NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

# "AN APPROACH TO FURNITURE DESIGN"

HISTORY OF

ART, DESIGN

AND

COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES

FACULTY OF DESIGN

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

NOEL A. FINNERTY

1991.

CONTENTS

This Thesis is, firstly an examination of contemporary 1980's furniture design, notably ~~in~~ the work of Robert Venturi (born 1941), Borek Sipek (born 1949) and to a lesser extent Philippe Starck (born 1949) and Oscar Tusquets (born 1941), each of whom have important lessons to teach us.

Secondly, the variety of their approaches to furniture design is made apparent in each section. Each different approach is valid, in a particular context. However, none of them are singly all encompassing in terms of the aesthetic effect, functional and symbolic requirements of various projects.

to examine the approach of designers who

Thirdly, the attempt of those who followed Le Corbusier and Mies Van der Rohe, to establish an international style by formulating a set of rules governing Architecture and Design. There are two main prejudices with this approach. The first, it treats all people and all design problems in the same way, an approach which is a threat to individual identity and local tradition. The second, it raises scientific logic and expert judgement above everyday experience, thereby excluding much of the spiritual and sensual context of design.

not a sentence

? problems

Fourthly, the Thesis, through examination of the work of Sipek, Venturi, Starck and Tusquets attempts to establish a more meaningful approach to design for the 1990's.

Furniture has a history thousands of years old, the chair even precedes the cultural choice of sitting above ground. It's image though subject to continual stylistic revision cannot be split into internal mechanism and external form, they are one, and as such a chair is more sharply defined than most industrial products. Because of this age old history, furniture design is concerned with semantic values that have left their traces in it: values of the sacred, of body shape, of rites and meaning bound up with function. The design of a chair therefore, is direct, ancient and difficult because nothing can be hidden.

The past hundred years is notable for the development of the transport industry, where we as travellers have sacrificed the fascination of old carriages, then vintage cars forfeiting plush materials, decoration and individualism in order to reap the advantages of efficiency, economy, popularity and performance brought about by extreme industrialisation.

In contrast where chair design is concerned we have not been so logical, we have not been ready to renounce the pleasures of fine, natural and traditional materials, we have not given up the infinite variety of designs and decorations. We have remained indifferent, at least relative to other areas of design, to the temptations of new performance levels and logical process in general. A phenomenon echoed in the words of Osbert Lancaster in his Home Sweet Homes (1939) which still remain essentially true today.

> "The open plan, the mass produced steel and plywood furniture..... are all in theory perfectly logical, but in the home logic has always been at a discount, the vast majority..... crave their knick-knacks and are perfectly willing to pay the price with broom and duster.
> (Osbert Lancaster 1939 page 76)

Because of this phenomenon large scale mass production is still largely irrelevant in the context of furniture, smaller scale production and a variety of models is the present option.

Events in the mid-nineteenth century, namely the experiments with mass productable furniture of Thonet, were thought for a long time to have signalled an irreversible turning point towards mass production and mass culture. However, this idea dissolved as recently as the last decade, for two reasons. First, where furniture is concerned consumers want, above all else, choice, and second, industrial technologies never did show their superiority over more traditional methods, with the tubular steel furniture designed in the thirties still being sold as high technology products.

The late fifties and early sixties saw the inadequacies of the international modern approach become more awkward and noticeable. ~~Also~~ In 1962 Robert Venturi re-opened the debate between pre-modern art history and modernism, decoration and the international style, in his first book "Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture (1966), with it's articulate rejection of the moderns' approach. He released ornament and decoration from the jail where Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier had placed them. The house is unlikely to be merely a machine for living in, and the chair is unlikely to be merely a machine for sitting in ever again.

Chapter I is concerned mainly with the personal experience and deep thought of Robert Venturi in relation to culture, ~~and~~ the decorative arts ~~history~~ and their part in a more culturally relevant design for today. Robert Venturi was selected because of his influential literary offering which deals largely with these factors. Firstly, in his articulate rejection of the international modern philosophy and approach, coupled with his own almost opposite views calling for a "Messy Vitality rather than obvious unity" in his first book "Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture" (1966) and secondly, in his search for a more relevant utilitarian culture, explored in his second book "learning from Las Vegas" (1972).

Chapter II deals with the importance of craft in contemporary furniture design. Borek Sipek's work was chosen to illustrate this: As he is multi-faceted in this regard, handling every material. He uses with great fluency and understanding, instilling in many of his pieces a convincing craft aesthetic which defies and subverts their often industrial production. Sipek was selected also, because he manages to include such a strong ethos in many of his pieces, giving them very strong character and voice.

Chapter III is concerned with two factors, firstly, the importance of industry and understanding of production techniques as well as mechanics, and secondly, the importance of the idea, or seed without which a project is nothing more than decorating. The former is explored in the work of Oscar Tusquets who in the Italian tradition works in very close association with industry. The views of Niels Diffrient are introduced here to reinforce this. The importance of the "Idea" is shown in the work of Philippe Starck whose only involvement in a project is in the concept stage. He has risen to international fame for his capacity as an Ideas Formulator.

The final chapter, the conclusion to the Thesis, is concerned with a design approach based on the findings of the Thesis and it's suggested relevance to the diverse requirements of our present age.

# CHAPTER I

# ROBERT VENTURI

Robert Venturi has been selected for discussion because of his exceptionally thoughtful design philosophy and his articulation of these thoughts as an Architect, Designer, academic and theoretician. Venturi has produced one of the most consistently articulate strands of "Post Modernism". He is one of Post Modernisms founding fathers and is largely responsible for the re-opening of the debate, between the present and pre-modern art and design history, on an international level.

His theoretical view points are expressed in Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture (1966) which challenges everything the modernists held dear and presents an anti-argument for the views of Le Corbusier in Vers une Architecture (1927).

Venturi's most prominent strength lies in his articulate rejection of Modernism and its strict functionalism -

> "I like elements which are hybrid rather than pure, compromising rather than clean, disturbed rather than straightforward ambiguous rather than articulate" (Venturi 1962 page 156).

Venturi has produced a range of furniture for Knoll, a tea service for Alessi, a mirror for Colorcore and other items including a Cuckoo clock, his latest offering for Alessi.

His advocacy of ornament and symbolism as well as his conscious reference to tradition are characteristic elements of his work. He is concerned with the extension of the objects role beyond both the functional and the Aesthetic.

In rejecting the machine Aesthetic of modernism and a purely Aesthetic reaction to it, Venturi produces designs which are commentaries on the eclectic culture of our age. Which can be paralleled with the music, fashion and movie industries.

The symbolic function of ornament , for example is just one means of contrasting and combining symbols of traditional and modern design cultures, Items of furniture and tableware can assume an almost literary function, both reflecting the "hybrid" elements of contemporary culture and commenting on apparently disparate elements from tradition.

In Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture (1962) Venturi calls for a "messy vitality over obvious unity" to break the mould of dominant modernism, he challenges everything the moderns held dear -

> "I like elements that are hybrid rather than pure, compromising rather than clean disturbed rather than straight forward."
> (Robert Venturi 1962 page 156).

I prefer "both and " to "either or" ; he is concerned with diversity relevance, contradiction, symbolism, representation, decoration and ornament, all this through Historism, Eclectism and wit.
It is significant that it was Venturi who hit the international modern movements credo of "Less is More" (Mies Van Der Rohe) on the head by countering it with "Less is a bore".

Venturi infuriates many of his contemporaries who profess to follow Le Corbusier's "Vers une architecture" (1927), but Le Corbusier also infuriated many with his ideas namely those who belonged to the Beaux Arts. This is not to say that Venturi is Le Corbusier's equal in persuasiveness or achievement; few will attain that level again.

However, for both Venturi and Le Corbusier the experience was personal and direct. Each was thus able to free himself from the fixed patterns of thought and the fashions of his contemporaries. Both make us look at the past anew, both are extreme in their views. They have both almost directly opposing views on every aspect of design for example Le Corbusier referred to decoration as "Peasant Art" whereas Venturi is largely concerned with decoration, symbolism and ornament and defines his architecture as "Shelter with decoration on it".

Venturi renounces Van Der Rohe's and Le Corbusier's modernism in favour of complexity and contradiction, "messy vitality",and a "richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning" (Robert Venturi 1962 page 183). This is entirely opposite to Le Corbusier's view - "Architecture is nothing but orderly arrangement" (Le Corbusier 1927 page 150).

Venturi's second book - "Learning from Las Vegas" (1972) - advocates the cultural value of American popular artefacts through a study of the Las Vegas strip where he finds his "messy vitality" in the neon lights, billboards, signs, fascades on sheds (Decorated Sheds).

Venturi found and liked buildings that were "Less abstract and more symbolic in nature, less architectural and more graphic " (1972 page 243). For example a fast food restaurant shaped like a chicken, from example's like this Venturi developed the theory of the object being a 'symbol in space' rather than a 'form in space', somewhat like the object being a sign for itself.

Learning from Las Vegas seems to be a desperate search for an American utilitarian culture worthy of development or reinterpretation. The "messy vitality" that Venturi found could be considered just too messy to be appreciated.

However this may be the view of a mind conditioned by the orderly values of modernism. Le Corbusier would find the Las Vegas strip at least as repulsive as he did Rome in "Vers une Architecture" where he said "... there (Rome) you find every sort of horror...." (Le Corbusier 1927 page 160).

The ideas in Venturi's books are concerned with Architecture, however the furniture and household products designed by Venturi, exhibit the realisations of many of his ideas on Architecture which would imply that Venturi does not differentiate between Architecture and design.

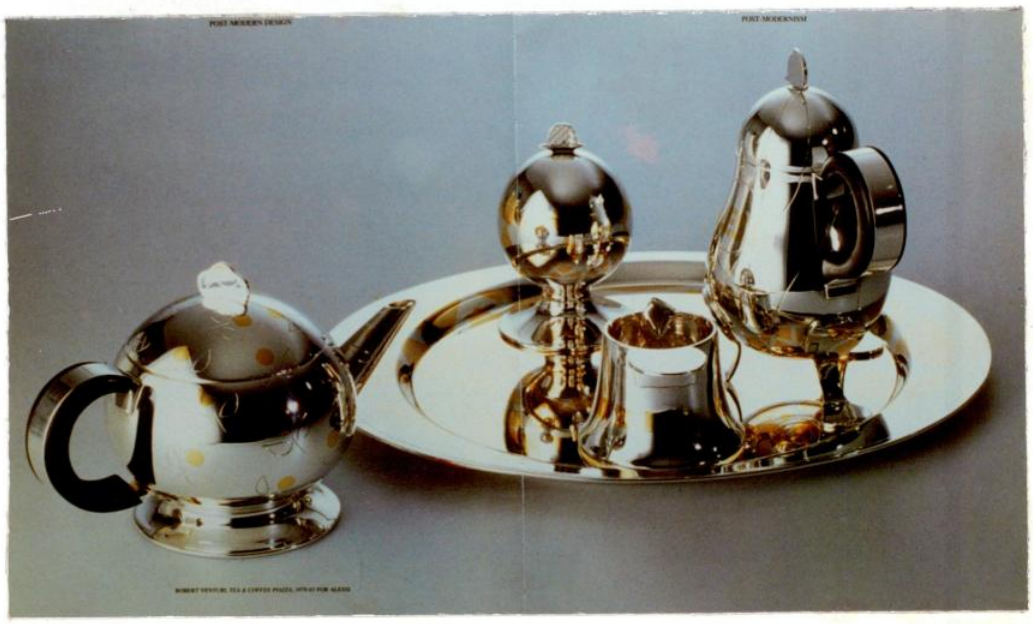
In 1984 Alessi commissioned eleven well known Architects to design a tea and coffee service set. Venturi was one of these Architects and well suited to Alessi who in 1979 with the arrival of Alesandro Mendini traced their history through Mendini's analysis of Alessi's production. This consciousness together with the firms complex production methods created the environment for their new post modern spirit to flourish.

