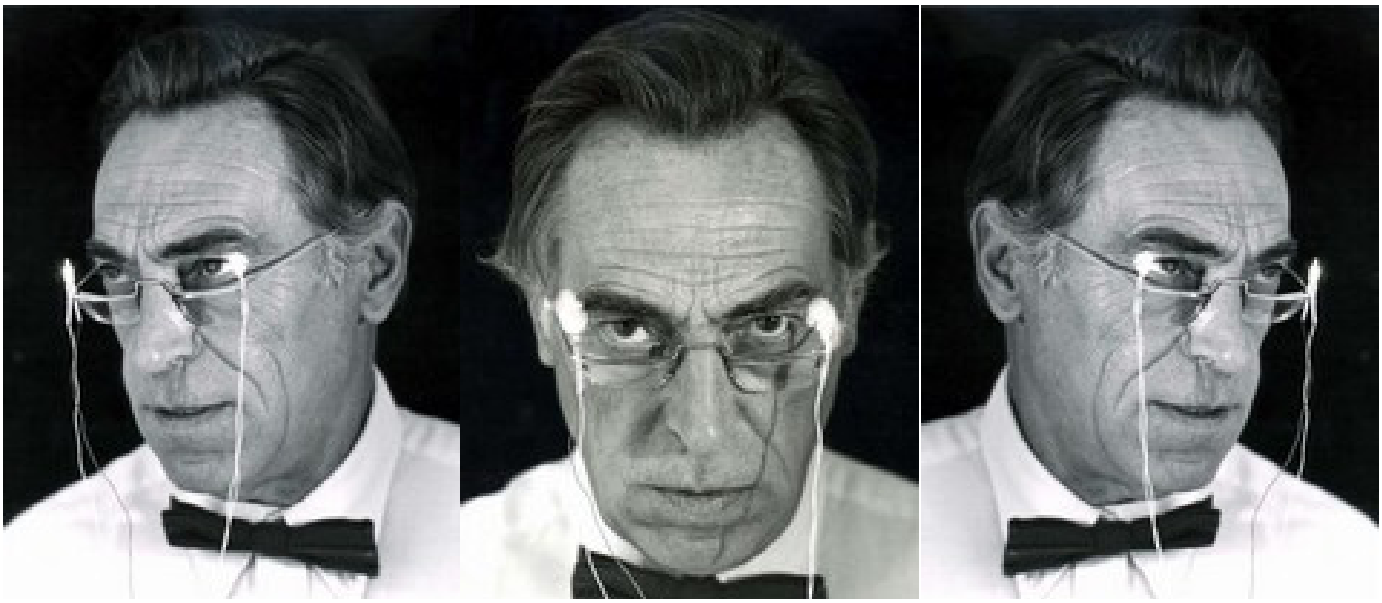
Achille Castiglioni

Simon Shum



Il Vecchio Maestro: Achille Castiglioni

Italian design is a process that has constantly been changing in context and form. These changes did not however occur within a day's time. Generations of architects and industrial designer have devoted their life's work in hopes to guide future generations to root themselves in Italian tradition. Among them, is Achille Castiglioni. Achille Castiglioni, also known as the father of Italian design was one of the few people privileged to guide the direction of Italian design. His contributions as an industrial designer and a professor have not only provided inspiration for newer generations, but also produced objects that have become passively embedded into the daily lives of people.

With understanding from previous papers regarding intellectuals, designers, and agglomeration, this paper hopes to reinforce the idea that Achille Castiglioni, a maestro of second generation has played a crucial role in Italian culture and sponsored the generation of innovative ideas in the present time. Such can be seen through understanding the context in which Castiglioni was part of, his background as a teacher and as an intellect, and the design methodologies he follows.

Rooting in context of WWII

Castigilioni's work is best understood within the context of post world war II. After the Second World War, minimalist design was in play. Due to the economic downfall, appliances that were functional, yet low in cost to produce and purchase, were in demand. Castiglioni, being a young

designer recently graduating in architecture from University of Polytechnic in Milan, joined with his elder brother to accepting commissions for exhibitions and set designs. Due to the lack of larger commissions from the economic downfall, Castiglioni developed products for Italian manufacturers that were hoping to rebuild their businesses.

The Castiglioni brothers thus produced functionalistic products for mass production. These items were cheap to produce but reluctant to reduce Italian quality. One of these most memorable devices include the Spalter Vacuum cleaner. A bright red plastic vacuum cleaner suitable to be slung across one's back like a leather strap bag. Simple, functional, affordable.

Family Based Companies

The importance of family in Italian design should not be foreign to us. Family companies collaborating and sharing in a deeper level has provided the keystone of Italian design. Due to the economic downfall and rapid growth in the economic miracle, small family based companies became more willing to invest in their time and money with designers like Castiglioni. As a result, designers and manufacturers shared personal time and take extra time to further enhance the quality and reduce usage of materials in a product. These family oriented companies were willing to take more of a risk, and thus able to create long-lasting relationships between designers and manufacturers. Family-based companies also built upon the idea of slowness, addressed in Italia papers of 2005; pushing the idea of taking the time between designers and manufacturers to enhance the quality of production. Castiglioni and Flo for example, understood light fixtures based on a shared creative vision and understanding. (Italia, 2005)

In an interview he writes: "A designed object is the result of the common effort of a group of people with different and specific technical, industrial, commercial and aesthetic skills. The work of the designer is the synthesis that expresses such common effort. The peculiarity of design lies in the continuous relationship among a number of players, from the entrepreneur to the worker in the factory." (depadova, 2007)

Design Methodology

Born in Milan 1918, Castiglioni studied architecture and graduated in architecture from Milan Polytechnic in 1944; later only to return as a professor to spread his knowledge as an industrial designer teaching a course known as 'Artistic Industrial Design'. Castilgiano was privileged to win the Compasso d'Oro award, a prestigious Italian product design award a total of eight times. While designing for major companies such as Alessi and Flo, Achille Castiglioni found joy in teaching as a professor in the very university he graduated from. As a teacher, he constantly challenges their thinking, with his idea:

Sella Stool 1957

Spalter V 1956

Archo 1962

Mazzadro 1957

"Start from scratch. Stick to common sense. Know your goals and means." Moreover, he pushed to inspire his students by bringing multiple objects into class. Castiglioni would bring in a black sling bag filled with his quirky collections of objects and toys made from a variety of items. These may have included odd sunglasses, parts of wooden stools, etc. These objects held only one thing in common, certain aspects of the object and its purpose inspired Castiglioni. He chose to show these objects that seemed to have life of its own, emphasizing that the success of these objects resulted from each fulfilling a single functional tasks that in return could be combined with other unlikely objects. With this, he encouraged students to collect and notice the small intricate details that may be a spark towards inventing something with end users in mind.

Castiglioni encouraged the idea that designers should never stick to a style, but base their style on the function and the needs of the user.
"What you need is consistent way of designing, not a style." (designboom, 2008)

In this, Castiglioni addresses the problem as an Intellectual, pushing the understanding of object, while stating that form and function may be important factors of a product design but that there is of underlying concerns to be addressed.

"With his functional and purist yet playful objects, Castiglioni has shown that form and function, while certainly the main ingredients for successful design, cannot be a designer's only concerns." (MoMa, 1997) A good example of this in Castiglioni's collection is the Sella stool. Conceived of the seat of a bicycle on cast iron base, the Sella stool was derived from Castiglioni's understanding of people who desire comfortable seating when they are talking on the phone. It confirms his idea of starting from scratch, seeing basic functions of a chair derived in a bicycle seat, and placing it into another context. This performs excellently with people who are on the phone, allowing them to pace around it, until needing a quick comfortable seating arrangement for a brief moment of item.

