

# the style

Organic or "sculptural" forms, high functionality,  
complete absence of ornamental detail..... ➤ **Linea Italiana**

"democratic" inspired, making products more affordable thus more desirable  
Mass production

After war, ppl had no or little money, but **needed** stuff  
thus designers committed themselves to designing everyday items



## european modernism

Meets everybody needs a more *humane society*

Rationalists: Franco Albini, members of BBPR (architectural firm)

**"new forms to shape a new society"**

No more thrills or gimmicks, clean, sleek, design for a better/new society



# 1946

Riunione Italiana Mostre per l'Arredamento (RIMA)

Organized *"Furniture explosion"*

Showed works by Ignazio Gardella, Vittoriano Viganó

designs were simple, inexpensive, for small apartments, wood (everything was scarce)



to create a relationship between industrial + applied arts + manufacturing

# 1947

Triennale opened

theme: *L'abitazione*

*the home*

curator: **Piero Bottoni**

*communist architect*

*need to solve problems of least privileged class*



end of 1940's

American product and new trends in contemporary art influence Italian design

Designers: Achille, Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Marco Zanuso, Ettore Sottsass, Vico Magistretti

established: **"Usefulness plus beauty"**  
individual way of interpretation

Thus Italian design history is best reflected on individual designers

focused on *form*, it was unique, not found in other countries

example: 1950 Turin architect **Carlo Molino**  
Arabesque furniture  
oddly distorted plywood shapes



## Working relationships with industrial companies

example: **Pirelli + Marco Zanuso**  
produced new kind of foam rubber: gommapiuma Lady Chair  
1951 founded Arflex

1954 Sleep-O-Matic

in response to tight living quarters in public housing developments





# Working relationships with industrial companies

designer: Gio Ponti

1953  
furniture manufacturer:  
distex easy chair



Cesare Cassina

1957  
superleggera chair



Traditional form + modern style (*secured cassina in history*)

1939

lamp manufacturer:

Gino Sarfatti



Entrepreneurs willing to take *stylistic + financial risks*,  
to employ modern production *technologies + experiment* with new materials  
*Small workshops + large industrial suppliers* = flexible in production + use specialized  
knowledge to create impossible designs

1950's  
product aesthetic appeal becoming more important

Milan Triennale of 1951, 54, 57 focused on new field of industrial design

## 1959 La Rinascente

design award: Compasso d'oro  
ultimate measure of achievement in profession  
run by ADI: Italian association of industrial Designers

HIGH standards

example: 1957 judges (Franco Albini, Pier Giacomo Castiglioni and Ignazio Gardella) gave only 5/1200 entries an award

designer: Gino Colombini plastic bowl Kartell

designer: Marcello Nizzoli Mirella sewing machine Necchi

designer: Benso Cesarino Pirarollo Dolomite ski boots

designer: Ruth Christensen Alta Marea fabric design

designer: Vincio Vianello a few colored glass vases



designers + manufacturers

1953

designer: **Marcello Nizzoli**  
*Necchi sewing machines*

took charge of design

'put his stamp' on Olivetti's products of 1940's and 1950's

designer: **Gino Valle**

head of design department at Zanussi

gave elettrodomestici (small household appliances) their elegant purist look



Not inhibited by corporate structure  
Could work independently

example: 1959 Ettore Sottsass create Italy 1st computer Elea 9003 and still showed his cerworld's lightest chairamic objects



# **cars cars cars**

designers: **Pinin Farina** } “haute couturiers” of automobiles  
**Bertone**

1947 *Cisitalia*

1956 designer: **Alfa Romeo** Giulietta Spider

Enzo Ferrari

*sexy sexy car*  
*superior engines*  
*success on racing teams*  
*aerodynamic lines and sharply contoured details*

Fiat mid-sized compact models

1957 **Nuovo 500**

*more Italians turned into motorists*



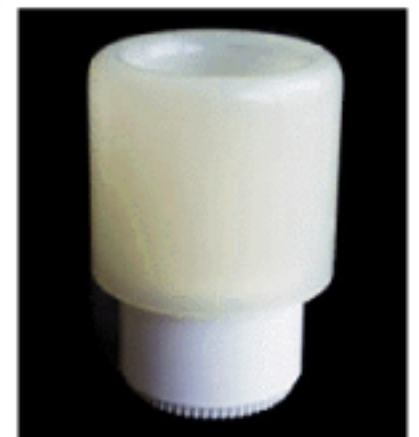


1957 Italy joined European Economic Community  
many export restrictions fell away.....> economic boom

1961 Salone del Mobile international furniture fair  
All every day objects became desirable  
Italians celebrated their design as a cultural achievement

motto: **“success through design”**

Kartell and Artemide changed material aesthetics  
*Plastic* not considered cheap and inferior, but showed its' advantages:  
*low cost, durability, lightness, flexibility*



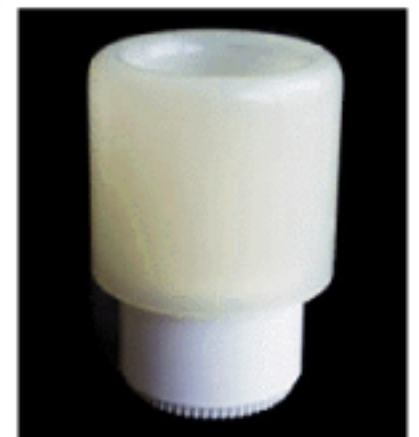


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# Critics

## Critics of modernist style:

Neo-Liberty movement: Gae Aulenti, Roberto Gabetti, Aimaro Isola and Aldo Rossi.  
Say new way is 'conformist'

