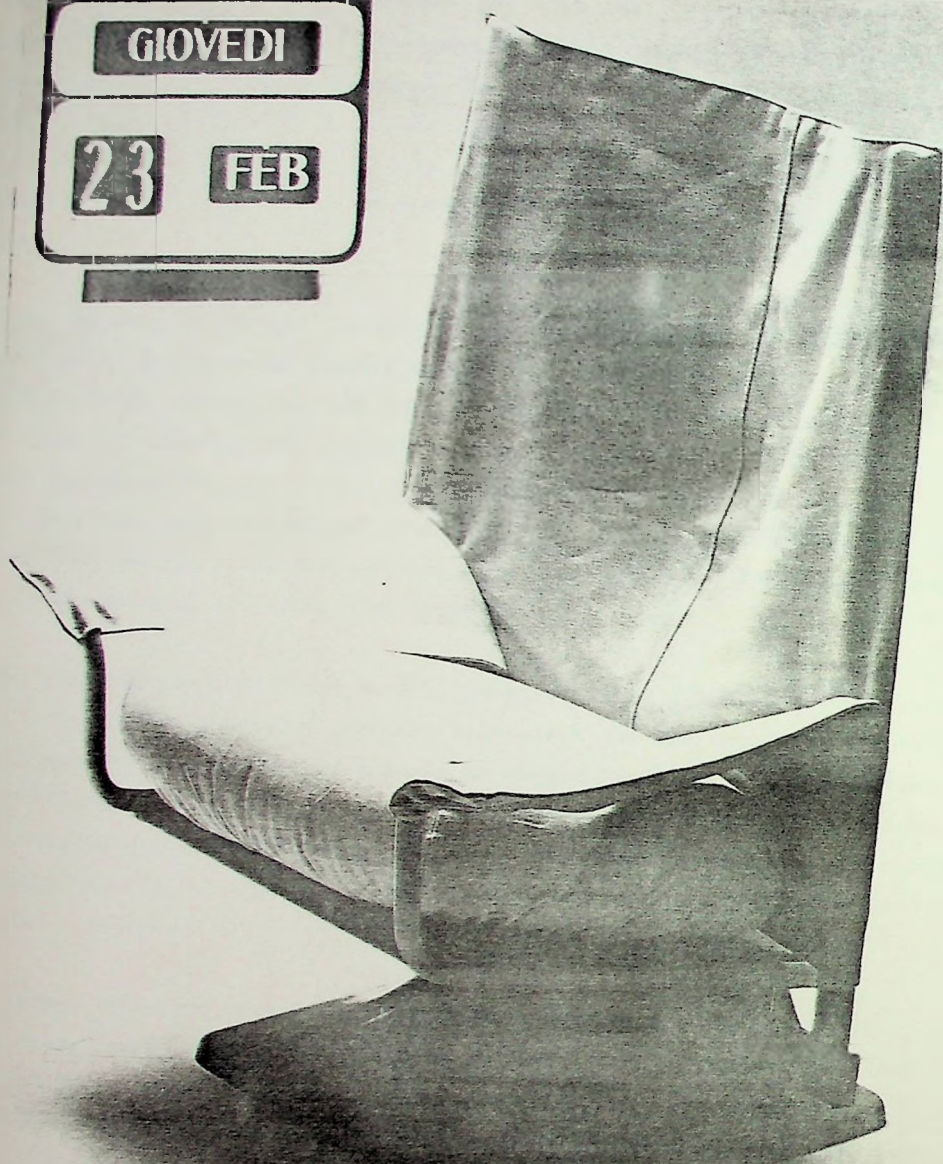
...ALO, Archizoom/Paolo Deganello, 1973

Cassina

Italian design was hopelessly behind the times with only a few isolated examples worth a mention here e.g. some work by 'Group 7' – founded in 1926, a group of newly graduated architects who had come into contact with the international movement. They were followers of the dangerous subversives – Gropius and Le Corbusier – and worked on some large scale projects such as Terragni's gas works and the 'Electric House' by Figini, Pollini and Libera, (fig.   ). Otherwise there was little or no innovation with the ignorant left in their ignorance.

Like the rest of Europe, Italy was devastated after the war – physically and socially. Cities were destroyed, industries neglected and the population demoralised. Technology had taken a leap forward because of the war but domestic orientated industry had not kept up. The economy had been undermined, politics had gone head over heels and the people had suffered massive cultural changes. War had been experienced, at it's worst, the bomb to end all others had been invented and all it needed was the push of a button to finish everything. A re-assessment of all values was needed.

The Rationalists were first on the scene, becoming firmly associated with the Anti-Fascist movements of national liberation and the democratic re-birth of the country. There were no schools of design in Italy so the architects turned their hands to the smaller tasks of furniture and product design, funds lacking for larger architectural projects. They set about re-building the country, easing the scar of oppression inflicted on her by the Fascists, establishing social justice.

However, there was an important mistake in that there was no 'National Plan', as there was in England for example, to name priority areas, resulting in the north being concentrated on and the south being virtually forgotton, tending to worsen the old economic imbalance between the two regions. But where new industry did spring up, it did so with surprising speed and enviable ability to adapt. After the war there appeared a range of materials (especially plastics) and processes undreamed of before which were quickly grasped and put to use. The Italians delighted in the new modes of expression open to them and, despite lack of co-operation from industrialists and a conventional public, they experimented wildly.
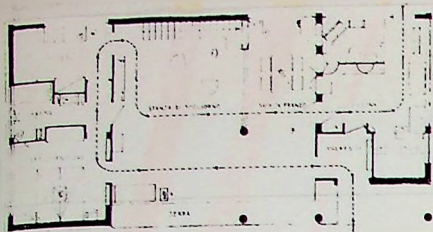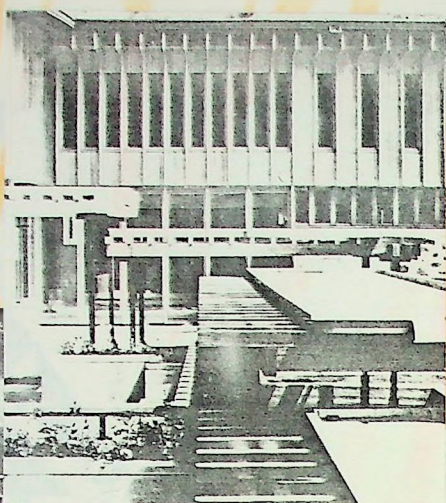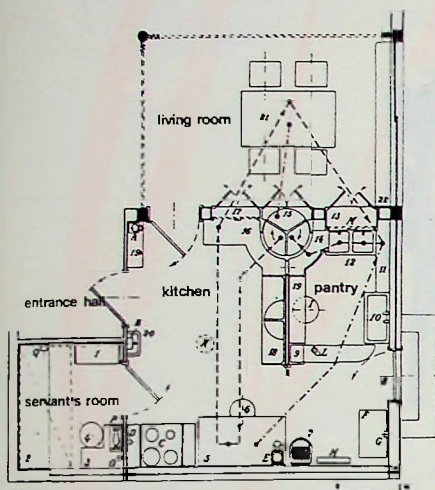
route for setting table, clearing, and washing up

Legend: 1. metal clotheshanger; 2. folding bed;
3. chest of drawers; 4. stool; 5. table;
6. stool; 7. bench with drawer; 8. service entrance;
9. broom closet with built-in ironing board;
10. washtub; 11. counter for soiled dishes; 12. double
sink; 13. pass-through for soiled dishes; 14. draining
board; 15. revolving shelves for dishes; 16. cupboard;
17. pass-through for food; 18. sideboard; 19. shelf;
20. water basin; 21. table; 22. cabinet

Electrical appliances: A. coffee grinder; B. sterilizer
for water; C. range; D. wall lamp; E. motor for
blender, mixer, juicer, etc.; F. refrigerator; G. wall
lamp; H. heater; I. washing machine; L. electric
iron; M. wall lamp; N. ceiling light; O. wall lamp;
P. sewing machine; Q. wall lamp
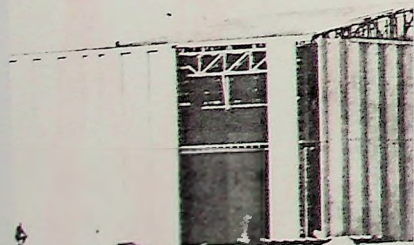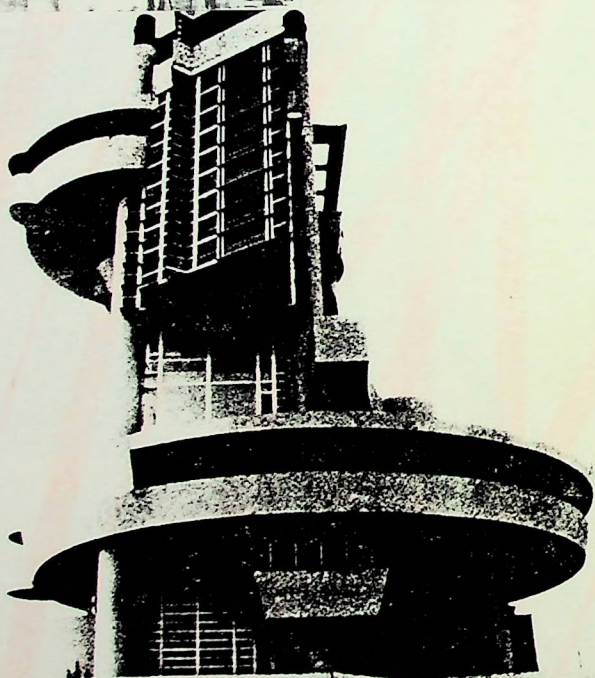
BUGATTI

PININFARINA
LANCIA AURELIA B20

1950

91287 EE

CTO508K
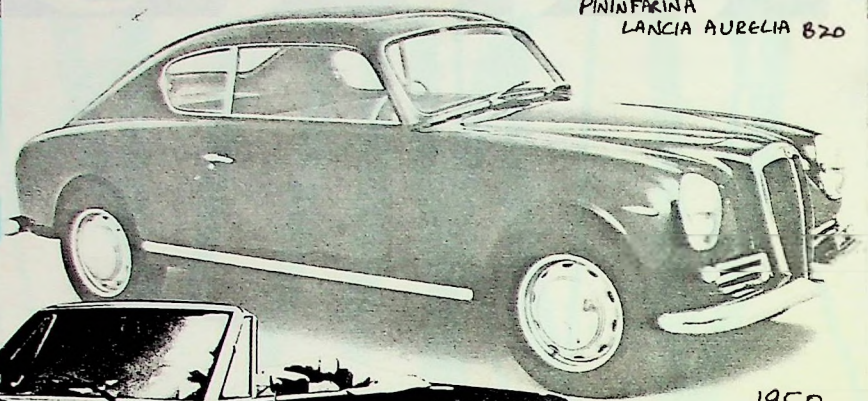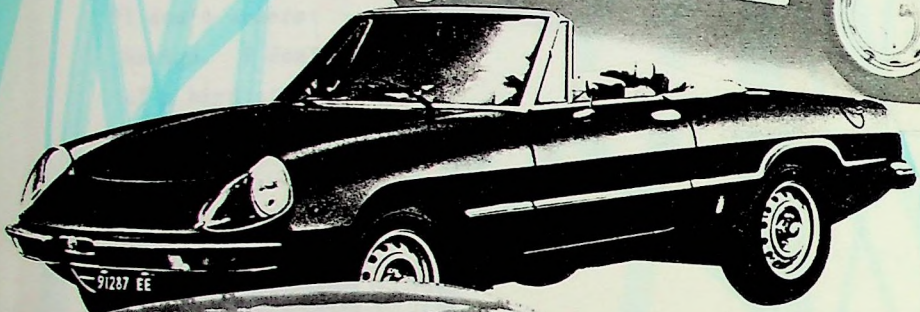
PARNA-DESIGNED FERRARI DINO 246 GT

The Rationalist aesthetic triumphed as the 'universal modern aesthetic' in the '50's and remained as such until the mid - '60's when it was delivered a final death-blow by the 'Anti-Design' movement which proposed a new, transient aesthetic more applicable to the times. Times when technology made possible new shapes and colours, previously undreamed of; cheap products which could be replaced when they broke down or when a new style or a better model came on the market - there was no longer any need for something to wear out before a replacement was got. The 'disposable aesthetic' was born where fashions changed and industry followed fashion. The Italians became world leaders at changing fashions, dispensing with the theory of an 'ideal' aesthetic:

> "I don't understand why enduring design is better than disappearing
> design. I don't understand why stones are better than the feathers
> of a bird of paradise. I don't understand why pyramids are better
> than Burmese straw huts. I don't understand why the presidents
> speeches are better than love whispering in a room at night." 2.

The ideal was no longer applicable in a world in which technology was changing rapidly.

There was another important by-product of these decades - advertising. The vast array of new products had to be sold to the public. This was done in the new department store where items competed on the shelves by means of their bright packages and winning slogans. Advertising became a phenomenon of the times proposing an image of the object to attract the consumer. Today, it is an industry almost as big as manufacturing, it's passing, 'image' quality displaying the transience of the goods it advertises.

So Italian design was to assert itself in all areas: automobiles by Pininfarina and Fiat - furniture by Cassina, Arflex, Zanotta and Memphis - lighting by Flos Arteluce, and Artemide - clocks by Solari - big names in electrical and systems design such as Olivetti, Brionvega and Minerva - plastics by Kartell and Danese ..... The list goes on. They did not restrict themselves to single objects either but attempted to solve the basic problems of design by taking the whole environment into account in their work, resulting in projects such as Sottsass' computer systems for Olivetti and Albini's work on the Milan Underground, and trying to desing simpler objects with it's potential environmental effects in mind, again Sottsass' work for Olivetti is a good example. There was also a

VERSACE 1982

G.F. FERRÉ 1982

VERSACE 1981

VALENTINO 1982
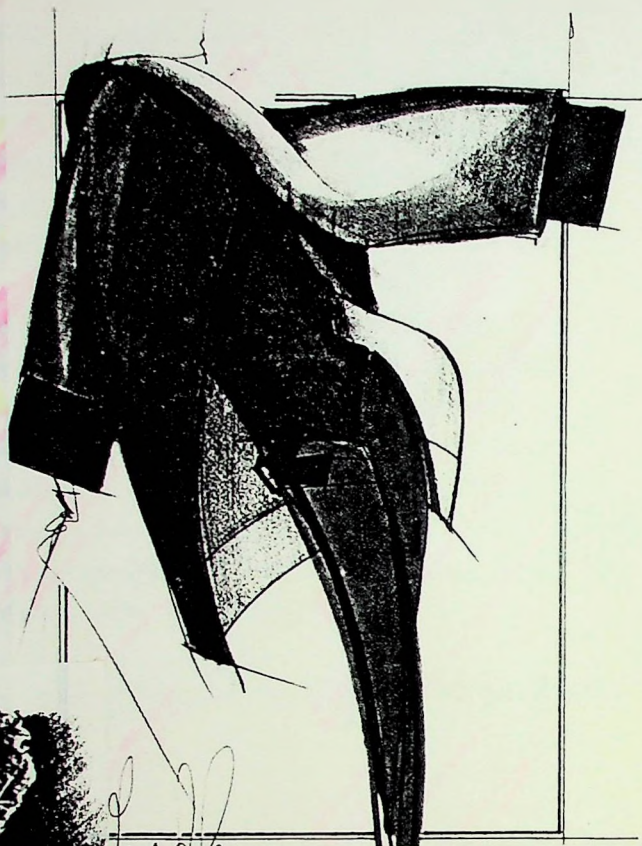
BASILE 1982

lot of work done on larger environmental systems such as prefabrication by
Feal, Bellini, Valle, Conte and Fiori with architectural projects by Valle,
Piano, Cappai and Mainardis. In the fashion world, names like Giorgio Armani,
Gianni Versace, Gucci, Soprani and Fiorucchi, with designs ranging from the
classic to the crazy, have also made their mark internationally - no area
has remained untouched by the Italian magic.

Italy has produced a complete environmental picture for the world - from
shoes to ships. She has evolved her theories over forty years of hard work
in which her designers caught up with and surpassed - debatably - the rest of
Europe. Even in the mid - '70's when it seemed as if they were all out of
inspiration, there emerged a new aesthetic, that of Post-Radicalism, which now,
in the mid - '80's, is influencing designers world-wide. They have been producing
new ideas for nearly forty years with an enviable ability to throw caution to the
wind and adapt quickly to change, indeed, they seem to relish it.

They don't seem quite ready to relinquish their position as a major trend-setter
yet.

’40's – A New Start

"It is a question of forming a taste, a technique and a morale, all
directed toward the same purpose - the building of a society."3.

In Italy, as in the rest of Europe, the '40's began after the war as people
began to come slowly back to reality. Italy looked around and saw technology
was miles ahead of her own industries. There was a lot of catching up to be
done.

The first major happening in the Italian design world at this time was the Rima
(Italian Association for Exhibitions and Furnishings) exhibition held in the
Triennale building in Milan. It explained its aims in the accompanying
introductory section:

"Facing the problem of providing the masses with the furnishings they
require, at prices they can afford, and shedding new light on plain
simple and natural furniture in accordance with the needs of the man
of today and his way of life and not with the useless and dangerous
tradition of decoration". 4.

The exhibition concentrated on popular furnishings and most of the modern
architects took part. The prevalent themes were simplicity, minimisation of
spatial requirements and flexibility of arrangement with the final results
requiring a type of interior decoration arranged and sometimes constructed by
the consumer, allowing the buyer to furnish his home with his mass-produced
furniture in his own individual way. For example, Iguazio Gardella's
'Home for three people', (fig. || :1), and Paolo Chessa and Vittoriano Vigano's
'Home for married couple', (fig. ||:2). Many of the designs in the exhibition
were based on the folding table and the deck chair e.g. Vico Magistretti's
'Demountable bookshelf and chair', (fig. ||:3).

In 1947 came the reintroduced VIII Triennale in Milan. It had a strong social
emphasis:

"The programme of the Eighth Triennale had to take into account the
social and economic climate created by the war..... It must face and
solve problems which interest the least well-off classes". 5.

11:1 GARDELLA: HOME FOR THREE PEOPLE: RIMA: 1946
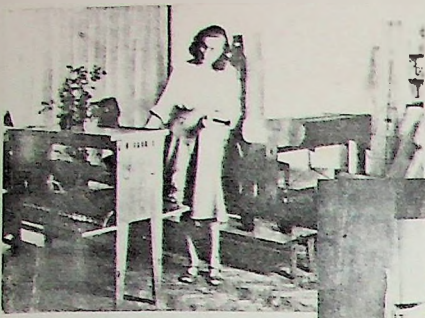
11:2 CHESSA 8 VIGANO: HOME FOR MARRIED COUPLE: RIMA: 1946
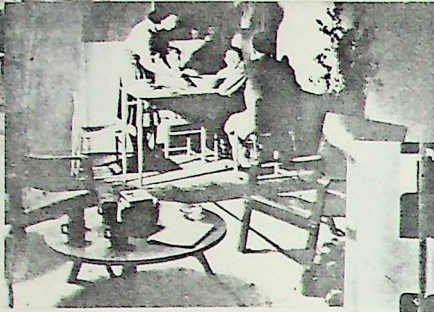
11:3 MAGISTRETTI: RIMA: 1946
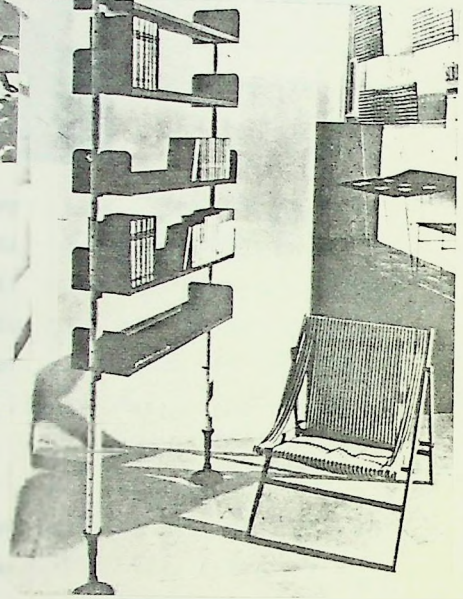
11:4 SOTTSASS: FEDE CHETI FURNITURE EXHIBITION: 1949
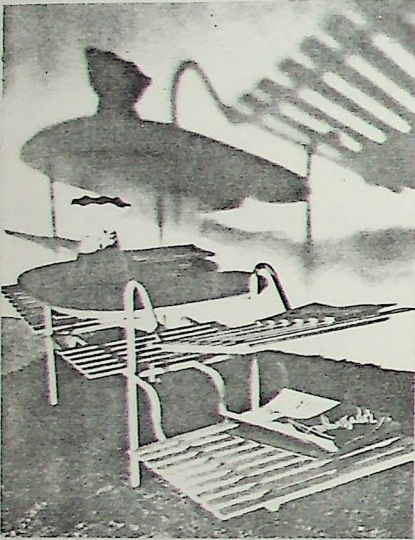
11:7 TOGINI BATH 8 KITCHEN BLOCKS: 1946
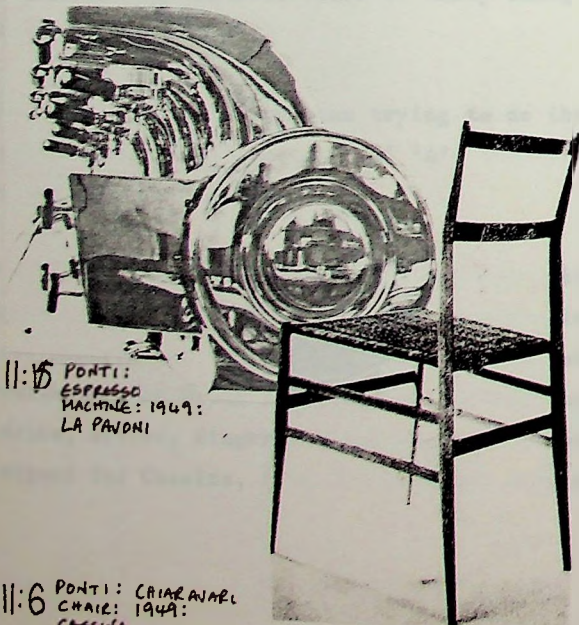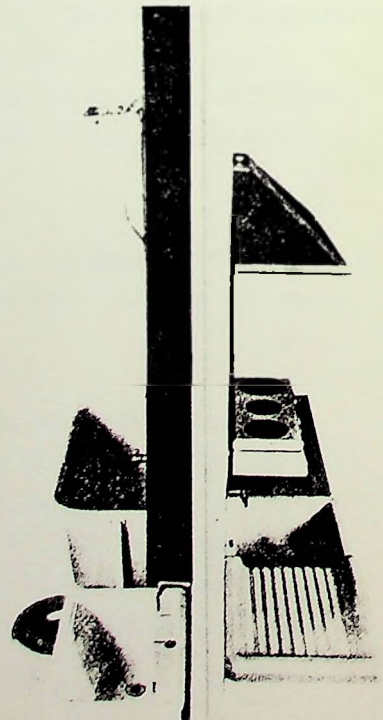
11:5 PONTI: ESPRESSO MACHINE: 1949: LA PAVONI

11:6 PONTI: CHIARAVARI CHAIR: 1949: CASSINA

Study committees were set up - by the Commisariat formed by the
National Liberation Front for Northern Italy - who worked closely to form a
unified plan for the exhibition, concentrating on re-establishing links between
designers and society. They decided that the subject of the home was the most
important one in Italy's post war years and the central theme of the exhibition
was the industrialisation of building and furnishing for the masses, with one
section devoted to individual items of furniture. The introductory section was
important in that, for the first time, an attempt was made to paint an unbiased
picture of the disasterous state of housing in Italy at the time.

Apart from exhibitions, design owed a lot to the magazines, 'Domus' being very
important at the time. Founded in 1926 by Gio Ponti, 'Domus' was edited by
Ernesto N. Rogers between 1946 and 1947. He used it as a means of communication
between Italy and the outside design world, preaching both Rationalism and
anti-Fascism. The magazine helped to rid Italian culture of the provincialism
which had prevented change and, subsequently, kept Italian design and industry
a decade or two behind the rest of the world.

The first issue under Rogers' editorship was devoted to five '1st aid' projects
for war damaged houses (submitted by architects Gandolfi, Latis, Tevarotto,
Mongiardino, De Carli, Chessa and Zanuso) with notes on prefabrication, some
discussion of objects and notes on art - Rogers believing that Italy should be
aware of what was going on in the world of fine art. During 1946 and 1947
Rogers submitted his own articles with his own ideas e.g. 'From a spoon to a city'
- implying use of same design methods, regardless of project scale, - and
'Design as the result of utility plus beauty', mirroring the theories of Max Bill
who preached the Bauhaus ideal of unity among the artist, designer, architect
and industrialist.

There were other publications trying to do the same work as 'Domus'. For example,
Pagani and Bonfanti's periodical 'A', the revised 'Casabella' (if only for three
issues) and the magazine 'Stile'.

'Stile' was directed by Gio Ponti between 1941 and 1947, an amazing man. He
worked in all areas of design and had a massive output, with nine books and about
three hundred studied articles to his name, while being an active professor of
architecture at Milan Politecnico. During the '40's and '50's he designed for
Cassina, Arflex, Singer and the Nordiska Kompaniet, the light-weight chair he
designed for Cassina, (fig. II:6), based on old Chiaravari craftsmanship along

11:10 MOLLINO: ROLLTOP DESK & CHAIR: 1946

11:8 (ABOVE) ALBINI:
DESK: 1945:
KNOLL

11:9 (LEFT) ALBINI:
'MARGHERITA'
CHAIR: 1950:
BONACINA

11:11 ZANUSO:
'LADY' CHAIR:
1951: ARFLEX

11:12 (BELOW) A. & P.G. CASTIGLIONI: 'TUBINO'
DESK LAMP: 1949: FLOS

11:13 (BOTTOM) P.G. CASTIGLIONI & L. CACCIADOMINIONI:
RADIO SET: 1945-46

11:14 (RIGHT) SARFATTI: FLOOR
LAMP: 1948:
ARTELUCE

11:15 (BELOW) HENGHI: LIBRA LUX
LAMP: 1948

with his elaborate espresso coffee machine, (fig. II:5), for La Pavoni, creating a 'style' of their own and providing a reference point in Italian design.

Although not an amazingly innovative period in Italian design, some interesting – though not necessarily unique – ideas began to develop. For example, there was a lot of interest in the problems of prefabrication and standardisation of elements. 'Modular' ideas began to spread, (fig. II:7), although they were more concerned with preserving the ethical and social values which originally prompted them rather than using the concept as a means of stepping up production in mass manufacturing.

Notable pieces of the time include a desk and the 'Margherita' chair, (fig. II:8,9), both by Franco Albini, a rolltop desk and chair, (fig. II:10), un-Rationalist in it's organic approach – by Carlo Mollino, and Marco Zanuso's 'Lady' armchair, (fig. II:II), for which he won a Gold medial in the IX Triennale. The latter designer was to become a strong representative in the following years for the younger generation of enthusiastic designers who were to begin to question the Rationalist theories.

The Castiglioni brothers (Achille and Pier Giacomo) were quite prominent in this decade, probably their most memorable work being in the field of lighting, (fig. II:12). They opened up the imagination in this area, producing some very new concepts and encouraging others to 'take chances', (fig. II:14,15). P. G. Castiglioni also worked with L. Cacciadominioni in 1945/'46 on a radio set, (fig. II:13), based on extremely strict industrial methods, a feature which was to become characteristic of the Castiglioni's work.

In the automobile area there were some surprising successes, for example, the Vespa 98cc scooter, (fig. II:17), with its load-bearing bodywork, and the Lambretta Innocenti scooter, (fig. II:16), with an open, tubular framework. These models were well suited to the narrow, winding Italian streets, answering a market need for a cheap form of motorised transport. They covered short distances fast and became a familiar sight in urban Italy. An alternative answer to the same problems was the Isetta car, (fig. II:18), which took up very little space, was economical to run and had an unusual front opening feature.