> "Today all the different methods of approaching a project can coexist. In an indefinite context where public taste changes rapidly, and it is impossible to foresee directions and trends. The only viable attitude seems to be the eclectic one"
>
> - Alberto Alessi 'Steel and Style' (1987 page 94)

Here Alberto Alessi tells us why this project code named P6, is a practical application of Post-Modern philosophy.

Alesandro Mendini was quoted in Steel and Style expressing a great belief in Post Modernism - P6 has brought the firm culturally up to date, in the post modern sense ' - with it's historism and eclecticism that was foreseen and desired..'
(Patrizia Scarzella 1987 page 95)

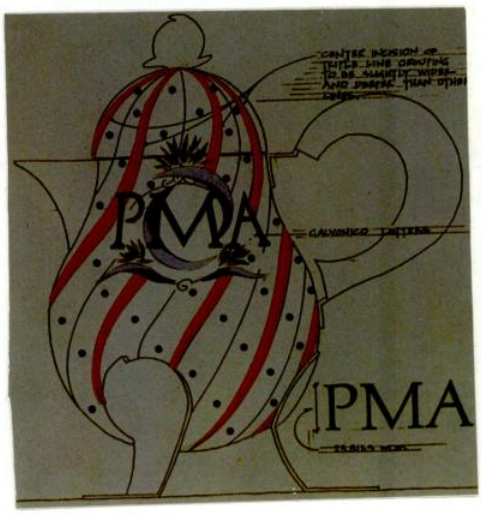
Venturi's offering to Alessi is typically Venturi and unashamedly eclectic and incorporates many aspect of his design Philosophy.



- Tea and Coffee Piazza. By R. Venturi for Alessi

The circular forms are georgian in spirit yet the surface decoration of part gilded tea leaves on the teapot quotes the conventionalised patterns of metalwork and fabrics made in the 1920's by Josef Maffian's (1870 - 1956) Wiener Werkstatte which attempted to relate ornament to function. The symbolism in the surface decoration is extended further and more abstractly in the spiral raising up around the coffee pot, this suggests steam and aroma. In the initial drawing for the proposed design Venturi had the spiral picked picked out in red by means of a inlay. However due to expansion rates this would not be possible which raises suspicions concerning Venturi's practical knowledge both in the manufacturing and in the performance of the product. Also the proposed handle for the coffee pot was also changed for cost effective reasons.

The apparent naivety of Venturi could be a clever tactic on his behalf. Where in the presentation of the design with Alessi representatives his apparent naivety would give him the psychological advantage.



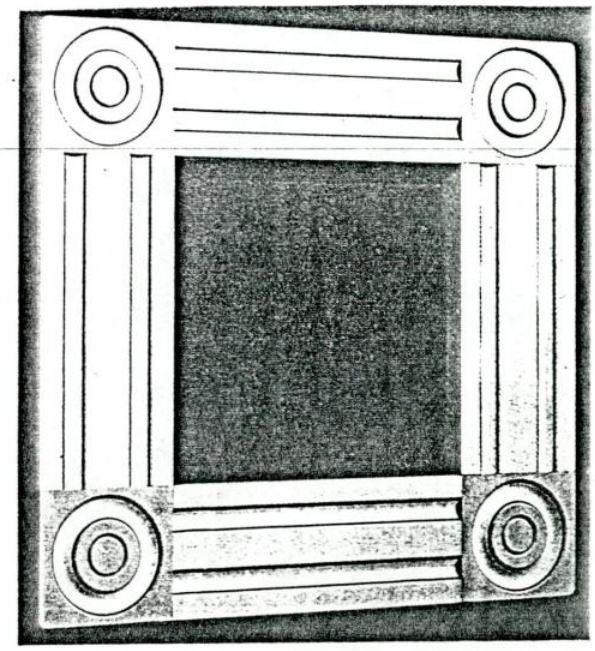
They would become preoccupied with the red inlay while Venturi gets the rest of the design accepted. When dealing with a man of Venturi's wit and intelligence this sort of tactic would be expected.

However his chairs for Knoll which are made from laminated plywood also raises suspicions concerning Venturi's manufacturing knowledge. The process used for his nine chairs is one of the simplest methods of manufacture to understand and use. One wonders whether Venturi was limited to this by his ignorance and even within this there are some poorly worked details, for example where Venturi joins the backs to the seats, the join is in tension where as a shear loading would not have changed the effect of the form visually and would have made the chairs much more robust.

Venturi's method of drawing seems also to impede his designs. Venturi draws in elevation; front and side views even in his sketches, there is no indication in his drawings of an object in 3-dimensional space. This results in very two dimensional chairs and a symmetrical Tea and Coffee pots for Alessi. However, this drawing method was well suited to the design of a mirror for Colorcore 1983. (Produced 1985).

The mirror is in the Greek revival manner and is quite pure in form quoting from the type of mirror that existed throughout the nineteenth century. It has all the correct fluting.

The mirror is obviously also classical in form and is fabricated in modern laminated plastics, here we have a brave combination; plastic classism, the material of anarchy. In short a "good taste form" in a "bad taste" material. Plastics have been despised for a long time and the suggestion of a career in that industry provided a good one liner laugh in the film "The Graduate". The result in Venturi's case is suggestive of his tongue in cheek approach to design. He is demanding a reaction from the observer, likely to be either a laugh or a frown. It is however, surprisingly likeable due to its fresh simplicity and whimsical value combined with good proportions.



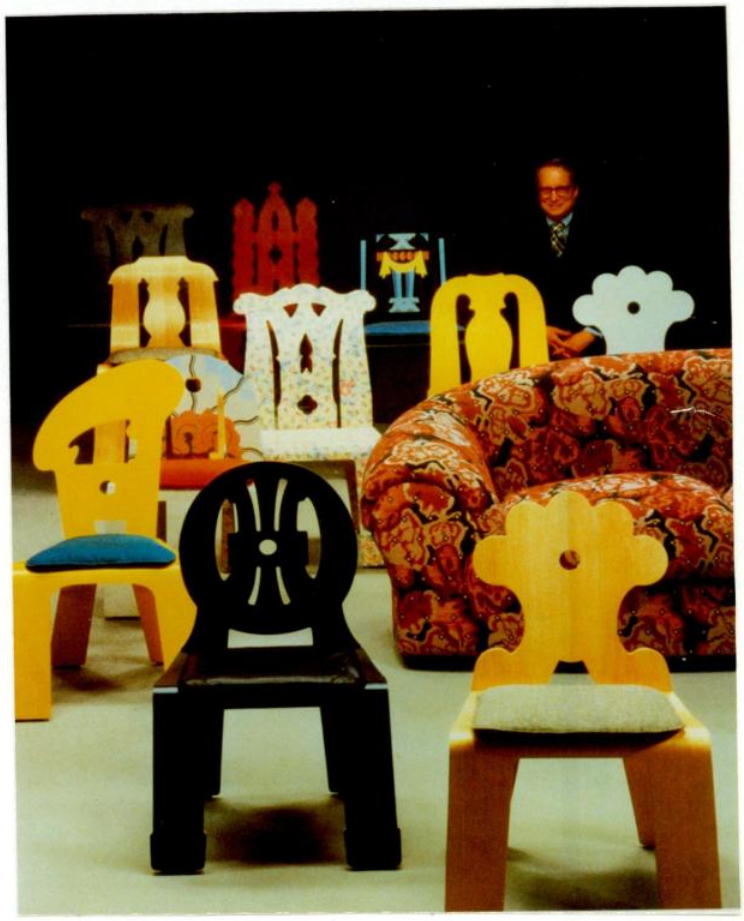
ROBERT VENTURI, MIRROR IN THE GREEK REVIVAL MANNER, 1983 FOR FORMICA COLORCORE

Venturi's most extreme contribution to design is his collection for Knoll which consists of a Sofa, Two high tables, a low table and a series of nine chairs. The extremity of this collection is emphasised in the context of Knoll (Manufacturing Company) as a producer of hitherto "good form" furniture having in the past produced the furniture of Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe and Marcel Bruer (1902-1981). The commission given to Venturi would seem contradictory in the terms of that companies history, possibly they too have come to see "less" as "a bore".

Venturi was openly aware of this history and said in "Metropolis" (Design periodical) that "Mies did one chair - I did nine". Venturi chairs are however, re-interpreted stereo types from history and it could be said that Mies chair was a more total work than Venturi's nine. It is however, unfair to access Mies and Venturi on the same criteria as Venturi achieved his messy vitality and Mies his "less is more" and "God is in the details" with his Barcelona chair of 1929.

Venturi's chairs as has been mentioned uses a very simple method of manufacture, apart from possible naivety, another reason for this could be that this method evokes memories of the experiments in plywood of Alvar Aalto or Marcel Bruer in the 1930's, this may have been Venturi's reasoning, adding another layer of meaning to the chairs.

In the main Venturi's chairs are highly ornamental and in approach are Post Modern revivalism from the early style of the 18th Century (Queen Anne) through to Hollywood Art Deco of 1930 and quote many styles within these dates from European and American Art History.



Robert Venturi
with his collection
of chairs for
Knoll International.

Venturi's approach is not archaeological or pendantic as some critics claim. There is no nostalgia or yearning for the past involved, Thomas Chippendale would surely disown the one which bears his name. Many Europeans find Venturi's pieces offensive and disrespectful as these traditions in Europe are bound up with class affiliations and snobbiness; and it is Venturi's combination of disrespect and deference that is refreshing.

It is possible to actually trace the predecessor of each of his chairs, for example his "Queen Anne" chair is likely to be inspired by a chair of Giles Grendy of about 1730. However, this identifying sources is time consuming and unimportant, it is enough to realise that Venturi often quotes particular items. Venturi does clearly set out to reinvent the style he quotes, with the series of nine chairs one gets the impression that Venturi has taken the originals and flattened them with a steam roller, the legs for example seem to have a same material volume content as the originals, only it is of course flat.