Archo Lamp 1962

Castiglioni also drew his inspiration based on the concept of avant-garde, pushing the boundaries of what is accepted as norms. Gaining inspiration from Marcel duchamp, who was well known for the 'urinary', Castiglioni pushed the ideas of lighting to a new level. Arco light, produced in 1962 is a fine example of Castiglioni pushing the limits of normal interpretation of industrial elements into the home. Like fitting lights on Italian roads, the Arco lamp does not have a fixed point on the ceiling. Its long neck and floating lamp emphasized on movement and mobility of lighting in the course of one's living room. The Arco lamp also used a heavy slab of marble as counterweight to provide a base of weighted elegance. (Film Media group, 2008)

Catagorization

Castiglioni classifies his work in a specific style. Understanding his means of categorization allows us to understand the purpose of specific works better. Moreover, it helps us visualize the way Castiglioni sees.

Ready-Made Objects: Objects are gathered from pieces of objects that seem to have a perfectly resolved relationship between form-function. Castiglioni takes such objects, retaining their original form, and places it in an entirely different context. Thus, the combinations of forms evolve into a new form-function relationship.

Cumano Table 1979

Redesigned Objects: Redesigned objects are in my preference, the easiest of forms that exhibit Castiglioni's influence to everyday life. Castiglioni redesigned traditional objects without claiming that they were not designed well, but in a sense of improving them based on technological advances and needs of modern life. A great example of this is the Cumano table, redesigned in 1978. By developing foldable legs on an ordinary coffee table, Castiglioni redesigned an already well-made coffee table into something easily transportable and decorate able. Similar products continue to exist in today's culture without ever knowing where it's origin of design came from. These include the inline light switch in 1968, and the spirale ashtray in 1971.

Minimalist Objects: Influenced by the culture and historical background of his time, Castiglioni pushed for a higher level of synthesis by eliminating everything unneeded to an object. He notes to "Delete, delete, delete and at the end find the 'core aspect of the design'". (depadova, 2007) This core aspect of design, also known as the primary design component becomes the bare bones of a minimalist object. An excellent example of this is the Dry cutlery set.

Expressionistic Objects: Simply a set of objects where a component of this object is dominant over the rest, without neglecting the functions and constructive elements of the whole. In completion, it becomes the play in character inside an object.

Integral Objects: Projects that included interdisciplinary influences in the work or separate parts of the project.

Castiglioni's Worries

In an interview, Castiglioni speaks to the audience of young designers, warning them in several aspects.

He begins by claming that designers of this generation are not trying to clean up objects, and thus they are becoming overloaded with connotations and are

removing from their pure functions, fearing the loss of minimalist design.

Castiglioni continues by explaining the importance of creating a relationship between the designer and the end-user, emphasizing that design is not entirely about functionalism. Moreover, Castiglioni emphasizes on the essentials of working as a team and never as an individual. "Good design projects never originate from the ambition to leave one's own mark, but from one's willingness to build a relationship with the unknown end-user." (dapadova, 2007) But is this possible with where the direction Italian design is heading? Moreover, the study of interaction design is highly conceptually based on collaboration and ideals of Italian design. With the removal of family-related business, the structure behind interaction would likewise fall apart.

Concluding

As an intellectual designer and as a teacher, Castiglioni offered his life to spreading knowledge and inspiration to the younger generation. His objects, furniture and architectural structures can be seen as a collection of inspiration objects, emphasizing on a quirky minimalist approach. More importantly, Castiglioni encourages ideals of family relationships within Italian design that has been rooted within since the first generation.

It's been noticeable that Castiglioni along with the maestri of the older generation have similarities. Each maestro has their own ideas, but similarly, they all round up with the same solution. That is, the idea that design must be humanistic, serving the context of its time, and the culture of the people is essential. However with the idea of globalization coming into picture, many of the new generation's maestri are now being gathered from the outskirts of the city. Milan itself has become a place of exhibition rather than a place of innovation and some of the ideals focused by the maestri of older generations are being lost. It is even arguable that innovation in Italian design is even being uprooted from the orientation of family businesses due to a new generation of design. What happens can only be determined by the new generation of maestri.

Il Vecchio Maestro: Achille Castiglioni

Aldo Rossi

theorist of architecture and art

by: Rei Chiang

Aldo Rossi was a great architect, artist, and theorist. In his lifetime he lead the post modern movement and through that derived new meanings of form and how to emotionally express them.

Rossi grew up during World War II and was studying the field as many other architects turned to other design occupations. Despite this dip in their economy many architects developed their own individual and innovative philosophies and ideas. In 1959 Rossi was a teaching assistant to known architects of the time: Ludovico Quaroni and Carlo Aymonino and graduated under their tutelage. Later on he was also able to work with Ernesto Rogers, a mentor to many architects. It is with Roger's magazine, Casabella-Continuita, that Rossi's theology took shape. ("Aldo Rossi: architect biography", retrieved 2008)

As an architect Rossi took advantage of the two main factors that provided many post-war architectural opportunities. The first factor was Italy's phenomena of the 'economic miracle' in which Italy was then able to afford architectural projects. The second was war damage. Many buildings had been bombed and this resulted in a high demand for projects that restored the buildings or replaced them. Rossi entered the field while there was a high demand as well as high competition. The opportunities he took allowed himself and other architects to express the unique ideas that they developed in the war.

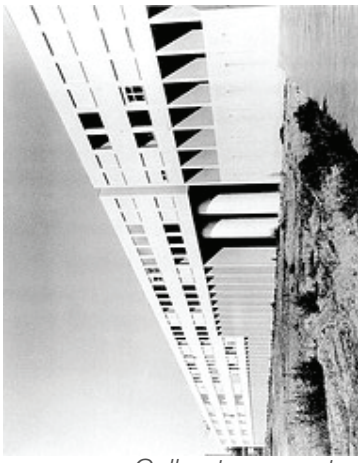
As Rossi was now aware with the world's modernist standard through Casabella and other new works that were being considered in Italy, he felt the need to break through this "international standard". The international standard, or modernist movement, created buildings that lost meaning due to the mass production of seemingly formulated structures. (Rossi, 1993) This social change encouraged Rossi to develop new ways of viewing architecture. There was a need to break from Modernism and away from a formulaic approach in viewing architectural type.

Rossi's theology began with Andrea Palladio. Palladio studied the past and analyzed contemporary needs while also deriving timeless and universal principles (Gable, 2004). Though there may be a slight influence of the Russian Constructive movement, Rossi was inspired to analyze architecture in a scientific way as well. Thus resulting in his use of primary shapes and seeing the architecture as a part of the city. Rossi's theory became a leading force for the Tendenza (Neorationalist, or Post-modernist) movement in Italy where many are influenced to "turn to the complexity of the urban realm and sought to understand the way architectural forms responded to changes in historical events." ("Italian Tendenza", retrieved 2008)

Rossi's early obsession with knowledge later became an expression of feeling. Rossi's early work gave hints to his theory between the newer and older parts of a city, and buildings within a form of relation with one another. However, it did not express his view of architecture as images of a city. One of his first works that expressed the relation between architecture, city, and its people was Segrate's town square, built in 1965. He was inspired by the architecture of the Enlightenment and created the monument to express the public space as a place to celebrate community life. More importantly, Rossi built the monument to also make it a gathering place through "creating a scene that was conductive to reflection [and] meditation". (Moneo, 2004)

Segrate's Town Square

The Segrate town square showed that Rossi saw architecture as a venue for thought and imagery. Within only a few years, Milan recognized an urgent need for living spaces and commissioned Rossi to construct the Gallaratese quarter in the outskirts of the city. Though Rossi had built large living apartment areas before, he had yet to construct a living area that integrated his theory. The Gallaratese quarter was constructed in a working class district, where it was standard for architecture to "be taken for military barracks". (Moneo, 2004) Rossi embraced this reality of the city and constructed a very plain piece of architecture, but within its beautiful geographical location, it almost acts as a countering image. In this way, it fits within the story of the city, but due to its location, this contrast draws attention to the building while making that single moment beautiful. This building comes to life and affects people in a certain way, much as how the Segrate town square was designed to attract and thus making that area a town square.



