

Toward Paris! 45 Years of Domus for a Design à la Français

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Multidisciplinary Aspects of Design

Objects, Processes, Experiences and
Narratives

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Objects, Processes, Experiences and Narratives

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Introduction

This book is the result of a long research process. The work started in 2020 with an exhibition held in Parma (*Design! Oggetti processi esperienze*, CSAC Università degli Studi di Parma), and a book of the same title, edited by F. Zanella (with essays by G. Bosoni, E. Di Stefano, G.L. Iannilli, G. Matteucci and R. Trocchianesi) and published in 2023 (Electa Milano) centered on the role of archives as memory repositories and agents for contemporary design. This first period of reflection was followed by an international conference: *Design! O.P.E.N.* (<https://www.designopen.it>) held in Parma on May 5–6, 2022. The present volume contains most of the papers presented at the conference.

Starting from the first volume (*Design! Oggetti processi esperienze*), the research was always characterized by a multidisciplinary approach, which became even more multidisciplinary at the international conference held in 2022.

In fact, the conference was organized by a network of scholars from the world of design, philosophy and history of art, whose aim was to intertwine several types of knowledge. Consequently, multidisciplinary is also the main feature of this second volume whose objective is to reflect, in an integrated manner, on the different dimensions of design, using competencies from the field of design and from that of humanities.

The aim of this project is to create a repertoire of opportunities of exchange and of relation among the culture of designers and the applied marketability of humanists in the project and in the innovation processes, in particular those design processes characterized by an important social and cultural impact.

In this context of exploration and experimentation in the territory of bordering subjects, stands the interpretative model in Fig. 1. It represents the potentialities in the interdisciplinary relations which verify the logics and dynamics in the “behavior” of a designer dealing with some project variables. On the vertical axis, humanities and techniques can be found, and on horizontal one, research and project.

Where these variables intersect, there can be four types of intervention:

- The intersection of techniques and research generates technological experimentation considering techniques and technology fields in continuous and fast evolution.
- Where research and humanities intersect, we are in the field of a historical/social/philosophical approach in which the analytical and critical dimensions of the research itself are developed.
- Between humanities and project, we are in the area on which our project focuses: here the meta-project approach becomes the synthetic expression of the relation among the two poles.
- Finally, between project and technique, we are in the area where the executive component of the project itself emerges.

There have already been significant studies which have stressed the importance of humanities for design and have shown that design can be a stimulus for humanities; this

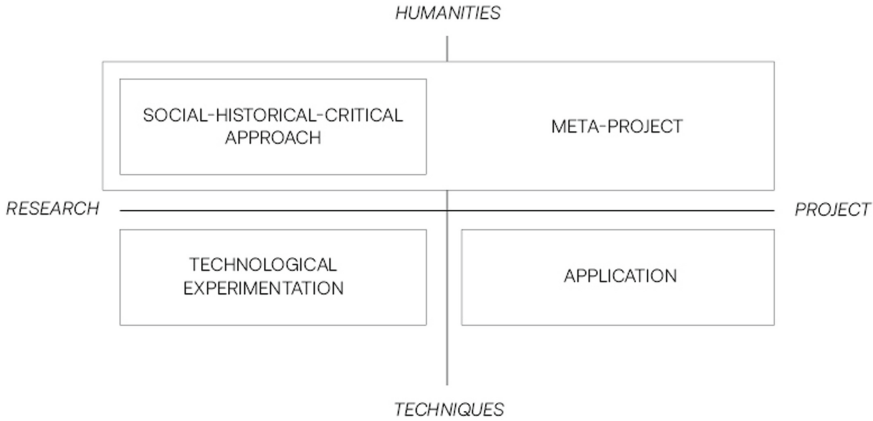


Fig. 1. Potential synergies between design and humanities [1]

is why the conference *Design! O.P.E.N.* intended to be an opportunity for research and debate with the objective of continuing this fundamental line of work.

Some crucial issues which interdisciplinary research must tackle are:

- The research of “new problems for design”, that is, the collective need, as a scientific community, to find new directions toward which work must be periodically re-oriented, and this can be done only through a process of joint reflection.
- Research investigating the “meanings” that the product can have for design.
- Research that investigating the “value” that the design product shows.

