

PESANDO A.B., Design and women through the pioneering magazine «Stile Industria» (1954-1963

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# Proceedings of the 2nd MoMoWo International Conference- Workshop

Research Centre of Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, France Stele  
Institute of Art History, 3–5 October 2016, Ljubljana

**Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> MoMoWo International Conference-Workshop  
Research Centre of Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, France Stele Institute  
of Art History, 3–5 October 2016, Ljubljana**

Collected by Helena Seražin, Caterina Franchini and Emilia Garda

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## **I EDUCATION AND PUBLISHING**



## Design and women through the pioneering magazine «Stile Industria» (1954-1963)

Annalisa B. Pesando

### A "new" magazine in line with the times

Since the fifties, Italy through a period of exceptional economic recovery driven by the industrial sector. The reasons for this increase depend on different factors: low cost labour, salary restraint with the effect of competition in market prices and exports (especially in the metallurgical, mechanical, automobile and chemical) and monetary stability. This "economic miracle" is also facilitated by a policy to bestow public budgets for the development of industry which also entails a significant change in the social structure of the Country, which has agricultural vocation goes to industrial and tertiary<sup>1</sup>.

In June 1954 in this climate of renewal and development comes a new trade magazine «Stile Industria» (hereafter «SI»). The magazine is dedicated to Industrial Design and is published by Gianni Mazzocchi as a magazine affiliated with the best-known architecture magazine «Domus». It is entrusted to a member and son in law of Gio Ponti, Alberto Rosselli<sup>2</sup>.

Rosselli since 1946 writes a column dedicated to "Design per l'industria". Notably in 1951, with the exhibition La

forma dell'utile, cared by the BBPR (Banfi, Belgiojoso, Peressutti, Rogers) and promoted at the IX Triennial, it opens a deep and methodological reflection. This will inspire the address of «SI», about the importance the use of products as cause of the choice of shapes and materials used. This vision, comprised by industrial aesthetics and by the functionalism of the product, becomes the leitmotif of the new magazine. The aim is to qualify the design discipline in relation to the industrial development, especially toward the building components for a renewal of architecture even before the study of furniture and interior. These unreleased analyzes go towards a responsible approach to technological problems, methodological, formal and also environmental related to the product of industry.

Significant that magazine birth coincides with the establishment of "La Rinascente Golden Compass Award" (1954) aims to honor the merits of industrial, artisans and designers which give the products the quality and form of presentation such as to make unitary expression of their technical, functional and aesthetic.

Among the great themes of Italian reconstruction, in addition to the industrial issue, also appears the woman question. From the Second World War, with the recruitment mass of female labor, women acquire awareness of their active role in society. In Italy, the universal suffrage the right to vote to women takes place in 1945, with participation in the first parliamentary elections on 2-3 June 1946 for the Referendum on the State institutional form: the monarchy-republic. Twenty-one women out of 556 deputies

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<sup>1</sup> Nicola Crepax, *Storia dell'industria in Italia. Uomini, imprese e prodotti* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002)

<sup>2</sup> Amalia Fracassi and Simona Riva (ed), *Stile Industria: Alberto Rosselli* (Parma: Artegrafica Silva, 1981)

participating in the Italian Constitution, a small but significant number of an ongoing change process. It will be the policy of the Left to deal with continuity of women's issues through media tools such as the magazine "Noi Donne" (the page of the lady of "L'Unità" is supervised by designer Lica Steiner since 1956<sup>3</sup>) and the social struggle against layoffs, strikes, wage disparities and foreclosed careers. Unlike the Democratic policy pushes little but strong women like Angela Maria Cingolani Guidi, the first woman in the history of Italy to be part of a Government (1951)<sup>4</sup>. It is in this period of renewal that the Italian woman comes knowingly outside its traditional home boundaries, taking scenarios and their anticipations of the intellectuals and artists of Futurism the early Twentieth Century (Rose Roso, Fulvia Giuliani, Benedetta Cappa Marinetti, Georgina Rossi...), claiming an active social role of women and subverting, in particular, consolidated scales of values<sup>5</sup>. In architecture and design the role of women in postwar period is still a secondary role, composed of figures professionally competent, faded due to a well-established history in the shadow of influential husbands and companions with whom often they share the study and

design work. It is interesting to note such as the birth of the main and wellknown magazines in Italy after 1950 in the newsrooms are found placed the life partners of the important artistic figures. Affections often born by affinity of studies at school with circles of mutual friends that facilitate the insertion in professional fields still rather unusual for women or new experimental such as magazines<sup>6</sup>.