Gallaratese quarter

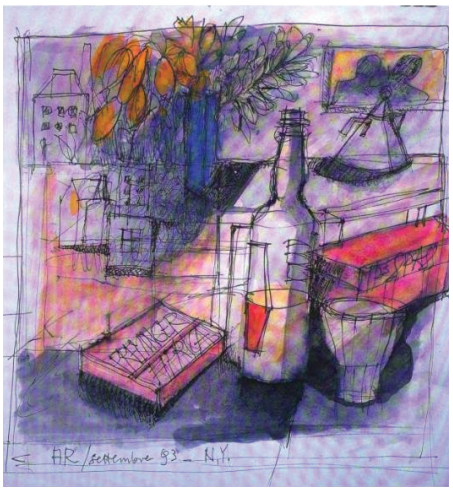
In 1971, only 2 years after the Gallaratese quarter, came Rossi's most representative work: the expansion of the Cemetery of San Cataldo. The new architecture clearly stands out in style compared to the older building, but in its essence captures the complete feeling of the cemetery. The roofless cubic addition (the Cuneo project) stands as a haunting and empty structure immediately entering the walls of the cemetery. The space around it creates a surreal landscape that emphasizes it as a "storage [space] for forgotten lives, spent lives, [and] history". (Moneo, 2004) This depressing reality, however, is contrasted by something eternal. Through his design Rossi provides an escape from time that is drawn onto the blue sky. This also marks the turning point where Rossi's work emits feelings and his analysis focuses on an emotion of the space. Likewise, the Piccolo Teatro del Mondo in Venice was expressed as an image; where it reflects the impression the city had on him.

Cemetery of San Cataldo

the Cuneo

Teatro del Mondo

Later on, Rossi worked entirely with image to create a collage of forms and emotions. His Il Conico and La Conica comprised of a tranquil emotion that Rossi states to create a landscape on the tabletop. Objects he designed was able to contain sentiment that is not confined within the "demands that come with architecture". (Moneo, 2004)



drawings

Il Conico

La Conica

The search for aesthetic in form is still visible in current day design, and the many possible areas of exploration are available through technology. In each area of interest, nowadays designers hold the same scientific obsession Rossi had within their specific area. As function changes in architecture, the form remains the same. Likewise, though the context in which contemporary designers work, the thirst and need of knowledge and emotions are still shown.

Rossi was a leader of the post modern movement and created well-designed works that inspired an emotional response in the viewer. This provides his architecture with a timelessness that makes him an amazing architect, artist, and theologist.

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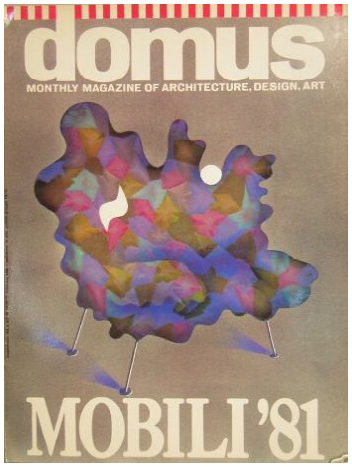
Alessandro Mendini

Brad Slavin

Design in Italy from the 1950s to the 1990s was integral in setting the foundation for Italian Design today. The work of Alessandro Mendini established a level of thought that has been passed on to the next generation of designers. One of Medini's greatest contributions to Italian Design is the idea of collaborating with other designers. This allows for a discourse to develop based on shared ideas from different cultural backgrounds. This discourse of knowledge, as well, is something that Mendini strives for in his work. As an intellectual, the theories and ideas of Alessandro Mendini helped define the level of quality in Italian Design, and the importance of knowledge in creating thought provoking, emotional works that reflect their cultural context.

Following World War II, Milan was in an economic crisis. It had been devastated by bombings and there were political tensions between fascist supporters and left-wing radicals. As outside funding began to help repair the struggling economy, southern Italians moved to Milan to take advantage of the newly rising financial success. Factories were back on their feet, but as people were still relatively poor, they could not afford most necessities. At this time, designers began producing products for the mass market. They were simple, inexpensive, and designed for everybody. Although the forms were still pleasing, they lacked the aesthetics of traditional Italian design.



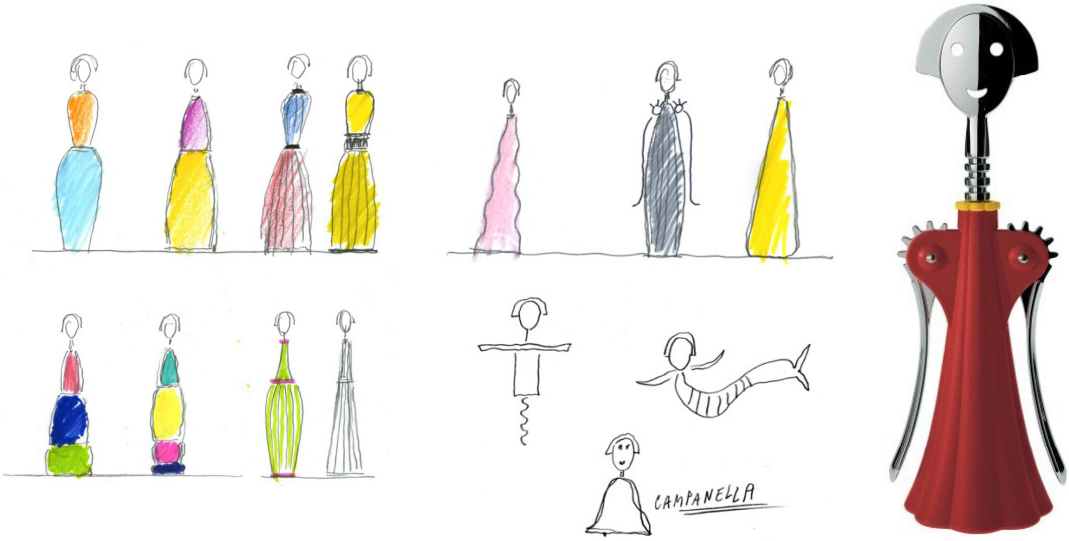
After graduating from the Politecnico di Milano in 1959 with a degree in architecture, Mendini had the training in a field that unfortunately was not flourishing at the time due to the still-recovering economy of post-war Italy. There were no design schools in Milan at this point; "all of the designers were architects. Zamuso, Sotsass, Gio Ponti, Magistretti, Castiglioni, all architects" (Mendini, 2006). The exploration of design by those who were formally trained in architecture created a

discourse of new theories and ideas: the foundations of Radical Design. These intellectuals collaborated with each other, sharing their ideas of new design. In Milan, magazines like *Casabella*, *Domus*, and *Modo* were published as a means of circulating these new ideas within a larger design audience. Mendini assumed the role of editor of all three aforementioned magazines during the 1970s and 80s.

The value of knowledge is immeasurable, and having the ability to share knowledge with others is an opportunity that is often taken for granted. It is this opportunity that fuels Alessandro Mendini's work and his ideas that lead to the theories of Italian Radical Design in Milan during the 1960s. Focusing on the humanistic side of design and not on mass production, Mendini and other theorists of the time, such as Ettore Sottsass, drew from intellectual ideas as inspiration for their work. Mendini's attitude of being "more interested in humanity than naturalness" allowed him to produce works that were focused on the specific context in which he was part of (Mendini, 2005).

For example, one of his earlier works, *The Proust Armchair*, from 1978 is a direct response to the lack of decoration and traditional aesthetics in post-war Italian design. He focused on the banal act of sitting in a chair, transforming it to raise questions about design. Mendini strongly believed that everything had already been invented, so he often built his work from a preexisting form. *The Proust Armchair* is an example of this technique, utilizing a form "inspired from the Louis XV style" and applying hand painted pointillism to the surface.
Italian Radical Designers were frequently experimenting with forms, materials and new theories. Mendini turns to his paper and pen to develop new ideas. This goal of experimentation and Mendini's perfectionism are apparent as he explains that when drawing out his ideas, he will "never use an eraser. [He would] rather throw everything away and start afresh" (Mendini, 2005). This

attitude is valuable for designers and is one that, if not already, should regularly be employed in the design process. Having the ability to identify a strong idea and leave behind the weaker ones allows the designer to progress past the ideation stage with an idea rich in possibilities.