As far as meanings are concerned, design and humanities integrated research can challenge, in a theoretically sounder way, “sustainability” by enhancing those concepts that are on the boundary between ethics and esthetics. Today, design cannot afford to dismiss ethical reflection, and, in this direction, humanistic culture can help to reinterpret the reflection on the mere functionality, in the more philosophically complex terms of the concept of “suitability for the purpose”.

With regards to the analysis of the value generated by the action of design, it may be interesting to speak of “technology of value”, which only humanistic investigation can help to process and fill with tools useful to produce not only ex-post critical knowledge, but first and foremost, oriented toward experimentation and to showing new corridors for contemporary design [1].

The volume follows the paths of reflection which structured the conference *Design! O.P.E.N.*, focusing on current themes and issues that are still at the center of the multi-disciplinary debate on design, investigated through four keywords: objects, processes, experiences and narratives, which correspond to the book chapters.

The first chapter focuses on object-oriented design, enhancing its functional narrative and experiential values. In fact, objects, beyond their value in use, bear symbolic, anthropological, political and social meanings and worldviews. This section also develops a theoretical reflection on the esthetic categories used to interpret the design object

in relation to the classic dichotomy useful-beautiful, to the category of game, to artistic values and the relation between ethics and esthetics.

The second chapter is on the designer's self-reflective moment which is focused on the analysis and on the definition of processes in various contexts, spanning innovation, social engagement, reflection on emergencies or forecasting. This section investigates how designers develop and test their models, both at production, implementation and research levels. The areas of investigation are those addressing innovation, social engagement and pursuing a reflection on emergencies or forecasting. The section is intended as an arena for discussion on topics revolving around both the different moments in the history of design and the contemporary condition. The contributions collected in the Processes Section reflect the current condition of the disciplinary debate, which is strongly characterized by a profound transformation of design processes due to the comparison with scientific research methods, with a prevailing interest for methodologies and contemporary priorities as the environmental one, or to the dematerialization of processes.

The third chapter focuses on as a theoretical and practical strategy aimed at facilitating and fostering experiential interactions among people, between people and objects or environments. This section aims at investigating the foundations and the implications of a specifically experiential turn in design from various perspectives and in various disciplines. Due to the multifaceted nature of this turn, both theoretical and practice-based research are testified by contributors.

Finally, the last chapter is on narrative. The narrative vocation of design represents a crucial key of interpretation in contemporary cultural expressions such as making history, representing through different media, archiving and exhibiting. This section explores narratives in three different "dimensions": narrative as a scenario (envisioning new contexts, behaviors, uses, spaces); narrative as a tool (creating new ways to trigger innovation); and narrative as a process (framing new methodologies to face complex issues).

Each chapter reflects the results of the conference held in Parma and is constituted by the analysis of concrete case studies and theoretical and methodological proposals aimed at highlighting the "multiverse" character of design. It is organized in the thematic subsection defined for the conference program, just to emphasize the prevailing interpretative trajectories.

A special thanks to the institutions that have funded the conference and the present publication (The Department of Humanities, Social Sciences and Cultural Industries and CSAC, University of Parma; the Department of Philosophy and Communication Studies, University of Bologna; the Department of Humanities, University of Palermo; the Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano; and the Department of Engineering Enzo Ferrari, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia) and all those who, in different ways, have contributed to reach this result (particularly Alice Biancardi and Marta Elisa Cecchi, and also: Okuniev Avhustyn; Katia Botta; Gabriela Del Rosario Abate; Giorgia Ferri; Salvatore Martino; Serena Massimo; Diego Valle; and Laura Xhaja).

Without their help, it wouldn't have been possible to make this event and this volume happen. We hope that this book will become a useful tool of reflection on the theoretical and methodological aspects between humanities and design.

The scientific committee and book editors:

Giampiero Bosoni, Elisabetta Di Stefano, Gioia Laura Iannilli, Giovanni Matteucci, Rita Messori, Raffaella Trocchianesi and Francesca Zanella.