Sheraton Chair

1984 for knoll

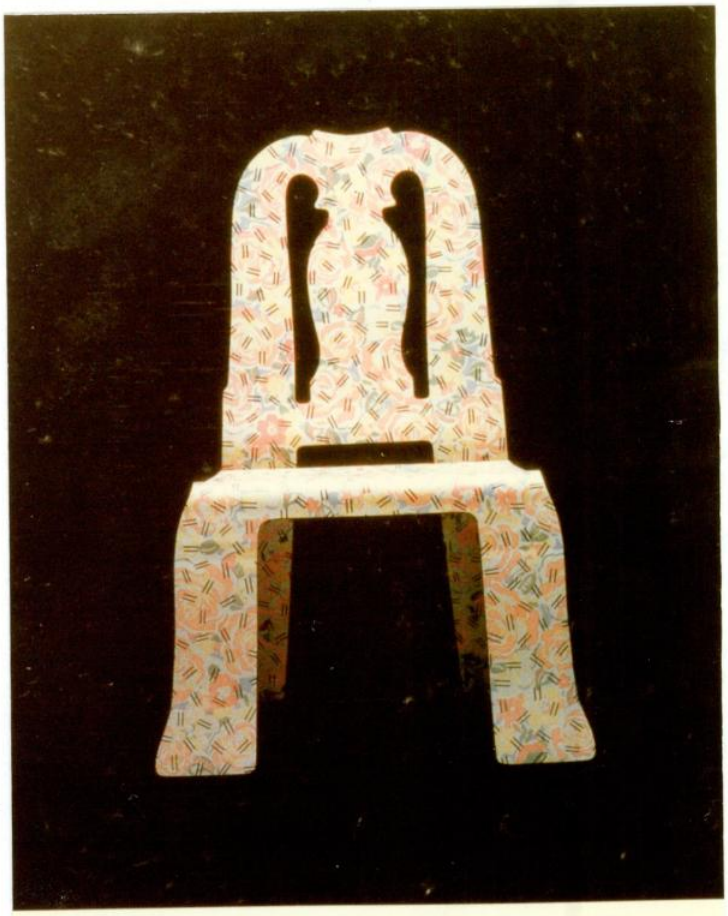
Chippendale chair

1984 for Knoll

There is something stagey about the flatness of the fretted backs on Venturi's chairs. They appear as pieces of theatre design, they have an animated look, mere cut-outs with none of the 3-dimensional qualities or roundness of their prototypes or source. Venturi has said that - "their backs are like signs or the false fronts on buildings of the old west". This is an obvious reference to the idea of the decorated shed expressed in "learning from Las Vegas" (1972) . The chairs appear very different in side views now that the bent plywood has a very modern look about it.

Robert Venturi
"Queen Anne" chair.

[Note – the surface treatment of diagonal lines juxtaposed with floral patterns.



ROBERT VENTURI *QUEEN ANNE* CHAIR WITH *GRANDMOTHER* PATTERN, 1984 FOR KNOLL INTERNATIONAL

A Venturi interior with "Queen Anne" suite and Tea and Coffee Piazza (1984)

ROBERT VENTURI INTERIOR WITH *QUEEN ANNE* SUITE AND *TEA & COFFEE PIAZZA*, 1984

Venturi's chairs also come in a range of different surface treatments, decoration is obviously important to him, here he exploits his "I prefer both and to either or" idea by combining fashion and trends from every possible source, as extreme as memphis laminate, the diagonal lines from the painting of Jasper Johust, nineteenth century colour theory and even a favourite tablecloth belonging to the grandmother of Robert Schwartz, one of Venturi's associates. "It is characteristic of Post Modernism to use familiar and conventional patterns but use them in an unusual way" says Venturi (Michael Collins 1989 page 107)

The whole Venturi Knoll collection is a real cocktail of styles with which Venturi has realised many of his aims expressed in his two books; complexity and contradiction, "both and", the decorated shed, messy vitality, richness of meaning rather than clarity of meaning. His eclecticism mirrors the desire for wit and the need for historical reference in design.

Venturi's furniture could be described as an animated or Walt Disney view of two centuries of furniture history.

America, probably more than any country romanticises the past, this can be seen in their music and movie industries.

Venturi's work could be seen a furniture parallel to this, or furniture's answer to Americans favourite game, that of tracing one ancestry to Ireland, England, Germany, Italy, France etc...
The chairs can be seen as witty antiques for a rich new consumer age. Bridging a place in history for a society anxious to prove its place within a historical content. They appear sarcastic jokey interpretations of European Art History. This is one way of dealing with Americans own lack of historical content, for this reason whether true or not many Europeans find Venturi's work offensive.

Venturi appears to be a little bitter towards Europe and European Art History his - "I prefer messy vitality over obvious units" could be read - I prefer American messiness over European togetherness. This seems evident in his total renouncing of the moderns coupled with his jokey interpretations of European Art History.

Venturi in this way resembles a little boy who has just been outsmarted by another and proceeds to make funny faces behind his back, on this level Venturi's furniture has a lovable charm. One thing is certain and that is without knowledge of his writings Venturi's furniture is difficult to take seriously, especially when they are marketed beside the Barcelona chair in Knoll stands.

Which is a very curious juxtaposition each one enhancing the freshness of one relative to the other. Showing that these two opposing styles can coexist and do very beautifully - reinforcing Venturi's - Less is a bore. In Venturi's writings everything he does is articulately justified in one way or another with the exception of his apparent naivety of manufacturing techniques. Therefore to critise his work one must critise his writings.

This is simple if one adopts the argument of the moderns. However it is likewise simple to attack the moderns using Venturi's arguments. It is therefore both unfair and unproductive to do either.

Venturi's writings have influenced many of todays designers and forms the singlemost through justification for the historical and eclectic approach so evident with the Post Modernists. Venturi with Charles Jenks are the literary leaders of American Post Modernism, among the most famous of those who profess to follow Venturi and Jenks are Michael Graves, Charles Moore, Robert Stern and Stanley Tigerman. Michael Graves quotes Venturi on occasion when speaking on his work. Graves has had more success than Venturi commercially, Venturi is a little bitter about this saying -

> "What happens is usually the man who does a new thing the second time does it better, I mean he builds on it he does it cleaner, he really sees the situation more clearly than the man who sweated and struggled to slug it out in the first place" (Robert Venturi 1973 page 133)

Venturi has not attempted to relate the science, technology and manufacturing industry to his work and as such fails to see them as an integral part of design and society. Design is not separate from these considerations.

It is his ignorance of these factors which deny~~s~~ies Venturi's design much creditability by many people in a world where technology is so evidently part of society.

Borek Sipek who will be discussed later understands the manufacturing techniques used for all the materials he uses and is therefore in a position to exploit them, he does this with great authority and doesn't therefore limit the results of the design process in this context.

Venturi's latest offering in the product design area, a yellow and green clock, was designed for Alessi in 1988. Venturi has written

> "Everyone knows what cuckoo clocks are and almost everybody loves them. It was a nice challenge to take what is at once a familiar form and a vivid symbol and retain its lovable qualities and make it new and fresh at the same time. We did this by diminishing its hand craft qualities and abstracting its form increasing its scale and intensifying its colours... this to create a bold kind of image appropriate for our time"
> (four designers clocks 1966 - 1988 catalogue by Alessi, Italy 1988 P. 14)

One suspects that this clock contains a few "In Jokes" one such being that Le Corbusier was the son of a Swiss Watchmaker, and never did he design a clock or watch. Another, the echoing of the slick aphorsism from "The Third Man" by Graham Greene which goes -

> "In Switzerland, they had five hundred years of brotherly love democracy and peace - and what did they produce ? The Cuckoo Clock".

Venturi is again trying to provoke complexity and Contradiction. He wrote 'Architects can no longer afford to be intimidated by the puritanically moral language of Orthodox modern Architecture' (Blueprint May '87 page 4). He does make us think about the meaning of culture, but with items like his clock, so far removed from puritanically moral language that one almost wishes it would return.

"Representation can work in the design of objects and it can be manifested in two ways: where the whole object looks like something it isn't - such as a clock that looks like a house - or where the applique on an object stands for something not necessarily inherent to the object. In these ways the object becomes aesthetically a sign in itself or a vehicle for a sign; the essential quality of this type of object is less formal, structural or functional and more symbolic or ornamental. Also the symbolic content is not necessarily related to the formal, structural or functional quality of the object.... In less historical ornament, a flower pattern, for instance, may allude to conventional wallpaper flowers rather than to real flowers; the extra layer of meaning makes the symbolism richer. Ornament in folk Architecture is often representational high - art ornament simplified and rendered in two dimensions through painted patterns on flat surfaces, or through silhouettes.

The jig-saw carpentry of American front porches or the cut-out boards of Alpine Balustrades are examples. Economy and naivety were probably the immediate for this representational approach, but its aesthetic results were eloquent expressions of the essence of style.

In our economy and Industrial Standardisation on the one hand and lack of craftsmanship on the other justifies this simplified, repetitive and depictive approach to ornament. If we cannot construct historical architecture today or revive revivalism, we can represent them through applique and sign. This goes for the design of objects too". (Venturi, Robert 19 page 162)

Venturi as a designer seems limited in his ability by his naivety of manufacturing methods; and his simplified ideas concerning formal expression. His lack of consideration for the use of the item and his tunnel vision where he sees Centuries of History as well as the present but there can only be one result, a witty play on a recognised stereotype cluttered with whatever symbolism and imagery that will fit whether relevant or irrelevant.

However, one must admire Venturi's tongue in cheek approach to design which does result in an object with a peculiar inherent charm even if it is on the level of a joke. This charm value is probably calculated by careful selection of a source or sources.

Venturi tends to select recognised stereotypes not obscure ones which insures that the viewer of his items is struck with a feeling of de ja vu which whether conscious or unconscious accounts for the charm of the object, for example "Queen Anne" style whimsically denatured.

Venturi's lasting achievement in design is that he has managed such representation and usually with some irony has brought colour, ornament and history back into the area of debate. In the end its the thinking that lies behind his designs that are important, not the objects themselves.

It is not surprising that Venturi's designs have not found ready acceptance; they have been both too new for all their complexity of content, and too simple and assuming in their realisation for this effluent era. They have refused to make much out of nothing, to indulge in flashing gestures or to ponder fashion. They have been the products of a deeply systematic analysis in pragmatic and visual terms and have therefore required a serious re-orientation in all our thinking, as did the work of Le Corbusier. The future may therefore value and appreciate Venturi more than the present.