Another prime example of the time is the Cisitalia car, (fig. II:20), by Pinin Farina – who put post-war Italian automobile design on the map. The Cisitalia idea had existed in embryonic form since 1940 and concentrated on compactness and continuity in design, getting rid of the superfluous chrome found in the U.S.

11:16 (ABOVE) LAMBRETTA INNOCENTI
SCOOTER: 1947

11:17 (LEFT) VESPA 50 SCOOTER: 1946:
PIAGGIO

11:18 (BELOW) ISETTA CAR: 1953.

Indeed, automobile design has always figured largely in Italy where 79% of families own one car and 25% own more than one. Even in the late '40's there were a lot in circulation and growing industry was prompting urbanisation of the population so transferring some of the emphasis from cars to public transport. An extraordinary achievement in this latter field was the Pullman bus of 1948, (fig. II:21). In plastic terms it may have been somewhat elaborate but it definitely displayed concern for continuity in the overall design, an interest in aesthetic unity of the entire example, a concern rare in this area in Italy at the time.

Altogether during the period, the number of objects of good design on the mass market was very small and contact between designers infrequent. There was one large exception to this and that was the Olivetti company. Since the beginning of the '30's they had had an extraordinarily far-sighted policy and, in 1945, set a precedent in the collaboration of Adriano Olivetti, Marcello Nizzoli (designer) and Pintori (graphics). Nizzoli had first worked for Olivetti in 1931, designing the 'Summa 40' adding machine, (fig.   ), for them in 1940. From then on, adding machines were mechanically perfected and in 1948, Nizzoli designed the 'Lexikon 80', (fig. II:22), which solved the relationship between mechanical parts and housing using a die-casting technique "on a level of technology and design that was completely revolutionary in terms of current practices." 6.

This success was a result of the inclusion of the designer as co-worker, rather than merely decorator, in the production process and also because of Nizzoli's long contact with Edoardo Persico 7. during the '30's. The combination worked well for Nizzoli, this time marking the beginning of the climax of his career. He continued his success with Olivetti with examples such as the 'Lettera 22' portable typewriter, (fig. II:23), in 1950, which won a Golden Compass Award in 1954 and which used the same enamelled metal housing as the 'Lexikon'. These models could be referred to as the first of the 'user-friendly' machines, distracting the operators attention from inner moving parts and allowing them to concentrate on the keys and the paper.

So the basis was laid for a design industry in Italy. A lot had to be done but the first few steps had been taken and the preliminary results were hopeful.
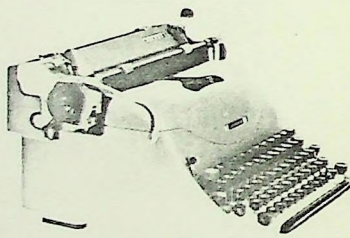
11:19 (RIGHT)
PININFARINA:
FIAT 1100
CABRIOLET:
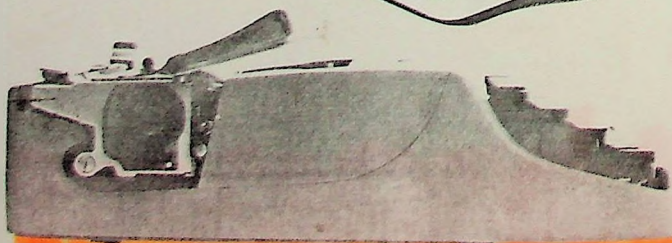1949

11:20 (BELOW)
CISITALIA CAR:
1947:
PININFARINA
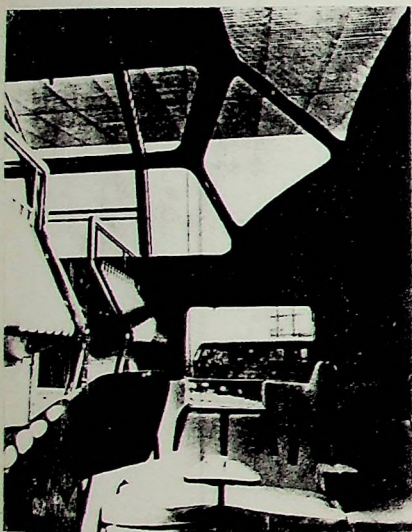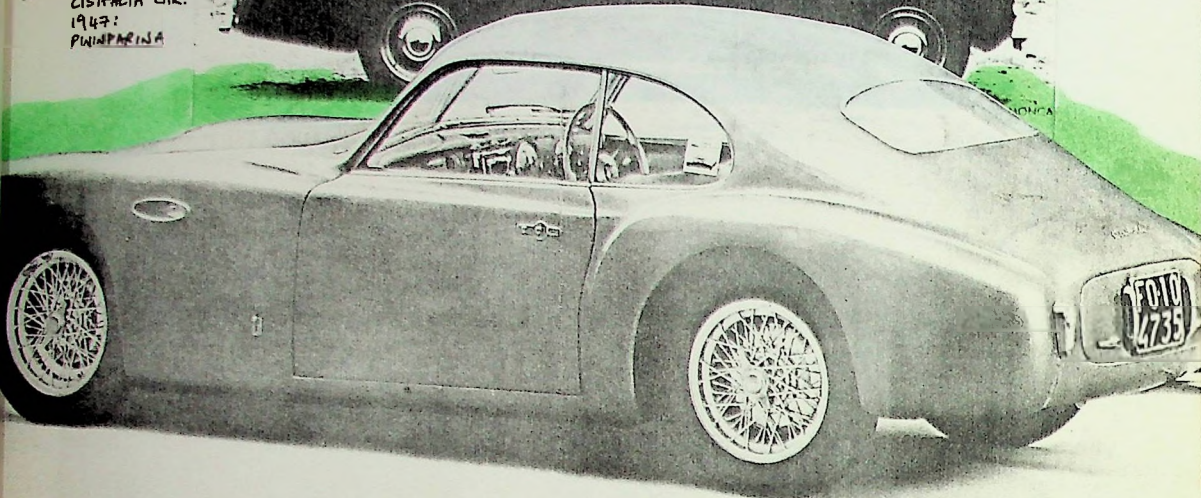
11:21 (LEFT) ZAVANELLA:
PULLMAN BUS: 1948:
BELVEDERE O.M.

11:22 (BELOW) NIZZOLI: LEXIKON 80
TYPEWRITER: 1948: OLIVETTI

11:23 (BELOW & BOTTOM) NIZZOLI: LETTERA 22
TYPEWRITER; 1950: OLIVETTI

"Since the war the artists have been frolicking like boys let out of school." 8.

The first major Italian design event of this decade was the IX Triennale in 1951. Design, as an important aspect of the manufacturing process, appeared throughout the exhibition, being featured in a section entitled "The Form of the Useful" which had been arranged by Peressutti and Belgiojoso of the BBPR firm, and which gave design the role of 'most important manifestation of applied art in Italy'. The idea of design as a skill in itself appeared elsewhere in the exhibition e.g. in a section of experimental furniture where Franco Albini entered a group of objects displaying his characteristic tendency to reduce to essentials. Albini's entries included a series of demountable cupboards, the results of research begun in 1948, which utilised a technique of cutting and bending plywood, allowing the walls to be reduced to extremely thin panels; the Adriana armchair which emphasised a delicate balance between a light framework of solid wood and the seeming weightlessness of the plywood projecting over it; and the 'Margherita' rush armchair, a modern adaptation of an old artisian skill, (fig. III:3).

Along with these examples, which seemed, perhaps, to be lamenting the old, there was a new generation producing designs with a fresh approach. These youngsters did not regard progress as a threat, rather they used it as a source of inspiration, a challenge, and as a means of questioning the Rationalist theories which had, too often, been over concerned with moralising and refused to recognise change. At the head of this new contingent was Marco Zanuso who was mainly concerned with strengthening and increasing contacts between designers and industry, laying himself open to capitalistic control rather than following the idealistic Rational approach which refused to compromise on design. However, Zanuso realised that compromise was necessary if the designer was to retain any control over what came on the market. For the IX Triennale, he explored the possibilities of foam rubber and nylon cord, resulting in designs such as the bridge chair, (fig. III:2), and the 'Lady' armchair, (fig. III:4), which in turn prompted the Pirelli body to set up Arflex, a company which produced on a small scale using industrial processes. Arflex concentrated on demonstrating applications of new materials and processes, using the actual market as judge, and they produced high-quality furniture throughout this decade and the next.
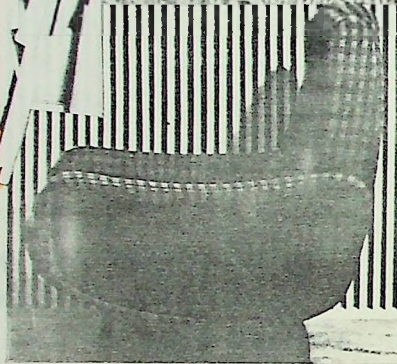
III:1 'FORM OF THE USEFUL' SECTION: IX TRIENNALE: 1951

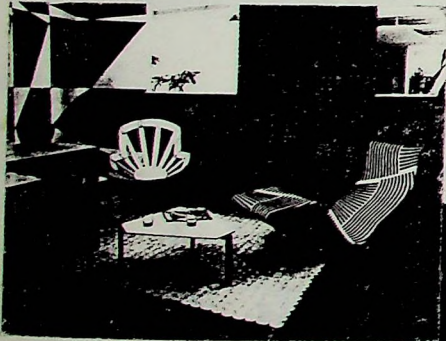III:2 (BELOW) ZANUSO: BRIDGE CHAIR: 1951: ARFLEX
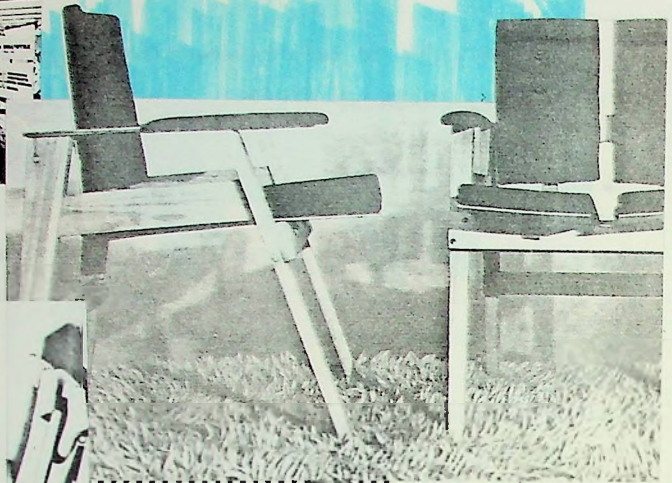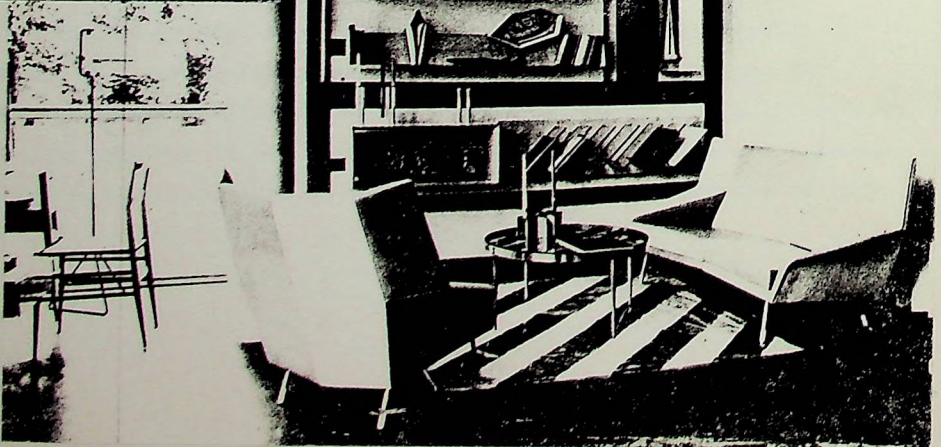
III:3 (ABOVE) ALBINI: ADRIANA ARMCHAIR: 1951

III:4 (LEFT) ZANUSO: 'LADY' ARMCHAIR: 1951: ARFLEX

III:5 GREGOTTI, MENEGHETTI, STOPPINO: 1954: MILAN TRIENNALE

III:6 (BELOW) PONTI: INTERIOR: 1957: MILAN TRIENNALE

The 1947 Triennale had had a 'strong social emphasis' but by 1951, the horrors of war were somewhat less vivid and this social concern was being overshadowed by a concern for the visual. 1954 saw the X Triennale with even more emphasis being placed on the visual rather than the social impact of design, as evident in its overlying theme - 'The Production of Art'. Styles were playful, with 'unrestrained aesthetic and technical experimentation', and fine art influences were in evidence, especially Organic Surrealism, an obvious snub to the Rationalists. In general, however, the X Triennale was more coherent than its immediate predecessor, largely due to Zanuso's efforts to give it an aim more relevant to the time. It departed from the norm of concentrating on architecture and trade. Rather it concentrated on trying to develop the strength of medium to large Italian industries, to suggest to architects that they might become an integral part of these industries and to suggest to industrialists that they might make good use of design. It contained a "key section", the industrial design pavillion, organised by the Castiglioni brothers, Menghi, Rosseli, Nizzoli, Michele Provinciale and Augusto Morello:

"The subject of this key section of the X Triennale is industrial
 aesthetics, which in accordance with an American term that has
 now come into general use may be designated as "industrial design"
 and interpreted as the interpolation of the concept of "form" into
 the industrial process, or into the formal aspect of technology,
 the essential meeting point between art and industry." 9.

The exhibition had an accompanying conference which clarified issues in the catalogue. Participants in the conference included such well-known, and diverse, names as Max Bill, Paul Reilly, Tomas Maldonado, the sociologist Pizzorno, Giulio Claudio Argan, Ernesto N. Rogers, the philosopher Enzo Paci, Konrad Wachsmann, Gino Martinoli and Walter D. Teague. The conference was probably the most important aspect of the X Triennale, bringing contemporary opinion into open conflict and forcing discussions such as those on relationships between capitalism and design and between design and art with Argan proposing his 'celebrated theory' of "city planning as an extended form of design and the place for social redemption". These discussions took place on a high theoretical level, restricted to tangible fields such as production, aesthetics etc. without any concept of something as abstract as the yet 'undiscovered' consumer society.

1957 came and with it the opening of the 'European Triennale' which, as the nick-name implies, was trying to bring Italian design and production up to European standards of production and consumption. Once again, it was theoretically brilliant, enciting necessary discussion, but in practice it remained restricted. Industry continued to be concentrated in the north and its benefits were reaped only by the people of the higher income bracket. One section of the XI Triennale was devoted to the 'Production of Art and Industrial Design', showing clearly the extent to which aesthetics had taken over. Objects were selected for it by Gillo Dorfles, Leonardo Ricci, Alberto Rosseli and Marco Zanuso to demonstrate themes such as 'the designer', 'the consumer', economics, the artist, technique and form. What it succeded in doing was presenting a striking sculptural style from an assymetrical sculptured soda syphon by Sergio Asti to a streamlined television receiver for Phonola.

Work of top designers was displayed and Nizzoli's 'Mirella' sewing machine for Necchi, (fig. III:8), was given pride of place, labelled as characteristic of an emerging Italian style. The machine was of the same high standard of design as seen in Nizzoli's earlier work for Olivetti, form following function without loss of concern for the consumer, it's casing reflecting a sculptural style, un-mechanical in it's curves yet echoing the internal mechanism. Another prominent design was the Castiglioni's 'Spalter' vacuum cleaner, (fig. III:9), manufactured from nylon, and, like the 'Mirella', its organic shapes transformed it from a mechanical—monster into a housewife—friendly machine.

The furniture industry mirrored the experimentation in product design with the use of new shapes and materials, firms such as Arflex, Gavina, Tecno and Cassina leading the way with designs by Rosselli, Nizzoli and Menghi, (fig. III:11), for example, who combined new technology with an interest in sculptural form.

In 1953, an exhibition was held in Milan which was to have major consequences. It was set up by the Rinascente department—store chain and entitled "Aesthetics of the Product". The exhibition itself was very successful, arousing widespread interest, and Rinascente decided that the time was ripe for an 'Italian design' stamp as such. Hence, in 1958, they set up the 'Compasso d'Oro' (Golden Compass) award to give recognition to the designer and producer of the prize-winning model, which should be outstanding "for its aesthetic qualities and the technical perfection of its production." The A.D.I. (Association for Industrial Designers) collaborated on the awards, taking complete responsibility after 1965.

NECCHI

NECCHI BU

mirella
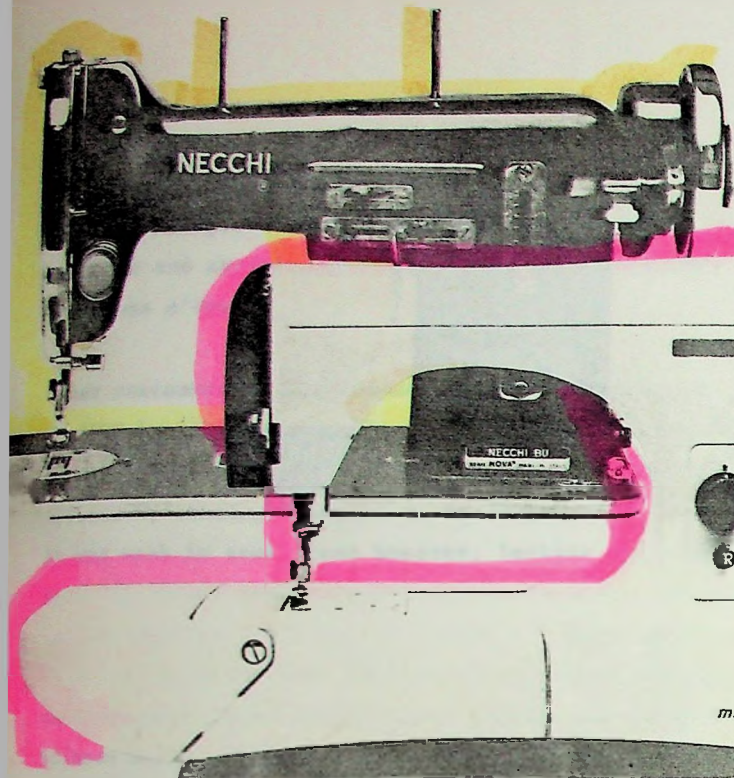
III:8 NIZZOLI: 'MIRELLA' SEWING MACHINE:
1957: NECCHI

III:9 (ABOVE) A. & P.G.
CASTIGLIONI:
'SPALTER' VACUM
CLEANER: 1956:
REM

III:12 (BELOW) LA RINASCENTE
'AESTHETICS OF THE
PRODUCT' EXHIB: 1963
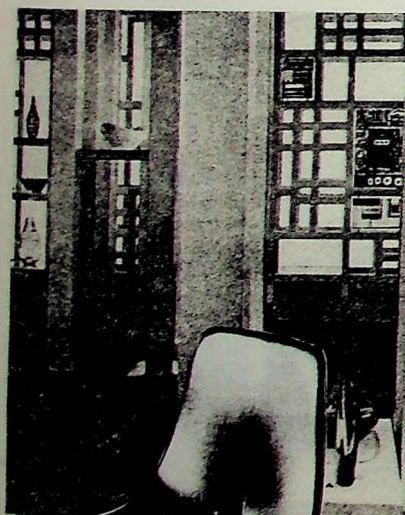
III:10 (ABOVE) SOTTSASS:
ROOM OF ITALIAN
GLASS AT XI
TRIENNALE: 1957

III:11 (LEFT) RINALDI:
'DUGO' CHAIR IN SHEET
METAL: 1952

The Golden Compass quickly became the most coveted award in the field of Italian design, as well as gaining international recognition, both of which it still retains. It provided an incentive for industrialists and designers to work together and anything produced of any merit at this time aspired to a 'Compasso d'Oro'.

Other newcomers of the decade included the magazine 'Stile industria', founded in 1953 by Alberto Rosselli. Until it ceased publication in February of 1963, it was probably the most important organ of Italian design, consistent and authoritative, leading others such as 'Casabella', 'Civilta delle machine' and 'Domus'. It was weak in some areas however, lacking encouragement of basic investigation into imbalances between needs and production, the shadowy area in Italian design. Another magazine, 'Il Mobile italiano', began publication in 1958 and attempted to bring the diabolical Italian distribution methods up to date. It concentrated on showrooms, large distribution outlets and local co-operatives, trying to balance north and south (at this time, the northern hinterland was turning out one third of the total national output) as the latter regions were receiving practically nothing of the formers wealth. However, the total lack of national planning in this area, among others, made effective distribution impossible and the magazine ended up merely trying to bring styles up to date.

The problem of distribution was one which had to be tackled. Swedish products owed a lot of their success to excellent distribution methods and well maintained standards of quality and, at the time, swamped the whole European market.

Another important publication of the decade on a statistical level was a study in 1959 by Slivio Leonardi, an engineer specialising in economic problems. It was entitled 'Produzione e consumo dei mobili per abitazione in Italia' (Milan; Feltrinelli, 1959) and was the best economic study on the problem of furniture production and consumption to date. It was based on a painstaking nationwide survey showing the general state and artisian nature of the furniture industry. It also showed its potential and examined the actual gap between the quantitative and qualitative nature of demand and the inadequacy of any organised response on the designers part.
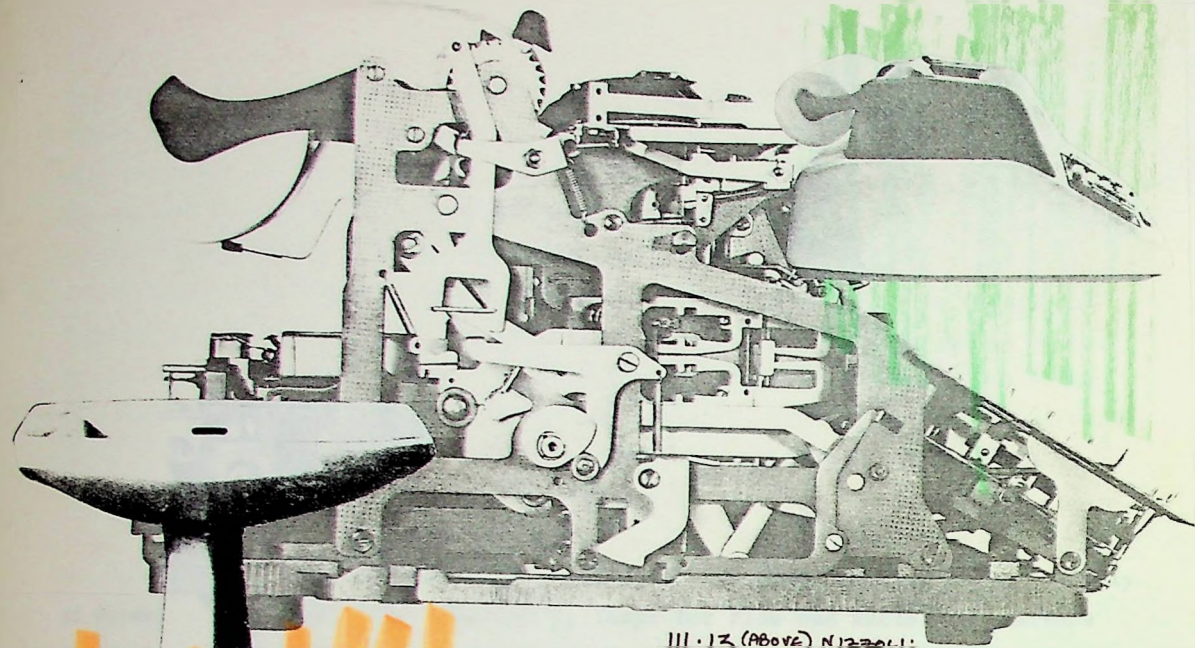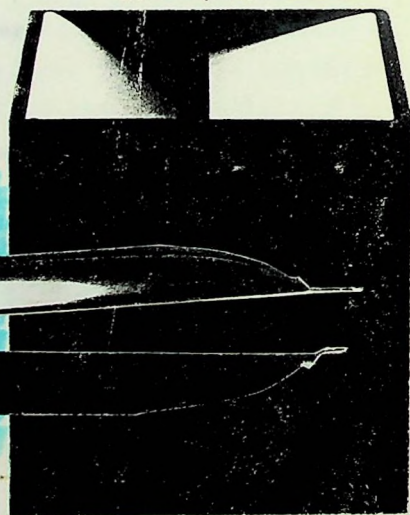
III:13 (ABOVE) NIZZOLI:
DIVISUMMA 24: 1956: OLIVETTI
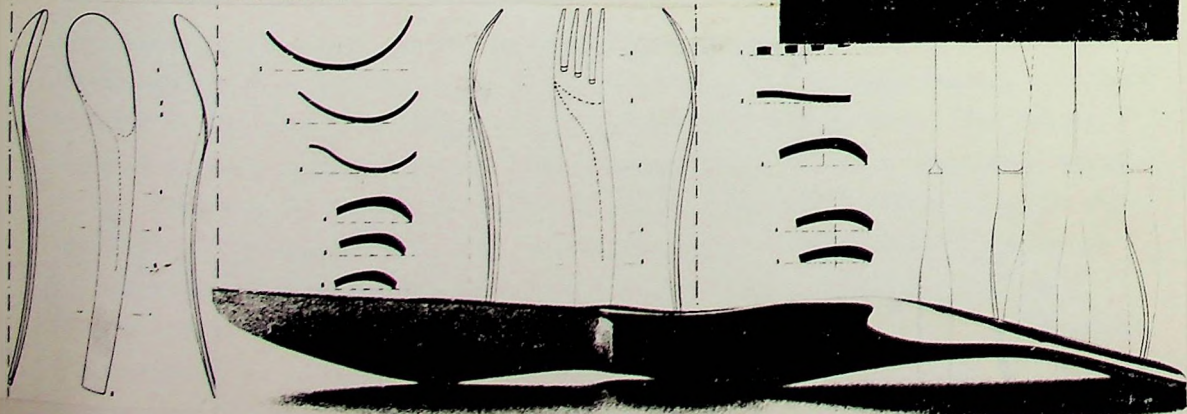
III:14 (LEFT) PONTI: SINK &
TOILET: 1953: IDEAL
STANDARD

III:15 (BELOW) MUNARI: 'CUBO'
ASHTRAY: 1957: DANESE

III:16 (RIGHT) R. SAMBONET:
FISH SERVING DISH:
1954: SAMBONET:
G.C. (GOLDEN
COMPASS) AWARD
IN 1970

III:17 (BELOW) R. MANGO: FLATWARE:
1959: REED AND BARTON

However, as the decade wore on, there was a visible increase in designer/
industrialist collaboration with new companies being set up that took design
very seriously and profited from it e.g. 'Kartell', with Gino Colombini as designer
and who led the field in Italian plastics design for many years. There were other
combinations; Solari with the BBPR design group in the electric clocks area,
Albini remained with his former manufacturer, Poggi, and Gardella, Caccia and
Magistretti founded 'Azucena' in 1949 which produced high quality goods both in
design and manufacture. Other newcomers included Sinisgalli who became a very
important indirect link between design and industry, working first with Olivetti,
later in Pirelli's department of public relations and finally at the I.R.I.
(Institute for the Reconstruction of Industry).

The Castiglioni brothers were quite prolific at the time, working with a variety
of firms; e.g. R.E.M. (the 'Spalter'), lamps for Flos and Kartell, furniture
for Gavina (the highly unusual San Luca armchair, (fig.III:18), of 1960), projectors
for Ferrania, radio sets for Phonola and the Lenci light bulb, (fig. III:21), which
freed the pure filament from its metal base within the bulb. All their designs
displayed a sharp precise approach, almost fantastic imagery with a near total
reduction to technical requirements.