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Toward Paris! 45 Years of Domus for a Design à la Français

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Abstract. Between 31 May and 23 September 1973, the exhibition *Domus: 45 ans d'architecture design, art, 1928–1873* was held in Paris. It occupied an entire floor of the Pavillon Marsan in the Louvre, involving the entire editorial staff of the magazine. The exhibition, subdivided by decades, used panels, a collection of objects, and original artworks to illustrate the history of Ponti's magazine from its foundation to 1973.

It presents different levels of interpretation that are exemplary of the way of telling the Italian design in an international framework practised since the years of the first issues of “Domus”. On the one hand, the placement of the magazine's interests in a temporal flow, in the form archive. On the other hand, the curatorial choice clearly privileges the cotè reserved for the visual arts, both in the reproduction of articles and reviews published over the years and thanks to the extraordinary contribution of exhibited artworks by Marino Marini, Max Bill, Renato Guttuso, Ben Sahan, Chillida, Tinguely, Armand among others.

The thesis of the paper is that this has been a mode of the Italian project that shapes its narrative code as a transformism calibrated to the culture and mood of the host countries with the aim of presenting a compact and coherent image (the Made in Italy, the Italian way or the Italian line depending on the situation) but also to adapt it to the foreign public, both the generalist -and possible buyer- and the specialist.

Keywords: “Domus” · Italian Design · France

In the spring of 1973, posters appeared on the streets of Paris announcing a new exhibition, hosted by the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, bearing the evocative and mysterious title: *1928–1973. Domus: 45 ans d'architecture, design, art*¹. Here, the Latin word ‘Domus’ refers to the first Italian publication dedicated entirely to Italian architecture and design, founded by the architect Gio Ponti in 1928. This is not the first time that the Milan-based magazine had landed on the French scene. In 1967, the editorial board of Via Dezza organised and curated the exhibition cum trade show titled *Domus: Formes Italiennes* [1], which took up an entire floor of the Galeries Lafayette. The *kermesse* had once again presented Ponti's formula, the «trois expressions» that makes Italian design ‘Italian’: industrial production, as well as artisanal production (both in series and as one-off pieces) [2]. In short, the exhibition re-iterated the magazine's narrative that, since its

¹ The poster is on the cover of *Domus* n. 525 (August 1973).

founding, had always emphasised the creativity and craftsmanship of Italian products, through its dissemination in the Western World, to delineate the global success of the Made in Italy somehow as a brand.

In that same year (1967), almost as a counterpoint, *Domus*, still under the direction of Ponti, published an edition completely dedicated to France featuring on its cover a blurred image, veering towards the colour green, of Roger Tallon's furniture.² Inside, the magazine presented an in-depth analysis of the diverse production manufactured on the other side of the Alps: prefabricated architecture, industrial design, and interior design, but also the artistic research and atmosphere, with a sharp focus on the Nouveaux Réalistes group. What emerged is a clear-cut image of French design, aligned with artistic rather than architectural research. The magazine's survey opened with the inevitable tribute to the noble father Jean Prouvé, point of contact with the tradition of the modern and ongoing research on quality prefabrication; a phenomenon also concerning Italian architects such as Gino Valle, Marco Zanuso and Angelo Mangiarotti [3]. The following articles focused on French Post-Avant-Garde themes. Ettore Sottsass proposed a *petit-tour* inside the homes of Parisian artists and creatives: from Lettrists Ben (Benjamin Vautier) and Stein, the gallerists Denise Renè and Michel Warren, Op art artists Vasarely and Le Parc (awarded the Grand Prix at the Venice Biennale in 1966), the Nouveaux Réalistes Cèsar and the duo Niki e Tinguely, the representatives of kinetic art Boto and Vdranega, inflatable artists Emmanuelle and Quasar Khan, the super-minimalist Portuguese couple Lourdes Castro and René Bertolo, the actress and activist Delphine Seyrig, to the neo-surrealist painter Lucio Del Pezzo [4]. As usual Sottsass's tone is teasing, but his approach is not immune to the charm of the ultra-technological Parisian flats – or their *bric-à-brac* appeal – belonging to rich gallery owners or couples of aspiring artists who lived the bohemian life of the twentieth century.