The book *Pulviscoli* is a collection of over 2400 of Mendini's drawings dating from 1960 to 2005. Many of his produced works can be seen in their earliest stages of ideation. The *Anna G* corkscrew, which he produced for Alessi in 1994, was part of the Anna Family project. The corkscrew has become one of Alessi's most famous products, garnering attention around the world. The humanistic qualities and quirkiness of the design have, like make of Mendini's works, put an emphasis on the banal. The *Anna G* corkscrew has also been duplicated on a larger scale and stands outside the Alessi warehouse in Crusinallo.

Another concept that emerged during the period of Radical Design is the act of collaborating with others. While working with Alessi, Mendini proposed a meta-project with the goal of making a "major contribution to the history of design in the '80s" (Alessi, 1998). *The Tea and Coffee Piazza* project involved the collaboration of ten international architects, including Richard Meier, Robert Venturi and Aldo Rossi. These architects, none of whom had experience in industrial design, were asked to consider the role of the piazza as an urban hub and how architecture could be related to the service of tea and coffee. What resulted was a series of very different, yet exquisite designs. Each architect's style was infused in his design; some were post-modern while others exhibited traits of neo-modernism.

As art director of the project, Mendini's idea of collaboration began to spread as Alessi's reputation became world-renowned. Later, he would again organize

the *Tea and Coffee Tower* project with Alessi. Another collaboration with Alessi in which Mendini was art director of was called *100% Make Up* in 1992. This involved recruiting 100 designers to design the surface of a miniature vase in which Mendini had design a few years earlier. At the end of the project, each vase was produced 100 times, creating a series of 10,000 vases with the same form but 100 different styles. Mendini continues to use multiple architects and designers in projects, such as the *MetroNapoli* station project in which he and his brother, Francesco, were art directing. Each of the metro stations in Napoli (Naples) has a unique style to it.

Mendini strongly believes that "having people working with them from different backgrounds and places yields interesting perspectives in design." In terms of the *MetroNapoli* project, the collaboration has produced "new results and different ideas for the stations than they could have thought of on their own" (ItaliaDesign, 2006). This role of "art director" is rooted in Italy. Milan's Palomba Serafini Associati (PS+A) offers art direction to their clients. They feel that they can build a stronger relationship with their clients by proving them with more attention. Like many Italian design companies, PS+A employs a variety of individuals, including architects, industrial designers, and graphic designers, to create a collaboration of disciplines. The company is not specialized in only one field and can therefore offer a wider range of services to clients in "total design packages" (Azure, 2008).

Mendini's legacy is that of a new design philosophy: experimentation with new ideas, and collaboration with people of different cultural backgrounds. The quality of design improves through these processes. The ideas are richer. The variety of contexts often leads to an intellectual discourse, which in turn promotes new ideas. If this philosophy can continue to be employed in the design process today, we can look forward to a future of knowledge-infused, thought provoking, intelligent design.

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Italian Design: Building Ideas

Morgan Taylor

Now in its fifth year, the ItaliaDesign field study has amassed a great amount of information on the Italian design industry. The work that has been done so far has laid some very solid foundations; it is truly an ongoing culture of design. As an instructor at Milan's Politecnico, Andrea Branzi is actively passing on his experience to future designers. He sees the design process not as a standardized approach, but "to test and actively stretch the limits of design" through well-crafted ideas (Branzi, 1984, pp13).

Branzi is first and foremost a theorist, an intellectual in the field of design; his primary input to the system is through ideas. He has written numerous books and articles on the subject of design's role in an ever-more complex world. Having been a part of the radical movement, through groups such as Archizoom and Superstudio, Branzi solidified his position as not just a designer, but as a critic of design and culture. Thus, what comes out most in Branzi's work is the importance of understanding the context that a work is placed within.

Italian design can not be boiled down to a single unifying feature other than that of constant change in light of contextual circumstances. Ideas from the past will not necessarily work today. It's about context. About knowing what came before you, not to imitate it such as with Neo-Classicism, but to understand why the innovations of the past worked for their context. The ideas behind these innovations are much more valuable to designers than the physical reproduction of objects: to look through a different lens, take knowledge gained from studying the past, and apply it to contemporary problems.

Andrea Branzi, Genetic Tales series for Alessi, 1998

Architecture is the most persistent of the arts, and most accessible to the general population. We can not be all that surprised that many of the old masters of Italian design - including Branzi's contemporaries, Sottsass, Mendini, and Rossi - trained as architects; they are the Italian architect/designers, intellectuals interested in all aspects of design and its relationship with people. The intellectual plays a very important role in the design system. If good ideas are injected into design, they can be tracked, monitored. The resultant feedback helps designers and intellectuals better modify future design.

Through Branzi, this essay highlights the importance of Italian history to the current state of design. This history is one of constant upheaval, of economic ups and downs, and of a legacy of great builders and thinkers. Recently, Branzi curated an exhibition, "The New Italian Design", at the Triennale Design Museum in Milan. In an interview about this project, Branzi states: "this is not the history of objects, it is the history of a country" (Branzi, 2007). Historical context is the foundation for Italian design.

Andrea Branzi, Portali series, 2007.

As a native Florentine, Branzi grew up surrounded by the works of the Renaissance masters. This experience is one that would have a great effect on Branzi's thinking, while the complexity of twentieth century society presented him with plenty of problems to which he could apply his experience. In a 2004 interview with designboom, Branzi cites Brunelleschi as having introduced reason in a time of chaos: "his invention of the classical turning within the medieval culture crisis gave birth to the role of the project and the esthetic research as a system for holding a civilization, which was falling apart, together." This thought gives the opportunity to examine the much-revered period of the Renaissance as an example of a successful aesthetic revolution.

However, the presence of the classical in Europe was to eventually come to an end. “After four centuries in which Western culture had proceeded cautiously, sticking to style that slowly rang the changes on the humanistic code, the end of the eighteenth century brought an acceleration of the rate of change in the whole external system of patterns of behavior and secular languages” (Branzi, 1988, pp56). The complexity of the European lifestyle increased at an exponential rate, further magnified by today’s advancements in electronic technology. The industrial revolution sparked an acceleration of cultural development, and it became increasingly more difficult for art and culture to live in harmony.

Archizoom, No-stop City, 1970

This increasing complexity reinforces what Branzi and his contemporaries put forth about the importance of understanding context at its most basic level. “The products of their design encompass all the elements that compose the environment, such as technology, objects, surfaces, colours, materials, clothes, and furniture. They reduce each of these elements to its original state and then try to understand it from a new point of view” (Isozaki, 1984). Projects such as Archizoom’s *No-stop City* are the result of this reduction and subsequent extrapolation.

When Branzi does have an object created, it is often done with the intention of expressing these far-reaching ideas. Seeing that society has no direction, no foundation, and that needs to change. We need a reason to do what we do. Branzi’s object designs seem to connect the viewer with their world, whether through natural or man-made forms. He brings the outside in, and the inside out. He looks to make design relevant to the viewer on an intellectual level. One place where he does so is in the incorporation of truly organic forms in his designs.

> *"Building a house for somebody means building a place and objects with which one can enter in relations, not just of use and functionality, but also psychological, symbolic and poetic. Holderlin used to say Man lives poetically, which means that the relations that link a person to his nest are literary in nature—partly obscure—and symbolic."* - Alberto Alessi & Andrea Branzi

Speaking of his *Portali* series, Branzi says: "I think that one of the tasks of design is being able to enrich the world not just with useless ornaments, but with self-sufficient spaces, micro-places devoted to what may seem unnecessary but absolutely necessary to give a sense to everything, such as the space for flowers and for the sacred objects of the lay civilizations" (Branzi, 2007).

Branzi and his generation of designers have lived in Italy long enough to become intimately familiar with its economic cycles. They have been through numerous economic cycles. If Italy is in a time of economic downturn at the moment, we must see this as an opportunity for discourse, and the seeding and building of ideas. The new generation of designers in Italy are from a different time, one where advancements such as the European Union and a global culture through the internet. So, these new designers are presented with an even more complex problem than Branzi's generation.