There were quite a few other notable designs of the decade; Giovanni Gariboldi's
set of stackable ceramic dishes for Richard-Ginori in 1954, (fig.III:20), for which
he won a Golden Compass award; Gino Valle produced a new line of domestic
electrical appliances (a rapidly expanding line in Italy at the time) for
Rex Zanussi; Zanuso did some work in sewing machines for Borletti in 1956,
(fig.III:22), his designs being somewhat clumsy in comparison to Nizzoli's;
Albini's 'Luisa' armchair, (fig. III:23), for Knoll in 1954, which was the definitive
version of a series of models, demonstrated the designers quest for perfection so
characteristic of all his work; a series of small, quality household objects,
mainly plastic, by Kartell; along with work by Rinaldi, the Feal company,
Rosselli, Arteluce etc., (fig.III:24-28).

In the area of transport, there was the 'Flying Dutchman', (fig. III:29), the
Abarth 1000 by Fiat in 1960, (fig. III:31), the Falco F 8 L light touring aeroplane
by Frati in the same year, (fig. III:30), and the Fiat 500 in 1959. The latter,
designed by Dante Giacosa, won a Golden Compass award and is a beautifule example
of the "desire to go beyond the equation design = beauty + utility to enter into
the field of typological invention and organisation of production"[10], allowing
for market needs and considering possible effects on the community and the
environment, a product made for the buyer in all senses, an example of one of the
first products to be 'dictated', in an indirect way, by the consumer to the producer.
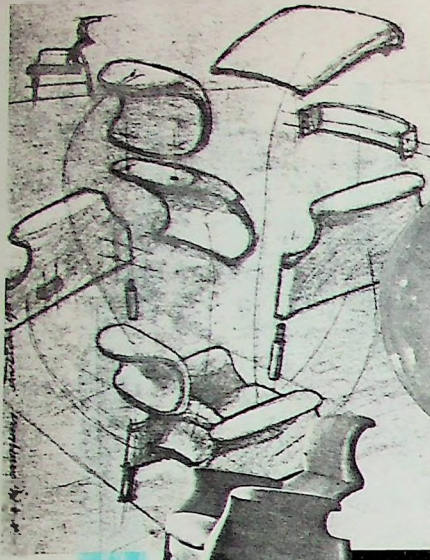
III:18 (ABOVE)
A & P.G
CASTIGLIONI:
SAN LUCA ARMCHAIR:
1960: GAVINA

III:19 (RIGHT)
A & P.G. CASTIGLIONI:
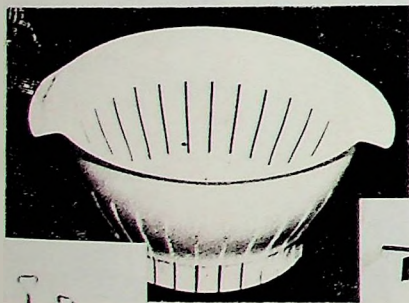'TARAYACUM' HANGING
LAMP: 1960: FLOS
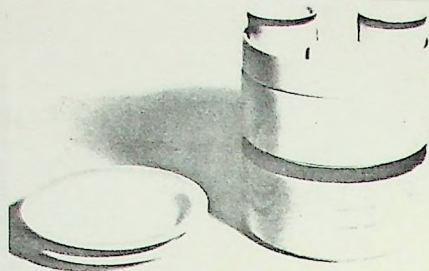
III:20 (ABOVE) G. GARIBOLDI: CERAMIC
STACKABLE DISHES: 1954:
RICHARD: GINORI

III:21 (LEFT) A. & P.G. CASTIGLIONI:
LIGHT BULB: 1957

III:22 (BELOW) ZANUSO: BORLETTI
SEWING MACHINE: 1956

III:23 (ABOVE) LUISA CHAIR:
ALBINI: 1955

III:24 (ABOVE)
COLOMBINI:
PLASTIC COLANDER:
KARTELL: 1962

III:25 (LEFT)
COLOMBINI:
PLASTIC DUSTPANS:
1958: KARTELL

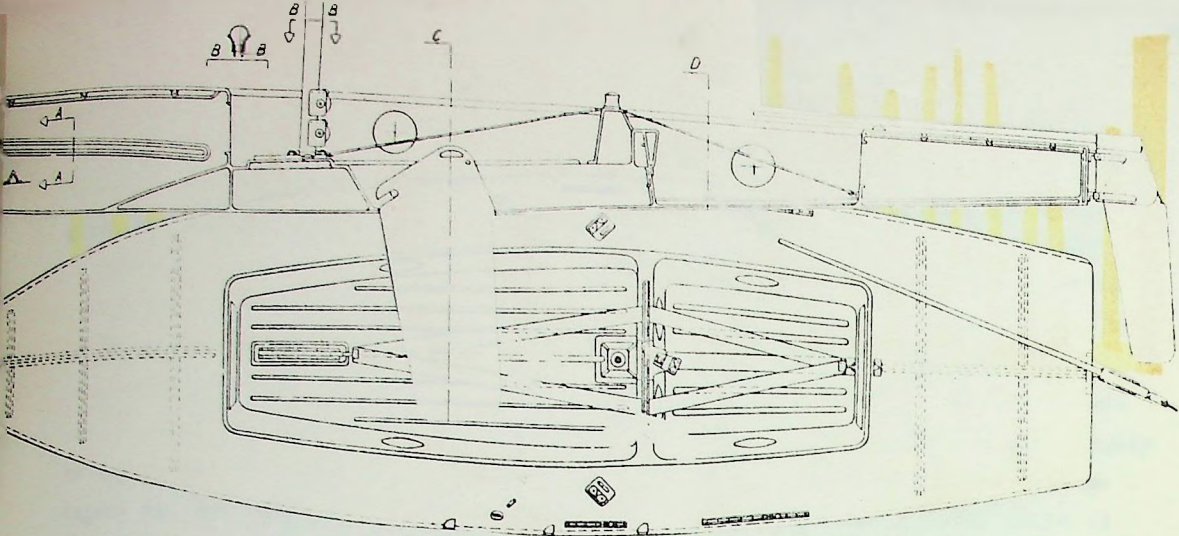III:26 (BELOW) ROSSELLI: BATHROOM
UNIT: 1957: MONTECATINI

III:27 (LEFT) G. SARFATTI:
LAMP MODEL 1055:
1954: ARTELUCE

III:28 (RIGHT)
PORTABLE
RADIATOR:
1960: FGAL

III:29 (ABOVE) FLYING DUTCHMAN
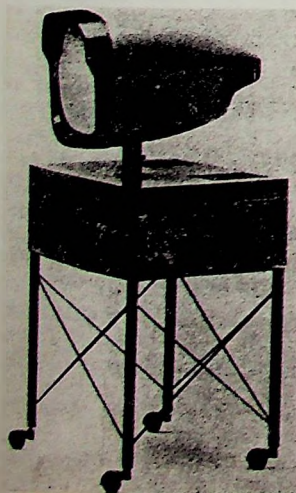
III:30 (ABOVE) FALCO F8L
1960: FRATI

III:31 (ABOVE) ZAGATO:
COUPÉ FIAT-ABARTH
1000: 1960

III:32 (RIGHT)
D. GIACOSA:
FIAT 500 CAR:
1959

III:33 (ABOVE) FIAT 500 TOPOLINO: 1938

III:34 (LEFT)
BERIZZI, BUTTE,
MONTAGNI; T.V.
CABINET: 1956:
PHONOLA

So, this decade saw an unexpected acceleration in Italy's economic and industrial development although the north/south imbalances remained. Thought was being given to consumer goods and services; with the US invasion had come the idea of comfort, the mechanisation of homes (the electric house of 1930 was becoming a reality), the refrigerator, the possibility of prosperity and security, while social status became representative in terms of possessions. The idea of 'handing down' items was rejected, heirlooms lost their prestige and the throw-away society emerged with a new style each season. This attitude was due largely to the spread of audio-visual media, i.e. advertising, which Italy fast became expert in, but also to a rise in incomes and living standards and the shift of political struggles from moral questions to the more materialistic ones of wages and services, the community becoming less concerned with tradition and more with the present, realising theories being postulated at the time.

In this decade also, Italy began to arouse interest internationally. In 1951, the Cisitalia car by Pinin Farina was selected by the Museum of Modern Art in New York for the 'Eight Automobiles' exhibition, two shows of Italian design were held in London in 1956 and 1958, and the Illinois Institute of Technology held a similar exhibition in Chicago in 1959 - Italian design had been launched on the world.

But why was it so popular? What was the formula behind its success? Some might say expertise, others might say organisation, more could say style, or "the right place at the right time", Reyner Banham was one of those who said 'luck':

"One of the most remarkable developments in the 1950's was the craze
for Italian design which galvanized the smarter elements of all
classes of British society. The scooter, the Olivetti typewriter,
furniture by Gio Ponit, hairstyling by Richard Henry, Espresso
coffee and its attendant machinery, certain tricks of shape, design
and display, and even certain typefaces from the Nebilo foundry,
helped to stamp the image of Italy as the home of good design at all
levels of consumption. The reasons for this development have
baffled critics and sociologists from the time of it's first
appearance in 1953 to its waning around 1960. The Triennale was
a major contributing influence at the level of conscious design.
The cinema and motor racing also played their part, but explanations
based simply on good taste and engineering cannot explain the whole
Italian mania." 11.

It may have seemed to 'appear' out of nowhere but "good taste and engineering" definitely played a part, and it certainly didn't wan in 1960.

"We are shifting perhaps from attachment to permanent, universal values
to acceptance that a design may be valid at a given time for a given
purpose..... All that this means is that a product must be good of
its kind for the set of circumstances for which it has been designed.
For example, in this age of accelerating technology, to refuse to
take notice of the transistory or to reject the ephemeral per se is to
ignore a fact of life..... For consumer goods, though form may have
followed function in the good old days, in this electric age they are
neck and neck." 12.

1960 came and with it, two exhibitions. The 'New Designs for Italian Furniture'
show was held in Milan, sponsored by the Osservatore delle arti industriale,
and perhaps best remembered for it's eloquent accompanying reports which aroused
widespread discussion on the value of design at the time and what it was actually
achieving:

"..... Thus persistently, against our will, renunciation of a
sense of the whole, of a taste for the sweetness of life, often
plunges us into the labyrinth of possible interpretations, where
it seems increasingly difficult to find an impetus toward any one
direction, expressive of a common effort." 13.

The profession of design was seen by many as an ally of capitalism and as an
evasion of realism. It lacked institutional recognition, it was given a marginal
position by public agencies and was too often regarded as a second line for
architects or graphic artists. The lack of organization on the part of designers
led to this public confusion as to the actual relevance of design in society
for, if the profession did not take itself seriously, how could it expect anyone
else to do so? They were still experimenting, each in his own way and coming up
with different results, which one was right?

The second exhibition of 1960 was the XII Triennale, with 'Compulsory Schooling'
as it's central theme. It had, as it's major challenge, the task of validating
design, of providing proof that the profession had a worthwhile contribution to
make to contemporary society. Possibly the most important consequences of the
XII Triennale was the emergence of two designers - Carlo Scarpa and
Ettore Sottsass Jr. - who were to have significant influences on design in Italy
in the following years.

The influence of Scarpa was quite indirect. He worked for the Venini glass factories in Venice and had never produced a piece of furniture for mass-production. However, he preached the banishment of all pre-conceived notions and, together with Franco Albini, has been responsible for some of the world's best museum installations which often display his high regard for Frank Lloyd Wright, (fig. $N:4$);

> "His extraordinary ability to establish clear spatial divisions
> by means of attention to, and invention of, detail, and his
> sense for giving continuity to the total environmental picture
> have decisively affected the best Italian design." 14.

The influence of Sottsass was, as it still is, more obvious. He had trained as an architect and had become disillusioned with the 'pretentious, paternalistic' attitudes that went with the trade. He began his career as a painter, embarking on industrial design with his collaboration with Olivetti in 1958 when he designed the M/IV computer, (fig. $N:5$). During the '60's he was to have the same impact on Olivetti products as Nizzoli had during the '50's, working on machines such as typewriters and computers:

> "They are all bound together by a tendency for strong, controlled
> imagery that still does not lose it's sense of pleasure in the play of
> colours and awareness of a plastic presence within an environment actually
> based on alienation: his effort is to establish the same normal
> relationship with a piece of apparatus that one feels toward the
> objects in ones home." 15.

Vittorio Gregotti has a great respect for Sottsass and his work, attributing his success to his personality and to his "constant quest for a continuity between work and one's way of life." This can be clearly seen in his work for Olivetti, (fig. $IV:6-10$). The products are no longer purely machines, they are bright, friendly workmates. The Valentine typewriter was made as a companion rather than as something to be groaned at on a Monday morning. This is a reversal of Nizzoli's idea of the machine as something completely separate - visually, sensually - from it's operator: Sottsass transforms it into a toy. The Elea 9003 computers are consistent systems, beautifully proportioned with a playful, almost cartoon, quality about them reminiscent of the 'Mickey Mouse' furniture that was to come later. In them he uses colour symbolism - mauve, turquoise and yellow
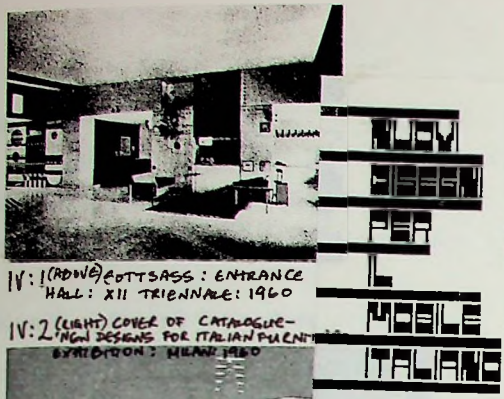
IV:1 (ABOVE) SOTTSASS : ENTRANCE
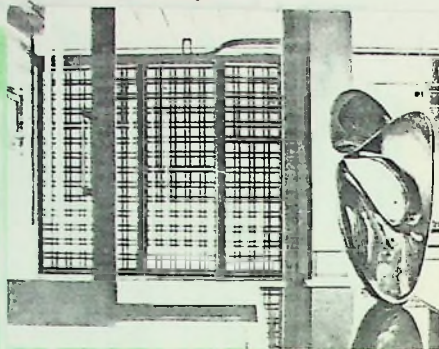HALL : XII TRIENNALE : 1960

IV:2 (RIGHT) COVER OF CATALOGUE-
-NEW DESIGNS FOR ITALIAN FURNIT-
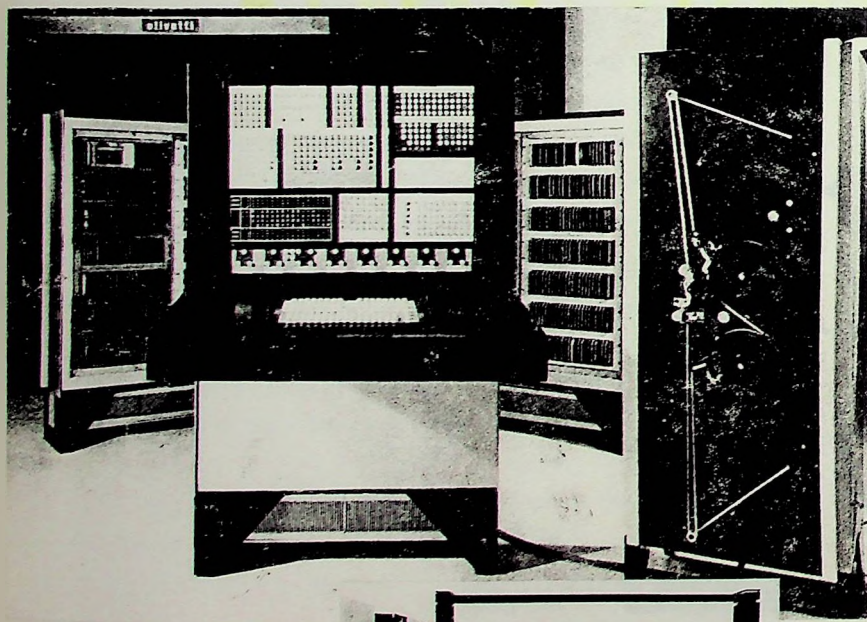-URE EXHIBITION : MILAN 1960
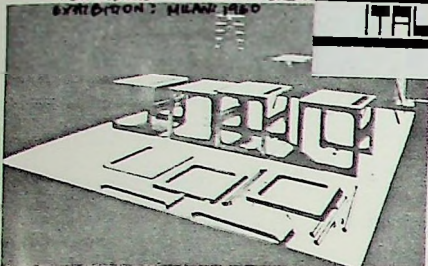
IV:3 (ABOVE) ZANUSO : COLLAPSIBLE
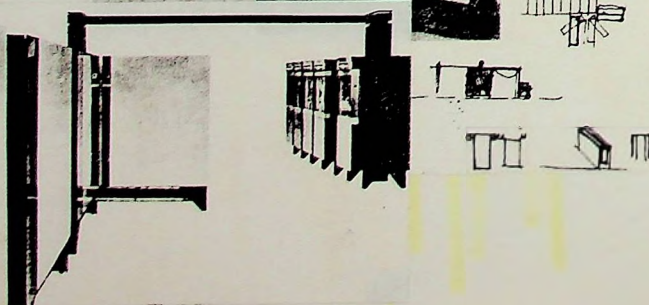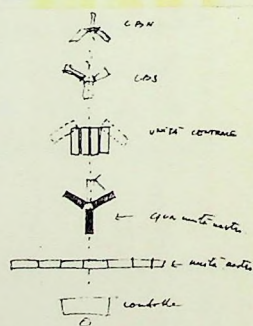SCHOOLROOM DESK : XII TRIENNALE : 1960

IV:4 (BELOW) SCARPA : OLIVETTI SHOP,
VENICE : 1958

IV:5 (BELOW) SOTTSASS : N/IV
COMPUTER : 1958 : OLIVETTI

IV:6 (ABOVE & RIGHT) SOTTSASS :
ELEA 9003 COMPUTER : 1959 :
OLIVETTI

controls – to relate parts to each other and to the whole. He evolved a group
of ergonomic measurements for the computers and lowered the height of the
cabinets so that the operators could see each other. He relieved the boredom
from punching in commands and turned a sterile job into a game.

His work extended into furniture but, as Gregotti said;

> "can we still use the word 'furniture' in this connection? They
> are violently coloured presences, centres and elements with
> magical references, new altars in which everything depends not only
> on a symbolic relationship with the object but even more on a
> ritual approach..... These are places meant to evoke within the
> dwelling a preideological way of life, in which love and
> attention take the place of manipulation and use." 16

And Gregotti wrote that in 1972! This removal, by Sottsass, of items from the
'real' world into the 'dream' world can be clearly seen in Sottsass' work of the
'60's. For example, he did a series of furniture for the Poltronova firm in
1966, (fig.|V:11-13), mainly wardrobes, using plastic laminates to cover his
pieces and using bold, simple geometric shapes, patterns and colours, giving the
illusion of exaggerated size. He drew inspiration from a wide variety of sources:
Indian and Far Eastern cultures; Pop painters such as Roy Lichtenstein and
Andy Warhol; shapes from painters like Frank Stella and the Minimal structures
of sculptors such as Sol Le Witt, Don Judd, Robert Morris and Robert Smithson.
He was very much influenced by American artists – since his visit there in the
early '60's – especially those associated with 'Pop' painting, Minimal sculpture
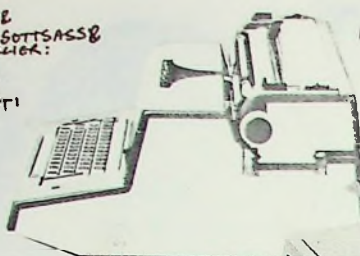and Conceptual Art.

The XIII Triennale happened in 1964 and provided a turning point in Italian design,
greatly influencing the following years:

> "Of past Triennales it has been said that they all looked to the future,
> and that this distinguished them from other exhibitions..... The
> XIII Triennale instead is all in the present." 17

Praxis 48
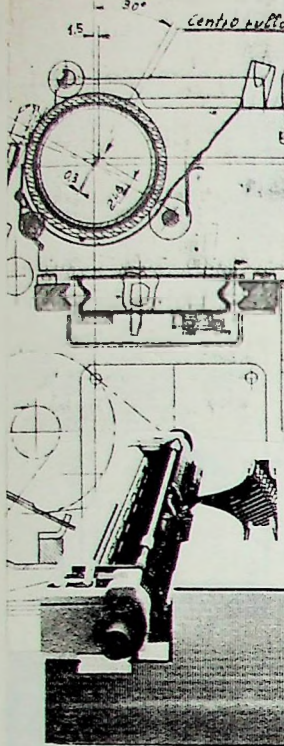
— 30°
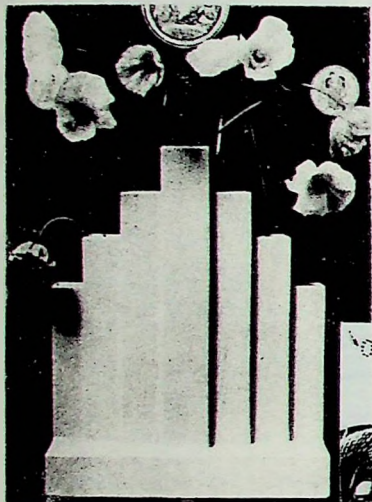1.5
Centro rullo

IV:14 (RIGHT) SOTTSASS:
ENAMELLED DISHES:
1958

IV:15 (CENTRE) SOTTSASS:
OF 'CERAMICS TO
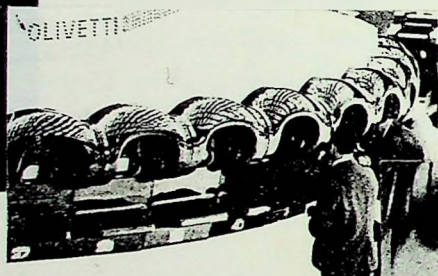SHIVA' SERIES': 1964

IV:16 (FAR RIGHT) SOTTSASS:
PRINTING: EARLY
1960's
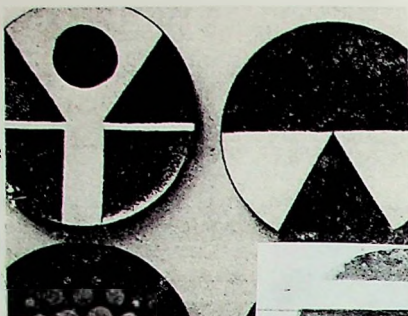
IV:17 (BELOW) SOTTSASS: 'YANTRA'
CERAMIC VASE: 1970

IV:18 (BELOW) SOTTSASS: MULTI-VIEWING FILM
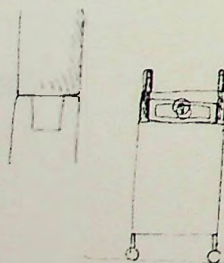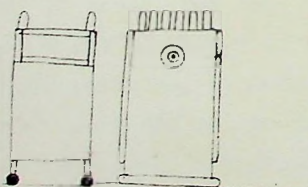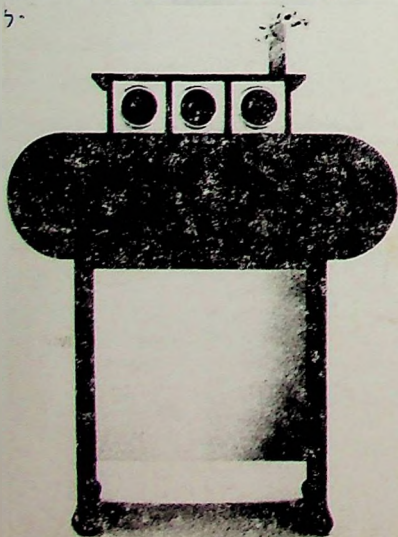EXHIBITION SYSTEM 'THE VISUAL JUKE-BOX':
1968:
OLIVETTI

OLIVETTI

IV:19 (BELOW) SOTTSASS:
JEWELLERY & BODY
DECORATION: EARLY '60's

PICCOLO MOBILE (4)

IV:20 (BELOW & RIGHT) SOTTSASS:
FURNITURE: 1965: POLTRONOVA
5.

It was given the theme of 'Leisure' and there were three main reasons for it's importance: firstly, it veered away from the theme of the production of art which had dominated the previous three or four exhibitions; secondly, there was a new generation in the fore with new ideas and demands; and thirdly, it brought things up for discussion which were to greatly affect ensuing Italian design, (fig. IV.21). Here we see the proposal of a design method which takes the whole environment into account; an object becomes part of a complete system with emphasis on it's role within that system and how it relates to the user, the environment, and other objects; part of a collage. The Triennale proposed that it was not enough to design separate objects without any relationship to the whole. It asked whether the deterioration of the environment could be controlled by the national design of separate objects, as the sum of a series of well designed objects does not necessarily ensure success as can be seen in the problems of over-crowding, poor placement and overlapping. And finally, the consumer was recognised as the main influence in design with problems of distribution and consumption becoming more and more important:

> "shift of interest from the classical thesis of the construction of
> an object and the social meaning of this operation to the problems
> of distribution and consumption which are given prime importance by the
> consumer, not only from an idealogical point of view, but in the field of
> formal and functional relationships and communications." [18].

During the following year or so, these topics were widely discussed and enlarged upon by theorists such as Gillo Dorfles (consumption) and Umberto Eco (visual communication), helping the profession to validate itself.

The XIV Triennale was held in 1968. It would seem that it was not particularly notable as it is barely mentioned in works on design of the time. Indeed the following Triennale of 1974 was closed early due to lack of interest, there were few new ideas emerging after the late '60's and design in Italy did not change much during the following decade - it was merely "expertly packaged and sold to the rest of the world." [19]

'The focus of our attention has not been to depict a situation but rather to show the direct action that should arise from it, so that each individual, recognizing the falseness of the situation, can take personal responsibility for regarding this as the necessary moment in which to consider possible ways of giving a rational direction to the situation itself

'To accomplish this, we have reduced to the minimum explanatory devices, interpretative labels, and guidance with any pretense at rationality that would indicate a division of the route into successive scenes, placing the visitor in the center of action, eliminating any distinction between him and the object, offering him a series of alternative choices, or rather forcing him to act, and attempting to transmit at every point the general meaning that we wish this section of the exhibition to impart, so that it may be understood at any level of interest and knowledge. Thus, all the elements selected as having a meaning in denoting a certain portion of leisure time are, to some extent, fragments of our objective world, whose meaning in other contexts is perfectly well known. We have tried to arrange these elements, not so much by isolating them or loading them with symbolic meanings, as by placing them in a different visual context that might imply making them appear in a new light. This is accomplished not so much by their repeated, unfamiliar, reciprocal juxtapositions, by gathering together a whole range of consumer products, or projecting and enlarging them "beyond their scale" "beyond the materials that are appropriate to the object itself (typical devices used in advertising), but principally by setting them within a different spatial framework, which arranges and multiplies them, projecting them into some unknown urban future — in accordance, that is, with architectural procedures. No matter if, in our case, this space is constructed, so to speak, "in the negative," and made up of illusions and absences, in the effort to establish a kind of historical void, an absolute presence around the object and ourselves as spectators, applying a rigid linguistic method that tends to reduce to the minimum the component elements in play and increase to the maximum the labyrinthine ways of combining them.'
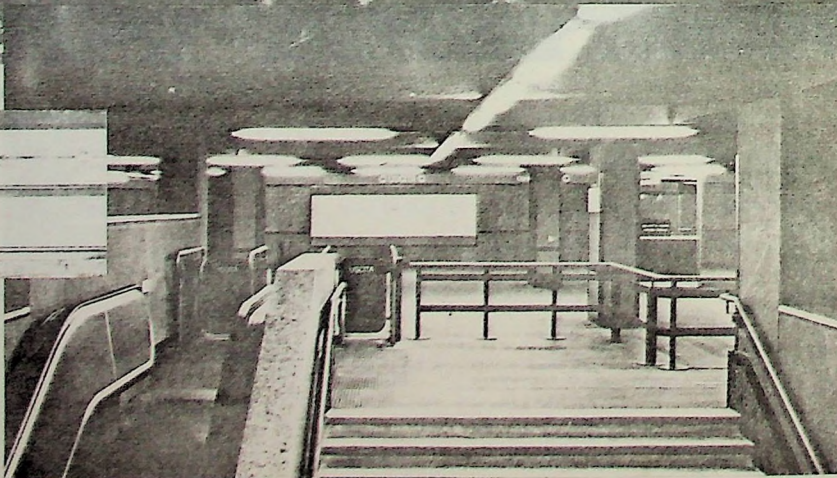
IV:22 (BELOW) UNREST AT 1968 TRIENNALE
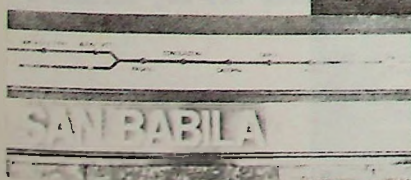
IV:23 (ABOVE) BOB NOORDA: SIGN FOR LINE 1, MILAN UNDERGROUND: 1969

IV:24 (RIGHT) ALBINI & HELG: UNDERGROUND STATION, MILAN: 1964

Design had been at a stage of crisis at the beginning of the decade, the
Golden Compass awards had been witheld in 1960 because the Commission for the
awards had not felt that the contenders deserved them. The select minority still
reaped all the awards:

"Let's look around us, let's enter any public office - a post office,
for example. Then let's go to a military area, a barracks, or a
seat of public administration. Looking beyond the pompous entrance
halls, behind the ticket windows at stations or the counters at
banks, let's go into the public lavatories; let's, in fact, poke our
noses into what we may call all the national cesspools, and
finally, without descending to the utmost limits of squalor,
let's visit the 35% of dwellings of the Milanese (or those called
Milanese) that statistics show are without any individual sanitary
installations: or let's visit the homes of all the Italian
porters, of the peasants, and of the overwhelming majority of
workmen and office employees. What do we find?.....