In addition, *Domus's* 1967 French-devoted issue covered the opening of the new Olivetti showroom designed by Gae Aulenti in Faubourg Saint-Honoré, Paris. The dedicated showroom echoed a *mood* in line with the creativity of the capital. Although it should be recalled that Aulenti wanted to create a square (an Italian square), the aspect highlighted is the 'magical' atmosphere accentuated by large African wooden sculpture, closer to a return to primitivism, and rather distant from the image communicated by the other showrooms belonging to the Ivrea-based company [5]: imagination and creation as opposed to the precision of typewriters and calculating machines [6]. Tributes followed to the young *génial* Olivier Mourgue, designer, and creator of *futuristes* interiors with the incredible equipment of Airborne that would soon populate the lobby of the space station in Kubrik's film *2001: A Space Odyssey*; and to Roger Tallon, presented as the interpreter of performing and technologically advanced projects, and simultaneously, as an experimenter of shapes, concepts, and graphic layouts foreign to the commercial realm. Eventually, the thesis that this issue of *Domus* intends to project is made explicit in the closing article of the French portfolio signed by the critic Pierre Restany, the founder of the *Nouveaux Réalistes* group and a regular contributor to the Italian magazine since the early years of the 60s and in the many to follow. *Paris bouge!* [7] is the slogan that attempts to put an end to the cold war between the *Ville lumiere* and New

² *Domus* n. 452 (July 1967) with contributions by Jean Prouvé, Sottsass, Aulenti, Mourgue, Tallon, Restany.

York City, mediated by the young French artists belonging to a second wave of artists following the generation of the School of Paris. The Nouveaux Réalistes are, in fact, split between Paris and New York: they are free from post-war, abstract, and post-avant-garde orthodoxies, and ready to take on the new challenges set by galleries and museums: «*un fait en tout cas est certain: en contradiction avec les prévisions les plus pessimistes et dans une période cruciale pour l'avenir de la culture française, Paris, enfin, bouge*». Yes, Paris was on the move as far as artistic research is concerned, but despite the host magazine's orientation towards design culture – albeit its boundaries were not always clearly defined – Restany's closing piece was all centered on visual languages.