**The Cavour Chair:** Vittorio Gregotti, Lodovico Meneghetti, Giotto Stoppino

**now** must think about social context in which the products exist in

Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm, Germany

Principle of exploring the social implications of product design  
influenced Italians in 1960's

**Tomás Maldonado** president of Ulm design school from 1964-1966

Developed unified concept for La Rinascente department store – design of salesrooms, merchandise display and store's graphics

*Mid 1960's*

Italy in deep recession, high inflation  
abandoned low age policy



# Ferragamo

the shoe that fits well

emigrated to USA  
worked in Hollywood

sanctions on Fascist Italy  
raw materials scarce

used other materials instead of leather

thin metal threads, wood, transparent plastics, felt, raffia fibers

careful craftsmanship + unusual material.....> **trademark**

inspiration most dominant from bauhaus, cubist graphics and african, tattoos. **hollywood**

studied every detail to create symmetries in a perfect blend of weights and measures  
aerodynamic

some shoes that are rounded off look like miniture aerodynamic structures

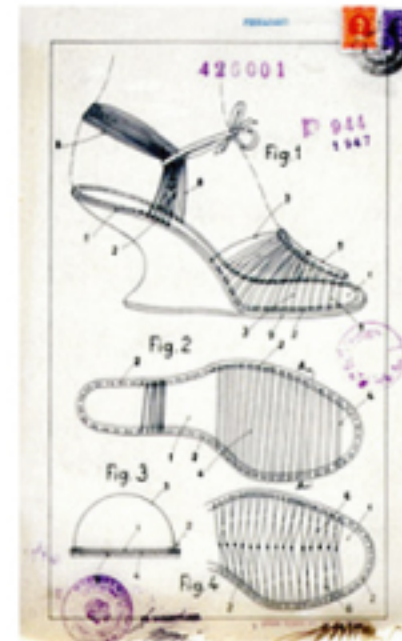
studied human anatomy

understood of the stress put on the arch of the foot when standing upright

1937 cork wedge heel  
sewing wine corks together

1955 stiletto heel  
used a metal pin

1947 **invisible shoe**  
continuous thread on upper part of shoe  
transparent nylon thread





# 1946 Piaggio vespa

designer: Corradino d'Ascanio

voluptuous curves, innovative integral body

not as expensive as cars  
affordable

It meant freedom from oppressive totalitarianism

Up until 1946 and the Vespa, Piaggio was very important with aeronautics, railway, steamships and transatlantic liner manufacturers



Gilera



# 1948 Olivetti lexikon 80 typewriter

designer: Marcello Nizzoli

Sleek form, smooth lines  
not just a metal shell but a sculpture



# Ponti

kept wickerwork and wood  
reduced structural elements

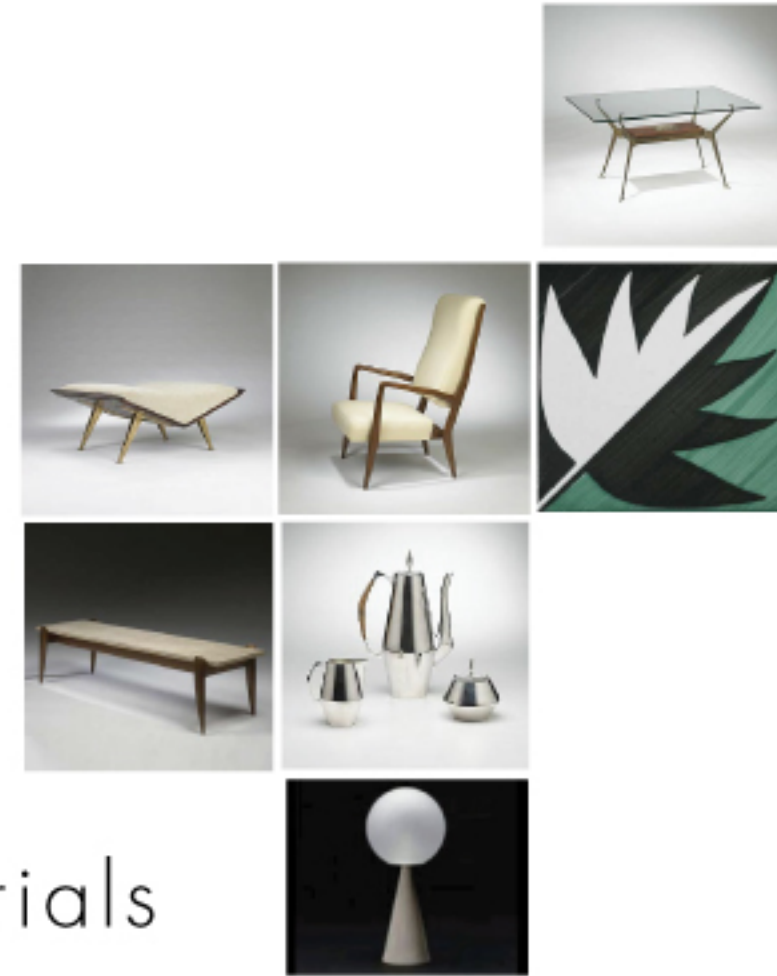
transparent, elegant  
world's lightest chair



designed fabrics for Vittorio Ferrari  
lighting and furniture for Fontana Arte  
Bilia table lamp globe resting on a cone

no "good" or "bad" materials

founded *Domus* discussed new currents of modernism  
published works of international architects



"the past does not exist, everything is contemporary. In  
our culture only the present exists in the ideas we form  
of the past as well as in our anticipation of the future."

Ponti

Pirelli tower