> *"We live in permanent uncertainty, and uncertainty has always existed, for those who have known how to interpret it, as an extraordinary occasion. When I cited Brunelleschi before, he was the very first architect who accepted living in a cultural system that no longer had a foundation. He reconstructed this classical code which had disappeared from the face of the earth for 12 centuries"* - Andrea Branzi, 2004

What does this mean for us as young designers in Canada? Well, it turns out that Branzi also has thoughts on that. In his 1988 book Learning From Milan, Branzi suggests an optimistic viewpoint: "with their European roots transplanted into completely new soil and the consequent development of forms of hybridization and conservation, that a new culture of design can emerge."

Almost twenty years later, in an interview with the 2005 ItaliaDesign group, it is clear that Branzi still holds this view: "In Canada there are many European connections that are living and very important. So maybe the opportunity that Canada will be in a position on the North American continent

that will be of more intelligence and, I think, cultural in the true sense of the word. So maybe Canada will have a role with more impulsive ideas, and not so connected to the companies as in the United States. Then they can suggest to the US and the world in the whole, a more European or modern way to think about design" (Branzi, 2005).

Branzi speaks to the 2005 ItaliaDesign group at Milan Politecnico

The same technology that has made our world all the more complicated has also allowed a new opportunity for collaboration over great geographic distance. And this is exactly what is happening with the ItaliaDesign project. We are making connections with designers and intellectuals, who hold solid viewpoints and have grown up within a system that we look to for inspiration. We must attempt to recover the "values that had been lost in the decadence of the new industrial age" (Branzi, 1984). Branzi's forward-looking optimism about the opportunity for innovation, within a system that lacks cohesion, works as a guiding light in the often-challenging world of design.

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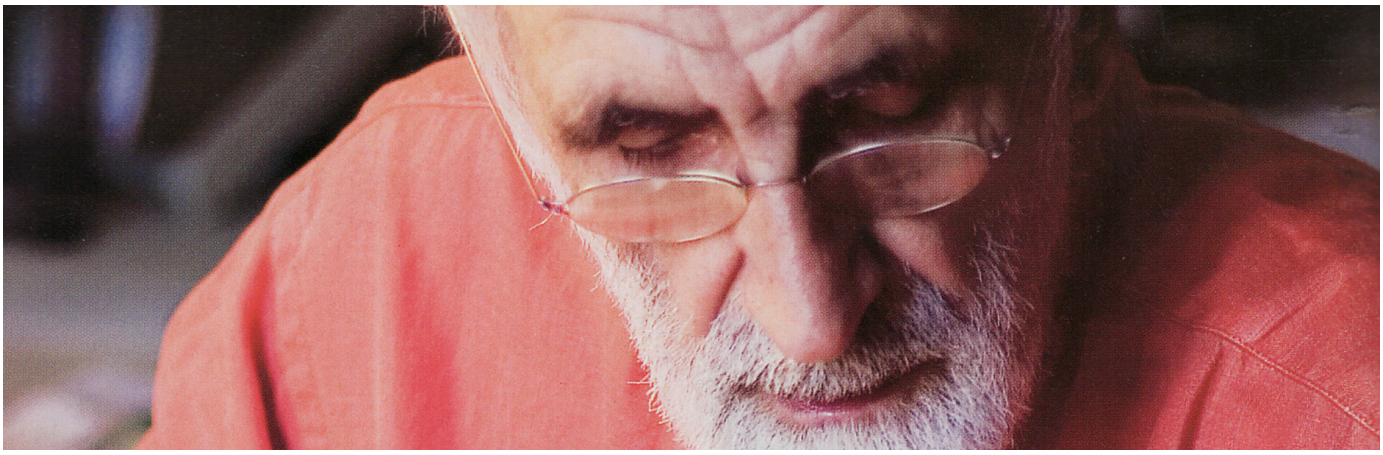
Enzo Mari + Design Process

Ryan Murray



Enzo Mari

After the Second World War, Italy found itself enduring economic hardships as was most war torn Europe. A fear began to rise of the possible increase in popularity of Communism throughout these poor Western and Southern European countries. As a means to prevent this from happening the Marshal Plan, enacted by the United States, provided funds to England, France, Germany, Italy and other European nations to help rebuild primary industries and re-establish their economies. In the example of Italy, this was the beginning of an economic “Miracle” that carried the nation until the mid-1960’s and a leading contributor to this economic boost was the introduction of Bel Design.

The foundational theories behind Bel Design were to create functional, rational products with simple but elegant designs that were easily mass produced. The mass production of these products made it cheap and affordable for the everyday person. However, despite the simple designs, there was a large amount of emphasis on the form of these products; it was looked at as a necessity rather than as a bonus. To be able to fulfill this requirement, companies began looking for Designers to create these forms. Designers like Enzo Mari.

Mari began his studies in 1952 at Academia di Brera in Milan and completed his degree in 1956. Unlike the other maestri of Italian design such as Andrea Branzi, Achille Castiglioni, Gaetano Pesce, Aldo Rossi, Alessandro Mendini and Gae Aulenti who were all trained as architects at the Politecnico di Milano, Mari had studied literature and had resorted to working as a visual artist and a freelance researcher to support himself financially. He then became interested in design and through trials of error, taught himself about the ins and outs of design. He began working

with Danese and worked on a series of mass-manufactured products. His primary focus was to develop these products that could be mass produced, but not to compromise his belief that the design of each project should be beautiful to look at and feel, while performing its function efficiently, which is the core of Bel Design (Design Museum, 2007).

from left to right: Pago-Pago Vase, Timor Table Calendar, 16 Animali

Recently he had begun work with a Japanese home store company called Muji which have very similar values to Mari, such as a rational and quality aesthetic look on their products.

Enzo Mari was not educated as a designer but instead was self-taught. It was this lack of training or schooling which maintains his, what Mari calls, “Soft”. As described in the magazine “Abitare”, the human brain can be looked at in two parts. One being the “Hard”, the tissues and nervous systems that make up the physical aspect and the other being the “Soft”, which is the knowledge gained from personal experiences. However, he argues that people lose this idea of “Soft” the moment they begin school. They enforce rules and guidelines that are expect to be followed, rather than trying or experiencing it on their own. Although that is not to say that learning from “others”, as will be explained later in this paper, is not necessary, but to explain this point using the example of trying to become a writer, rather than only reading examples of great literature (Dickens, Dickinson, Perec, etc.), instead simply write and practice (Mari, 2007).

This iterative process of trying over and over again is the beginning of what Mari calls “Proper Design” and is the baseline idea to his process of design. That through his ideas of Proper Design and the Railroad Method, one can go about creating products that have multiple layers of depth, “Thick Design” and then most importantly use the knowledge gained from the process and apply it to the next project. In the process of following these ideas, Enzo Mari has created many objects that still bear relevance in today’s world, over forty

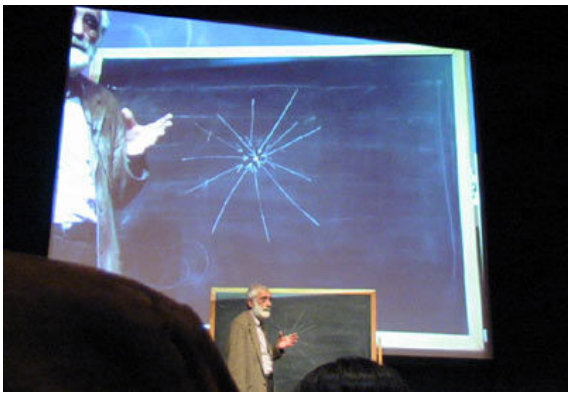
years later. According to DolceVita Design, "…80% of the objects created by Mari are still actively listed in sales categories" (Carosio, 2008).