In attempting to evaluate the respective conditions, and draw
comparisons, it seems to me completely illusory to point to the
statistics on the most recent dissemination of automobiles, for
example, or the figures on the so-called 'Italian Miracle'." 20.

However, things were gradually improving. There was a new generation of designers
with a new approach. Franco Albini produced very few actual objects at this time,
concentrating instead on systems and environments. Together with Franca Helg
and Bob Noorda (graphics) and beginning in 1960, he was commissioned to design
the stations of Line I of the Milan Underground. The result was a complete,
continuous system based on repeated prefabricated panels and the unification of
entrances, stairs, handrails, pavements, lights etc. with beautiful continuity
in the signs: a completely integrated environment.

A similar job was undertaken by Tomas Maldonado, a former director of the
Ulm school of design, during the early '60's: that of the unification of the
entire Rinascente public image, from graphics to architecture. Sadly, this project
was scrapped before it was completed when the company changed hands, but, along
with the previous example of Albini's and Sottsass' computer systems, it remains
among the best examples of environmental design to come out of the country at
that time.
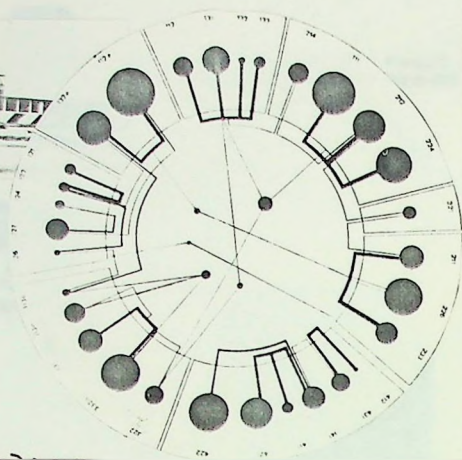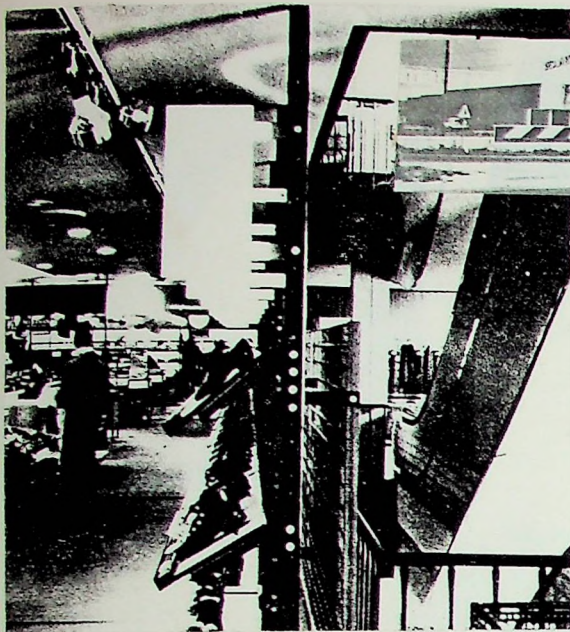
IV:25 (LEFT) ALBINI:
LA RINASCENTE
DEPARTMENT STORE : 1958: 62
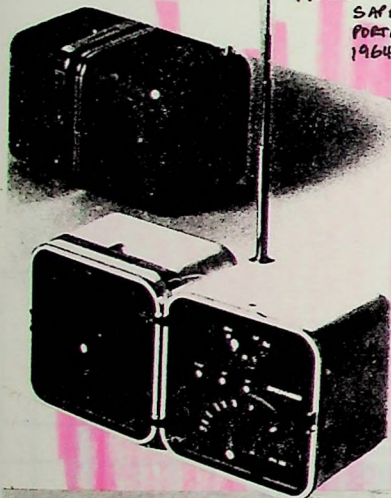IV:26 (ABOVE) GREGOTTI, PAULIS, PARMIANI:
SMA SUPERMARKET : 1969: RINASCENTE
IV:27 (ABOVE RIGHT) POINT-OF-SALES MANUAL:
1969: RINASCENTE-UPIM
IV:29 (BELOW) ZANUSO & SAPPER: SMALL
CHILDS CHAIR: 1961: KARTELL

IV:28 (LEFT) ZANUSO &
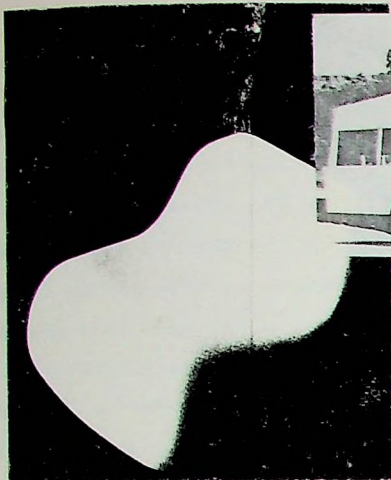SAPPER : TS502
PORTABLE RADIO:
1964: BRIONVEGA

IV:30 (BELOW) ZANUSO
& SAPPER: T.V.
SET: 1965:
BRIONVEGA

IV:31 (ABOVE)
ZANUSO
& SAPPER:
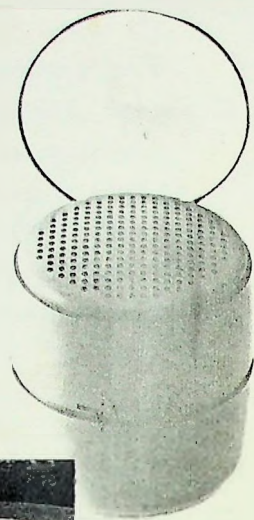'GRILLO' TELE-
PHONE: 1965:
ITALTEL: GL.
AWARD 1967
IV:32 (RIGHT)
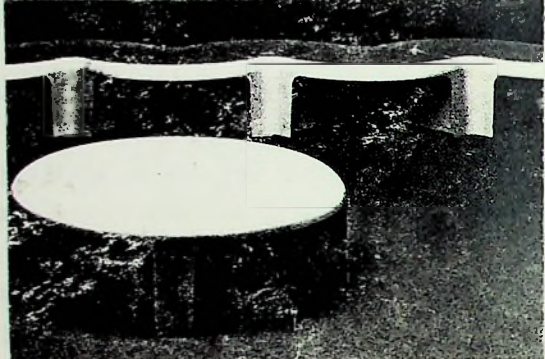ZANUSO:
'LAMBDA' CHAIR:
1962: GAVINA

IV:33 (ABOVE) ROSSELLI: JUMBO LOUNGE
CHAIR: 1968: SAPORITI

IV:34 (ABOVE) ROSSELLI & ISAO
HOSOE: MELIOR PULLMAN
BUS: 1970: ORLANDI-FIAT

IV:35 (BELOW) BONETTO: MAGIC
DRUM RADIO: 1968: AUTOVOX

IV:36 (BELOW) BONETTO:
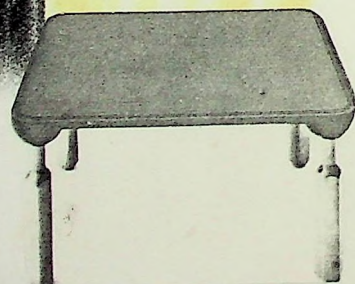QUATROQUARTI TABLE: 1969: BERNINI

IV:37 (LEFT) A. & P.G. CASTIGLIONI:
'TOIO' FLOOR LAMP: 1965:
FLOS

IV:38 (BELOW): A. & P.G. CASTIGLIONI:
'MEZZADRO' CHAIR: 1957: ZANOTTA

IV:39 (ABOVE) A. & P.G. CASTIGLIONI:
SCREWDRIVER TABLE: 1966:
BERNINI

Marco Zanuso was a designer who showed great continuity during the '60's. He produced quality designs, refusing to follow fashion and always drawing from previous experience. He tended to be infatuated by production methods, expressing these in his designs but in everything he did he showed an amazing eagerness, almost agressiveness, in his work, grasping onto new theories to apply them to his own work. He did a lot of work on flexible systems, (fig. IV:29), and collaborated with Richard Sapper on many electronic products, (fig. IV:29,30,31), their 'black box' solutions annonymous in any domestic decor, as well as working on furniture, (fig. IV: 32), and architectural projects.

Other designers around at the time included Alberto Rosselli, (fig. IV:33,34), and Rodolfo Bonetto, (fig. IV:35,36), the latter interesting in that, like Nizzoli, he had no formal architectural training but rather worked from a knowledge of processes, fixings and materials.

The Castiglioni brothers were prolific as always, their tendency to ironise, their feeling for assemblage and their reduction to essentials becoming even more accentuated, tending occasionally to Anti-Design, (fig. IV: 37÷39). Their work in lighting continued to be unique, the 'highlight' coming in 1962 perhaps with the 'Arco' ('Arc') floor lamp for Flos, (fig.IV:40), a perfect model of elegance which was to epitomise good taste throughout the decade, as it still does. They also produced other lights along with some pieces of furniture, (fig. IV: 41-43).

Enzo Mari was a product of the '60's, devoted to theoretical research which he summarised in his monograph: 'Funzione delle ricerca estetica' ('Function of Aesthetic Research', Milan: Comunita, 1970):

> "Mari has a vision of revolution as the establishment of worldwide
> human communication, also to be brought about by means of design,
> and even at the cost of completely changing the language of
> communication, beginning with the alphabet." 21.

He did some work for Gavina and quite a lot for the Danese group, (fig. IV: 44-47), especially in the area of vase design.
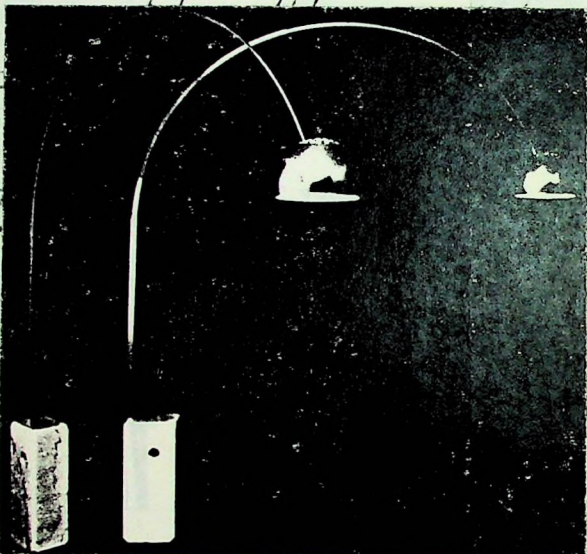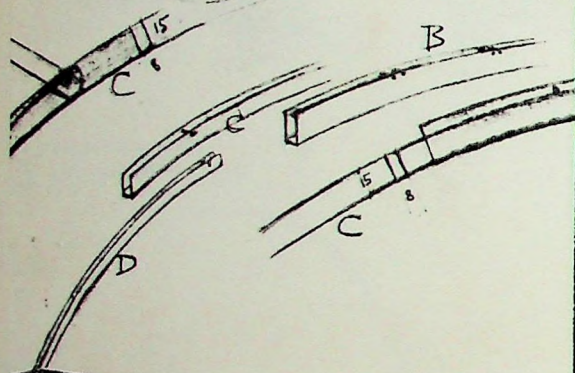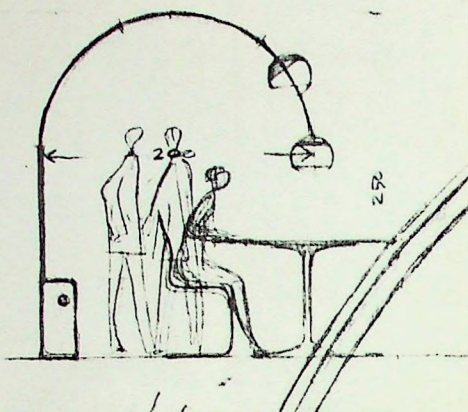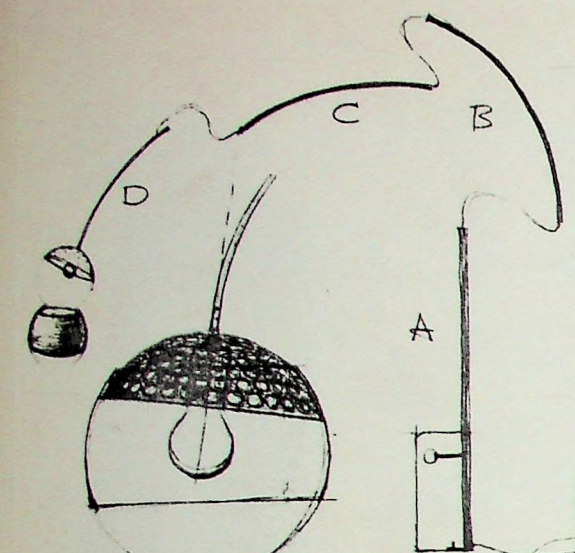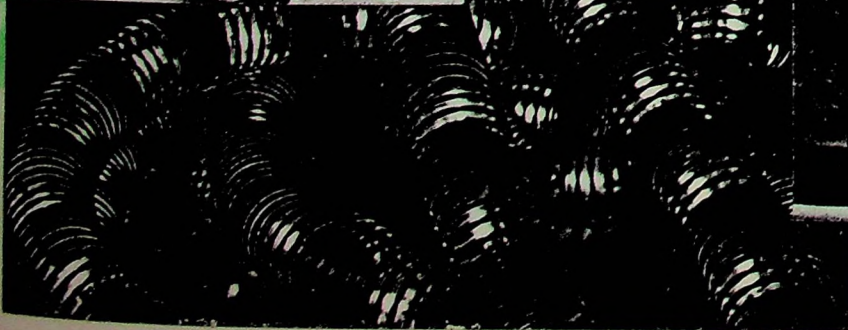
IV:40 (ABOVE & RIGHT) A & P.G. CASTIGLIONI: 'ARCO' FLOOR LAMP: 1962: FLOS

IV:43 (BELOW) A. CASTIGLIONI: PRIMATE KNEELING BENCH: 1970: ZANOTTA

IV:41 (LEFT) A. & P.G. CASTIGLIONI: STEREO SET: 1964: BRIONVEGA

(BELOW) G. FRATTINI & LIVIO CASTIGLIONI: IV:42 BOALUM FLEXIBLE LAMP. 1969: ARTIMEDE

IV: (BELOW) MARI: SINGLE
44 FLOWER VASES: 1961 DANESE

IV: (BELOW) MARI:
45 REVERSIBLE VASE:
1969: DANESE
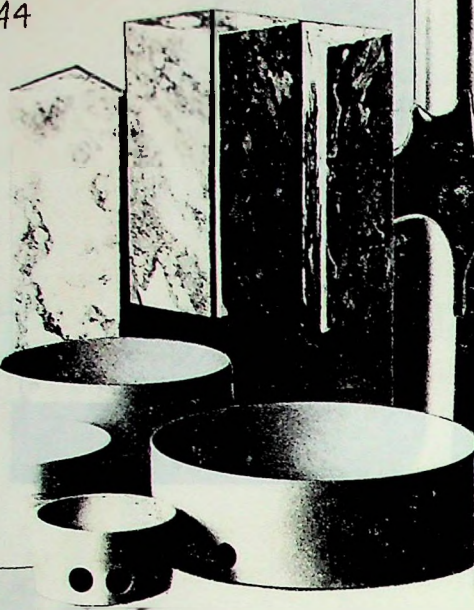
IV: (ABOVE) MARI: MELAMINE TABLE
47 BOWLS: 1969: DANESE

IV: (ABOVE) MARI: BAMBÙ
46 VASES: 1968: DANESE

IV: (BELOW) COLOMBO: 'ELDA'
49 ARMCHAIR: 1965:

IV: (BELOW) COLOMBO: 'SPIDER'
48 LAMP: 1965: O-LUCE
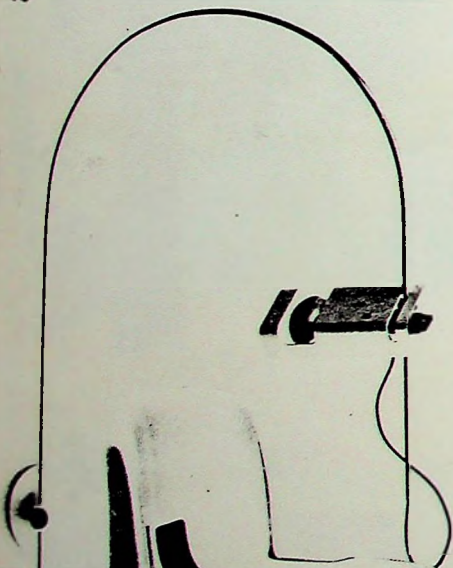
IV: (BELOW) COLOMBO:
50 PLYWOOD CHAIR:
1965: KARTELL
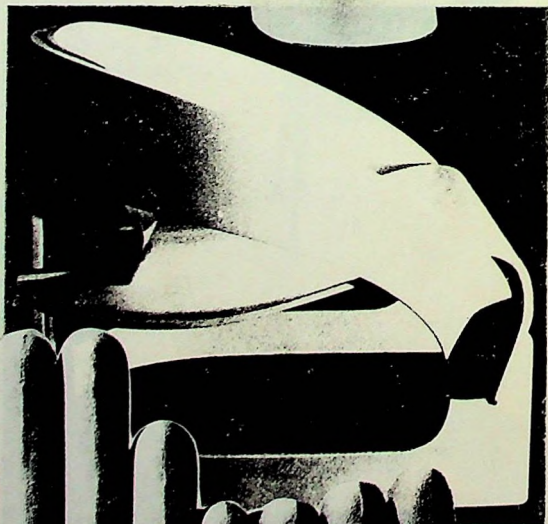
IV: (RIGHT)
51 COLOMBO:
STACKING
CHAIR:
1965:
KARTELL

IV: 52 (ABOVE) COLOMBO: ADDITIONAL SYSTEM:
1968: SORMANI

IV:53 (LEFT) MAGISTRETTI: 'VICARIO' ARMCHAIR IN REINFORCED POLYESTER: 1970: ARTEMIDE

IV:54 (LEFT) MAGISTRETTI: TABLE LAMP: 1965: ARTEMIDE

IV:55 (BELOW) FERRIERI: 'STAND-UP' SYSTEM: 1969: KARTELL

IV:56 (ABOVE) R. SAMBONET: 'CENTRE LINE' COOKING SET: 1964: SAMBONET

IV:57 (ABOVE) L. & M. VIGNELLI: STACKING SERVICE: 1964: HELLER: G.C. AWARD 1964

IV:58 (RIGHT) SARFATTI: TABLE LAMP: 1966: ARTELUCE

IV:59 (RIGHT) GREGOTTI, MENEGHETTI, STOPPINO: CAVOUR ARMCHAIR: 1960: AZUCENA

IV:60 (BELOW) MENGHI: SAFARI CHAIR: '60's: ZANOTTA

IV:61 (RIGHT) BELLINI: TCV 250 VIDEO CONSOLE: 1965: OLIVETTI

IV:62 (BELOW) BELLINI: LOGOS 270 DATA PROCESSOR: 1970: OLIVETTI

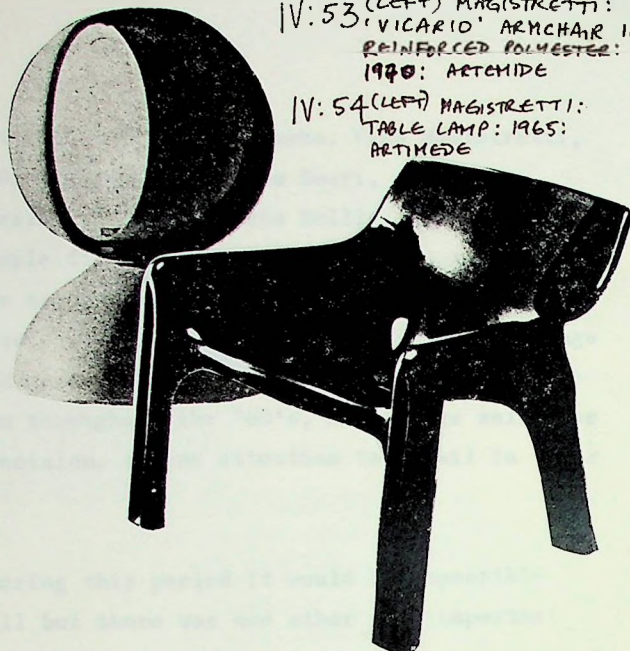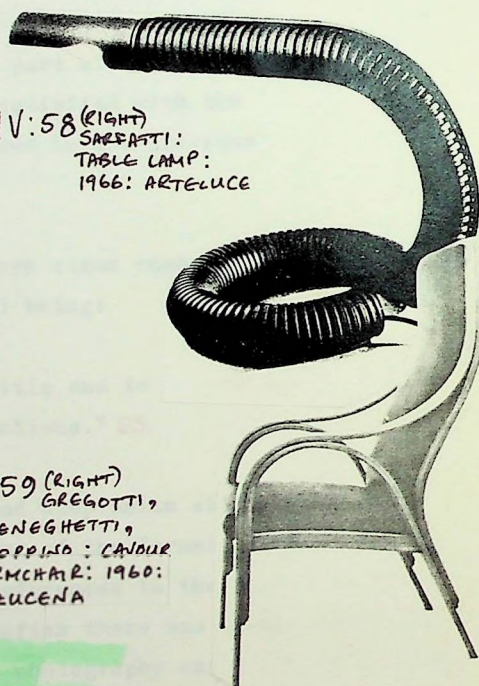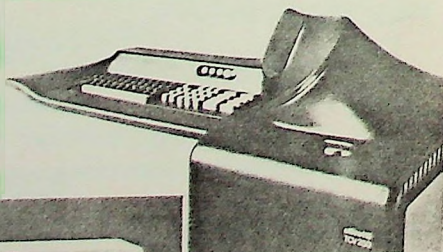There were plenty of others around at the time: Joe Colombo, Vico Magistretti, Gae Aulenti, Tobia and Afra Scarpa, Giotto Stoppino, Cino Boeri, Gianfranco Frattini, Sergio Asti, Massimo Vignelli, Mario Bellini, and others. Colombo produced some beautifully simple flexible units along with some lighting, (fig. IV:48-52), and is regarded by some as the figure who epitomised early '60's Italian aesthetics, his objects not self-expressive but using their surroundings to complete the aesthetic picture. Magistretti was another to uphold the 'cool, clean' image of Italian design throughout the '60's, his design solutions always displaying an exactness, a precision, a fine attention to detail in their elegant solutions, (fig. IV:53,54).

There were so many notable designs during this period it would be impossible in this discussion to examine them all but there was one other very important happening of the decade:

"the rejection of the immediate past on the part of a small group
of young architect-designers, who were dissatisfied with the
elitist definition of design that had evolved in the previous
decade." 22.

Hence the 'Anti-Design' movement began. There were clear connections between it, Neo-Dada and Conceptual Art, the intention in all being:

"to make art that functioned as it's own critic and to bypass
traditional media and tired artistic conventions." 23.

The work was characterised by the use of irony and utopianism with a deliberate exploitation of kitsch and eclecticism "as a way out of the formal purism of Functionalism". 24. There were a lot of nostalgic references to the '20's and '30's, with an unashamed mixture of the two, and quite often there was no actual design work, with alternative media being used, usually photography and the written word. These use a hypothetical design problem to express their theories basically maintaining that no one is going to fulfill their design ideas anyway so why bother? They attempt to change this beginning at a political and social level, (fig. IV:63-67):

"The designer..... is no longer the artist who helps us to make
our homes beautiful, because they will never be beautiful,

IV:65 (RIGHT)
P. PASCALI:
RECONSTRUCTION OF
THE DINOSAUR:
1966-67

IV:64 (ABOVE)
ARCHIZOOM:
MIES ARMCHAIR:
1969: POLTRONOVA

IV:63 (ABOVE) CLAES OLDENBURG
(AMERICAN) SOFT SCULPTURE:
'SOFT DRAINPIPE': 60's

(BELOW) UFO GROUP: OVERSIZED
TEMPLE-TABLE ON COLUMNS, PLEXIGLASS
IV:66 LAMP & RAT-EATING TABLE:
1969
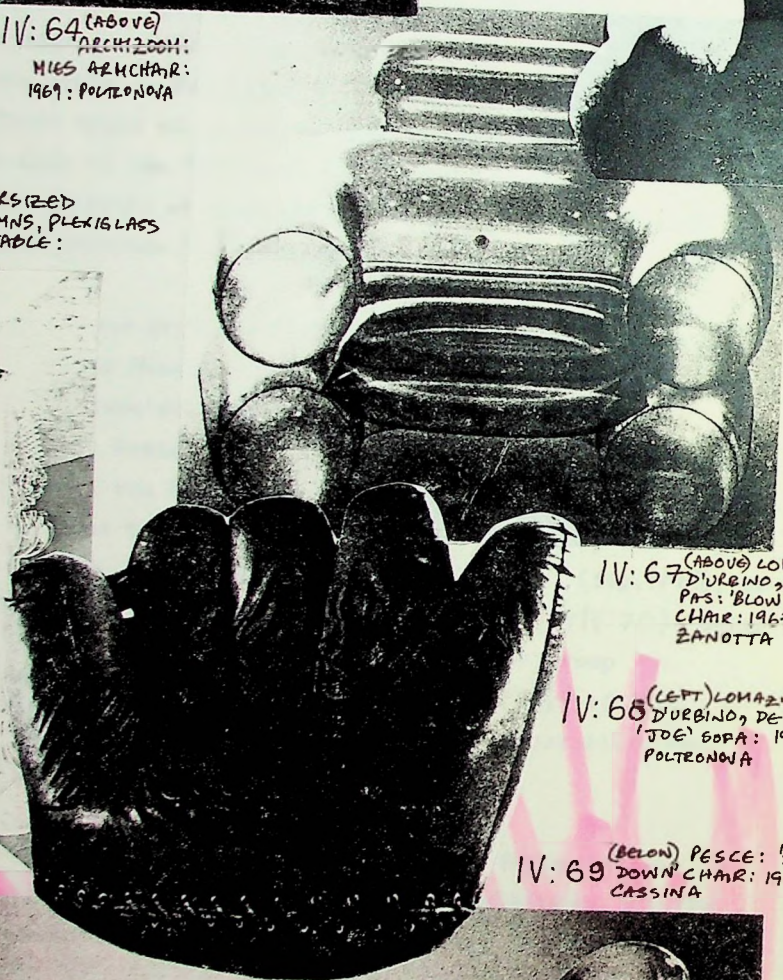
IV:67 (ABOVE) LOMAZZI,
D'URBINO, DE
PAS: 'BLOW'
CHAIR: 1967:
ZANOTTA

IV:68 (LEFT) LOMAZZI,
D'URBINO, DE PAS:
'JOE' SOFA: 1970:
POLTRONOVA

IV:69 (BELOW) PESCE: 'SIT
DOWN' CHAIR: 1975:
CASSINA

but the individual who moves on a dialectical as well as
formal plane and stimulates behavioural patterns which will
contribute to full awareness, which is the sole premise
required for a new equilibrium of values and finally for
the evolution, or, if you will, the recovery of man himself." 25.