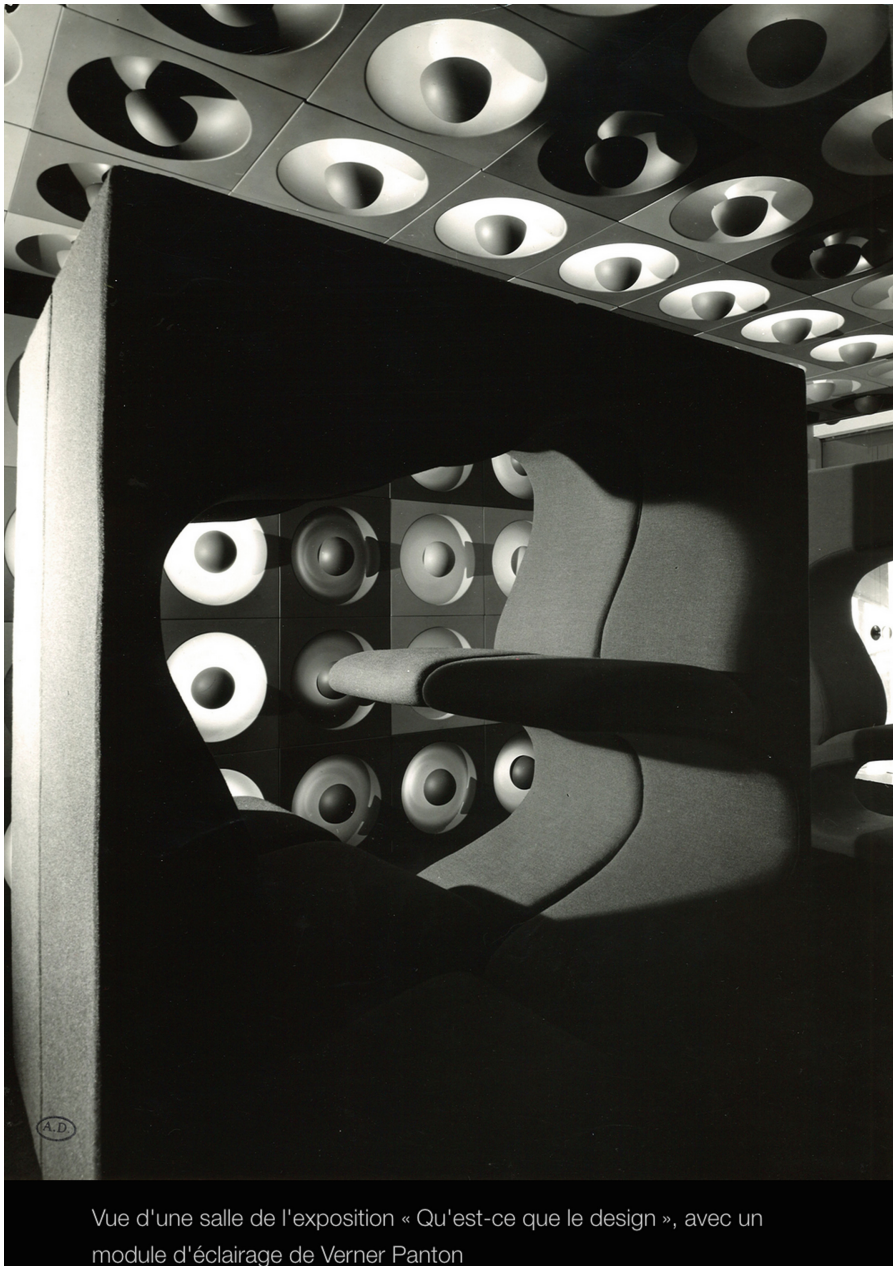
A similar direction also seems to underlie one of the first events promoted by the CCI. The Centre de Création Industrielle, a state body established in 1969 [8] – and consequently merged into the nascent Centre Georges Pompidou in 1972 – commenced its work by questioning the design discipline with the exhibition, held in the premises of the Louvre's Musée des Arts Décoratifs, *Qu'est-ce que le design?*. The promoter of the centre, François Mathey, was a long-standing curator of French museums who, in 1960 and in 1962 respectively, had put on two exhibitions: *Antagonisme* and *Antagonisme 2: l'objet* [9, 10]³. In particular, the second exhibition brought together one hundred and fifty artists invited to respond to the theme of the decorative and the everyday object, and its making. Extreme responses, such as the ones by Klein or Takis, were presented together with those orientated towards the decorative arts – Pomodoro, Consagra – or closer to industrial design as per Isamu Noguchi or Harry Bertoina's work. The *fil rouge* that connected the nearly 500 objects displayed was the type of – artistic – training shared by the all the authors.

A similar approach was also taken when questions around design were promoted and communicated in *Qu'est-ce que le design?*. The exhibition introduced five designers: Joe Colombo together with Charles Eames, Fritz Eichler, Verner Panton and Roger Tallon were the authors of the work exhibited and curated accordingly in five different sections. In the exhibition catalogue, the five designers answer a series of questions concerning their respective projects, and the subject of design more broadly. Panton presented the lighting system used in the restaurant of the publishing house Spiegel in Hamburg (1969), and edited by Poulsen (Fig. 1), the informal chairs *Living Tower* (Herman Miller, 1968) and the rugs designed for Mira-X. The room dedicated to the Eames, titled *Three Clients*, showed works for Herman Miller, IBM, and several government offices, as well as one version of the GEM slide show on three screens and panels, sharing the interview given by Charles to the museum.⁴ Eichler displayed projects, and processes for Braun while Tallon's exhibition space presented the lathe/threader and the television *Téléavia* alongside his responses to the interview. Lastly, Joe Colombo put on view the *programmable system for living* designed for 'La Rinascente' (1968).

The attempt to bring order to the definition of design by interviewing five personalities that represented as many 'national' (or presumed as such) approaches to design,

³ 485 objects were commissioned for the exhibition which included artefacts by Jean Arp, Jean Dubuffet, Max Ernst, Giacometti, Ipousteguy, Meret Oppenheim, Man Ray, Dorothea Tanning, etc.