"When I make something for Danese I take the view that it has to outlive the current design trend...the idea being that something that is relevant today will be relevant in three hundred years' time" – Enzo Mari

One of Mari's theory on design is that there are two types of design that are very distinct although also quite interrelated; one being "our own" or "Proper Design" and the second being "of others" or "Improper Design". It is important to point out the difference is not good or bad design. Improper Design is the repetition of a previous design or the use of pre-existing rules. There can be poor designs taken from others and then copied resulting in unsatisfactory results, but there can also be good pieces of work, such as a hospital destroyed in a disaster and needs to be rebuilt quickly and a copy of a good model is built. Proper Design starts from the ideas of others and by looking at many of these existing models and understanding their form and rational then one begins to learn from them and progress from these models. "The more attempts one makes the more likely one is to discover something unforeseen." (Mari, 2007).

Another outlook on his design process is what he calls the "Railway Model". Just like a railroad track, there are two main paths. One is the requirements of the projects, client needs, user needs, the continuing history of the object etc. and the second track is the cost, materials and technical simplicity that may restrict the design project. These two paths should be tested for connection and convergence constantly throughout the processing, just like the wooden planks that connect both tracks (Ryan, 1997).

It is the combination of these two theories that when applied create what is known as "Thick Design" which "integrates layers and layers of meaning and understanding into a product or idea" (IDFuel, 2006). Design is not a linear path, but instead it is multiple paths all converging towards one goal that is



Enzo Mari presenting at the Art Institute of Chicago

constantly moving. This target is defined by culture, history, fashion, science, technology and social forces. It is the application of the Railway Model, constantly checking the connections between these factors, and also using the ideas of Proper Design and learning from others and applying one's own ideas to create a solution for these problems.

However, it's not just the satisfaction of a couple of these problems, because then it becomes dated and loses it's relevance over time. It's the solving of all of these issues that makes an object "timeless". The more problems an object solves, the greater chance it has to staying relevant and survive as a useful object. "If it has no invention, it will be just another object, and the object needs invention to be alive" (Ryan, 1997).

With that all said, it isn't the end product that should be the focus, but instead the path and the process to get to such a design (Ryan, 1997). Learning from the process of a project, one can realize what the true needs for society are. And because the process matures and evolves with each project, it is important to remember what was done on the last project, so that those ideas and themes can be built upon, strengthening the next project, creating a thicker design and a stronger project. There is a constant search for something that can't, as yet, be realised, and the greatest strength that Enzo Mari has, is that he never give up this pursuit.

"I think that it is easier for those students who really think that the project is a problem of life or death." –Enzo Mari (Ryan, 1997)

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Gae Aulenti

Karen Lo

Being one of the most controversial and eminent Milanese architects today, Gae Aulenti has successfully established herself as being one of the few females architects who have a place in the top list of Italian design maestri. Her activity covers many domains: architecture, design, industrial design, lighting and interior design, installations and show rooms, urban planning, as well as theory. As a native Italian designer rooted to the craft, the tradition of Italian design is inherently seen throughout her work and design process.

Born 1927 in the town Palazzolo dello Stella near Trieste in northern Italy, her parents had wanted her to just be a normal nice stay-at-home girl. Being rebellious at the time, she enrolled herself in Milan Polytechnic and graduated at the age of twenty-four from a class of twenty students with one other female colleague. As with other Italian designers who emerged around that time, her training at the school of architecture in Milan became a basis and foundation for her future endeavors.

After graduation, she became the art director of Ernesto Roger's architecture magazine *Casabella* (1955), and remained with them for ten years (Vogel, 1987). The magazine at the time was run by a group of avant-garde architects whose purpose for the magazine was for architects to discuss and have theoretical and critical discourses about their work. They used it as a place for their continual discourse "about the future of architecture", says Aulenti (Vogel, 1987). It was important for architects to communicate with their peers — to bring criticality to their own work. They looked to Neo Liberty, which was "considered the Italian version of Art Nouveau in France", as a way out of the Bauhaus movement and fascistic themes of World War II (Vogel, 1987). Because of the economic struggle caused by political happenings earlier, Italian architecture had not solidified yet. The World Wars and Mussolini's fascist government left Italy in state of economic recession as well as a country that was not culturally unified even if the Risorgimento of Italy had occurred in 1861. The architects wanted to engage in intellectual discussion because they found it imperative that "a confrontation with the modern movement was necessary, [and] more than anything, [they] were trying to recognize [their] own identity", says Aulenti (Vogel, 1987). Casabella promoted the radical cause and "announced

the formation of 'Global Tools'" project in 1973 where "nearly all the key individuals associated with the movement participated...[and] aimed to extend radical ideas to a wider audience through education", it consisted of offering lab facilities to "young designers for free experimentation and discussion" - encompassing the "shared idealism within the Italian design movement" at the time (Sparke, 1988).

During her years as *Casabella*'s art director, she taught at the University of Venice and Polytechnic of Milan from whence she came. As an intellectual as well as a designer, her contributions and activity in the realm of academia fueled and supported the paradigm of Italian Design and the generation of innovation. Interdisciplinary study with emphasis on learning and ongoing discourse about ideas and theories were common among the older generation of Italian designers, including Aulenti. Being an intellectual means you wore a critical eye of analysis which is important in the evaluation regarding the quality of ideas in design artifacts. "Every good designer will have some sense of a 'meta-project' - a recurring theme in their work - and a strong body of critics is crucial in helping the designer externalize this idea and become a greater designer" (Betts, Poon, Lam & Taylor, 2005). Magazines like *Casabella* allowed this dialogue and exchange between designers, architects, critics, academia to occur — forming the conceptual backbone of all designs produced thereafter.

However, intellectuals are only one of three characters that exist in the context and process of Italian Design, the other two being designers and companies. Designers "bring an interdisciplinary breadth to the table...and an awareness of the culture" and a higher conceptual level of thinking (Betts, Poon, Lam & Taylor). However, they cannot manifest their ideas in tangible forms unless they have companies who will invest in them.

Fortunately, because most Italian companies are family-owned and their *culture of slowness* (concept of time), and high regard for quality is inherent in their goals and company visions, it allows those designers room to experiment and test their theories and ideas in the real world. The designer's role throughout the process of bringing an idea to reality is also vital to its success. Ongoing discussion between designers and intellectuals help consolidate speculative ideas thus making it one step closer to realization. The designer then fabricates the idea within the company if the company sees any market potential for it; however if not, then they would put the idea aside for incubation to be picked up later when a market opportunity arises. Italians view time differently because to them, quality is of utmost importance so their process allows the "designer to concentrate on making something

worthwhile, without worrying about time efficiency" ("The Process of Italian Design", 2005).

During the time in which Aulenti was teaching, she was also at the same time working for Martinelli Luce's company Zanotta designing home furnishings, making showrooms for Olivetti (data-processing machines manufacturer) and art direction for Fiat (automobile manufacturer) and Fontana Arte; later, Artemide, Knoll, Iguzzini Illluminazione, to name a few (Mendin & Muhlke, 2006). Her more significant work lie more in the realm of architecture though. In alignment with designers being multidisciplinary, Aulenti has "always tried to not to fall into specialization" and instead allows the context of the proposed design to guide her design decisions ("Q & A with Gae Aulenti, Architect of the Asian", 2001).

Other great Italian designers of her generation all worked in a similar context with similar backgrounds and education. They understood and valued the inherent *culture of slowness* with the goal of longevity in mind ("Context", 2005). Even during Italy's economic lows, they were still able to produce innovation - or rather because of financial constraints they were able to think of new ways to handle problems and find solutions that they otherwise would not have had to consider if not for those constraints. The new generation of designers have a different situation on their hands since many of them are not of Italian origin so they come at Italian Design from a different perspective, bringing their own cultural context with them.

Aulenti's approach to architecture draws from past Florentine early Renaissance masters (like Filippo Brunelleschi or Leon Battista Alberti) by thinking of the three-dimensionality of buildings as a sculptural form that can appeal to human emotion through its physical and visual properties. For one of her installations (part of "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape" show at the MoMA), she believed that the "conscious principle in [the] design has been to achieve forms that could create experiences" connecting the people who come into contact with her designs with the space ("Designer Bios: Gae Aulenti", 2002).