These designers refused to work for the system that 'produces more to consume
more'. They used exaggerated shapes and sizes and eccentric forms, so that the
product lost all credibility, thus questioning the credibility of design. They
produced small, deluxe objects, expensive though perhaps only made of paper,
or endowed items with a magical, fairy-tale quality - 'Alice through the
Looking Glass'. All were snubs to Formalism and Rationalism, which were by now
just about finished. These types of questions were not merely restricted to
design - we can perhaps look at the "hippies" - but were being asked in all areas
of life. They were characteristic of a period in Western culture where the youth
had inherited the post-war problems of their parents.

There were a lot of designers and groups following these theories; the Danese
group (of which Enzo Mari, Bruno Munari and Van Onck were members), UFO group,
Archizoom, Superstudio, Paolo Lomazzi, Donato D'Urbino, Jonathan De Pas,
Casare Casati, Emanuele Ponzio, Gaetano Pesce, Piero Gilardi, Giuseppe Raimondi,
Gino Marotta, Gruppo Stru, Hans von Klier and, of course, Sottsass, (fig. W: 68-72).
All these groups and artists had their own individualistic ways of presenting
their ideas, from the 'Joe' sofa of Lomazzi, D'Urbino and De Pas, (fig. IV:68), to
the writings of groups such as Superstudio and Gruppo Strum, (fig. IV:70), owing
a lot of their initial inspiration to the English architectural group
'Archigram' with their utopian graphic visions e.g. "Plug-in-City" of 1964
where science-fiction is used to show a future city in which flexibility and
expendability are the norm, (fig. IV:74).

Because of the non-capitalistic, non-profit-making nature of these groups,
their distribution was limited and they relied heavily on exhibitions and the
written media for their publicity. 'Casabella' and 'IN' magazines were devoted
to the cause and the groups organised themselves into exhibitions. Archizoom
and Superstudio had been formed in 1966 and in the same year Archizoom organised
the first exhibition of Superarchitectura which was held in Pistoria.

IV:70 (BELOW & RIGHT)
SUPERSTUDIO: ENVIRONMENT FOR 'ITALY: THE
NEW DOMESTIC LANDSCAPE' EXHIBITION: 1972
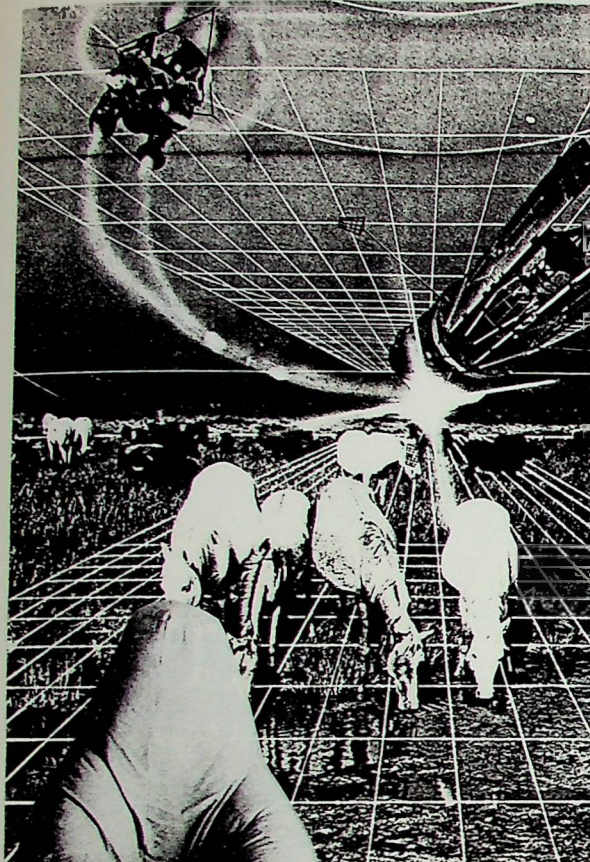
The proposed microevent is a critical reappraisal of the possibilities of life without objects. It is a reconsideration of the relations between the process of design and the environment through an alternative model of existence, rendered visible by a series of symbolic images. The microenvironment is like a room with walls; the floor and ceiling are covered with black felt; thin luminescent lines make the corner angles stand out clearly.

A cube about six feet wide is placed in the center on a platform about sixteen inches high. All the walls of the cube, except the one facing the entrance, are made of polarized mirrors, so that the model inside becomes clearer and clearer as we move to the end of the room. This model, repeated to infinity by the mirrors, is a square plate of chequered laminated plastic, with a little 'machine' out of which come various terminals. One of the terminals is connected to a TV screen, which transmits a three-minute movie, a documentary on the model seen in various natural and work situations. The sound-track gives information about the original concepts for the model. Meteorological events will be projected on the ceiling: sunrise, sun, clouds, storm, sunset, night.

The lighting of the cube varies according to the phenomena projected. The rest of the room is permanently plunged in darkness.

Specific Considerations

In this exhibition, we present the model of a mental attitude. This is not a three-dimensional model of a reality that can be given concrete form by a mere transposition of scale, but a visual rendition of a critical attitude toward (or a hope for) the activity of designing, understood as philosophical speculation, as a means to knowledge, as critical existence.

Design should be considered as a 'cross-discipline,' for it no longer has the function of rendering our requirements more complex through creating a new artificial panorama between man and environment. By finding a connection between data taken from the various humanistic and scientific disciplines (from the technique of body control to philosophy, the disciplines of logic and medicine, to bionomics, geography, etc.), we can visualize an image-guide: the final attempt of design to act as the 'projection' of a society no longer based on work (and on power and violence, which are connected with this), but an unalienated human relationship.

In this exhibition, we present an alternative model for life on earth.

We can imagine a network of energy and information extending to every properly inhabitable area. Life without work and a new 'potentialized' humanity are made possible by such a network. (In the model, this network is represented by a Cartesian 'squared' surface, which is of course to be understood not only in the physical sense, but as a visual-verbal metaphor for an ordered and rational distribution of resources.)
The network of energy can assume different forms.
The first is a linear development.
The others include different planimetrical developments, with the possibility of covering different, and gradually increasing, parts of the habitable areas. The configuration (typology) of the environment depends solely on the percentage of area covered, analogous to the way in which we distinguish a street from a town, a town from a city.

IV:71 (LEFT) GATTI,
PAOLINI, TEODORO:
'SACCO' CHAIR: 1969:
ZANOTTA
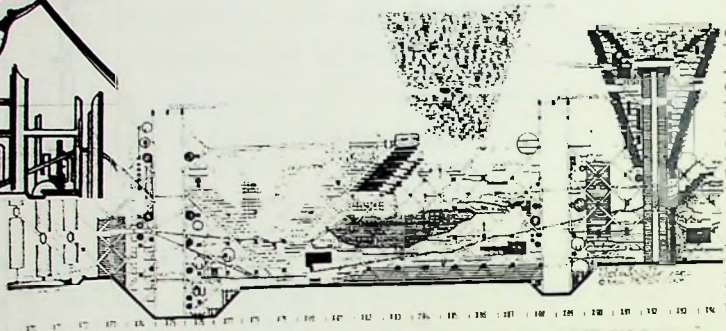
IV:72 (RIGHT)
PESCE:
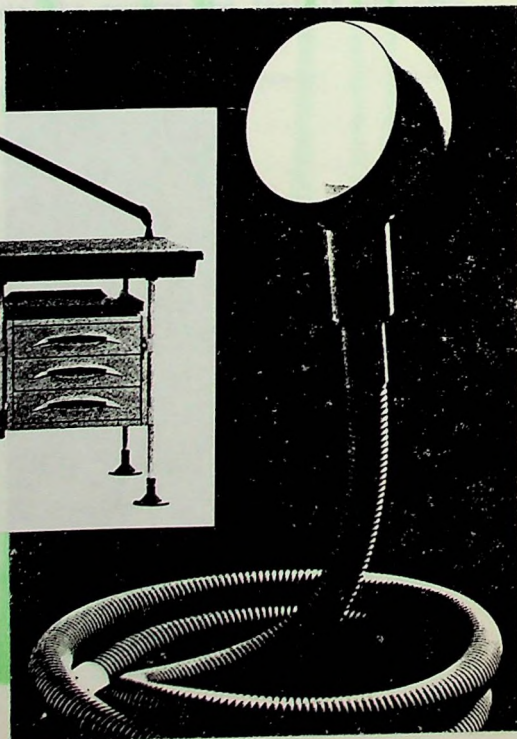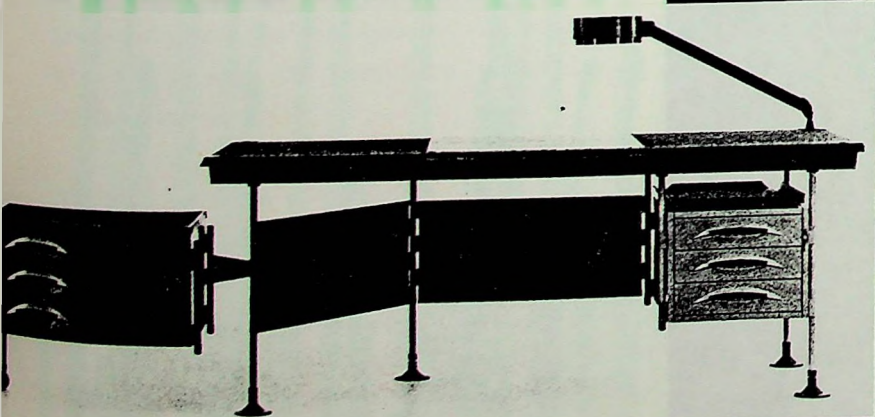'MOLOCH' FLOOR
LAMP: 1972
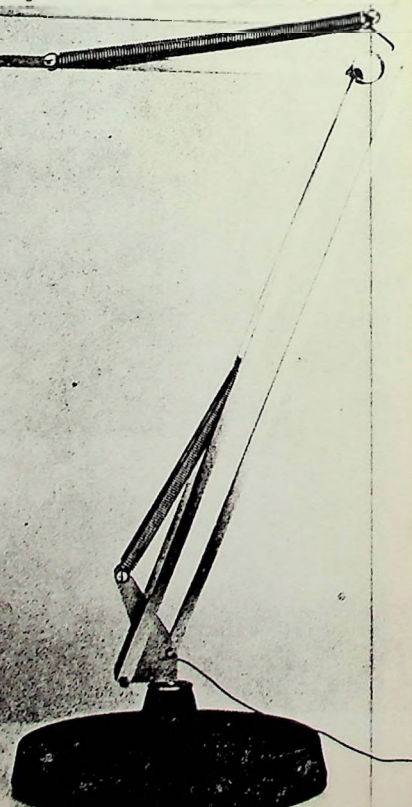
AMAZING ARCHIGRAM 4

ZOOM

IV: 73 (LEFT) ARCHIGRAM 4: COVER
ILLUSTRATION: 1964

IV: 74 (BELOW) ARCHIGRAM:
'PLUG-IN-CITY': 1964

IV: 76 (BELOW) ISAO HOSOE:
HEBI LAMP: 1969: VALENTI

IV: 75 (BELOW)
BBPR FIRM: 'SERIE SPAZIO' OFFICE
FURNITURE: 1961: OLIVETTI

The same group put on the second Superarchitectura exhibition in Modena the following year, were responsible for the 'Centre for Electric Conspiracy' at the XIV Triennale and set up 'No-Stop City', another exhibition for radical architecture in 1970. Their designs had a Dadaist quality, full of references to Art Deco and Pop culture, emphasising their belief in design as a ritualistic, anthropocentric act. Superstudio took a more intellectual and conceptual approach, producing numerous architectural schemes which consisted of "networks of energy and communication" and, together with Gruppo 9999, they estabilished the Separate School for Expanded Conceptual Architecture in 1970. Gaetano Pesce is notable also in his approach in which he was completely different, using distortion to show the impossibility of man relating to object until consumption is no longer the sole mediating factor.

But at that time, consumption was of ever increasing importance. We see the birth of a new society: the throw away society. According to post-war critics such as Reyner Banham, the accelerated technology demanded an equally transient aesthetic, there was no longer room for the sterility of Functionalism in a world where people liked the fast-moving, gaudy attractions of places like Las Vegas. So we see work like that of Sottsass:

   "The message is not in the quantity of objects, or in their design,
    but in communication." 26.

He employs vivid colours, shapes which stimulate the memory and tactile surfaces, going beyond pure aesthetics to the emotions, was this what 'kitsch' meant? An emotional design rather than a functional one? His work was definitely interesting and, unlike some of the other Anti-Designers, he applied his theories to real life e.g. the Valentine typewriter, the Elea 9003 computer, the Furniture for Poltronova.

The '60's had been a turbulent time with a lot of new ideas coming through and a lot of settling of old ones. There was an exaggerated multiplication of new firms, new lines in furniture appeared, new technology abounded. The periodical 'Ottagono' was founded. There were furniture fairs - 'La Casa abitata' in Florence. Womens magazines began to take interest in domestic products - 'Vogue' began issuing a special edition about the home - while 'Domus' tried desperately to keep it's head above water and differentiate it's own role from those of the 'less artistic' publications. The same contradictions existed in

industry: most Italian designers practiced their profession outside of the
production system, very few were engaged as general consultant to or part-time
employee of a business enterprise and it was almost unheard of for a firm to
have it's own qualified designing office. Companies tended to copy what was
already successful, or else trip over a brilliant new idea on their own, leaving
the industrial designer still on the outside in general.

Regardless of all this, by the start of the '70's, Italian design occupied the
same position on the world market as Scandinavian design had in the '50's.
Indeed, Italian design flourished mainly because of it's success on that market
rather than within Italy itself. Areas of private consumption - those of the
fastest turnover - were concentrated upon to the loss of the public services
sector, distribution was still bad and southern regions underdeveloped, but
Italian products were recognised world-wide for their style and quality:

> "Italian design in the past few years has simultaneously both enjoyed great
> popularity and been severely criticised. No one can deny that it offers
> a picture of felicitous forms that, thanks to it's lively imagination,
> can with fertile inventiveness jump heedlessly over the actual
> difficulties of production methods that are often merely improvised.
> On the other hand, Italian design often clearly shows the worst
> defects of our national character: improvisation, superficiality,
> a weakness in respect to fashion, a passion for innovation at all
> costs." 27.

'70's – Stalemate?

"I just started to think that if there was any point in designing
objects, it was to be found in helping people to live somehow, I
mean in helping people to somehow recognise and free themselves,
I mean that if there was a point in designing objects, it could
only be found in achieving a kind of therapeutic action, handing
over to the objects the function of stimulating the perception
of one's own adventures." 28.

In 1970, the A.D.I. sponsored a symposium to discuss the principle design-related
theories of the time. Participants included Roberto Guiducci, Maldonado,
Spadolini, Cribini and Gregotti who discussed topics such as the necessity to
transform industrial society into a society of services, the possibility of
design being used in general environmental studies, the inclusion of design
within university reform, systems analysis and the design situation at the time:

"In general, the meeting presented the usual depressing spectacle of ideas
that become absorbed at a theoretical level before there is any
possibility for concrete experimentation. Once again we see a
discipline pursuing a direction that might finally lead to carefully
thought-out reflections and productive advances, while on the other
hand, there are the needs of a country in which many internal
imbalances are still unresolved: and an exchange between the two
types of experience seems virtually impossible in practice." 29.

The old problem of good theories seldom accompanied by any practical work. This
was slowly beginning to change however, especially in the ideas of more radical
designers, where they were taking their work further than the purely superficial
aesthetic approach, for example the work of designers such as Joe Colombo and
Mario Bellini, (fig. $V: 1-2$). This was quite evident in the first big exhibition
of Italian design held outside the country. It was entitled
'Italy: The New Domestic Landscape', was held at the Museum of Modern Art in
New York and was organised by Emilio Ambasz, curator of design at the Museum.
It was an ambitious project, showing design development in Italy over the previous
10 years with contemporary ideas expressed in a series of designs by contemporary
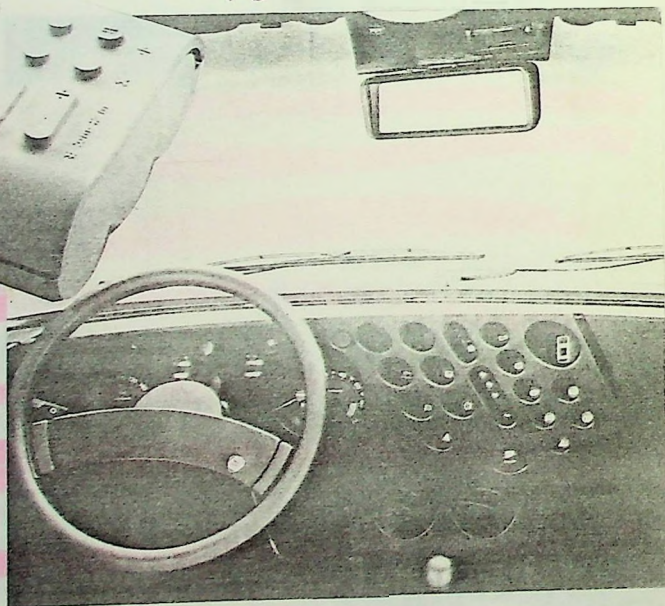designers, (fig. $V: 7-10$).
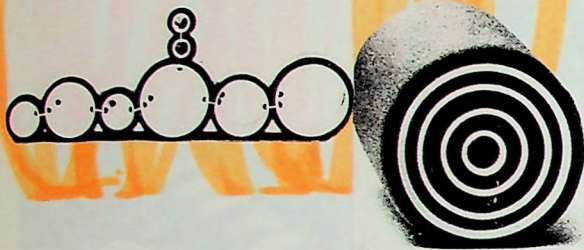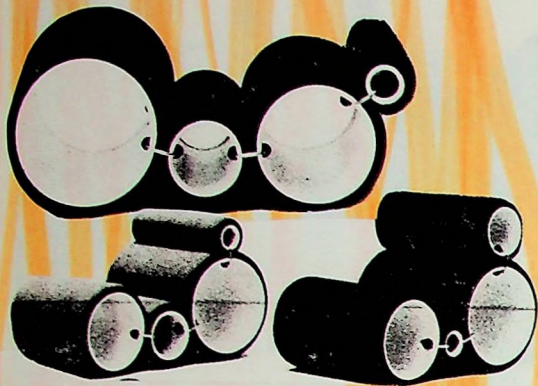
IV:1 (ABOVE) COLOMBO: 'ADDITIONAL
SYSTEM' : 1968 : SORMANI
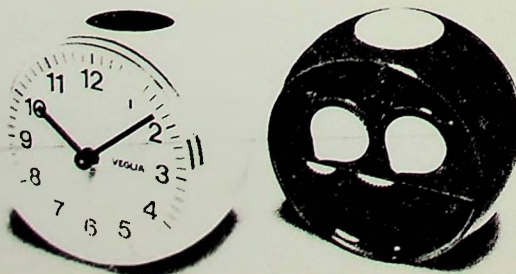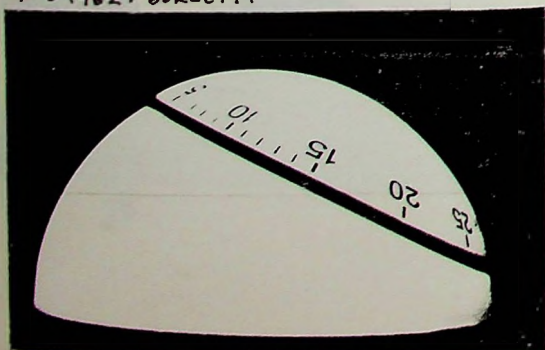
V:2 (LEFT) COLOMBO: TUBE CHAIR:
1970 : FLEXIFORM
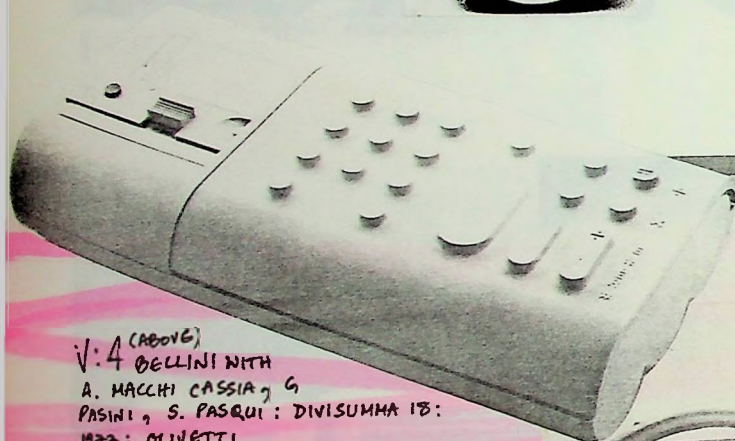
V:3 (BELOW) BELLINI: DASHBOARD,
LANCIA BETA: 1977: LANCIA

V:4 (ABOVE)
BELLINI WITH
A. MACCHI CASSIA, G
PASINI, S. PASQUI : DIVISUMMA 18:
1973: OLIVETTI

V:5 (BELOW, RIGHT) BONETTO:
'SFERICLOCK' ALARM CLOCK:
1963: VEGLIA BORLETTI

V:6 (BELOW) BONETTO: MINUTE-COUNTER:
1962: BORLETTI
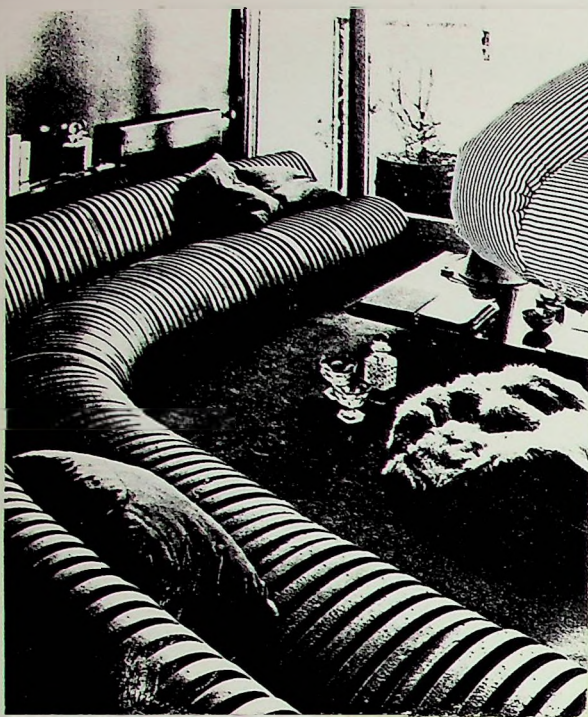
V:7 (ABOVE) CINI BOERI: SERPENTONE:
V:7 1971: ARFLEX

V:9 (BELOW) S. ASTI: COLLINA VASE:
1968: CEDIT FOR GAVINA

V:8 (ABOVE) ALESSANDRO BECCHI:
ANFIBIO 3-POSITION COUCH:
1971: GIOVANNETTI

V:10 (BELOW & BOTTOM) SEBASTIANO
MATTA: COMBINABLE SEATS SYSTEM:
1966: GAVINA

V:12 (LEFT & BELOW) PESCE'S SUBTERRANGAN CITY: 1972

V:11 (LEFT) SOTTSASS' MODULAR LIVING SYSTEM: 1972
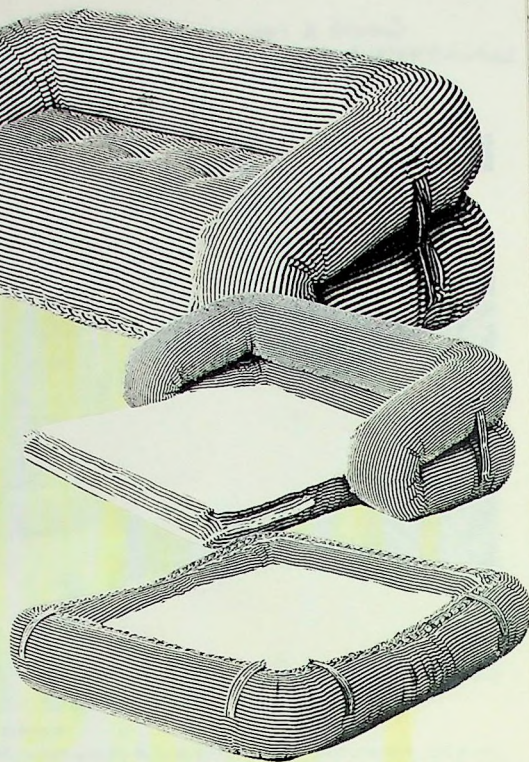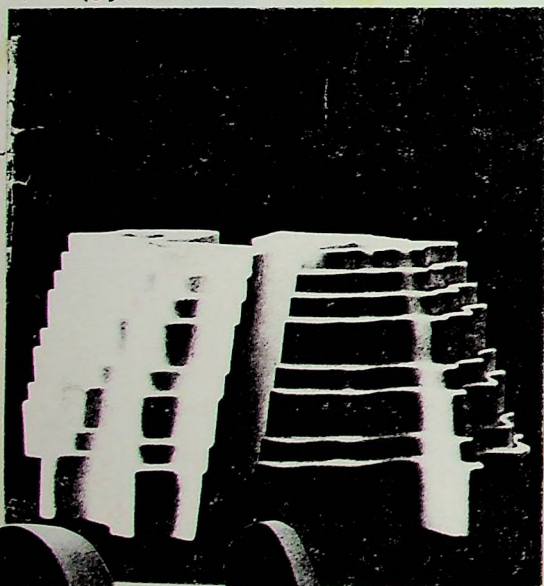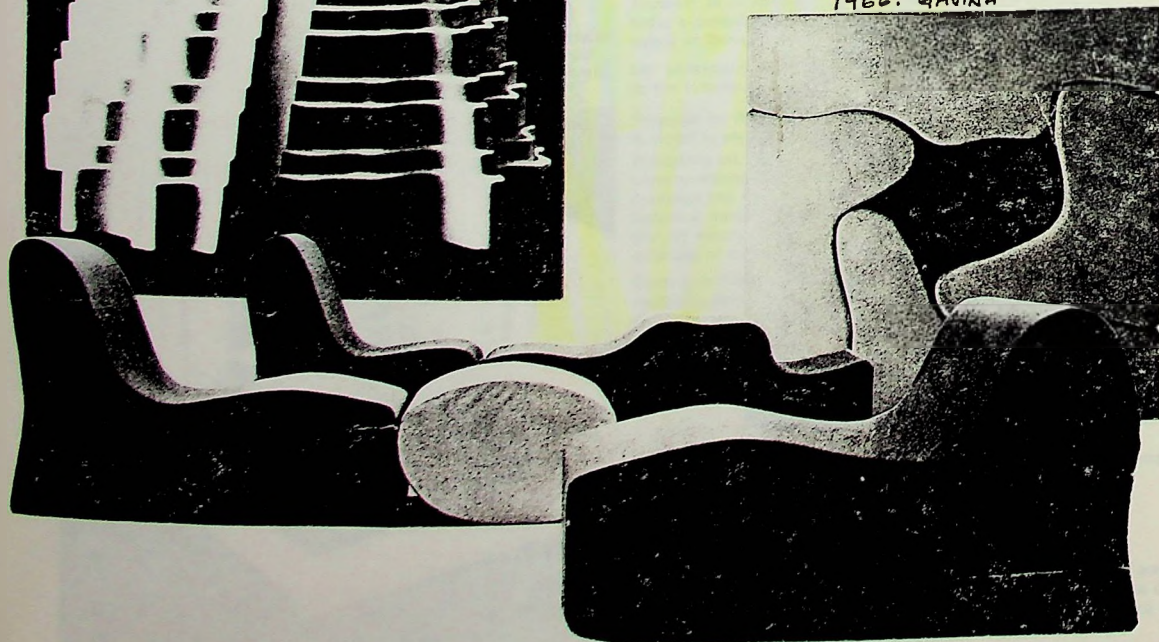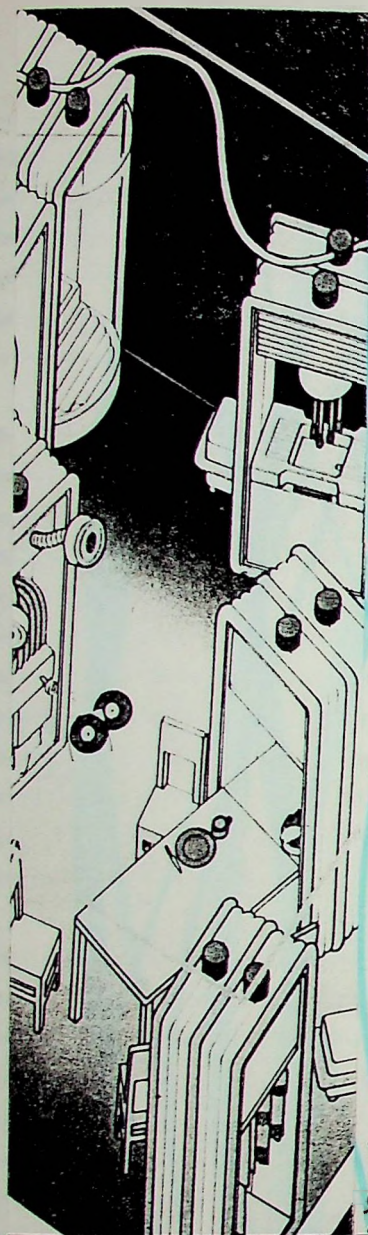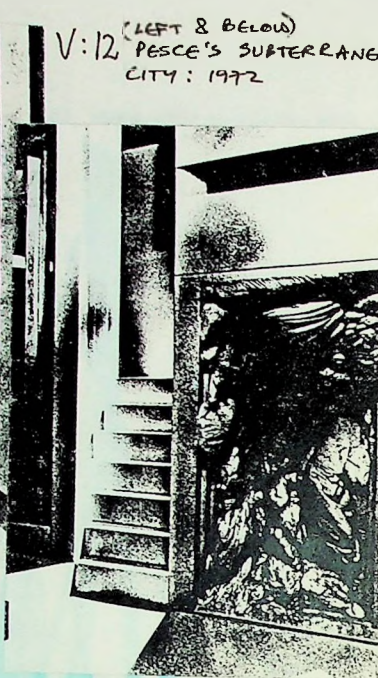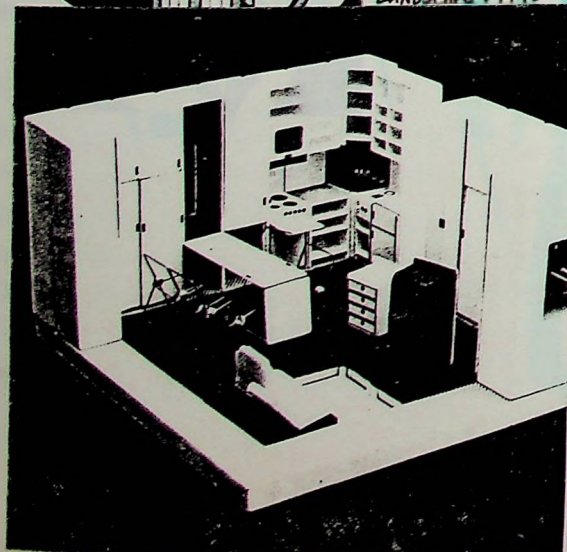
V:13 (RIGHT) MARI'S PROPOSAL: 1972