⁴ In 1972, the Eames studio produced the short documentary *Design. Q&A*; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmgxDCujTUw>.



Vue d'une salle de l'exposition « Qu'est-ce que le design », avec un module d'éclairage de Verner Panton

Fig. 1. One of the halls of the exhibition *Qu'est-ce que le design?* With the lighting system by Verner Panton; CCI 1969 Bibliothèque MAD, Album Maciet 309 bis 41 bis. ph Pierre Jahan. Courtesy Pierre Jahan Archives

constitutes, in all likelihood, the theoretical basis on which to lay the foundation of the emerging CCI organisation. It was also a response to what had been displayed at the Milano Triennale⁵, the previous year, in terms of French manufacturing: objects of current industrial production, but above all, futuristic solutions designed by artists/architects, synthetic fabrics chosen by Paco Rabanne for his collections, the pauperistic clothes of Schreiber and Hollington, as well as graphic and multiple arts over which dominated César's enormous installation: a sixteen meters long seat made of a two-tone polyurethane foam which creates an «exciting off-scale, and at the same time conceptual and dimensional» [11], all ensembled together in the spirit of the «libre créativité»: in short, the French slogan for creativity orientated towards visual languages.

The pronouncements of the five designers reflected the 'form follows function' debate, in accordance with what had already emerged within the counter-cultures movements in the previous years. More specifically, Colombo suggested a definition of design as an ensemble of actions or of small interventions carried out by the designer that, in turn, can become levers for producing changes at all scales, including the urban dimension⁶ [12]. Here, the bond between 'form' and 'function' was re-interpreted: form became a direct consequence of the designer's role who acted as a sort of epistemologist. Additionally, the idea that design was not subjected to fashions was fully formulated. On the contrary, it was argued, it was the designer – and the design system – that guided fashion and the public's taste. The nature of these affirmations, that included allusions to semiotics, philosophy, and advanced technology ('we live in the heart of the technology era') brought Colombo closer to the Anti-Design thought shared with his French colleagues, and further away from his Italian counterparts.

The choices of the French continued with a very targeted selection. In 1970, the CCI organised a subsequent exhibition in collaboration with the Italian firms Cassina and B&B. Set once again in the Louvre and titled *Nouveaux espaces*, the exhibition included two spaces designed by Gaetano Pesce and Quasar Khanh. Pesce proposed elements made of synthetic materials including the series *Up*: « un rito di derisione in cui l'oggetto divinizzato, posto su un altare, incensato, inserito in una colonna sonora, illuminato come un'icona, appare nel suo fasto, venerato e invitante» [13]. His piece 'Yeti song'⁷ was played in the *pneu* (or inflatable) room to complement the *Aerospace* furniture series designed by his French-Vietnamese colleague Quasar Khanh [14]. Two portraits complementing each other: the French designer was unconventional, in search of new materials, and close to the fashion world (his wife Emmanuelle is a well-established fashion designer) while the Italian designer was already immersed in an artistic and individualist approach that will be fully applied to his post-apocalyptic work *Environment* at the 1972 MOMA's exhibition *Italy. The new domestic landscape*, and in line with the transalpine *mainstream* [15].

⁵ Archivi della Triennale di Milano, TRN_14_04_0178-0205.

⁶ In 1964, the magazine *Edilizia Moderna* (n. 85) edited by Vittorio Gregotti and entirely dedicated to design, the same interview questions are directed to 12 Italian designers. Their conclusion was that architecture can and must be run by designers as 'traditional' architects and planners had failed at their task.

⁷ The song was released on LP by Gaetano Pesce and produced by RCA; <http://boxes-of-toys.blogspot.com/2019/12/la-canzone-dello-yeti-toy-2332.html>.