# CHAPTER II

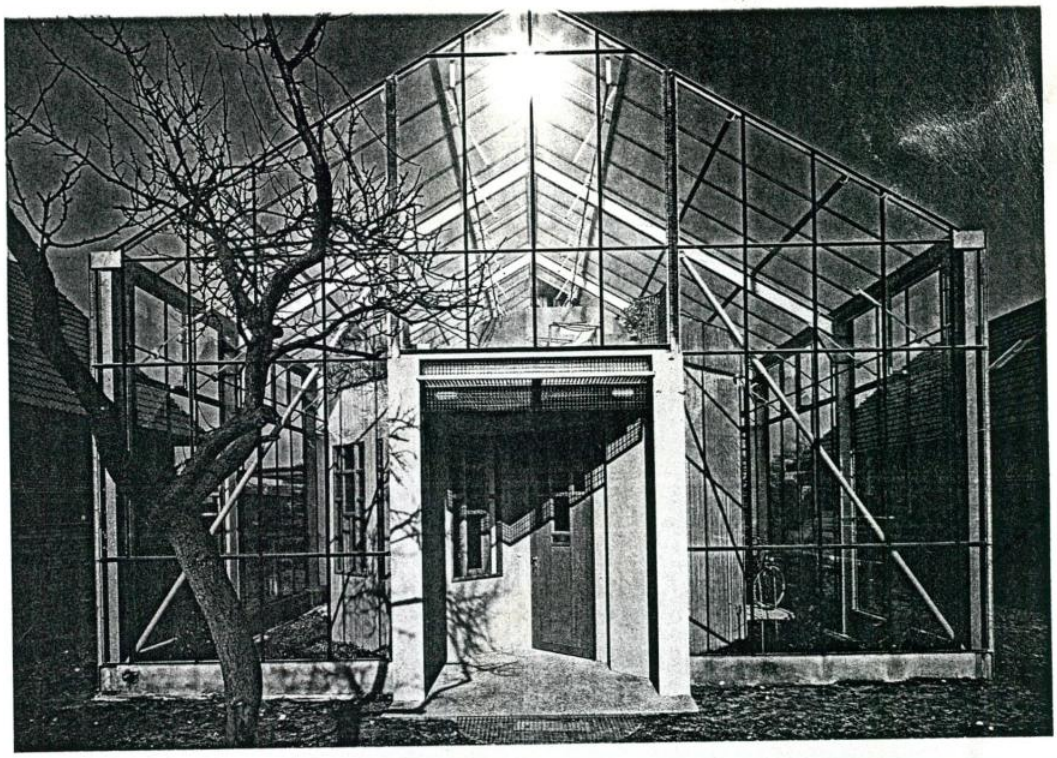
# BOREK SIPEK

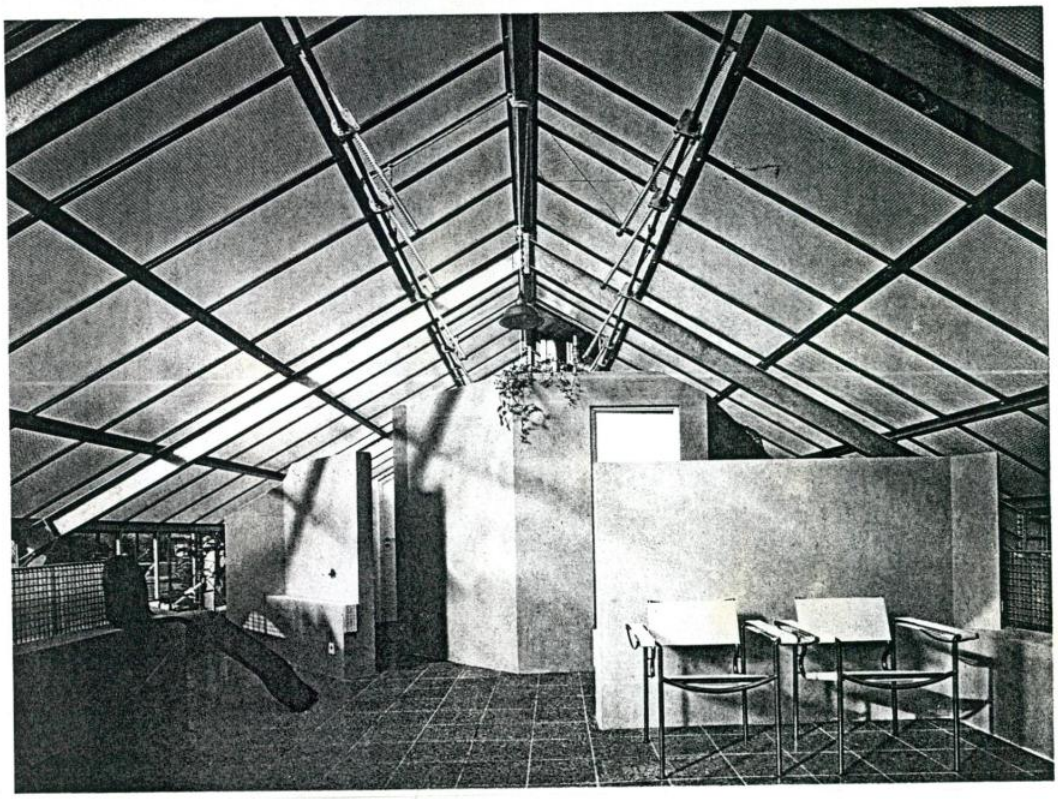
Borek Sipek (b. 1949) is a Czeck emigrant architect inspired by the flamboyance of tradition and culture, he creates objects of art with a dramatic presence, evoking a sense of ritual and mythology. "I'm not doing pieces for everyday" Sipek claims "I'm working for Sundays" (Rick Poyner 1990 page 11).

Now 42 Sipek has studied furniture design in Prague before leaving Czechoslovakia in 1968, he then moved to Germany to study architecture in Hamburg but transferred to philosophy in Stuttgart that same year. After graduating from Philosophy he spent much time drifting before getting his first "real" job as a scientific assistant at the institute of industrial design at the University of Hanover where he spent two years. He then moved to Holland in 1979 where he finally graduated from Architectural school in Delft he then became a professor of design theory. From here he assumed a position teaching design theory at Essen. At this point his career seemed likely to be an academic one.

Thankfully, this was not to be and in 1983 he designed his sisters house, this signalled the breakaway of an unusual design talent. The house shape was dictated by planning authorities so Sipek simply traced the dictated form and built a glass house inside which he built the real house. this is a typical example of Sipeks lateral thinking. The resulting solution appears as if a conservatory had engulfed a cottage. From here Sipek broke away from the academic life and began making "one offs" furniture and glassware. This was a costly venture for Sipek but when "Driade" (Italian Manufacturing Co.) saw his work they cleared his debts and began commissioning him to design for them in 1986. Despite Sipek's impressive education he does not like to talk about his work saying "I like to do and not to speak" (Rick Poyner 1990 page 13)

Of all contemporary furniture designers Borek Sipek has one of the most distinctive and personal visions. He is concerned with organic shapes coupled with geometrical shapes, enthuasism for sculpture, ornament, imagery, primitive art, craft, technology and the spirit of the 1900's.





Sisters house by Sipek 1985

Sipek has a cultural rooted view of design where tradition is important to him

> "not in recreating traditional form but in the sense of finding roots in cultural experience; Mythology for example, I try to re-intrepret it in a different way each time" (Marco Romanelli 1988 page 75)

His work is an effort to create forms which echo ancient and dreamy content. His ratton chairs for Driade for example imply an image of a bull like creature pawing the ground which evokes. A chair Sipek believes

> "... is not an interpretation with your brain on how to use it, but it's a challenge to your emotions on how to love it, so it's not about ergonomic comfort but your spirit" - Sipek

This implies that he is more concerned in ritual folk art and eroticism than functionalism despite all this his pieces are functional, his chairs are comfortable, his glasses are useful objects, many of his objects are even more functional than they appear, and only through use does the user discover new layers of function.

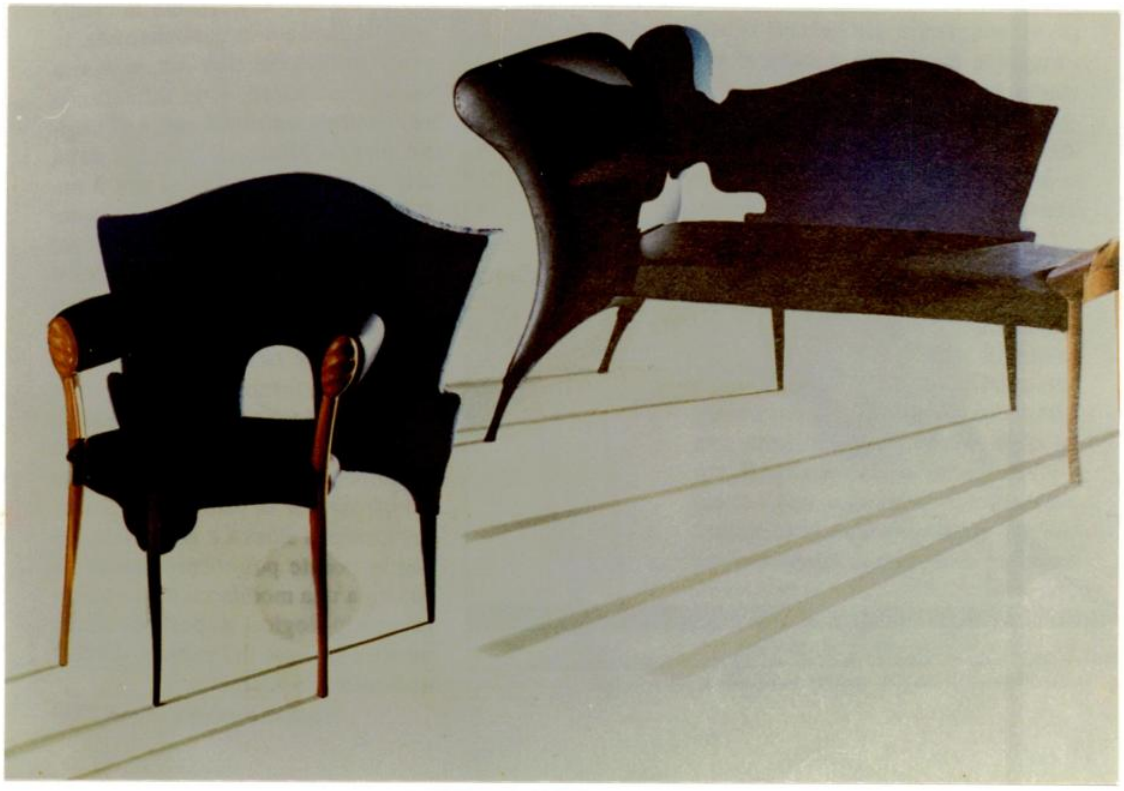
This feature improves the ritual and spiritual value of his pieces as a relationship develops between the object and the user through use. It is therefore evident that after all his decorative and organic tendencies he may have a sneaking admiration for the Czech functionalist tradition on the other hand the way he instils his function is very Baroque in spirit, in that the appearance gives little indication of the use. For example his spikely champagne glasses which appear at first glance to be purely a styling exercise, the spikes even seem to obstruct use however on using, one finds the spikes as comfortable supports for one hand while ensuring that the contents of the glass stays chilled.

One suspects that function informs Sipek pieces and the ornament and decoration adorn it. It is difficult to say which if either, style or function Sipek regards as most important. However, he has shown that by combining both, setting the function requirement and using knowledge and imagination to shape the form within the functional specification he does this so well that critics don't seem to see ~~the~~ that Sipek's designs are functional, they seem preoccupied with the appearance of his pieces.

Sipek has probably one of the most eccentric approaches to design today, he is beyond doubt a romantic. For the most part Sipek produces varied, rich but in a certain sense bohemian pieces. His design process is as described by Sipek himself -

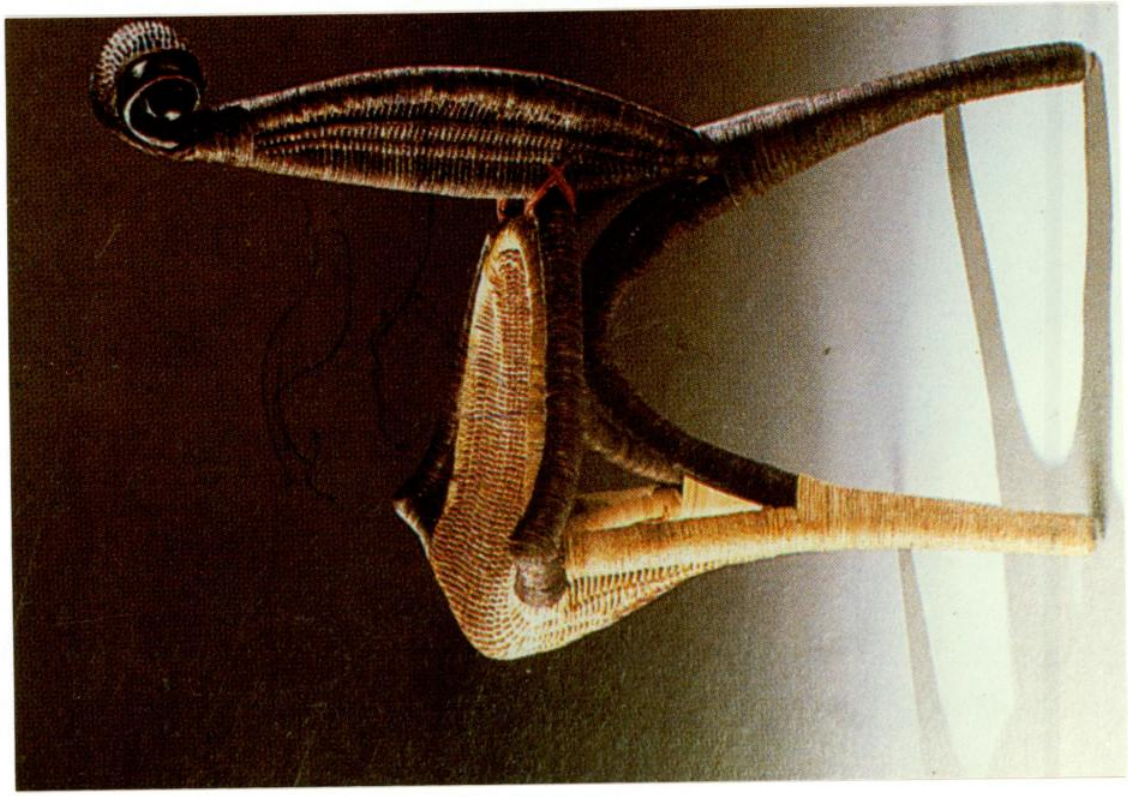
> "When I start to plan, it is as though I want to tell a story I have in mind .... when the project is finished the story is no longer interesting because it only performed a controlling role; what counts is the object itself; it's ability to be communicative, sensitive, erotic"
> (Mauro Landini 1988 page 124).