V:14 (BELOW) GIANANTONIO MARI: WINNER OF COMPETITION: ITALY: THE NEW DOMESTIC LANDSCAPE: 1972

Foreword

All human activity is, first and foremost, communication. We must clarify whether the 'communications' inherent in the two parts into which the exhibition 'Italy: The New Domestic Landscape' is divided are the same, or different. The Museum has used two different criteria in organizing these sections. In one, it has made a critical selection of objects produced by Italian designers in the past ten years. For the other, it has invited individual designers or groups to present their 'philosophies' in the form of environments.

But, if these 'philosophies' are identical with those implicit in the other section of the exhibition, their mise-en-scene is redundant. If, on the other hand, they differ, it is illusory to think that the differences concerning the socioeconomic aspects of design (since this is all that can be in question) can be communicated scenographically. In fact, within the context of an exhibition of this kind, this scenography can find backing for its execution only within the limits of communicating superstructural aspects to the visitor, or at any rate by using an experimental, and hence obscure, language.

That is why I have refused to participate directly in this section. (I have, however, allowed some objects designed by me, and chosen by the Museum, to be included in the second part of the exhibition; for, in today's competitive climate, the profession to which I belong must rely solely on formal quality for its patronage, and hence for its survival.)

My 'philosophy,' however, can be more clearly and usefully explained in the following

Proposal for Behavior
directed to my colleagues:

Producing art, and the philosophy related to it, are aspects of communication among mankind. More specifically, they concern research into the appropriateness of modes of language in their historical development. The usefulness of this research lies in the fact that, by means of new models, it proclaims (or should proclaim) the sclerosis of current communications.

Communication is the most important factor in social relations and their evolution. Social evolution today can be determined solely by the class struggle. Communication is the determining element in the class struggle. (If there is a ruling class and a subordinate class, it is not only because the former has more guns than the latter, but because a large part of the subordinate class is still not clearly aware of the implications of its own conditioning; in short, there has been no communication.) Any revolutionary activity, therefore, is above all a matter of communication. But while, on the one hand, it is clear in what direction the collective force is moving to achieve a new order, it is less clear what strategic choices are required if truly revolutionary results are to be brought about quickly.

It is just this lack of clarity that accounts for the diversification of current ideological and political research, and hence of related communications.

Political research must inevitably be recognized as being far and away more urgent than any other kind of investigation, precisely because it serves to determine the conditions under which it might be possible — for everyone — to achieve everything else.

In order to bring the exhibition right up to the present and show the variety of ideas going around the country at the time, the Museum asked a number of Italy's top designers to research a particular design problem, allowing them complete freedom of expression in their solutions. The designers invited to attempt the project were Ettore Sottsass Jr., Gae Aulenti, Joe Colombo, Alberto Rosselli, Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper, Mario Bellini, Gaetano Pesce, Ugo La Pietra, Archizoom, Superstudio, Gruppo Strum and Enzo Mari.

The brief to these designers was to produce a microenvironment, a complete system for living, which they did, ranging from Sottsass' living unit, (fig. V:11), to Pesce's subterranean city, (fig. V:12), to Mari's written proposal, (fig. V:13), the same project being the basis for a competition open to designers under the age of 35, allowing them to express their views, (fig. V:14). The brief was very specific and the results showed the preoccupation with radical designers to move away from the creation of single objects to that of complete environments. Design was moving onto a larger plane, looking more deeply into the whole design process. All Italy's best known names were represented at the exhibition and it was clear from the quality, quantity and, quite often, morality of the work displayed, the enormous contribution Italy had made to post-war international design.

Transport remained an area of interest and expertise: there was a new Pullman bus in 1977, (fig. V:15); the highspeed magnetic leviation train, 1977, (fig. V:16); Pininfarina's research on the ideal aerodynamic shape up to 1978, (fig. V:17); Fiat's 'Jumbo tram' of 1975, (fig. V:18); gliders, (fig. V:19); and Giorgio Giugiaro. The latter was a designer, heading his own company 'Italdesign', who did quite a lot of work on automobile design. This included a commission to develop a new look for Volkswagen in the early part of the decade. The result was the VW Golf, (fig. V:20), which was to be widely copied in later years.

In regard to product design of the '70's, theoretically it cannot be said of it that it changed much since the late '60's. Technically it had advanced, materials and processes had become more sophisticated, but visually it had the same clean, clinical look with very little change from the style the Italians had found so successful on the world market in the previous decade. Indeed, by the end of the '70's, Italian design had asserted itself very strongly on that market with the big designers of the previous decade continuing to produce high quality, 'stylish' products for the industrialists who, by now, had clearly seen what design could
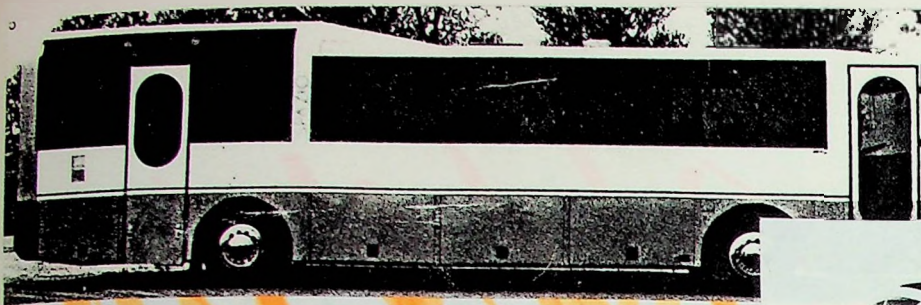
V:15 (LEFT) DALMOIRAGH BARRESE, MOSOE, TORRICELLI, LOCATELLI : PULLMA BUS : 1977 : INVECO

V:16 (BELOW) NEUMEISTER DESIGN : HIGHSPEED MAGNETIC TRAIN : 197?
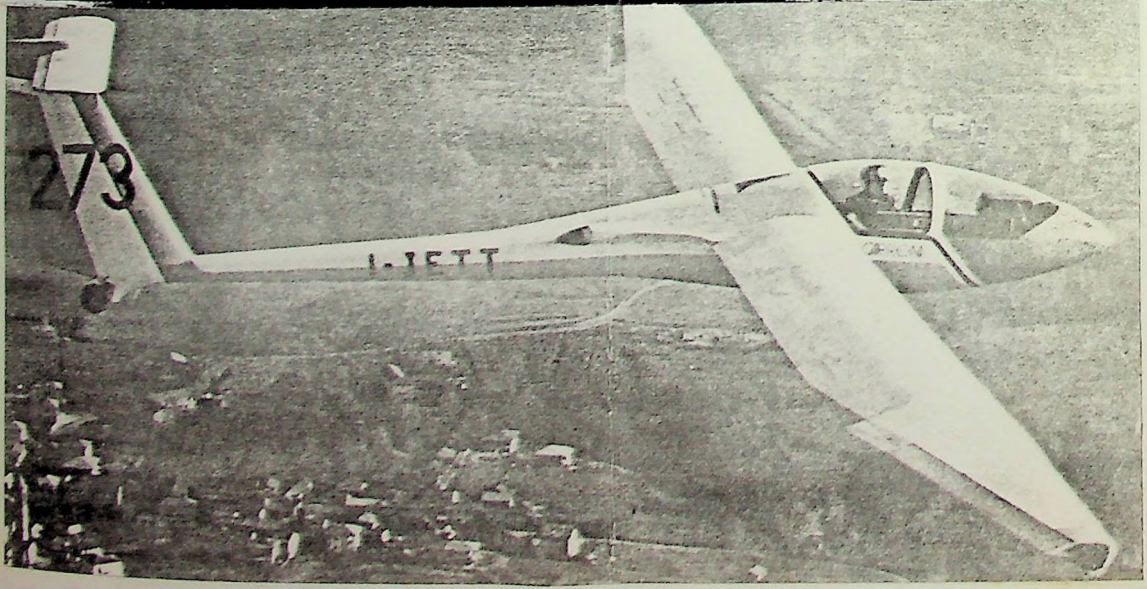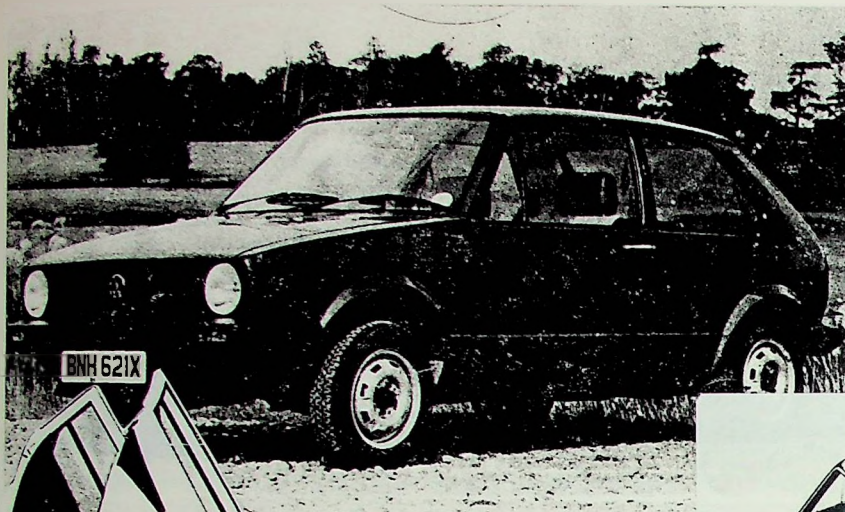
V:17 (LEFT) CENTRO RICERCHE PININFARINA : IDEAL AERODYNAMIC SHAPE : 1978
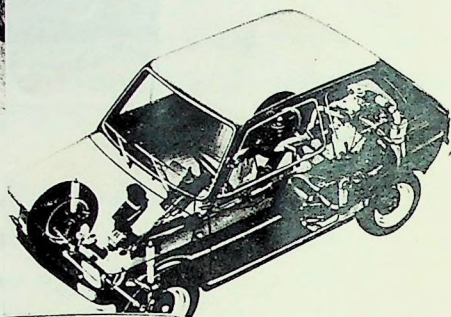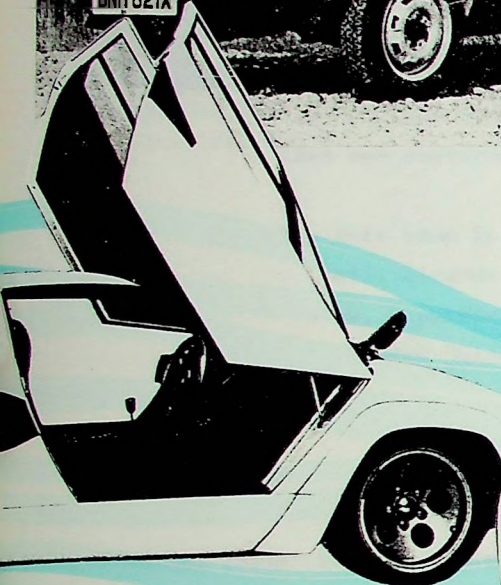
V:18 (BELOW) KOENIG, SEGONI : JUMBO TRAM : 197? FIAT/OM

V:19 (BOTTOM) FERRARIN & SONZIO : (GLIDER) CALIF AZ ISJ : 1974-75 : CAPRON VIZZOLA
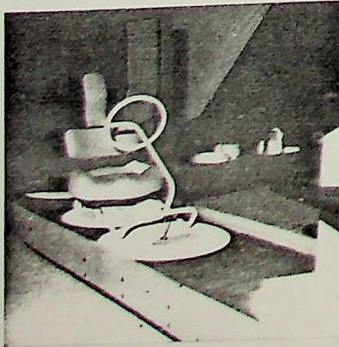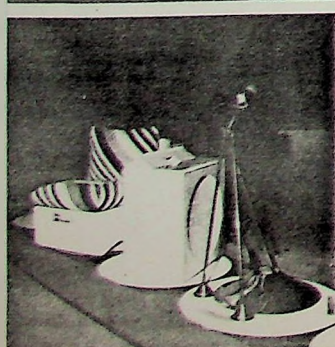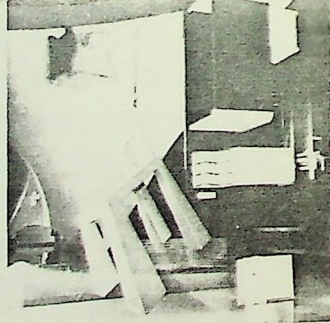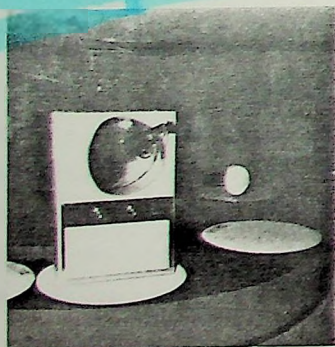
V:20 (LEFT) GIUGIARO: VW GOLF: 1970's

V:21 (BELOW) FIAT 126: 1972

V:22 (ABOVE & LEFT) MODEL - COUNTACH LP500: 1972: LAMBORGHINI

V:23 (BELOW) SOME STANDS FROM 1974, XV TRIENNALE

do for sales; Magistretti worked for Cassina, Zanuso for Brionvega, Achille Castiglioni for Flos etc., (fig.V:24-30). Numerous design magazines provided the propaganda with their glossy back-up and in spite of continuing insecurities – economic, cultural, political, moral – design retained a position at the heart of Italian manufacturing, almost getting to the point that when a piece of product design emerged from the country, it was immediately praised as a masterpiece.

However, an abundance of leather, marble and black boxes at fairs and exhibitions was becoming somewhat tedious, culminating in the early closure of the XV Triennale of 1973. The Italians had succeeded and were now playing it safe.

The first reaction to this came in 1973 when many of the radical designers – e.g. Archizoom, Remo Buti, Ricardo Dalisi, Ugo La Pietra, Gruppo 9999, Pesce, Gianni Pettena, Sottsass, Superstudio, UFO group and Zziggurat – met in the Casabella offices and founded "Global Tools" which they explained as:

>   "A system of laboratories in Florence dedicated to prompting
>   the study and use of natural technical materials and their
>   relative behavioural characteristics. The object of
>   'Global Tools' is to stimulate free development of individual
>   creativity."

It was seen as an alternative to the architectural and design training available at the time and, as can be guessed, supported radical attitudes.

A second, and more consequential, reaction took place in 1976 when Alessandro Guerriero formed Studio Alchymia. This centre had as it's purpose to manufacture and sell innovative pieces which had up until then only existed in the imagination. Members of the late '60's radical groups soon joined, using it as a means to express their more radical concepts, for example Alessandro Mendini, Andrea Branzi (who used to be with Superstudio), Sottsass, and some new recruits e.g. Michele de Lucchi, Paola Navone and Daniele Puppa, (fig.V:31-32).

Mendini became the spokesman for Studio Alchymia, referring to the movement it was creating in design as 'Post-Radicalism' or 'Post Avant-Garde', making intell-ectual references to previous styles in design and claiming 'kitsch' as his source.

V:24 (BELOW) ZANUSO:
'MARCUSO' TABLE: 1971:
ZANOTTA: G.C. AWARD 1979
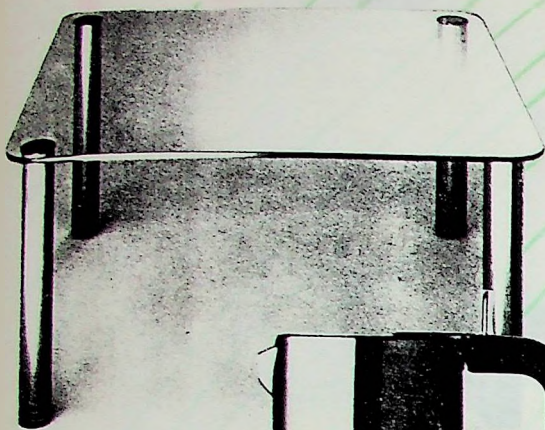
V:25 (BELOW)
P.DEGANELLO-
ARCHIZOOM:
ARMCHAIR AEO:
1973: CASSINA

V:26 (RIGHT)
SAPPER:
ESPRESSO
POT: 1978:
ALESSI:
G.C. AWARD,
1979
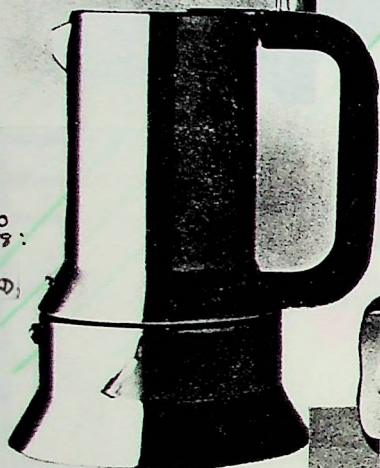
V:27 (BELOW) SOTTSASS,
KING, LECLERC,
SCAGHOLA, UMEDA,
YOUNG: OFFICE SYSTEM
FOR SUPPORTING MACHINERY: 1972: OLIVET

supporto per P.602

sistema P.602

P.602

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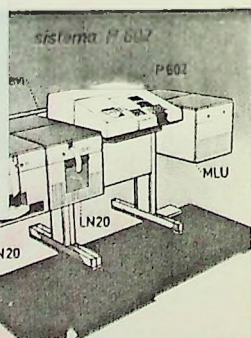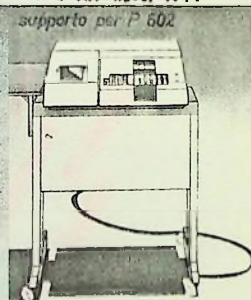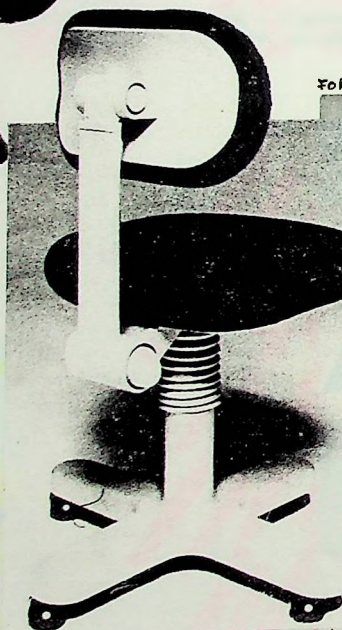
V:28 (ABOVE)
SOTTSASS:
SECRETARY'S
CHAIR: 1973

macchina-supporto

P.602 ANI

V:29 (ABOVE) SAPPER: 'TIZIO' LAMP:
1972: ARTEMIDE: G.C. AWARD, 1979

V:30 (BELOW) A.C. FERRIERI:
'OUTLINE' SYSTEM: 1979:
KARTELL: G.C. AWARD 1979
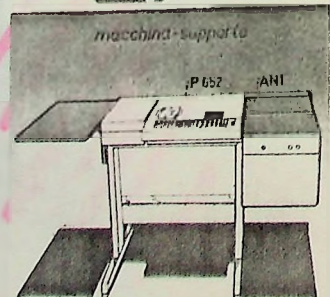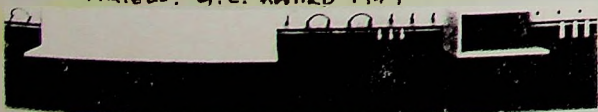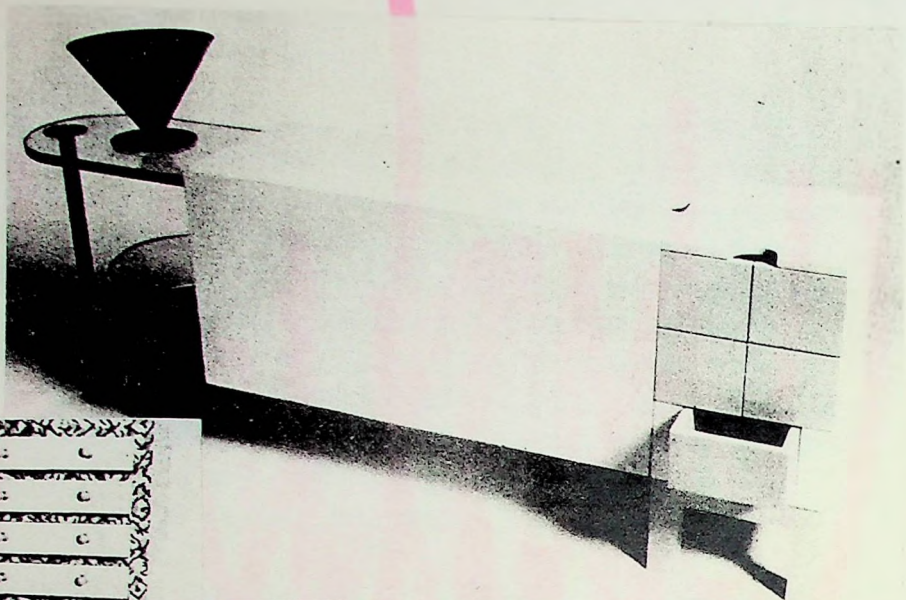
V: 31 (ABOVE)
ANDREA BRANZI: BUFFET: 1980
STUDIO ALCHYMIA
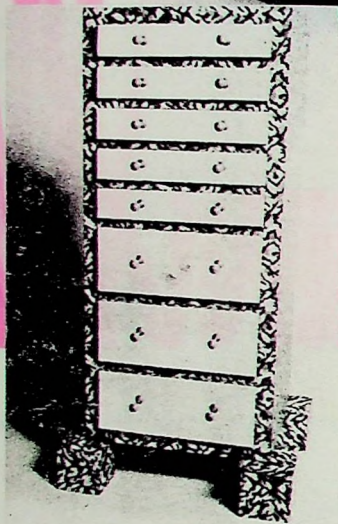
V: 32 (LEFT)
PAOLA NAVONE: CHEST OF
DRAWERS: STUDIO ALCHYMIA

V: 33 (RIGHT)
SOTTSASS:
CHAIR: STUDIO
ALCHYMIA

V: 34 (BELOW)
MENDINI:
'KANDISSI' CHAIR:
1980: BAUHAUS I
COLLECTION, STUDIO
ALCHYMIA
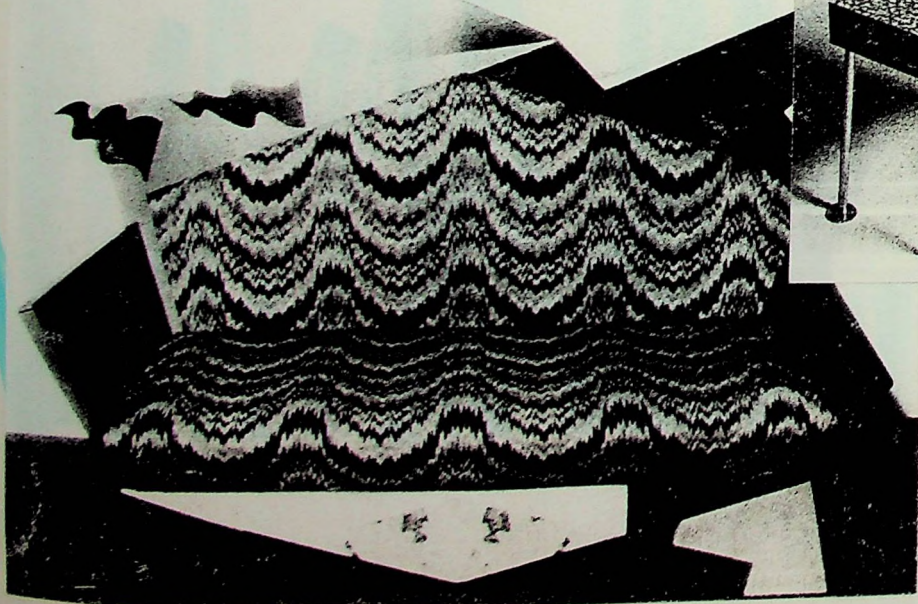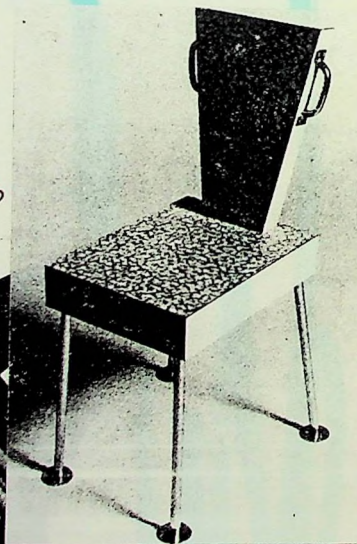
He produced two collections for the Studio: BauHaus I in 1979 and BauHaus 2 in the following year (Sottsass collaborating on the first). In these series', Mendini and his co-workers covered new ground exploring the aesthetics of the mass-environment and applying it's imagery as decoration. They used bizzare patterns, domestic materials (e.g. plastic laminates) and strange combinations of shapes to make up the work, (fig. V:34), drawing from sources such as fine art and strange objects from the '50's. Sottsass referred to the heroic '50's in his work also but not in the same vein of pessimism as Mendini used, instead he was optimistic about the use design could be put to. He used domestic textures and patterns with plastic laminates, creating a surreal quality in his work which inspired a lot of public reaction, (fig. V:33).