This was the context in which the exhibition for the forty-five years anniversary of the magazine *Domus* took shape in the rooms of the Pavillon de Marsan. 1928–1973. *Domus: 45 ans d'architecture, design, art* occupied the whole floor of the museum's wing dedicated to decorative arts, and it involved the entire editorial staff and other professionals from Italy throughout its run – the 31st of May to the 23rd of September. The exhibition's lighting and sound effects bore the names of two excellent protagonists of the Italian design scene: Livio and Piero Castiglioni, while the visual identity saw panels and plinths covered in the chequered plastic laminate produced by Abet Laminati and designed by Superstudio – the same material that was being used for the *quaderna* furniture series produced by Zanotta (1969–72).

These were also the years in which *Domus*, still under the direction of Gio Ponti, saw Pierre Restany and Germano Celant as members of its editorial board. The effects of their orientations and research that identified France as a privileged field of comparison, could certainly be felt. Of Restany (at *Domus* since 1969) we recall his already mentioned involvement with the Nouveaux Réalistes, and of Celant (on the editorial board since 1971) the action initiated in 1967 to bring together artists working around the notion of *Arte Povera* [16]. An endeavour that will lead, thanks to his continuous dialogue with Pontus Hulten – who, at the time, was developing the artistic programme for the future Centre Pompidou –, to the realisation of major French exhibitions such as *Identité Italienne* at the Beaubourg in 1981 [17]. *Domus*, in the early 70s, thus, reflected also through its signatures, the Parisian atmosphere of the *engagées* artists. Indeed, in the magazine's articles, a wide variety of languages can be identified: a legacy of the counter-culture years of the sixties that could be, however, easily mended together with the magazine's original approach that exhorted artists to 'leave the museums' and engage with designers.

The overall exhibition was designed by Cesare Casati and it resembled a large library filled with a dense sequence of photo panels, enlargements from the magazine, objects, models, and original artworks. The audience was welcomed by a luminous installation designed by the Castiglioni – father & son – who had been experimenting for years, especially Livio, with early electrotechnical and electronic devices [18]. In Paris, however, an analogical solution was preferred: sixty halogen bulbs (a novelty on the market), with a concentrated light beam, were mounted on boxes hidden in the balustrades of the entry staircase projecting the word *domus* on the vault of the vestibule. Nothing 'kinetic', no filters or convex lens: the light glow was simply a result of the patient-empirical-work of calculating the distance and the angles of directions of the bulbs projecting the letters⁸ [19, 20]. The techno soul of the exhibition – whose layout simply consisted of full-scale boxes, covered by an over-lit canopy, leaning against a dark central spine that guided the visitors through the magazine's five decades indicated by illuminated signs – was centred around the futurist machinery *Page Search 500*. Introduced by Livio Castiglioni and placed at the entrance of the exhibition surrounded by floor lamps *Toio*, *Page Search 500* was a microfilm reader-printer produced by 3M that 'allows visitors to consult an

⁸ The exhibition was repeatedly advertised in the magazine since the beginning of the year, and a preview was given in the April issue. The May issue (522) included most of the texts published in the official exhibition catalogue.

index of 9000 names that corresponds to 100.000 punch cards' with the option to read the articles on the screen, but also to print them off and take them at home⁹ [21].

The exhibition layout followed two parallel ways of recounting the history of the magazine: themes and chronology. In both cases, the curatorial and 'biased' approach that has always defined *Domus* and that 'reflects the situation according to legitimately discriminatory limitations and angles' was retaliated [22] (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Gio Ponti presenting the exhibition at Louvre, Courtesy Piero Castiglioni

The decades 1928 – 1940, *l'avant-guerre*; 1941–1945, *la guerre*; 1946–1955, *l'après-guerre*; 1956–1965, *le siècle dans sa maturité*; 1966–1973, *notre époque dans sa pleine virtualité*, converged in a small room dedicated to the Plateau Beaubourg – the allocated space for the CCI's design exhibitions and still under construction – to then resume the representation of its history, almost in a genealogy, through the *objets d'utilisation courante*: cars, chairs, espresso coffee machine and radios. The parade of objects – from Breuer's *Cesca*, FIAT 126 to the Castiglioni's radios –¹⁰ were surrounded by four-dimension wallpaper picturing over four hundred posters featured in the magazine from 1928 to 1973 tracing the evolution of graphic design and advertising (*les insertions du 1928 a 1973*).