The "Story" Sipek works to is like a dream and is responsible for the surreal quality of his work in that the story is the re-evolution of a chair for example, incorporating dialogue and character. Sipek's design all have a strange character and life of their own. For example, "Prosim" appears swift and light thanks to a kind of metaphoric surrealism that distinguishes its sinuous curves, so the chair Helena is a broad - limbed, poised beast. The former is changeable and quick and the latter is concentrated and reflective.

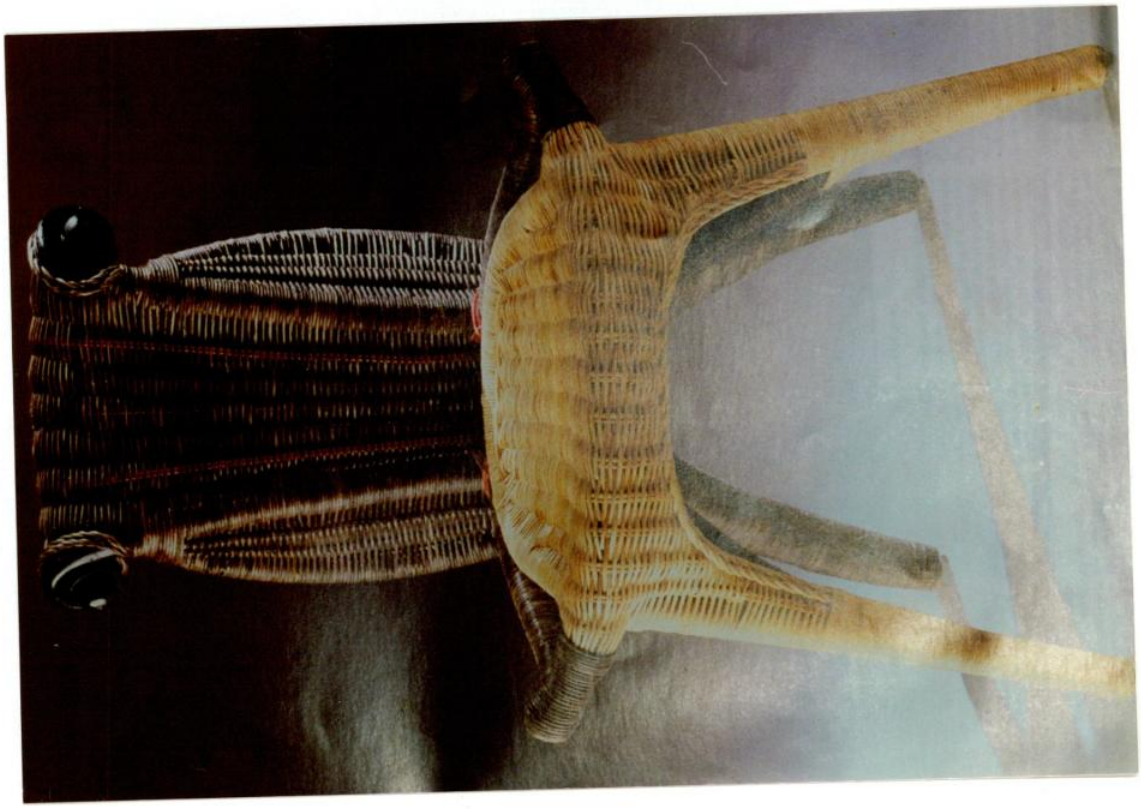


"Prosim" by Borek Sipek for Driade (1988)

The Sedni Armchair and The Sni Dormeuse



"Helena" Ratton chair for Driade (1988)



A feature often evident in Sipek's work is dialogue: the dialogue between organic shapes and geometric ones. The dialogue between precious materials and humble ones, the dialogue between aesthetic and function, the 'sni dormeuse' for example has a seat and headrest covered in black leather while the backrest is covered in blue cotton. The backrest is a very surreal animated form resembling a leg and boot of a cartoon character while the seat and headrest are elegant form's with a large degree more geometry than the backrest. The footrest is made from polished cherry wood which is as much a styling feature as a functional footrest, the cherrywood chosen for practicality but also to increase the dialogue of the piece.

The "Sni Dormeuse" and the "Sedni" Armchair are obviously in the spirit of the 18th Century upholstery furniture, Sipeks story has ensured that traces of history are not overly evident. If they were the object may not rise to a sphere superior to biography or polemic. Sipek does enough not to be seen as a Post Modern in Venturi's light as his pieces are contemporary in the best possible way, he seeks a genuine artisan expression, an individual vision.

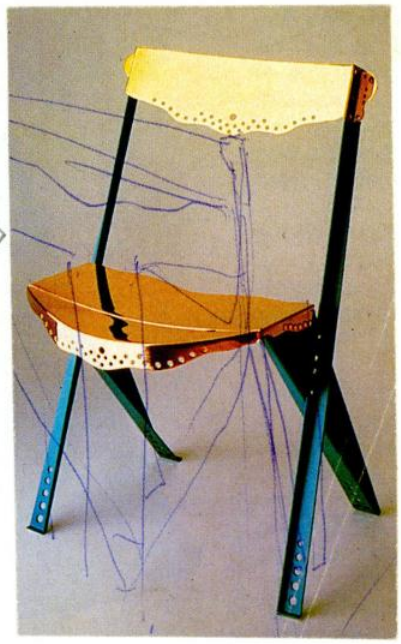
The spiritual historical content rather than the formal historical content shows the fundamental difference between pieces by Sipek and those by the more superficial Post Modern designers, those who make historical quotations and are more passively grovelling to the teaching of the past. In a word they are more Bourgeois whereas Sipek seems more Aristocratic. Sipek's items possess the discretion of the colloquial object.

His "Anebo Tak" chair as an example has this humble, discrete colloquial image. It has a back made from sheet brass, a masculine material, which has been transformed into a feminine one by the touch of a craftsman laser cutting curvy patterns and perforating with doily like patterns, which is a favourite Sipek motiff. The seat is sheet copper treated in a similar manner which seems to evoke images of lace ladies underwear. Again Sipek uses dialogue between the organic seat and back and the geometric legs, the steel is a cheap material and is painted while the polished brass and copper appear semiprecious.

"Anebo Tak"

Borek Sipek for

Driade.



The chairs name translates "could be like this" meaning the army chair which it is an interpretation of can assume a spiritual function without compromising its function. The prototype for the "Anebo Tak" was forged by Sipek himself in his own studio, this practice is common with Sipek as he likes to work intuitively with materials.

It is apparent that the physical craft of making things is of utmost importance to Sipek. He often calls on the resources of high technology to make pieces like "Anebo Tak" which combines laser cut precision with organic verve. He has united natural maple with tubular steel, sheets of brass with medium density Fibreboard (MDF), he has turned ratton into an avant garde statement, made glass vessels so other worldly they may have been conceived on another planet, produced porcelain pieces sprouting rims like lacy collars, as well as much more. It is largely Sipek's understanding and ability in making that instils authorative confidence in his designs, his ability to weld, upholster, carve, cast metal, ceramic and glass, throw pots, blow glass and weave. It is very unusual for Sipek to commit himself to a design on paper and prefers to work intuitively with the materials. His objects have a life of their own, a life that subverts their industrial production displaying sinuous, curving lines that comes from his assured handling of materials.

Exploring the possibilities of traditional glass blowing (which he learned through his step-father a Czech glass blower)

Sipek has collaborated with legendary glassblowers in many countries, teasing precious crystals of glass, nubs, guills and lattices that appear to defy all logic, but thanks to Sipek's lateral thinking talent, turn out to perfectly functional.

Sipek is very thorough and methodical concerning manufacture and realises it's utmost importance to design. Many designers, like Venturi appear inadequate in this context, but Sipek excels in his perfectionalism and quest for knowledge. In order to design a series of Ratton chairs Sipek travelled to the Phillippines to learn to weave ratton. The chairs that resulted showed Sipek's ability to learn and master the process creating chairs which converted ordinary ratton into a medium through which an ethos could be communicated.

With many of his pieces Sipek supervises the tooling up of production lines, showing his dedication to his pieces insuring they are not compromised by Engineers on the factory floor.

Sipek is however more than just knowledgeable concerning the methods of manipulating material, for in the hands of a man lacking talent wood, stone, clay, metal, glass, fabric, thread and ratton cannot go beyond their practical value. Sipek when attracted to a material penetrates it with a passion giving it new life and raising it to a new higher level of existence, where it has the power to excite our senses.

Sipek does not go in for large scale mass production -

> "People buy my things because they like them, not because they are somehow expected to" "Starck says he wants everyone in the world to own a Starck item" (Borek Sipek 1990)

It is curious that Sipek should contrast himself to Starck as they are certainly the most opposite of contemporary designers. Starck with his couple of scribbles flung to a bevy of underlings who actually design the items and Sipek with his intense involvement from concept to production. Starck's dream will not work for reasons Sipek obviously sees, and that is, one cannot make assumptions on what the mass markets taste might be.

It is therefore better to design what is good for oneself and allow the product to select its own market. If one tries to satisfy everyone inevitably no-one is truly satisfied. Sipek realises this and claims his only philosophy is "individualism". His work as he says is "not for everybody" but "for Sundays", Sipek wants to be experienced not analysed "I don't think it's important that you find the philosophical ideas behind it". (Borek Sipek 1990) This statement at least implies that such underpinnings do exist.

Sipek's ratton chairs for Driacle have a carefully contrived rawness which again implies the discretion of a local craftman, this rawness provides a fresh alternative to the sophistication of most contemporary furniture. The ratton chairs Helena, Liba and Prorok have achieved a surreal richness of myth and matter, of tribal rites and symbolic spirit declaring a strong sensuality. This sensuality relates to the expression of Papua which Adolf Loos insults in "Ornament and Crime 1908 where he wrote that -

"Some men and women are sad that we of today, unlike the black men and men of times gone by, are unable to make new ornament. Let them be comforted - that we are unable to make new ornament is a sign of the great qualities of our time - we have gone far past it". p.v.