Similarly, Aulenti regards architecture as being connected to the city, that "it is an art of the city" and very much a part of its "foundation so it cannot help but refer to and be conditioned by that specific context in which it is born. The place, the time and the culture shape one architecture" (Petranzan, 2002). Using a humanist approach, Aulenti really took into account the cultural context in which she had to design like her large-scale award-winning

renovation projects like Musee d'Orsay in Paris (1982-1985), and Asian Art Museum in San Francisco (1997-2001).

"Practicing architecture means beginning by creating for myself the greatest number of constraints possible, constraints that I take from the place itself as well as from the disciplines. In fact, one of the nicest compliments that anyone can give to an architectural work is to say that it seems that it has always existed in that context," explains Aulenti (Petranzan, 2002). She has her own guiding principles for her work which stemmed from architecture which are expressed as three basic skills: "Analytic ability, Synthetic ability, and Prophetic ability" ("Q & A...", 2001).

The first skill essentially means that in order to create specific unique solutions that are always rooted and connected to the the surrounding context, one must know how to effectively "study and recognize every different kind of architecture" ("Q & A...", 2001). Bringing a keen sense of observation and combining it with a pool of knowledge is critical to being able to analyze well — this is something that has been carried over to the field of interaction design where an uncanny sense of observation can help designers discover inherent unaddressed user needs as depicted in the book Thoughtless Acts by Jane Fulton Suri of IDEO who specializes in human-centered design.

The second skill: "synthetic ability [is] knowing how to make the necessary synthesis to give priority to the architectural major principles" to take out things that do not need to be in a project. The ability to differentiate different elements and simplify things so that the core project idea can show through without extra decoration that may distract — this kind of thinking has been described in the book The Laws of Simplicity by John Maeda of MIT Labs where specific principles detailing how one can simplify and reduce (also a book useful in the field of Interaction Design where overly-technological solutions tend to complicate projects unnecessarily).

Asian Art Museum (1997-2001)

The third skill, "prophetic capacity", is more like a goal of creating "continuity in culture, build[ing] its forms, in a personal but always contemporary way" ("Q & A..", 2001). This skill is more on the

subjective side in the way that it can be perceived — making edgey decisions can make one end up in controversial debate which has happen to Aulenti regarding the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco (1997-2001) which was also her first work in the United States. She expressed that the transformation of the former Main Library into the Asian Art Museum was one of the most challenging projects she's faced in her career up until that point. The redesign required the removal and destruction of a set of murals that were part of the city's cultural history and Aulenti has been criticized by art historians and the like about her negligence towards San Francisco's local culture (Bonetti, 1999). The architectural redesign of the building itself cured the gloomy lighting before by having a V-shaped skylights which let in abundant light. The ground floor was transformed into a piazza or what she calls "an all purpose meeting place and starting point for tours" (Woodbridge, 2002). Aulenti says in order to make "art and architecture become one", each piece of art needs to be considered with the portion of the museum that's being designed (Vogel, 1987).

Santa Maria Novella Entrance (1990)

Being versed in more than one discipline, Aulenti would collaborate with other designers, such as Massimo Canevazzi, Vianca Ballestero, Carlo Vannicola and Piero Castiglioni (who did the lighting) for the entrance of Santa Maria Novella Station in Florence in 1990.

Musee d'Orsay (1980-1986)

The transformation of the French underground train station, Gare d'Orsay, to the Musee D'Orsay in Paris (1980-1986) won Aulenti the Chavalier de la Legion d'Honneur from the president of France, Francois Mitterand "making her the first female architect so honored" (Vogel, 2001). The museum was dramatic with a "450-foot-long central hall, capped by a barrel-vaulted glass ceiling and bathed in natural light, seemingly defies spatial boundaries" (Vogel, 2001). Holes drilled in a horizontal line along the top and bottom of walls were intended as sound absorbers, but the top holes could also be places to hang pictures. Her proposal was chosen out of five international architects who were invited to compete in the second competition for the design of the new museum. Aulenti refers to the meeting of art and its accommodation as the "'double condition or double ambiguity' of architectural renovation, juxtaposition [of] elements of the past with the present" (Vogel, 2001).

As one of the few notable female Italian designers, Gae Aulenti secured her place and reputation with her repertoire of elegant, culturally-infused architectural pieces even though they had invited controversy but were also met with great respect. Aulenti believes that "women in architecture must not think of themselves as a minority, because the minute you do, you become paralyzed" (Vogel, 1987). She has always worked for herself and not let others restrict her. It is important that designers bring their own personality to their work as long as it fits in the context and embraces the cultural values within the project space.

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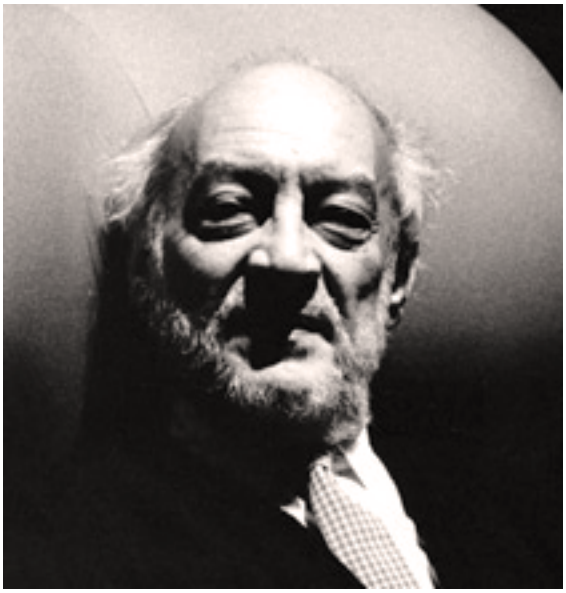
Gaetano Pesce: Ideas and Innovation

Alex Cotoranu



"*A very serious problem is that most of the people have lost the connection with the society, they don't work for the needs of soceity.*"

-Gaetano Pesce

Thesis:

The ideas that are realized by Gaetano Pesce, in the form of contemporary Italian design, are influenced by the context in which he works and lives. His inspiration is drawn from personal experiences, relationships, and from the design, art, and architecture of the past. His motivation is drawn from his curiosity and from response to culture and economy. Together, the attributes relating to the motivation and inspiration of Gaetano Pesce are key in understanding the impact of his work in Italian design from the late 1950's onwards.

Inspiration:

During his early years, Pesce was introduced to Cesare Cassina, who took interest in the works of Pesce and the message that he were trying to convey. For this reason Cassina gave Pesce a monthly salary with which to continue research with materials and to come up with prototypes. Over the years, their relationship deepened, as Pesce quotes: "*Cassina became a kind of father to me.*" (Gaetano Pesce) It was Cassina who actually inspired Pesce to not only make inspiring works of art, but rather to embed this quality into industrial products. "*Cassina helped me understand that contemporary creativity was associated with the new reality of our times. It did not subscribe to the romantic ideal of art, but rather to industrial production.*" (Gaetano Pesce)

The relationship that Gaetano Pesce had set up with Cesare Cassina, and the ideas that inspired his more contemporaries to support him, granted Pesce access to the resource of production and experimentation.

The death of one of his contemporaries, Milena Vettore, while they were touring the Cassina factory, inspired visions of blood in Pesces work. "*I'm sure over the next years, all the work I did where blood was very present had to do with this.*" (Gaetano Pesce)

It was because Pesce had support from Mario Bellini and Vico Magistretti, which where then already well established designers, that he was able to produce works inspired by the previously described tragic event. One such case was when Cesare Cassina was sceptic about fabricating the "*Fioreinbocca*", which depicts part of a face with a flower in the mouth and blood streaming down from the nose. In addition, the contrast between contrast of love and suffering, that can be observed in this piece, served to emotionally affect viewers.