⁹ The exhibition catalogue was edited by *Domus* as an off-series double issue, edited by Cesare Maria Casati, Agnoldomenico Pica, Emanuele Ponzio, Gianni Ratto and Pierre Restany.

¹⁰ Images from the exhibition can be found © Bibliothèque Kandinsky, MNAM/CCI, Centre Pompidou - Dist. RMN-Grand Palais: *Domus, 45 ans d'architecture, design, art: 1928/1973*. - Exposition au Musée des Arts Décoratifs (31 mai - 23 septembre 1973): vues de salles.

Blow-ups, reproductions of articles, and images published in the 45 years of life of *Domus* were animated by a considerable number of original artworks. Drawings by Sant'Elia, Terragni, Figini e Pollini, Le Corbusier, Ponti-Fornaroli-Rosselli and Superstudio; and objects – especially prominent in the first decade as to point out the origins of industrial design – by Aalto, Pietro Chiesa, Richard Ginori, Krupp, Lobmeyr, Nizzoli, Wirkkala, Peressutti, Zanuso, Bellini, Colombo. But the most striking – and valuable – artefacts were the paintings belonging to De Chirico, Morandi, Carrà, Fontana, Campigli, Sironi, Marini, Matisse, Leger, Guttuso, Klee, Shahn, Vedova, Santomaso, Rothko, Kline, Klein, Raushemberg, Oldenburg; and the sculpture–installations by Fazzini, Marini, Bill, Munari, Chillida, Tinguely, Manzoni, Cèsar, Gilardi, Armand, Raysse. In summary, the *crème de la crème* of the visual art world originating from each decade covered by the exhibition, with a rich group representing the French Nouveaux Réalistes, the Italian post-Conceptual, and the Pop avant-garde.

The articles selected, expressly translated into French, and reproduced for the exhibition as well as the catalogue – published as a large format in two volumes, with a curious binding in *pluriball*; the graphic bore the name of Ennio Lucini – also reveal a strong tendency towards visual arts. Since the beginning of the publication, alongside the well-known essay by Persico *Punto e a capo per l'architettura* [23], articles were published covering Leger, realist painters, and the fate of Italian fine arts more generally. However, in the last few years, Germano Celant and Pierre Restany had moved the magazine's editorial line even closer to the visual arts claiming 'the prevalence of the irrational, of delusional excess, and that is, of the Dionysian principle' [24]. Reportages such as the one covering the fourth edition of *Documenta* in Kassel (1968), where the protagonist was Joseph Beuys; the Christo's *land art* mega-structures; the performance of the Nouveaux Réalistes in Milan for their 10th anniversary (1970); and the wondering of Mertz's igloo at the Venice Biennale in 1972 dominated the exhibition's narrative. The articles' texts were almost all chosen by Restany and Celant, and the first pieces written for the opening of the exhibition to 'congratulate' *Domus*, were entrusted to art critics and historians, curators, and museum's directors. This way *Domus* presented itself, and by extension Italian design too, as a place where to observe and confirm the idea that the magazine had always privileged an artistic and creative *cotè* within the design process. A belief that was clearly forced upon the magazine and its founding director that, however attentive to the things of art and to pursue an all-around definition of Italian design, had never moved the goalpost thus far (Fig. 3).

The French 'turn', that resonates with colleagues operating on the other side of the Alps, is a clear example of the Italian project's ability to shape its narrative to the culture and mood of its host countries with the aim of presenting a compact and coherent image of what Italian design is (the *Made in Italy*, the *Italian way* or the *Italian line* depending on the situation) while appealing to a foreign public, both the generalist – the possible buyer – and the specialist [25]. This way the Italian narrative follows the 'Dolce Vita' slogan in the USA, the 'primitive-rural' in the Scandinavian, the techno in the post-Bauhaus nations and the 'artistic' in the Nouveaux Réalistes countries.



Fig. 3. One of the halls of the section “L’Après-guerre” with artworks by Bill, Guttuso, Shahn, Klee; Centre Pompidou, Bibliothèque Kandinsky/Fonds Muséologie, CCI8. RMN-Grand Palais/Dist. Photo SCALA, Florence

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