Loos sees ornament as primitive, savage and criminal, he also claimed that all art was erotic, but it is exactly this primitive eroticm that enhances these chairs ethos.

Sipek's ratton chairs seem related in spirit to the Czechslovak cubism and it's furniture of the first ten years of the twentieth century, or the Baroque architecture possibly of Josef Plecnik whose work in Prague, Sipek has expressed a sentimental love of. Sipek's chairs have similar expression and monumental value, the same powerfully "mobile and monumental modelling of the matter" - (Karel Teige). Sipek is capable of achieving this content without compromising function unlike the tradition of the Czeck cubists who professed to follow Karel Teige (leader of The Devitsil group) who worked free from the purely functional conditioning.

Sipek seems influenced also by later Czech designers in the Czech functionalist tradition, the type of work carried on today by people like Jan Kaplicky. But Sipek refuses to fit into either category, the former influence causing his aesthetic expressionalism and the latter his functionalism. His designs are well balanced and evoke a dialogue between function and expression.

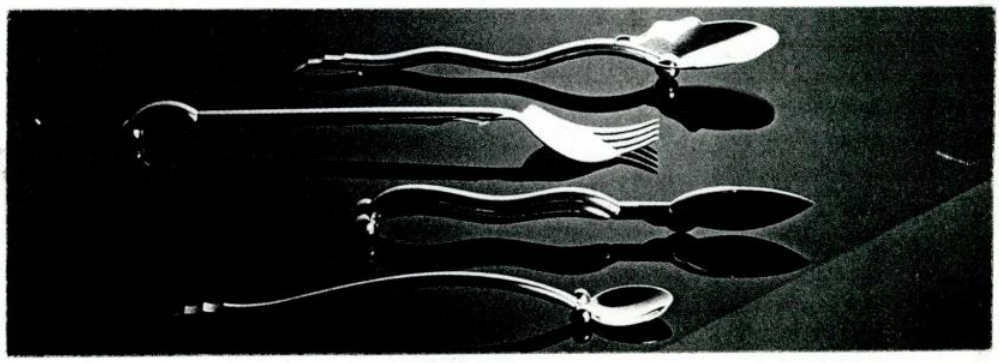
This has led Sipek to apparently turn his work against "practical" functioning which has reduced most industrial products to "boxes with knobs". He puts the power of objects against attentative association for which, in fact he makes new functional, "practical" suggestions, which are not immediately recognised. This is especially evident in his glass ware. For example his carafe created for Savoye and Moroni, have which permits drinking out of the prickly stopper. The "centre table" - which is really a fruit bowl can be removed from it's base after the water which has drained off the fruit has collected in the spines. The base can then serve as a vase while the bowl can be used separately.

Gudrum on the Banks of the Leineufer

This inventive lateral thinking is also evident in Sipek's furniture, for example the - "gudrum am Leineufer" chair despite it's appearance is both comfortable and highly practical; interlinking of four or a back - to - back line up of any number of chairs can be composed.

Gudrum am Leineufer

His cutlery too is highly ergonomic, functional and practical. He makes his cutlery stand for the apparent aesthetic reason but also to improve use of it. The curved handles are different on each, because we use each of them differently, and they are all adapted accordingly.



"Verwandtschafien" cutlery 1988.

Sipek wittily practical lateral thinking is evident in all he designs from his sisters house to a spoon. His pieces are rich in spiritual content from seeing to using, (or exploring).

Sipek shows that spiritual content is not inhibited by function but can actually be improved through function his design approach is re-evolutionary in it's approach and this passage can be interpreted by everyone. Sipek's work is that of an extraordinary talent, his pieces are the result of a craftsman with a philosophical consciousness for the human spirit, teasing and pleasing it with functional forms realised by the craftsman in both an industrial and a craft workshop. Handling every material and process with great confidence and fluency.

# CHAPTER III

# OSCAR TUSQUETS

# AND

# PHILIPPE STARCK

A designer with an architectural background Oscar Tusquets Blanca (born 1941) is in the Italian tradition; in that he works in close association with industry. He became one of the best known architects in the world for designing a tea set. The tea set in question was the "Juego De Te Orando" - designed in 1983 for Alessi.

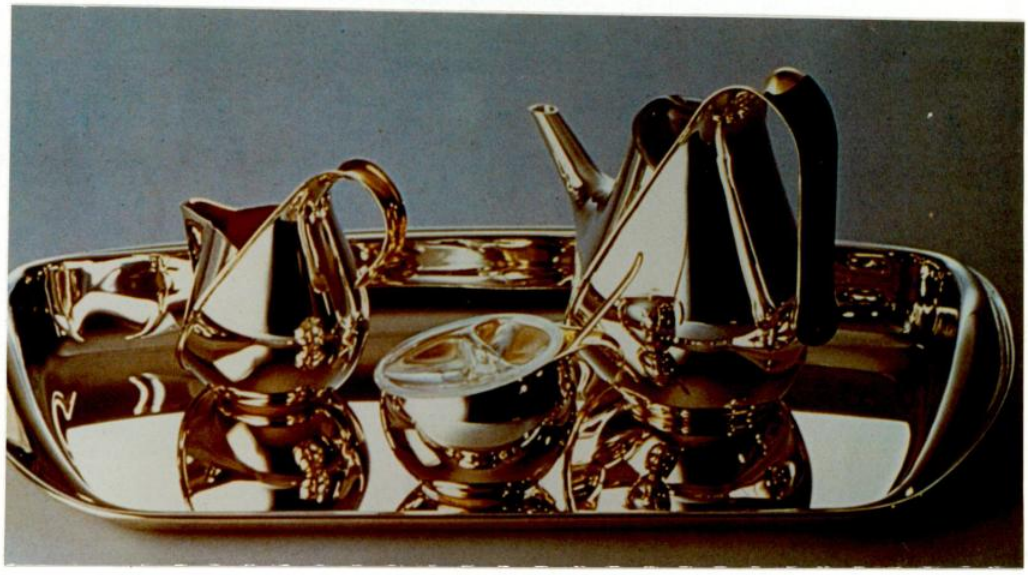
Tusquets close co-operation with the manufacturers of his products, and their Technicians is the effector of his frequently outstanding pieces, in a technical context. Also, in the Italian tradition he does not produce working drawings of his designs, concept sketches only serve to convince himself that a design proposal will work. Discussions with those responsible for manufacture are made face to face. "There are two types of technician" says Tusquet's "Those who see only difficulties; and the usually older men who say 'this may seem impossible but if I make it this way perhaps it's possible' If a designer does not propose silly things, the technicians will respect him" (Alan Pipes 1990 page 38)

The method of designing relies on a very personal level of collaboration between designer and technician, where the designer confronts the technician with ideas, the technician then decides whether or not it can be done, the result depends on the ability of both. Tusquets usually works with just four or five factories, owned by personal friends where he has a good relationship with the technicians.

Oscar Tusquets various range designed in 1984 for "Casas" exhibits the results of collaboration with the Casas Technicians, the secretarial chair especially. This chair uses a clever linkage of pivot and glides. This improves the use of the chair remarkably, ensuring that the users back is supported even in a leaning forward position, aside from this features obvious ergonomic role it provides an alternative to swinging and rolling around the room for this bored office worker, this is actually what one first thinks when using the chair.


Secretarial chair for Casas

With the teaset for Alessi, Tusquets offering was the only one of eleven proposals which didn't use traditional methods of manufacture. His desire to produce something special led him to invent a new technique for fabricating a teapot, this allowed him to produce a pot which appears as one growing out of another. it is made from two formed pieces, the spout is an integral part of one while the handle is on the other. They are joined diagonally to form the teapot. Like Sipek, Tusquets works with prototypes and produced a wooden model for Alessi and was the only one not to submit drawings.



Oscar Tusquets Teaset for Alessi 1983.

Tusquets does not push the limit of technology but uses what's already available, sometimes in a way which hasn't been done before. He is in some respects similar to Niels Diffrient - an American furniture designer. Their main similarities lie in their advocacy of mass production and technology. However, there is at least one important difference between the two.

Tusquets manipulates technology for the cause of his design, whereas, Diffrient manipulates his designs in the cause of manufacture and comfort, he feels the furniture industry is "Old fashioned" and that this is it's dilemma "It's as though we get a mixmaster in the Kitchen but still whip the cream by hand" he continues

> "Neither Architecture or Furniture has ever made use of where Technology really is. What fascinated me was the integration and comprehension of the machine relating to design. I feel that's whats really needed to be mastered. It's easy enough to design forms - what I call styling - and then by some semi-handicrafted technology make them come true by oneses and twosises. To do something that really good by the most advanced techniques, and produced in the millions, is another challenge entirely".
> (Eric Larrabee 1981 page 121).

Diffrient is concerned with the chair as a machine for sitting on which must use the most up to date technology in it's realisation. Tusquet however, works at all levels of industry from low technology craft based companies to the highest of high technology producers.

Tusquet's approach is broader than Diffrient as the latter limits himself to large scale high-tech mass production, his approach is therefore more suitable for work stations or tractor seats. Diffrient is not concerned with the spirit of the user only the body shape, Tusquet is concerned with both as parallel consideration.

Aside from Industry Tusquet considers the idea to be the most important aspect of design, this is obvious, for without the idea there is nothing. The work of Phillippe Starck stresses the importance of the idea as he has built a worldwide reputation on his ability to conceptualise in areas spanning architecture, Boats, Furniture, Cutlery to mention only very few.

Philippe Starck (born 1949) the French superstar of the design world, has been involved with projects as diverse as a Toyko beer hall and a spoon (his cutlery incidentally took longer to design). He rose to fame through media coverage of his interiors for clubs and cafes. His interiors exhibit ingenuity and humour, games of scale and form with a whimsical elegance.

Starck's claim "I'm not an architect, I'm not a designer" (Television Interview 1989) is essentially true if one's definition of design is concerned with the concept being detailed to production. Starck does not involve himself in the project after the initial concept stage, not partaking in the technicalities and problems of the development process. This practice which tends to infuriate many in the design profession and is almost the opposite of Borek Sipek's intense involvement, is Stark's virtue. In it he realises the importance of technical development and employs experts in that area who he feels will do a more superior job than he would. It is a process justified by the end result of the project.