However, looking further back in the the life of Gaetano Pesce, we can learn of the feminie influence that has manifested itself in some of his works. During his childhood, Pesce was expelled from various educational institutions (due to his rebelious nature), and as a result was "*briefly [enrolled] in a convent academy for girls. There he was happy*" (Marisa Bartolucci, pp.9) This happiness sprung while he developed his taste for art during "*conversations about music and art*" (Pesce) with the head nun.

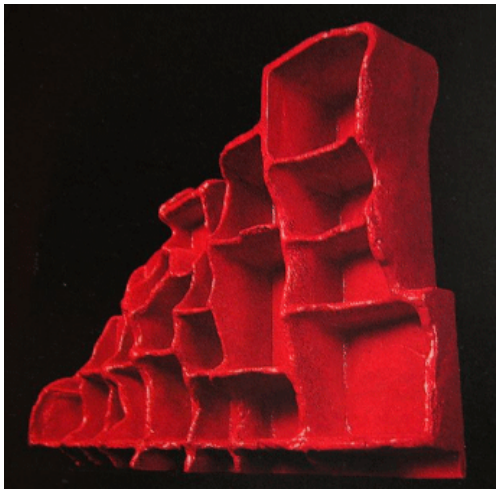
"*Wherever he went, he was in the company of women, his mother, her cousin, his paternal grandmother.*" (Marisa Bartolucci) Pesce's mother worked hard and raised him on her own, and Pesce had a deep appreciation for that. As a result of this part of his personal life, there has been a deep feminine influence embedded in his ideas.

For example, his "*La Mamma*" chair has a distinct feminine quality in its form that sets this work apart from other chairs. This form is meant to be expressive, to both viewers and sitters, of the love and care that a mother has for her child. This work also ties in with Pesce's ideals; "*We have to answer people's needs, create something useful, give joy and happiness.*" (Gaetano Pesce for Designboom)

La Mamma

"*Human beings are full of mistakes. For me it was important to use the mistake as a quality. To find a different kind of beauty.*" (Gaetano Pesce pps.15-16)

It was this human characteristic, that inspired Gaetano Pesce to take advantage of defects created by manufacturing errors. For example the "*Carenza*" bookshelf was made by allowing bubbles to form in the plastic material that it is made of. This caused parts of the plastic to break off from the edges, making each individual "*Carenza*" unique. This aspect gave the bookshelves a human characteristic, allowing them to better integrate in human culture as more than just design objects.



Carenza

This desire to instill a unique quality to the individual copies of a mass-produced product was inspired by his learnings and interpretation of the art of previous eras. This art was regarded by Pesce as: "*a set of products designed to meet the needs of a select clientele, an applied art where the portrait, the landscape or the nude corresponded to a well-defined demand*" (il Modo Italiano). It was with this in mind that he went about working in the domain of industrial design, making unique products that were not meant for everyone. This was a very important step for Italian design during the late 1960's, when, for purely economic reasons, generic products were being made for the general populace.

This study of previous masters and their methods allowed Pesce to learn beyond the design work that was happening during his time, and bring something fresh and innovative to the table. "*Many of Pesce's early designs refer to the perfectly proportioned human form of the Renaissance*" (Marisa Bartolucci, pp.15)

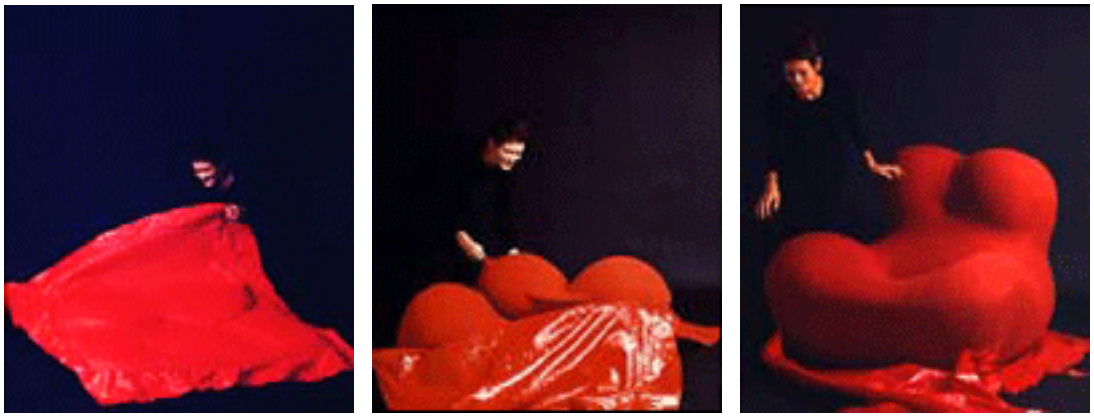
Motivation:

Gaetano Pesce was motivated to appeal to cultural values through design, when he observed a lack thereof in the profit-driven products during the mid 20th century. He understood that products should not simply be fabricated for function alone, but also for how they affect society and culture. "*Design alone was not enough for me. I thought objects should be about more than function.*" (Gaetano Pesce, pp.11) Pesce was unsatisfied that design pieces only fetched money; they needed a purpose; a meaning. It was the aesthetic and cultural dimension to his works that made them relevant to their time.

During the Radical Design/Architecture movement of Ettore Sottsass, groups such as Archizoom and Superstudio, and others, Pesce found ways of instilling emotional qualities through the various elements of which his works were comprised. At this time the purpose of his works was to spawn discourse with his contemporaries, on the aesthetic qualities of design pieces and their function. It was through this discourse and experimentation that Italian design was able to capture both functional and aesthetic qualities that lead to a genuine human response such as surprise, or joy of use.

However, it was the curiosity of Gaetano Pesce lead him to experiment with many materials that were relatively new during his time, such as polyurethane and other plastics. These experimentations allowed him to form a knowledge base of materials, from which he could draw forth innovative ideas when inspired by everyday experiences.

In fact, this had been the case with the previously described "*La Mamma*" chair, where the idea behind the fabrication and materials for this chair came from an entirely different context than the feminine and maternal qualities that it portrays. While taking a bath, Gaetano Pesce was inspired to use polyurethane by observing the qualities of the sponge that he was using. Here, we can observe the "*La Mamma*" chair from the point of view of the materials of its making, and their significance in terms of innovation. The sponge-like material of the chair allowed it to be placed into a sealed bag, and all the air to be vacuumed out. This left behind a flat bag which was not only easy to store, but also to bring into a new living location for example, where the bag could be opened and the chair could inflate on its own. This inflatable quality is what further inspired and encouraged Pesce to make an entire series of chairs known as "*Up*".



Steps of unpacking La Mamma

We can observe this rich exploration of materials yet again with Pesce's "*Feltri*" chair, that was made out of a very thick wool felt and polyester resin on the exterior and quilted down on the interior seat area. The materials allowed for a strong and comfortable base on which to sit, and an adjustable backing and armrest that could be reconfigured to change one's sitting experience completely. The innovation behind this choice of materials lies not with the quilted padding of the interior, but with the single large piece of wool felt that the rest of the chair is made of. A more speculative view of the base of the chair reveals further innovation in the form of a miniature Roman amphitheater, complete with arches to give it the strength required to support the weight of a person. Here, we note that Gaetano Pesce has once again looked back at the art and architecture of times passed, seeking inspiration, combining it with his knowledge of materials, and ultimately resulting in an innovative product.

Feltri

Conclusion:

The close relationship with key design houses, such as Cassina, have allowed Gaetano Pesce to materialize his ideas, and to experiment, expressively, in the domain of contemporary design. The combination of ideas, inspired by various experiences, has allowed Pesce to come up with emotionally as well as technologically innovative and inspiring works. In Marisa Bartolucci's book, "*Gaetano Pesce*", she compares Pesce with designer/architect Frank Gehry, as having "*pushed materials to their expressive limit*". With our previous examples of the "*La Mamma*", "*Carenza*", and "*Feltri*" we can see this this quote come to life in full effect. Pesce's observation of culture and economy, his curiosity of materials, his study of art and architecture of the past, his personal experiences, and his ideas, have defined him as an intellectual designer who has played a major role in defining what we know today as Italian design.

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