So, Studio Alchymia prompted a new direction in Italian design, or rather spurred an existing notion into the realms of possibility;

"Studio Alchymia has succeeded in reviving the possibility of an
'alternative' design movement in Italy." 30.

In the mid - '70's there was a distinct possibility that Italian design would become stagnant and would lose all it's credibility on the world market but, true to form, they have taken another chance, unafraid to explore another aesthetic perhaps more suitable to these changing times.

"I am a designer and want to design things. What else would
I do? Go fishing?" 31.

Half-way through a new decade and we look back upon the major happenings in
Italian design over the past four or five years. Differentiating the important
from the less so is difficult when the ideas haven't had time to mature, but
there are a few who stand out.

One of these is by a designer who put his name in the history books under the
VW Golf of the previous decade. His name is Giorgio Giugiaro and the project
was the Fiat Panda which Giugiaro regards as "the most amusing project I have
ever been given" in that it gave the final blow to the car as a status symbol,
(fig.VI:1-3). The project, launched in 1980, had been commissioned under a
tight and tricky brief with strict parameters concerning weight, cost and engine
size. Aesthetically, it was completely free with no restrictions on the finished
appearance of the project. The result was a car designed from the inside out,
around the driver and passengers, an intelligent solution rather than a luxurious
one, with plenty of interior space, adjustable seating....., maximum facilities
at minimum cost and maximum efficiency. It was a radical step in automobile
design, providing a new image for the modern 'convenience' of a car.

Meanwhile, within Studio Alchymia, Sottsass and Mendini entertained conflicting
philosophies on design: Mendini was pessimistic about the profession's ability
to change society while Sottsass was deeply committed to using creativity as a
social force. This resulted in a rift between the two with Sottsass breaking
away from Studio Alchymia. Then, in the late summer of 1981, a new group emerged,
'Memphis', headed by Sottsass, based in Milan and arousing widespread interest
and astonishment. In it's aims it was similar to Studio Alchymia i.e. it
produced unconventional work that would otherwise never have materialised. It
differed in other respects however; it had no allusions to intellectualism but
appealed to the most basic of senses - sight and touch. Use is made of both
ancient civilisations and 'pop' culture, vivid colour and decoration, the use of
industrial materials and a concern for the functional aspects. Memphis opened as
a type of art gallery, selling avant-garde furniture, with each piece handmade
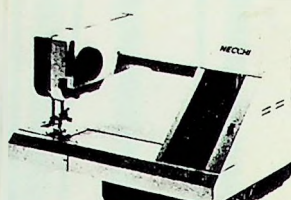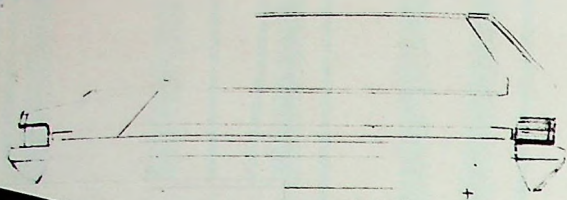
VI:1 (ABOVE) GIUGIARO: FIRST CONCEPT FOR PANDA

VI:2 (LEFT) GIUGIARO: PANDA: 1980: FIAT

VI:3 (BELOW) 'PANDA NERO' UNREALISED CONCEPT FOR SPORTS VERSION

VI:4 (ABOVE) GIUGIARO: LOGICA SEWING MACHINE: 1982: NECCHI

VI:5 (BELOW) 'CAPSULA' CONCEPT UAL RESEARCH PROMOTED BY ITAL DESIGN
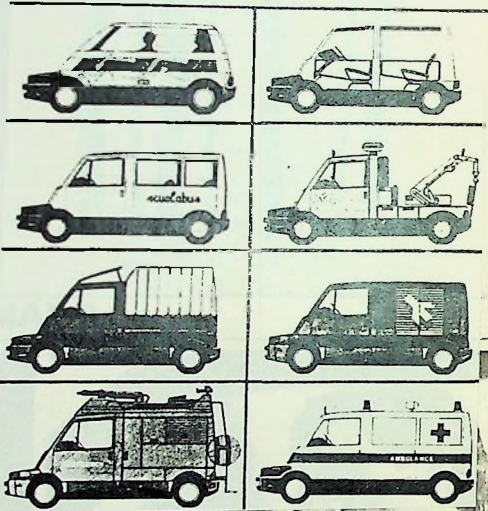
NYSTORY - INCONTRO CON GIORGIO GIUG
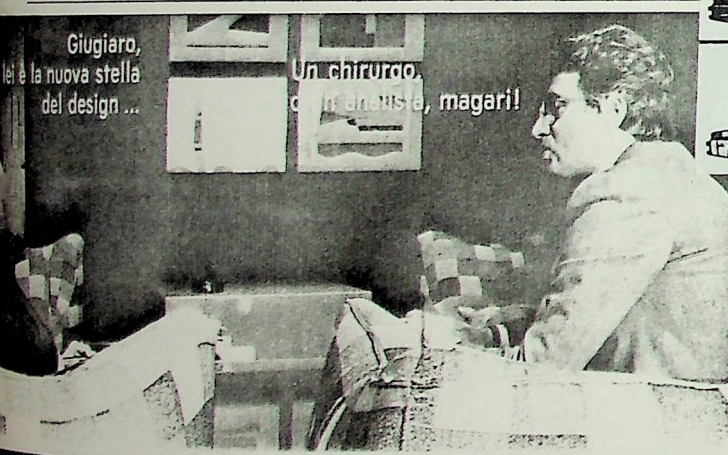
Giugiaro, lei è la nuova stella del design ...

Un chirurgo, o un analista, magari!

Non si sente artista?

E per il restante 98%?

E' tutto un metodo capillare di lavoro e di controllo ...

are the new star of design ... A surgeon, or an analyst perhaps! 2) Don't you feel you are an artist? 3) Yes, as regards 2% of my won... 4) And the remaining 98%? 5) It's all a method of working and checking ...

FORUM   6.7 maggio 1981   7
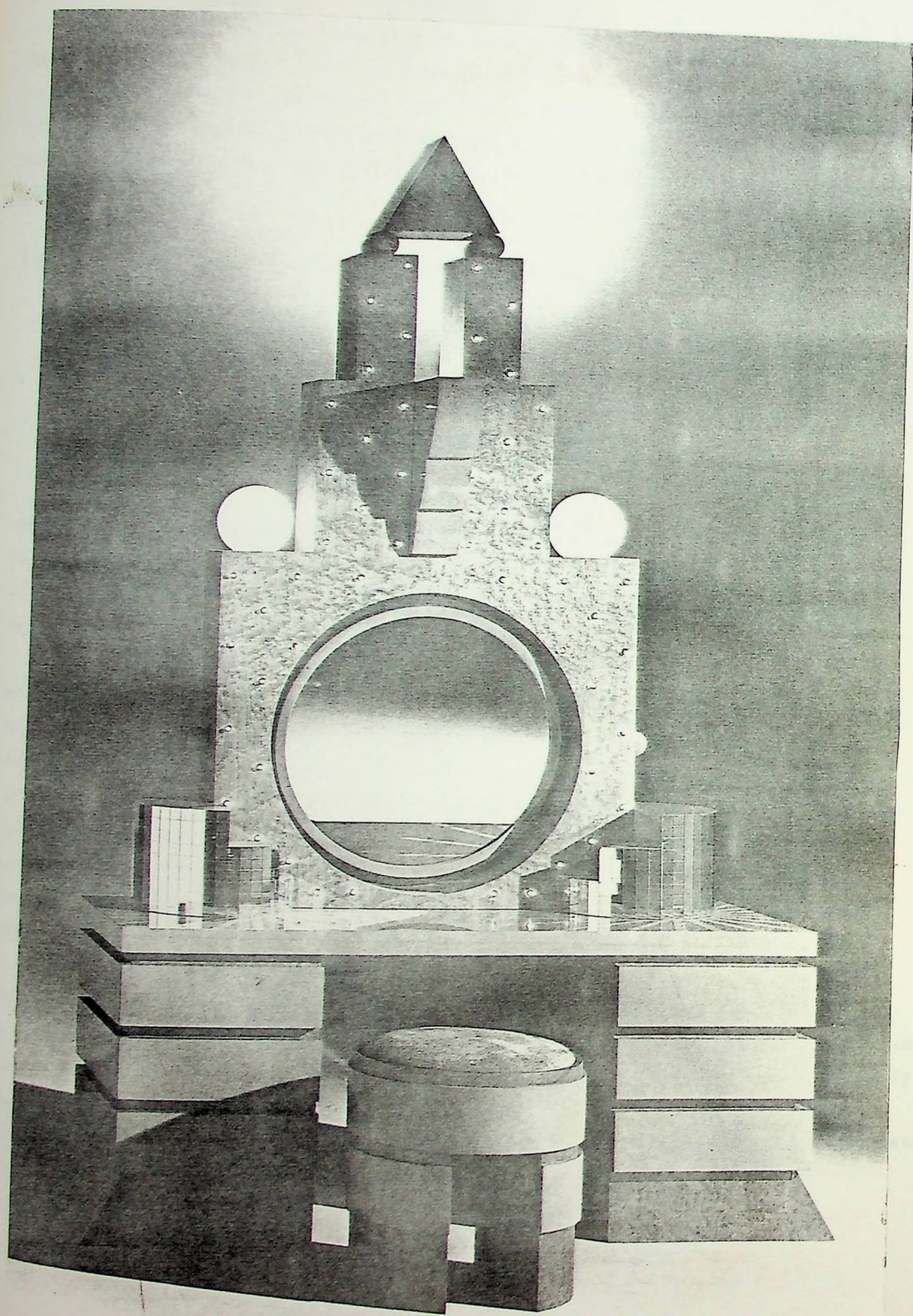
V:6 MICHAEL GRAVES: 'PLAZA' DRESSING TABLE: 1981: MEMPHIS

(by Renzo Brugola who has been with Sottsass for many years) using industrial materials, allowing for it to be transferred to mass-production should the market so demand. As well as producing furniture – tables, chairs, beds, shelves etc., (fig. V:6-10), Memphis produce ceramics and glass objects, which look simply like ornamental sculptures, (fig. V:11,12), but you'll find that the teapots actually work.

The venture was named Memphis for a number of reasons:

"A name mentioned in numerous songs....., MEMPHIS, Tennessee, birthplace
of W. C. Hardy, father of the blues, of Elvis Presley, father of
rock 'n' roll. MEMPHIS, ancient capital of Egypt and sight of the great
temple of the god Ptah, artist among the Gods, 'he who creates
works of art'." 32.

symbolising Sottsass' interest in ancient civilizations as well as pop. The word has now taken on a new meaning for the world, it implies the style of playful, almost gaudy products that come from Ettore Sottsass Jr., the father of humour in design.

Will it stop there? Sottsass is now 68 but age certainly doesn't seem to affect his creativity. He continues to propose 'alternative architecture' projects, through his own design company, 'Sottsass Associati', he designs for firms within Italy and abroad, recently working for companies such as Fiat, Zanotta, Fiorucci, Alessi, Croff etc., and he never allows his own design philosophy to go stale, continually evolving. He continues to travel and experience other cultures, drawing his experience into his work. He is a consistant designer, utilising previous lessons learnt, but never boring.

He has embarked on an adventurous project in Memphis, he is not commenting on previous designs but creating a new idea for a new future. He is often criticised, called a fine artist with no commitment to real design. But what he has actually done is married the two and proved that, alone, objects are meaningless but, in the context of human life, they become significant. He is ultimately interested in finding the best way in which objects can communicate to man rather than act as mere commercial items.
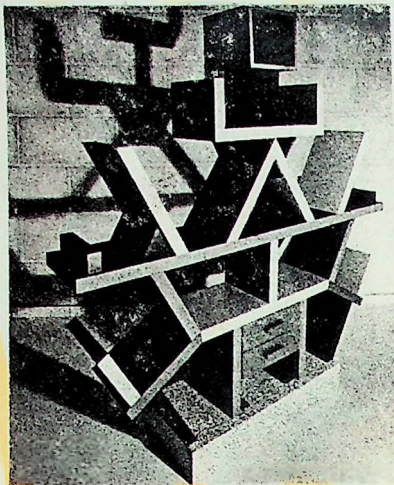
V:8 (ABOVE) SOTTSASS: 'CARLTON' BOOKCASE: 1981: MEMPHIS

V:7 (ABOVE) ETTORE SOTTSASS JR.
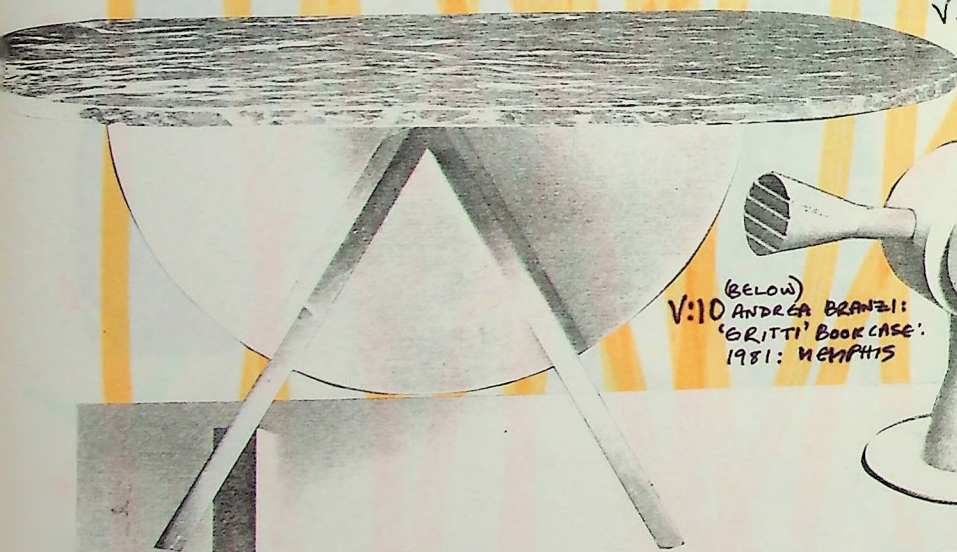
V:9 (LEFT) MARTINE BEDIN: 'PRINCE' TABLE': 1983: MEMPHIS

V:11 (BELOW) MICHELE DE LUCCHI: HAIRDRYER: 1979 FOR MILAN TRIENNALE

V:10 (BELOW) ANDREA BRANZI: 'GRITTI' BOOKCASE'. 1981: MEMPHIS
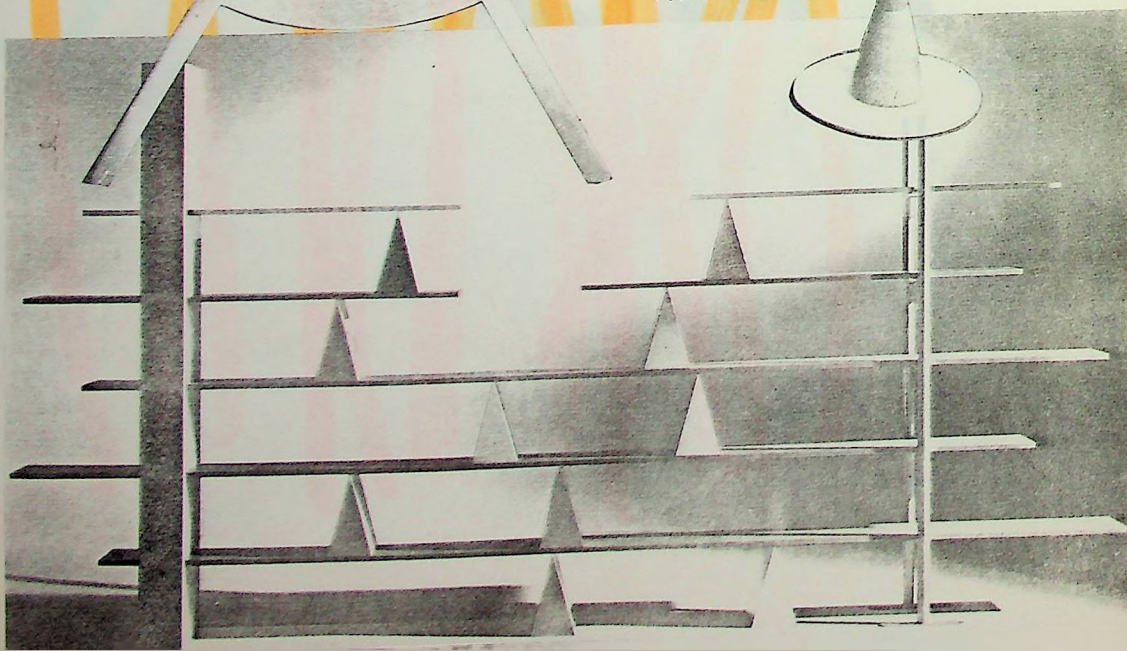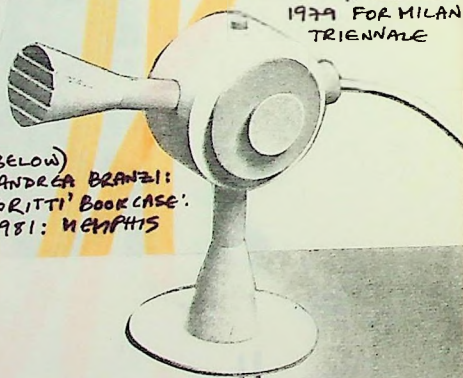
V:11 (BELOW) MATTEO THUN:
'COLUMBINA
SPHEROIDEA'
TEAPOT: 1982:
ALESSIO SARRI
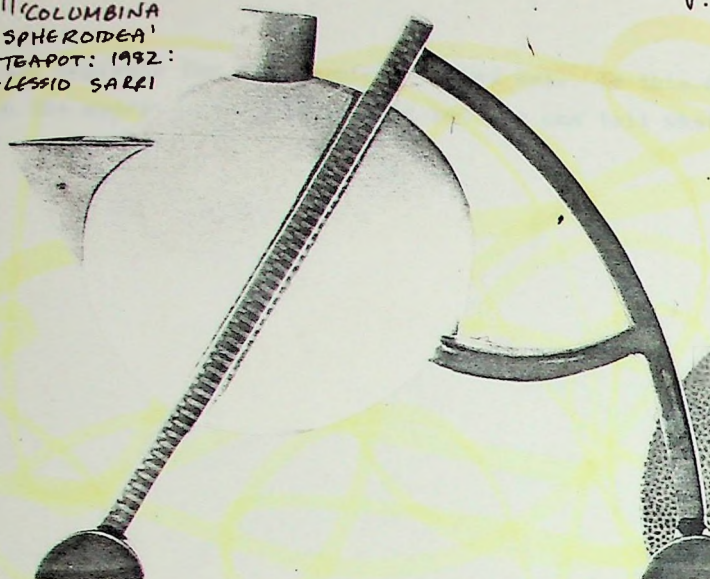
V:12 (BELOW) MATTEO THUN:
'ONEGA': 1982: MEMPHI!
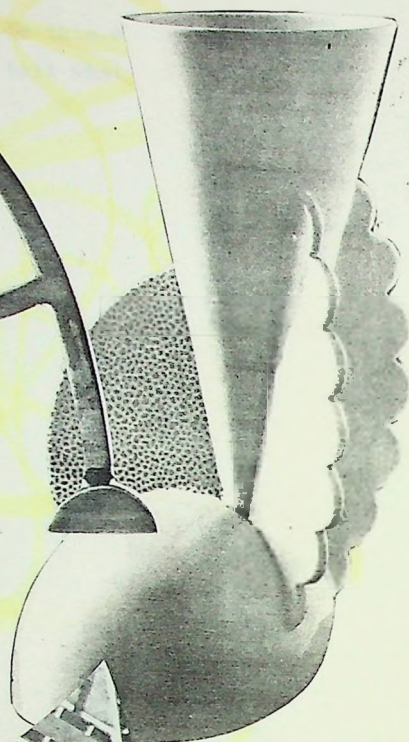
V:13 (BELOW) PATTERNS FOR MEMPHIS
BY SOTTSASS, NATHALIE D U
PASQUIER, RUDI HABERL

Is this the approach for the future? indeed not. In this ever-changing world, it may be the approach for the present but who can tell what the future will require?

V:14 (RIGHT)
PESCE:
'MAN HATTAN
SUNRISE' SEATING:
1980: CASSINA
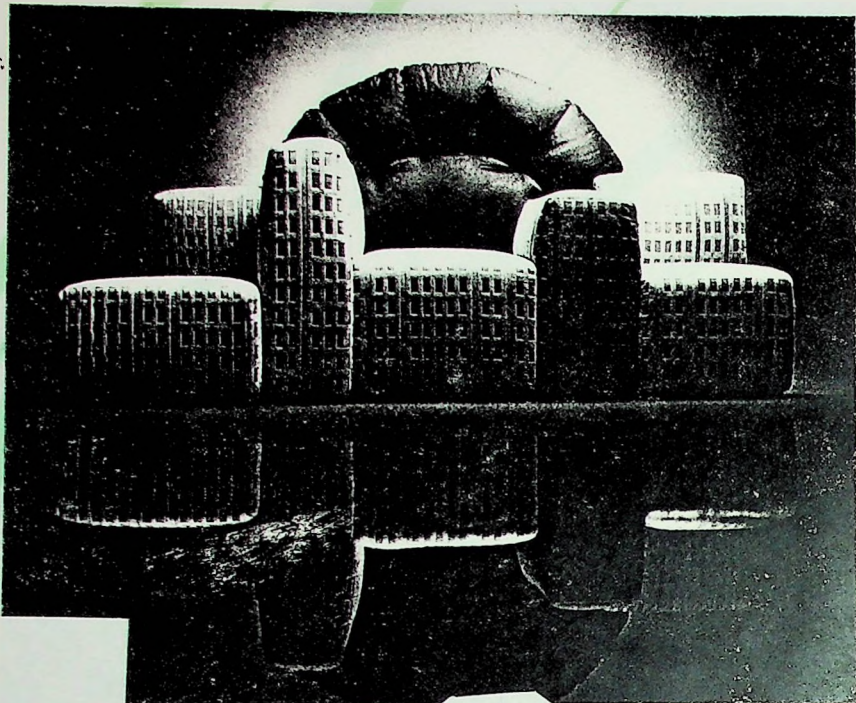
:15 (BELOW)
FURNITURE: 1980:
STUDIO ALCHYMIA

V:16 (ABOVE)
UGO LA PIETRA:
THREE-CHAIRS SYSTEM
PLUS TERMINAL: 1981-82:
ZANOTTA

V:17 (LEFT)
MAGISTRETTI:
KOBE BED: 1983:
DE PADOVA

V:19 (ABOVE)
DEGANELLO: 'TORSO' LOUNGE
CHAIR: 1982
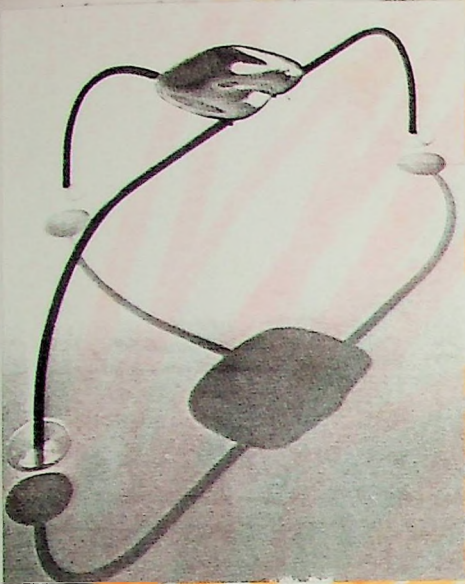
V:18 (ABOVE)
A. CASTIGLIONI: ALLUNAGGIO:
1982: ZANOTTA

V:20 (RIGHT)
PININFARINA:
AUTOBUS: 1982:
ATM MILANO

(BELOW) A. CASTIGLIONI:
GIBIGIANA LAMP:
V:22 1981: FLOS

V:21 (RIGHT)
EZIO DIDONE:
CIAO LAMP: 1982

(BELOW)
MAGISTRETTI: 'SINBAD' CHAIR:
V:23 1981: CASSINA

The End?
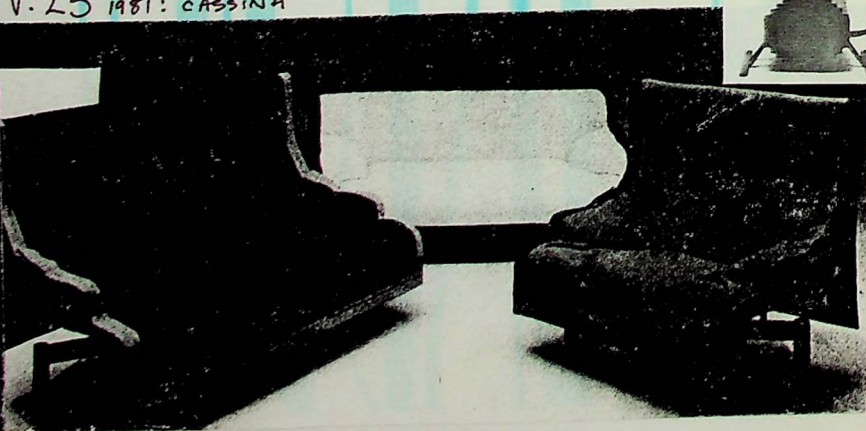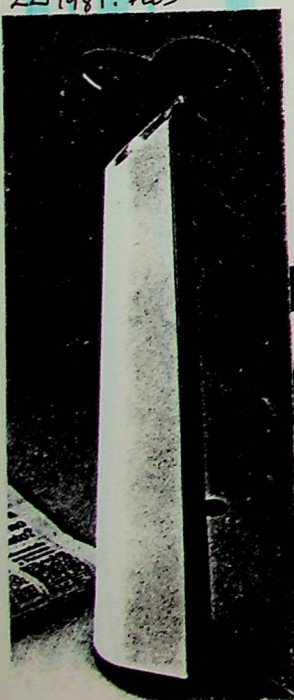
What do you think is the future of design?

SOTTSASS: "It is like asking about the future of politics, or the future of eroticism, or the future of soccer. It is very, very difficult to answer, but anyway I am working very hard and there are a lot of young people working very hard to carry on the message sent around in the sixties by the small group of the "anti-design" people, trying hard to deliver to design a larger catalogue of communications, more meaning, a wider linguistic flexibility, and a wider awareness of the responsibilities toward private and social life." 33.

Italian design has changed a lot in the past forty years; moving from one extreme - Rationalism - to another - Anti-Design, giving the artist, as designer, a prominent position within the manufacturing process, ergonomics is now recognised as a highly specialised field in it's own right, the 'consumer' has become a reality and the throw-away society is born.