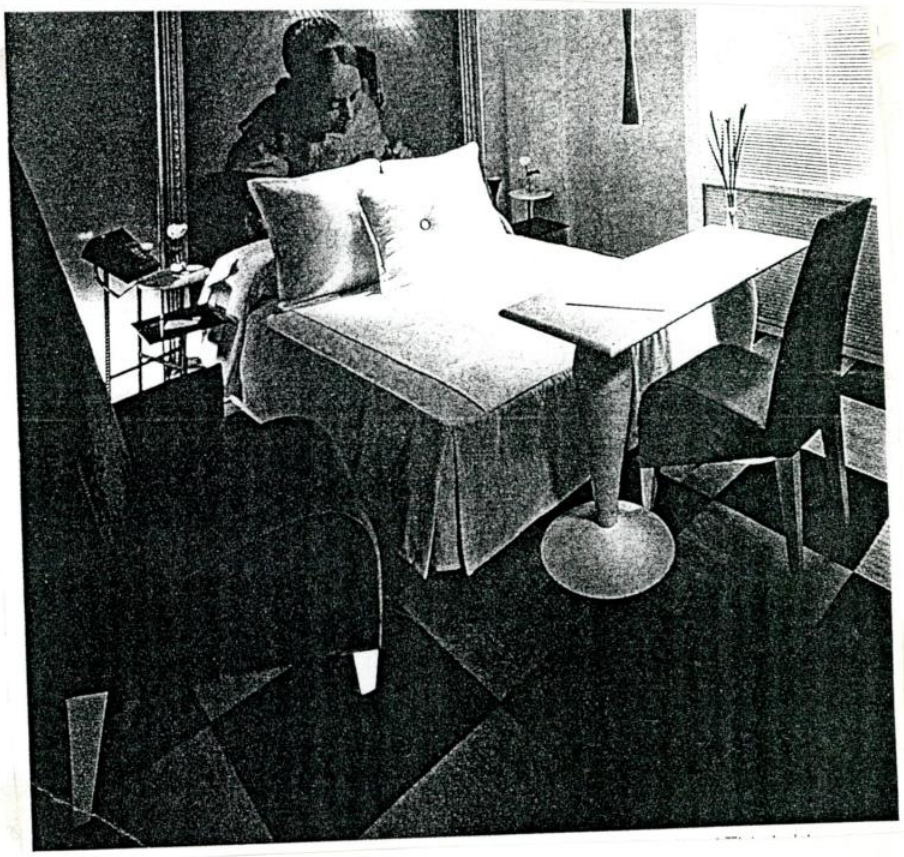
"I am a professional dreamer... I'm here to make a precise concept" (Starck 1989)

Starck works by placing himself in an empty room free from any visual distraction. This method is a curious phenomenon, for if one is placed in a room in a house under construction for example, one cannot help but try to fill the emptiness, limited only by ones imagination. Starck brings with him to this room Two questions - The first "... why is the current one (object) unsatisfactory" (Starck 1989) and the second which sums up his philosophy "object have you life, have you soul" (Starck 1989). The first accounts for his ingenuity and humour, the second, his games of scale and forms with whimsical elegance.

Starck's Lounge chair for Driade takes a familiar Lounge chair and reduces all it's form to a minimum Thickness and casts it in aluminium. In an attempt to make it more relevant to today, the result is functional and creates a strong image of something old done in a new way an observer may ask himself "Ah why not before" which is exactly what Starck wants.

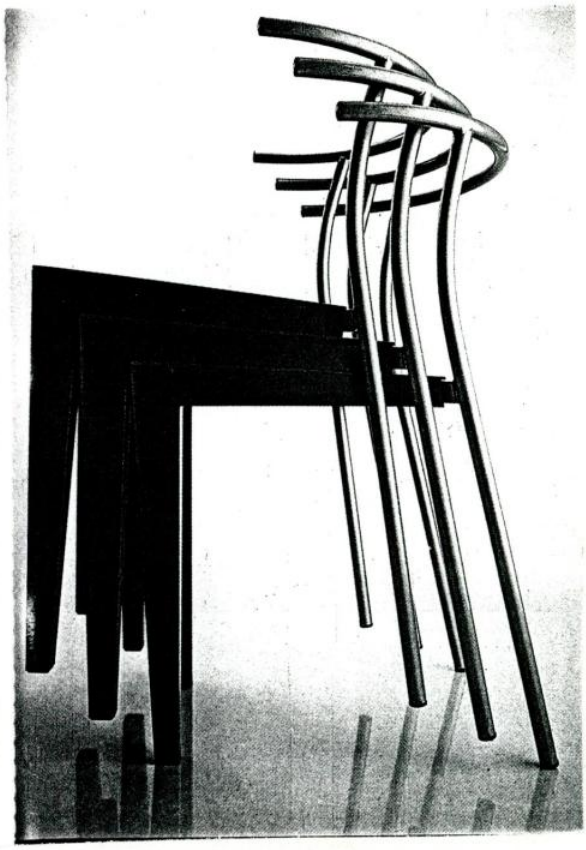
Lounge chair for Driade

In his design for the dining room of the "Cafe Costes" Starck placed four chairs around each table one with a high back and three with low backs. The idea behind it "Let them play let them fight" implying that customers could amuse themselves by selecting a head of the table.



A Starck interior

Probably the most interesting of his chairs is his "Dr Glob" chair for Kartell. An Avant Garde chair using a curious juxtaposition of plastic and tubular steel, the idea as with most of Starck's work is simple and effective.



Dr. Glob stacking chair for Kartell

Starck is not concerned with design philosophy or manufacturing techniques his only philosophy is "Object have you life, have you soul". Starck's contribution to design is his stressing of the importance of the idea without which there is nothing.

The chair is probably the purest vehicle of expression for a designer, in that the internal mechanism and outer form cannot be separated. Today we have an abundance of designers who design to a set of rules which they themselves choose. Furniture designers can learn from the different approaches, without professing to any single philosophy.

Robert Venturi's work demonstrates the importance of symbol, ornament and decoration, and it's relevance or apparent relevance to a particular design problem. He shows us the importance of looking at the past anew and making one's own deductions. Because his views are practically the opposite to those of Le Corbusier, Mies Van der Rohe and the moderns in general, he makes us question this approach. It is interesting to note that despite his writings Le Corbusier was more concerned with style than convenient planning. His apparent hypocrisy aside, this informs us that Le Corbusier realised the importance of style which is essentially ornamental. The problem was that many of those who professed to follow Le Corbusier would not design outside the bounds of his writings as the master himself did.

It would seem that Le Corbusier was aware that his written theory was (like all others) not all - encompassing and in practice there were considerations which arose that were not accounted for.

It is therefore important not to blindly follow and single philosophy, style or fashion. This is evident in many cases; there was Le Corbusier's hoard of followers whose rule book was "Towards a new Architecture". They are responsible for creating the awkward monstrosities which led to the demise of modernism. A simpler clearer example can be seen in American design of the fifties where car designers stumbled on the streamlined teardrop shape and adopted it as a symbol of modernity. This shape which came from the discoveries of aircraft designers had less but some plausible functional relevance in car design. But the relevance of the tear drop look became completely unclear when applied to such things as refrigerators, stoves, meat grinders, electric irons, orange squeezers and radios suddenly someone somewhere realised strangely enough that a refrigerator did not have to be designed for flight, and then the teardrop had run it's course. This is not to say that streamlining was not a valid style, but like everything it is good only when used in a creative and somewhat relevant way.

With furniture many consumers persist in their enthuasism for the man made or anything that appears handmade. Borek Sipek's work shows us that the craft aesthetic need not be limited to craft production but can be achieved through inventive and knowledgeable manipulation of production techniques. He shows that the careful contrived rawness of the craft aesthetic juxtaposed with the rigours of geometry can have a poetic effect in the dialogue between the two. Venturi on the other hand expresses respect for the craft of yesteryear but claims that the nature of the industry today denies the use of craft. However, it is his naivety of the industry which forms the basis for this view point. As Sipek's work shows us, a handicraft appearance can be achieved through industrial production, and also an industrial craft aesthetic can be achieved, the idea of a craftman using an industrial workshop rather than a craft workshop.

Oscar Tusquet's designs would be mundane if not for industrial production techniques and his tendency to use them in a fresh way. The beauty of his Teapot for Alessi, for example, relies on the diagonal split line which would not traditionally have been possible.

Niels Diffrient too shows us how industry can be important with his use of always the most advanced up-to-date methods of production to produce his chairs. However, Diffrient also exhibits another important lesson. That is the danger of being a blind follower of industry. Diffrient is a slave to technology, he uses it to produce a "Machine for sitting on" the parallel forces in his work are technology and ergonomic comfort, the resulting aesthetic effect is a consequence not a prior consideration.

Function is important in that it makes a chair a chair. However, maximum comfort is not always important, if it were we wouldn't sit at all, as the human body was obviously not designed for sitting. It is rather a cultural choice bound up with tradition and rites as well as various levels of comfort. A task chair, for example, requires maximum comfort, this can be achieved without overly compromising aesthetic as is seen in Oscar Tusquets secretarial chair.

Mies Van der Rohe would have us believe that comfort was all important, but then proceeded to design chairs that were more stylish than comfortable. Incidentally Van der Rohe's Barcelona chair is the only chair still produced by "Knoll International" in a handicraft manner which is not to say his furniture is lacking, it is just to point out the recurring irony involved in the better work of the moderns.

Borek Sipek's treatment of function is a curious one, his work generally functions in a traditional manner with reasonable comfort, however, his pieces often include features which appear to be purely styling gestures but through use one discovers that they are actually functional features, this aspect improves interaction and intimacy between the user and the chair.

It is evident in furniture design that the function and level of comfort should inform the project. Then through form, materials and decoration the ethos of the piece should be established along with the desired aesthetic affect.

Design is a planning activity whose aims, objectives and procedures should be dictated by the project at hand not a preconceived philosophy, as projects change so too should the exclusion and inclusion of the various considerations, for example, because pleasure is more social and psychological than physical, the systematic exclusion of aesthetic and sensual delight in favour of ergonomic comfort is most often an invalid approach to furniture design. Chairs should have a voice, they should not be mutant, mundane objects, the content of this voice should have some relevance to the particular chair and it's desired effect which will vary greatly from project to project.

The single most severe short falling of furniture designers is their lack of versatility, because this denies them the opportunity of realising there best from project to project. Robert Venturi's statement "I prefer 'both and' to 'either or'" is as much a reflection of consumer demand as it is a motto for his practice. Design is about society and as such it's concerned with what's best for the consumer and the environment.

The diversity of the user and the diversity of the environment demands the versatility of the designer. For an ultimately more honest and relevant design approach we must be more alert and versatile. Where the modern masters strength lay in their consistency, ours could lie in our diversity. Many species of design and style can inhabit the earth.