Rationalism had served it's purpose in establishing Italian design worldwide. Italy had been ravaged by war and left without hope for the future by the Fascists. The architects had plunged enthusiastically into the task of rebuilding the country. They were, theoretically at least, on the side of the downtrodden worker. They proposed an ideal design, not based on superficial beauty or ornamentation but a beauty defined as pure utility and honesty to materials and structure: if the form was true to the function it was beautiful with no need for adornment:

"Art is a mere substitute, as long as the beauty of life is inadequate (but) it will disappear as life becomes more harmonious..... Then painting and sculpture will no longer be needed, because our lives will be art made actual." 34.

Dear Tomás Maldonado,

■ I'd like to talk a bit about your outlook and mine.
Although I realize that our attitudes are very far apart, you have
nevertheless always been a source of considerable interest to me.
I am drawn by your overtly and deeply-felt concern for problem-
atical questions which, in other ways, I too am concerned with.
You are the sharpened paragon of the kind of designer-strategist
we refer to as a « problem-solver », and by pushing ahead in
this intent you actually tread on meta-methodological ground:
you do not so much seek methods as you develop « methods for
seeking methods », associating yourself with some of the world's
principal elaborators of historical methodologies, like Luther,
Voltaire and Marx. The massive diagnoses of the present which
you have been carrying out for years now with obstinate coherency
in your capacity (as you yourself say) as « globetrotter and
jack-of-all-trades » are proof of your steadfast determination that
every project and every statement shall be absolutely exhaustive
and subjected to the demands of « critical rationality ».
You are a theorist, a producer of images, a designer of objects,
a systems engineer, an organize
losopher of education and edito
an avant-garde artist, now you
councillor for the municipality
these activities with the moral
possible degree, to vivisect ther
most recondite aspects, to under
stood in the most detailed way,
occasion into a general, scientifi
You have geared all your crafts
for the interpretation of needs,
criticism of commercial goods. T
from the most certain possible d
of nations, to make itself the sp
life, to attain to a morphology o
the struggle against waste. But
yours for rationality appeals to
not believe that the phenomena
objectives being equal — can se
perfection organizable by techni
that viable design solutions for
disciplined and uncontrollable v
vidual experiences that elude a
the « fanciful » morphology of o
utterly unalike in our thinking,
    We both in fact
exhausting exper
the multiplicity
perfectionism. Bc
with doubts: you
coherency and se
and chaos; you t
crisis; you the h
tion of the built
recognize it as a
a model of progr
model of express
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have condensed
« nope through d
of mine is called

Alessandro Mendini

Dear Michele De Lucchi,

■ there is a big gap in Italy as far as the birth of new young
designers is concerned. You among few are the one who is emerging
most distinctly, at this time in which everything connected with the
form of objects is very difficult. Why are there so few young designers?
The design discipline resembles a garden which has up till now been
very well looked after and which recalls the climate of important
times past. But there is a risk of its losing its meaning unless its tools,
manure and plants are modified. The new gardeners, like the new
designers, can exist only provided that different situations and men-
talities are created. Take your case. It seems to me that with the
objects that you make, your desire is to give a new face to the
technology of this age of informatics. So far the technological object
has seldom accepted absorption into the « pop » kind of figuration,
that is, into the fundamental figurative characteristic of our time.
As you and I have often agreed in our conversations, the last formal
periods to have succeeded each other in time were the Renaissance,
Baroque and Rationalism. And now pop is dominant, with its mass
consumer culture. But the history of design is very loath to admit it.
Technological design is still wholly functionalist, rationalist and
conceptual. Ulm and Braun have created a very strong tradition, a
slightly faded reality which does not however seem to be ending.
Through the form of objects the intention has been to transmit the
values and certainties which the use of technology can guarantee. The
object must be serious, calvinistic, almost sad; it has to exude relia-
bility; its form has to convey the message that the object is « good ».
But shouldn't it be taken for granted that an object has got to be
right as regards its use? The technological object can afford other and
subtler messages. In fact, some designers — such as the early Gio Ponti
and Ettore Sottsass today, whom you see in the background of
your picture on this Domus cover — had and have already been
working for some time in the direction of pop. And now I think that
you in person, with the colours, the decorations and the forms that
you use, can point the way to new things and be taken as a symbol of
a possible change in the Italian style in technology, when by now the
functional dependability of the object can afford to be ironical about
itself, and to make an object or a tool look like a gadget or like an
optimistic, well-adjusted toy. Today we have the new and alternative
industrial system, that of informatics, which suggests altogether
different models, methods, projects and processes. You steer the
benefits of informatic towards pop. Such benefits could lead to
certain interesting archaic states of objects; towards
a joint presence of opposites. A technical improvement
of their conditions might be matched by a sort of
figurative regression, an anthropological simplification
and a return to origins. This may be the characteristic
of the computerized age itself. On the one hand it
makes devices elementary and, on the other, it
permits the generalized use of data everywhere, thus
overturning the ethical, political and mental foun-
dations of today's morals and cultures. From this
data processed civilization a new concept of products
is therefore taking shape. For the moment you are
demonstrating an important thing: that these pro-
ducts need not of necessity resemble that kind of
object or design born, in fact, to develop the current
initial state of the informatics mechanism.

Alessandro Mendini

Throughout the '50's Functionalism was the dominant aesthetic. It was internationally recognised and the Italians were desperate to become internationals after their long time under Fascist 'protection'.

> "English products offered a balance between needs and solutions;
> American products were above all designed to take advantage of
> the highly developed technology and well-established production
> system; French products had the benefit of the rapport between
> the engineering and the production fields, based on efficient
> mechanical and engineering innovations. As for Italian design,
> it was above all found to be capable of making up for deficiencies
> in production and marketing, which were still considerable, and of
> consumption, while growing on the technological organization
> level and improvised on the methodological level, by means of
> brilliant, aesthetic solutions to specific problems." 35.

The work of the Italian Rationalists was aided by cheap manpower, a strong foreign market and a large backlog of unsatisfied demand for durable goods. But they also had problems within their country in the populations fear of change and the lack of a national plan for internal distribution. However, they sold their wares on the foreign market, tending to ignore the poor state of their own people.

So, the market existed to finance the industries. Technology was continually developing and the array of materials constantly multiplying with new choices in colours, textures, strengths, weights and shapes. Products were made a thousand a minute, bought as quickly and then dropped for a new, better model. We see the emergence of the short-lived product, the inclusion in design briefs of a new dimension; the proposed life-span of the product. It only had to last until a better product came along or until fashion changed. A phenomenon of the times where new is identified with good and 'planned obsolescence' defended as sound economics. The Americans had been doing it for years:

> "The American consumer expects new and better products every year. He
> has become accustomed to the yearly automobile show - to national advertising
> announcing new models. His acceptance of change toward better living is
> indeed the American's greatest asset..... Our custom of trading in our
> automobiles every year, of having a new refrigerator, vacuum cleaner or
> electric iron every three or four years is economically sound. Our
> willingness to part with something before it is completely worn out is

a phenomenon noticeable in no other society in history. It is
truly an American habit, and it is soundly based on our economy
of abundance." 36.

But where did this fit in with Rationalist theories? During the '60's, Rationalism
wanned: it was too static for a fast, ever-changing world; it was based on a
given formula at a time when progress was continually revising other formulae;
there was no room for individuality in the Functional aesthetic, just when man
might need it most; in a sense it was being dictated to the public; it was
right, everything else was wrong. But in itself it had become a style, a word
abhorred by all true Rationalists. The attack on Rationalism had begun.

"I believe that change, even for it's own sake, can be a good
thing. But I contend that, before we dare assume this right
to judge and shape other people's values, we had better first
examine our own values and our own motives for wanting to
exercise this control over the lives of others. In doing so,
it might be helpful to go back and begin separating the
truths of design from the fancies of fashion, and the truths
about all people from our fancies about ourselves." 37.

Who can dictate to the public his likes and dislikes? Considering the
functional aesthetic, you may go to a 'common' man - the man in the street for
whom the designers produce their functional wares - you may present him with a
black box chair or a steel tubing and glass table and beside these, perhaps, a
highly ornamented clock or an elaborate four-poster bed. He may choose the
decorated, over-worked example. He has no taste you may say, but is that not
what he wants? As a designer is that not what you should give him? Man needs to
be able to choose, and there are precious few things in the world today where he
is free to make a choice. Man needs something to differentiate himself from his
neighbour.

During the '60's there was a

"growing awareness of design as an activity whereby man creates
artifacts to mediate between his hopes and aspirations, and
the pressures and restrictions imposed upon him by nature and
the manmade environment that his culture has created." 38.

MEMPHIS

The New International Style

MARTINE BEDIN   ANDREA BRANZI   ALDO CIBIC   MICHELE DE LUCCHI
NATHALIE DU PASQUIER MICHAEL GRAVES HANS HOLLEIN ARATA ISOZAKI
TERRY JONES SHIRO KURAMATA JAVIER MARISCAL ALESSANDRO MENDINI
PAOLA NAVONE PETER SHIRE ETTORE SOTTSASS GEORGE JAMES SOWDEN
STUDIO ALCHYMIA   MATTEO THUN   MASANORI UMEDA   MARCO ZANINI

1981

SOTTSASS
MARISCAL
DE-LUCCHI
DU PASQUIER
1981
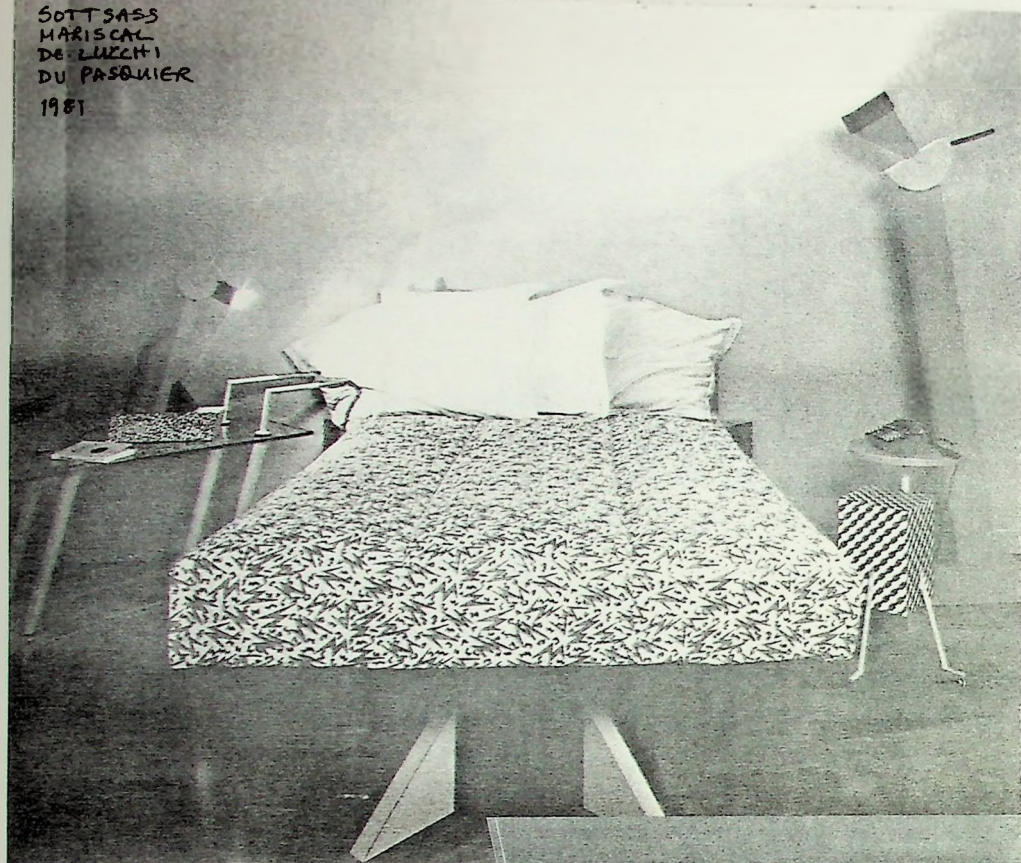
SOTTSASS
'MALABAR'
1982
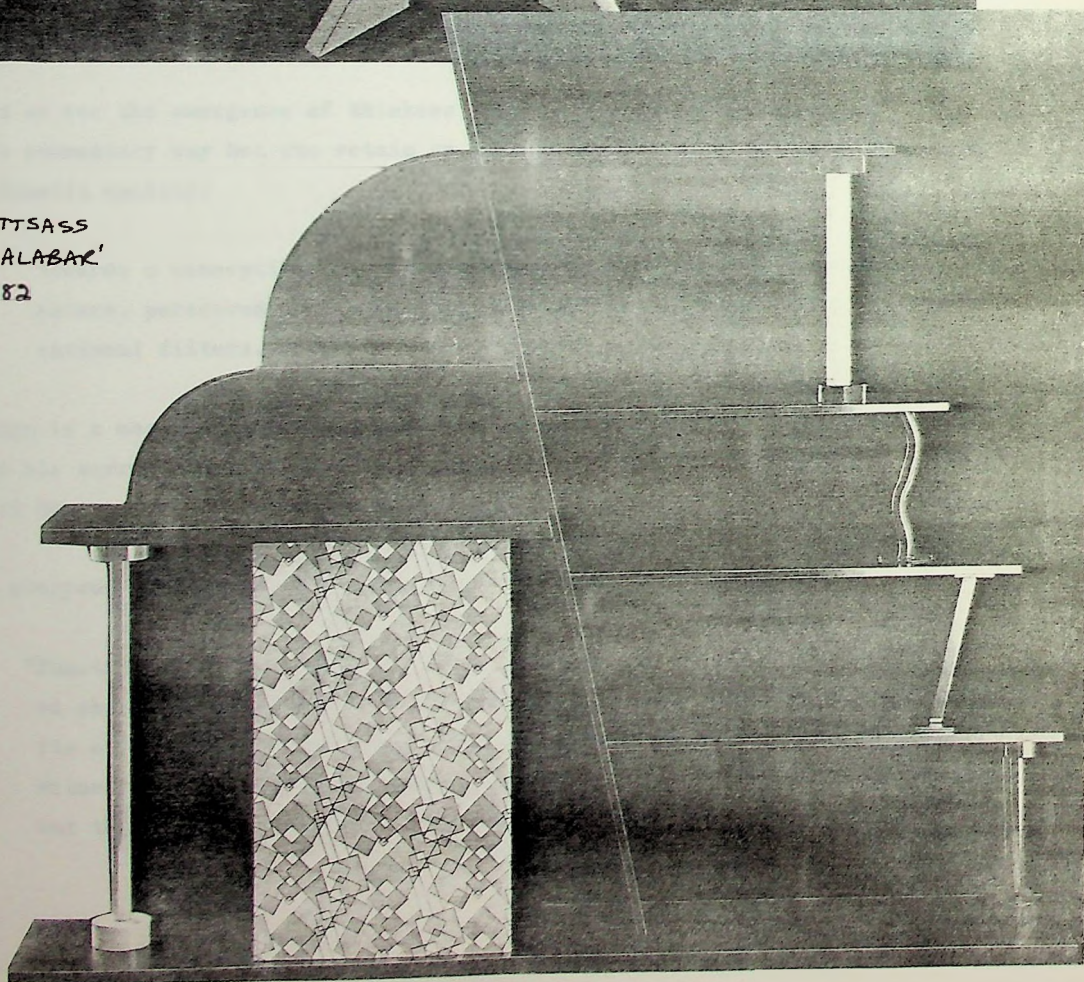
So, design began to move back towards the visual. Objects became symbols and aesthetics became as transient as the technology that accompanied them. There evolved the idea that life must be lived in the present rather than in the past or the future - design for today and tomorrow will take care of itself. The predictions of post-war critics, such as Reyner Banham, were realised i.e. those who argued

"the inappropriateness of a unified aesthetic standard having eternal
validity in an age of accelerating technology and instantly
expendable articles, and who found the look of functional efficiency
antiseptic and dehumanised for a popular culture that enjoyed the
gaudy attractions of Las Vegas." 39.

The 'Anti-Design' movement delivered the final blow to Rationalism in the mid - '60's. It included a deliberate exploitation of bad taste - kitsch - so escaping the stale formality of Functionalism. There is the use of Pop-art, exaggerated shapes, fairy-tale props - all commenting on the idealistic, unrealistic state of design. Trying to alleviate the pressures of reality while snubbing Rationalism and the idealism it stood for.

Then we see the emergence of thinkers such as Sottsass who do not use design in this commentary way but who retain an optimistic attitude in design's ability to benefit society:

"towards a conception of design reflecting the world of man and
nature, perceived and translated through sensory rather than
rational filters." 40.

Design is a means of communication. Not a way in which man can alienate himself from his surroundings by providing a set formula for everything but a means by which he can identify with his environment.

Not everyone agrees with this approach however:

"Functional design considers the visual aspect, that is, the beauty, of
an object as a component of its function, but not one that overwhelms
its other primary functions. Such other approaches as those we have
witnessed in recent years can be amusing and even commercially interesting,
but their ethical and aesthetic value is nil." 41.
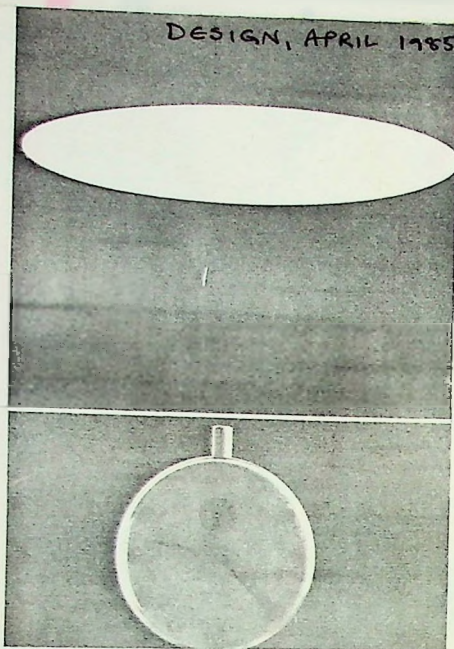
ITALY'S SOUTHERN QUESTION

Joys from Brazil
Interesting to see that those disc-shaped Memphis feet have walked all the way to Sao Paulo. Here they are supporting two pieces by Luciano Deraz an architect and designer based in that Brazilian city. Maria Bonita (above) designed for Mobilinea is a wooden sideboard faced with marbleised laminate. The diminutive green legs are made of painted metal. Appropriately named ET the laminate-topped table (above right) has a wooden base and iron feet, both lacquered in chilli pepper red. Nani the painted aluminium alarm clock right designed for ... also by Derza ... 455

■ The southern question, first approached by Villari in 1875, in « Le lettere meridionali », has been the subject of numerous studies by eminent thinkers, politicians and economists during the last hundred years: from the these of Guido Dorso, who recommended the formation of an élite to act as critics and leaders, the autonomist theories of Don Sturzo and those of Antonio Gramsci, who believed in the need for an alliance between the working class of the north and the peasants of the south to take general revolutionary action, right up to the more recent theories of the economists Pasquale Saraceno and Francesco Compagna, who maintain that the pockets of backwardness that have formed in the south can only be combatted through State aid which ought, through the implement of planning, to guide spontaneous market forces. A solution which, as we have seen, is extremely hard to apply in today's context! The arrogance of more or less occult groups, be they called mafia, ndrangheta or camorra, has never allowed the south to shake off the yoke that has kept both the oppressed and the oppressors prisoners. Laxity and the conspiracy of silence have prospered in such a climate, where people are prepared to close their eyes and ears rather than get involved in situations that would entail some degree of personal commitment. To crouch in the shade of the powerful and to leave the running of public affairs to a few and not always the best, is an attitude whose ... counterpart can also be found in cultural circles, where the ... of any real driving force among the majority in the trade has ... the « barons », who for years have held the sceptre of culture, ... any attempt at renewal in the arts, science or technology. ... symptom of change is regarded with suspicion and mistrust ... that have every interest in keeping things frozen in a ... hich nobody likes but which has the great advantage of ... known and proven. The fragmentation of the south into ... small areas of differentiated socio-cultural development ... the creation of a combined organism. Indeed it has ... accusations and self-accusations of provincialism whenever ... form have been enunciated; nor has the aristocratic ... ized culture been able to foster any integration ... uals, groups and society within a single connecting ... tion and ambiguity thus underlie the relationships ... an increasingly complex society, conditioned by the ... too rapid and ragged development to be able to ... rama a system based on the abuse of power and on ... the individual and that of the group. Besides, the ... still prevents the solid framework of this overbearing ... being unhinged. In fact, the few courageous attempts to ... always ended in silence, or are, if necessary, even ... violence ... the young « mafiosi » are killing off the old mafia in order to ... nish themselves, it only remains for the people concerned with culture of the south to emigrate to the north in search of an environment to which they are entitled. DOMUS 1981
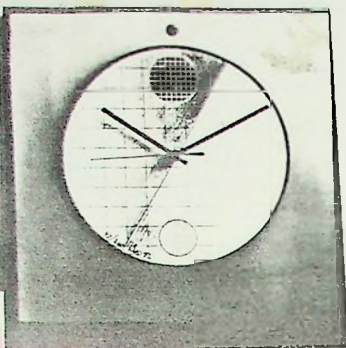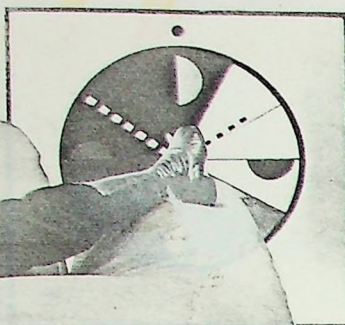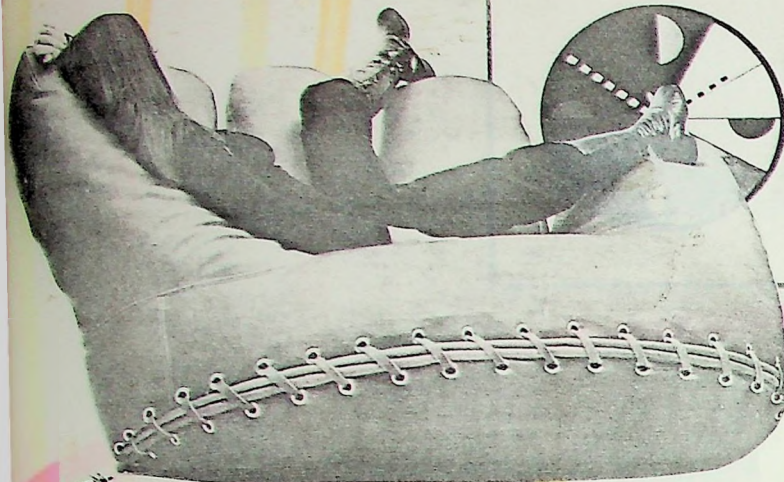
TECH-TOC ↑LUNAR-TIC
BY KURT DELBANCO
PRODUCED BY ACERBIS 1985
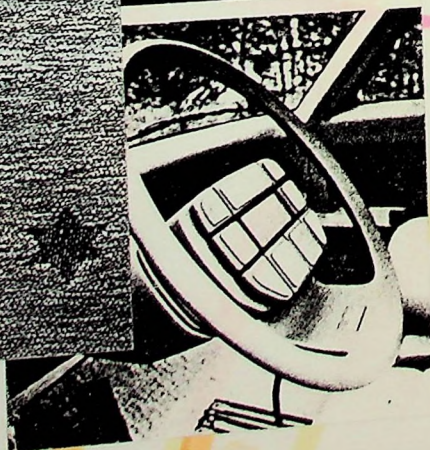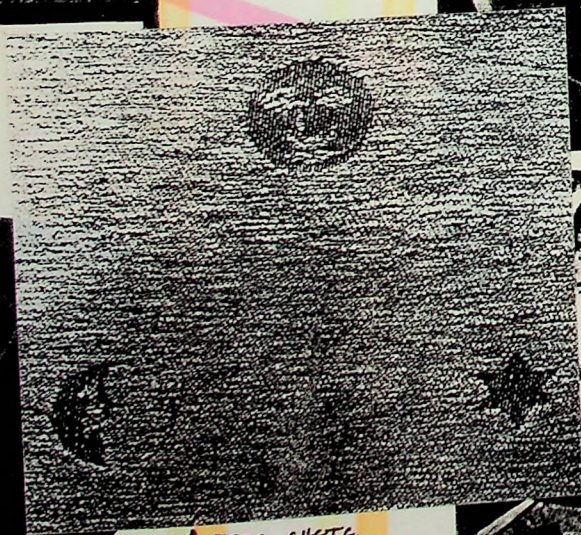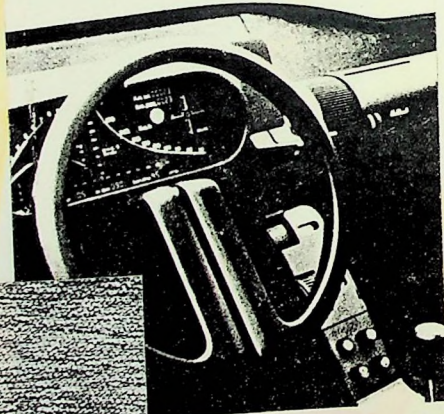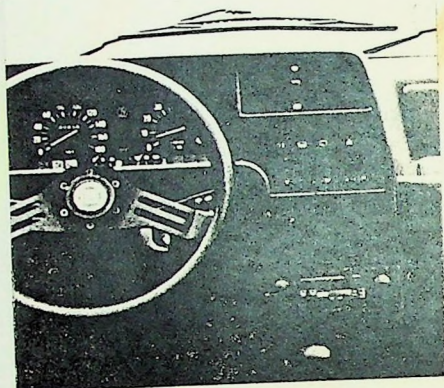
↑ FEDE CHETE
'LUNA e STELLE'
1952

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2. Ettore Sottsass Jr., a sequence of questions on the theory of design was put to Max Bill and Sottsass, this is part of Sottsass' reply to the question "What is the value of enduring design in a society that plans obsolescene?' From 'Design Since 1945'.

3. Ernesto N. Rogers, taken from January edition of 'Domus', 1946.

4. Carlo Pagani, from the introductory section to the RIMA exhibition of 1946.

5. Ernesto N. Rogers quoting P. Bottini in 'Experience from the Eighth Triennale' in 'Domus', July 1947.

6. Vittorio Gregotti from 'Italian Design, 1945-1971', taken from 'Italy: The New Domestic Landscape'.

7. Persico was probably the most notable theoretician and sensitive artist of all the Rationalists.

8. Walter Dorwin Teague from article entitled 'An Italian Shopping Trip' in 'Interiors' magazine, November edition of 1950. The statement was prompted by a visit Teague (an American industrial designer) made to Italy in 1950 to select some objects for an exhibition.

9. From the exhibition catalogue to the X Triennale, 1954.

10. Vittorio Gregotti from 'Italian Design, 1945-1971'.

11. Reyner, Banham, from article entitled 'Design by Choice', originally in 'Architectural Review', July edition, 1961. Found in collection of works by Banham entitled 'Design by Choice'.

12 Paul Reilly, from 'The Challenge of Pop', 1967.

13 From the report accompanying the 'New Designs for Italian Furniture' exhibition, Milan, 1960.

14 Vittorio Gregotti, from 'Italian Design, 1945-1971'.

15 Vittorio Gregotti, from 'Italian Design, 1945-1971'.

16 Vittorio Gregotti, from 'Italian Design, 1945-1971'.

17 Dino Gentili, 'Discorso di inaugurazione' (inauguration speech), in Milan, Palazzo dell'Arte al Parco, from 'Tredicesima Triennale di Milano: Tempo libero'. Opening the XIII Triennale in 1964.

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23 Penny Sparke, from 'Ettore Sottsass Jr.'.

24 Penny Sparke, from 'Ettore Sottsass Jr.'.

25 A. De Angelis, from his article on 'Anti-Design', quoted in F. Raggi, 'Radical Story' in 'Casabella', edition no. 382, 1973.

26 Ettore Sottsass Jr., from the catalogue to the exhibition entitled 'Ettore Sottsass Jr.', held at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem in the spring of 1978.

27 Vittorio Gregotti, from 'Italian Design, 1945-1971'.

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