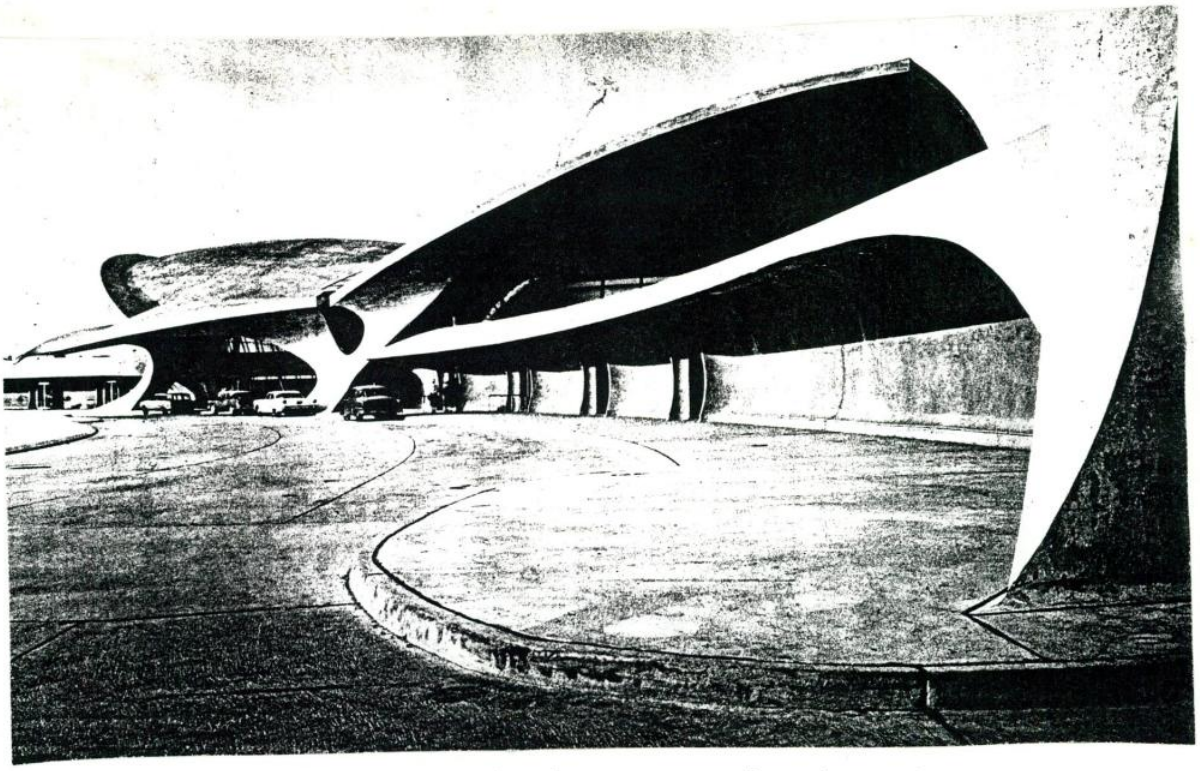
The designer should be inspired by the approach of Eero Saarinen whose work has no individual style. There is no Saarinen trademark. In each of his designs there existed a vocabulary of form which was likely to be incredibly different from project to project. In a book concerning the history of the furniture manufacturers "Knoll International" published in 1981 titled "Knoll Design", Saarinen explains his approach

> "In general if I had to say how we work I guess it would be that we start by considering very carefully the problem of the spirit of the particular job.... If everything goes well and everything is really performing within one idea and the structural system is the right one with all the right materials and methods and so on, it becomes the one thing which locks everything together", (Eric Larrabee 1981 page 50).

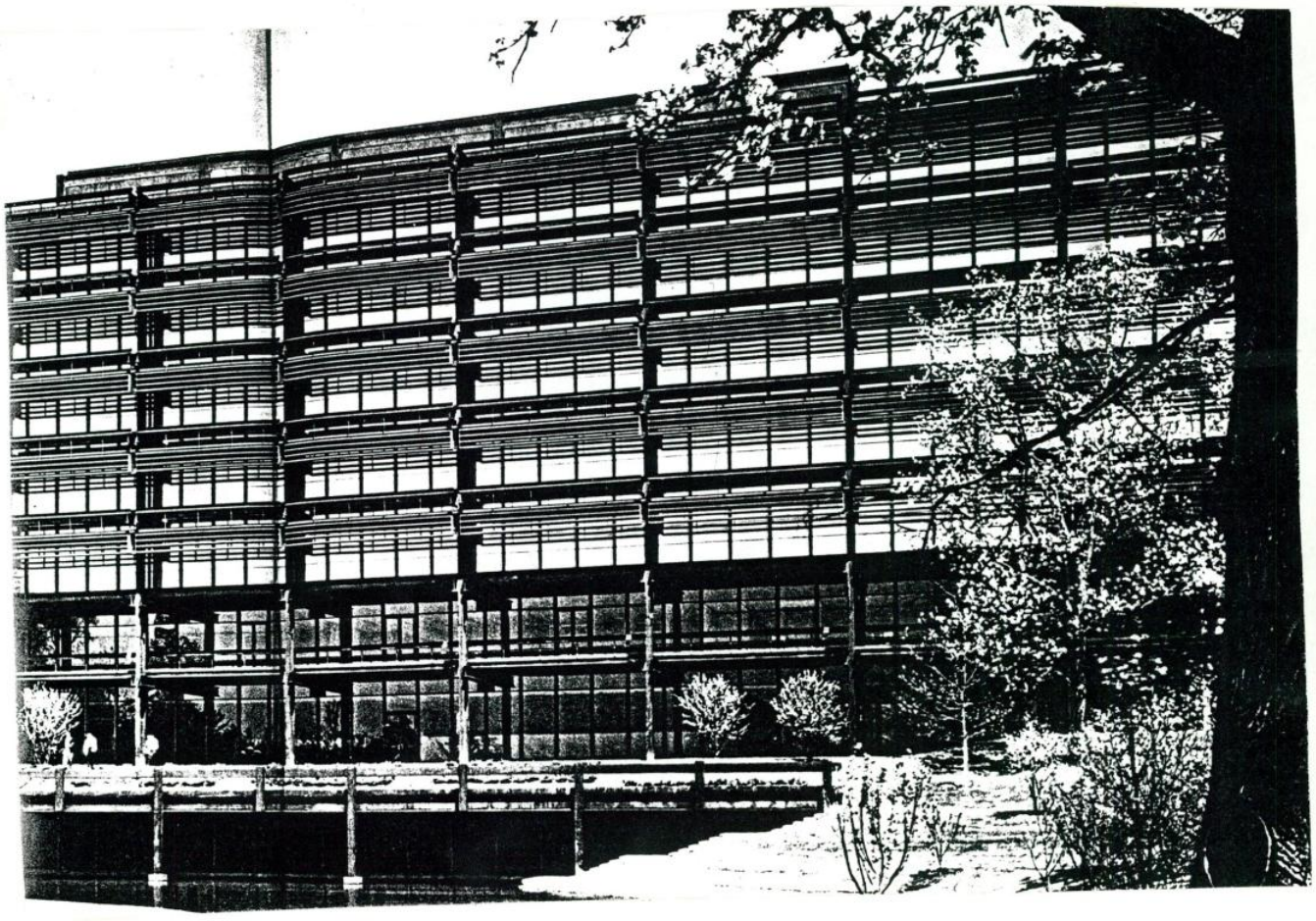
Saarinen could manipulate any style to achieve the desired effect in a particular project. He was perceived in his time to be insecure because of this talent, whereas the reality of it is that he was open-minded and ultimately more honest in his approach. Two of his buildings is enough to show the relevance of his approach, firstly the John Deere headquarters on which he said -

> "Farm Machinery is not slick, shiny metal but forged iron and steel in big, forceful functional shapes. The proper character for it's headquarters architecture should likewise not be a slick, precise, glittering glass and spindly metal building, but a building which is bold and direct using metal in a strong and basic way" (Eric Larrabee 1981 page 53)

Secondly, his TWA flight terminal at John F. Kennedy Airport, the affect Saarinen felt most relevant was that of a building poised for flight to communicate the excitement of air travel, he achieved this with a sweeping organic concrete structure. The following illustrations of the John Deere Headquarters and the TWA Flight Terminal show the diversity of this approach.



TWA Flight terminal at Kennedy Airport



John Deere Headquarters

It would seem that the furniture designer should accumulate a pool of knowledge and awareness concerning culture, tradition, art history, philosophy. psychology, technology, industry, craft, sensual stimulation, ergonomic comfort and design theories as diverse as Le Corbusier's and Venturi's. He should not blindly follow any philosophy, style, fashion or trend, but instead should draw on this knowledge for the cause of and, as the project in hand demands, with the overall aim of a more honest design approach and a quest for a more meaningful and relevant expression which would be re-established for every new project. Form will follow function where function includes use, performance and the desired aesthetic which includes symbolism, style, decoration and ornament. These two parallel considerations will constitute the ethos of the object. Echoed in the words of Eero Saarinen, the master of this approach,

> "Start by considering very carefully the problem of the spirit of the particular job.... and it becomes the one thing which locks everything together".
>
> (Eric Larrabee 1981 page 50)

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Chapter I

dates



Chapter II

Chapter III

Chapter IV

## BOOKS


Ambasz, Emilio — The International Design Yearbook 1986/7
Thames and Hudson, London 1986.

Branzi, Andrea — The Hot House - Italian New Wave Design
Thames and Hudson, London 1985.

Collins, Michael — Towards Post Modernism,
British Museum publication, London 1987.

Collins, Michael
& Papadakas, Andreas — Post Modern Design,
Academy editions, London 1989.

Duncan, Alastair — Art Nouveau Furniture
Thames and Hudson, London 1982.

Garner, Philippe — Twentieth Century Furniture
Phaidon Press Limited, Oxford 1980.

Isozaki, Arata (Ed) — The international design
Yearbook 1989/90.
Thames and Hudson London 1988.

Jencks, Charles — Post Modernism: The new classism in
Art and Architecture.
Academy Editions, London 1987.

Lancaster, Osbert Homes Sweet Homes
John Murray, London 1939.

Larrabee, Eric Knoll Design,
H.W. Abrams, New York 1981.

Le Corbusier Towards a new Architecture translated by
Fredrick Setchens,
The architectural press, London 1946.
(original "Vers une Architecture" 1927)

Pipes, Alan Drawing for three dimensional design.
Thames and Hudson, London 1990.

Scarzella, Patrizia Steel and Style: The story of Alessi
household ware.
Archidia Milano 1987.

Siapeta, Viadimir Czech functionalism
Architectural association, London 1987.

Starck, Philippe
(ED) The International Design Yearbook 1987/8
Thames and Hudson, London 1987.

Stern, Rubert (ED) The International Design Yearbook 1985/6
Thames and Hudson, London 1985.

Venturi, Robert Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture.
Museum of Modern Art, New York 1966.

Venturi, Robert Learning from Las Vegas. 1972.

Vercelloni, Isa Stlyes of Living: The best of Casa Vogue
Thames and Hudson, London 1985.

## PERIODICALS


Burt, Jillian — 'The Hippest Hotel in Manhattan'
Blueprint Dec 1988/Jan 1989.
page 22 - 26.

Cohen, Lisa — 'Hotspots' Interiors January 1989.
page 26.

Cummings, Hugh — 'The designed object, an international survey, Alessi metal ware.'
Art and Design Vol 3 1987.
page 22 - 31.

Grant, Ian — 'Paris'
Interior Design (UK) March 1988.
page 22 - 23.

Harris, Patricia & Lyon, David — 'The Fabric Workshop', fibre Arts magazine
Jan/Feb 1989.

Henderson, Justin — 'Heroic influence' Interiors Jul 1989.
page 98 - 99.

Landini, Mauro — 'Borek Sipek, Driade'
Domus September 1988.

Mendini Alessandro Diverse Architecture Casa Vogue
October 1988
page 174 - 193.

Niesenand Nonie The Art of Starckness Vogue (UK)
April 1989
page 228 - 231.

Poyner Rick Armchair Theatre
Blueprint June 1990
page 46 - 48.

Promoli Francesca The sign of Starck Casa Vogue
April 1989
page 188 - 193.

Comanelli Marco Borek Sipek
Domus June 1988
page 74 - 79.

Schepers Wolfgang Post Modern Glass design Neues Glas
No. 3 1988
page 180 - 195.

Sudjig Deyan Furniture on the catwalk
Blueprint November 1988
page 44 - 49.

Truppin, Andrea 'Starck Struck'
Interiors February 1989
page 121 - 129

Warren, John 'Clock forces'
Blueprint April 1988
page 24 - 25.

Wigley, Mark 'The decorated gap'
Ottagono March 1990.
page 30 - 55.

Williams, Hugh Aldersey 'Spain the Catalan connection'
ID May/June 1988
page 54 - 61

Williams, Peter 'Emigré Eminence'
Design Week June 1990.
page 17 - 19.

Others

Four designers clocks 1966 - 1988 catalogue by Alessi 1988.

MM Video BBC production - Philippe Starck 1989.