In newsroom of «SI» comes Franca Gualtieri<sup>7</sup>, Carlo Santi's wife, while Julia Banfi, BBPR Gianluigi's wife<sup>8</sup>, is editorial assistant of «Casabella Continuità». Under the direction of Ernesto N. Rogers (1953-1964) are inserted two other female figures who are going to succeed in architecture sector, first students then assistants of Rogers at the Milan Politecnico: Gae Aulenti (graduated in 1953) made her debut in «Casabella» with Gregotti, Purini and Aymonino and deals with graphic layout (1955-65)<sup>9</sup>, and Matilde Baffa (graduated in 1956) as young editor<sup>10</sup>. Achillina Bo, a young Roman architect, arrives in Milan entering the drafting of «Domus» of Gio Ponti and Pagano<sup>11</sup>. While still in «Casabella-

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.enciclopediadelledonne.it/biografie/>; <http://www.onalim.it/anna-steiner-racconta-i-suoi-genitori-albe-e-lica/>

<sup>4</sup> See the papers of the Centro Interuniversitario "Per gli studi sulle donne nella storia e nella società", directed by Ginevra Conti Odorisio, Sapienza Roma. Overall: Paul Ginsborg, *L'Italia dal dopoguerra ad oggi* (Torino: Einaudi, 1989, 2 vol.); Alisa Del Re, Valentina Longo, Lorenza Perini, *I confini della cittadinanza. Genere, partecipazione politica e vita quotidiana* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Katrin Cossetta, *Ragione e sentimento dell'abitare. La casa e l'architettura nel pensiero femminile tra le due guerre* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2000); Elena Doni and Manuela Fugenzi, *Il secolo delle donne: l'Italia del Novecento al femminile* (Roma: GLF Laterza, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Claudia Mattogno, "Muse, committenti, progettiste. Il lungo percorso delle donne in architettura", *Che "genere" di città per il futuro*, vol. 6 n. 10 (giugno 2013): 71-82; about the women professionals see the researches of Vanda. *Teorie e opere femminili in architettura*: <http://www.tempiospazi.it/spazi/findex1/>; Alice T. Friedman, *Woman and the Making of the Modern Architecture. A Social and Architectural History* (New York: Abrams, 1998).

<sup>7</sup> Franca Santi Gualtieri, *Design in redazione* (Mantova: Corraini, 2002); Ead., *Succede di passare attraverso la storia* (Milano: FSG ed, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> Gian Luigi e Julia Banfi, *Amore e speranza* (Milano: Archinto, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Nina Artioli (ed), *Omaggio a Gae Aulenti* (Mantova: Corraini, 2016)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.acmaweb.com/costruirelemodernita/profilialbini/matildebaffa.htm>

<sup>11</sup> Lima Zeuler, *Lina Bo Bardi* (London: Yale University Press, 2013)

Costruzioni» architect editor is Anna Castelli Ferrieri<sup>12</sup>, who graduated in 1943 enters to work in the studio of Franco Albini getting in touch with Piero Bottoni and Ernesto N. Rogers. In 1947 she won the gold medal at the VIII Triennale in Milan, with the competition organized by the Ministry of Public Works related to single-family homes for veterans to QT8 district in collaboration with Franca Helg, and in 1951 founded the company Kartell with Giulio Castelli. The magazine «Metron» founded in 1945 and directed by Piccinato and Ridolfi, presents only woman in a board of nine men, Margaret Roesler Franz as editorial secretary.

Similarly in the early Sixties this introduction by influential people of wives and daughters within the newsrooms continue. For example since 1962 Anna Grasselli (philosopher Giulio's wife) and Letizia Frailich Ponti (Gio Ponti's and George Frailich's wife who in those same years began to write articles for the magazine) are aggregated to «SI».

The magazine and editors experiences start to women professional career. In particular for «SI» Franca Santi Gualtieri, with the closing of the magazine in 1963, joined the almost exclusively female editorial staff of «Abitare», directed by Piera Peroni (1923-1974) out of which afterward sheself becomes director. While Maria Bottero, only female signing on the magazine, from 1963 to 1974 became editor of the trade magazine «Zodiac» by Bruno Alfieri.

### **Anatomy of a magazine: articles, writing and women's contribution**

The milieu in which the «SI» born is that of a circle of friends and long-standing partners, from cultural garde anti-fascist of Milan, that shares the enthusiasm to search for the new in the formula "more beauty utility". Especially in the early years of the magazine, Rosselli enclose friends who share thoughts and ideals in order to identify a specific and clear boundaries field for the Industrial Design. Meeting place is "Jamaica", a dairy-bar, whose name comes from the 1939 film "The tavern of Jamaica" by Hitchcock, where young intellectuals and artists comparing the experiences of the modern movement, before the war, and then since 1948. Here come together students, professors and professionals coming from the Brera Academy and the Milan Politecnico (the architects Banfi, Belgiojoso, Peressutti, Rogers, Pagano, Giolli, Albini, De Carlo, the painters and designers, Mucchi, Veronesi, Huber, Treccani, Birolli, Guttuso, Sassu ecc.).

The editorial staff that Rosselli sets up is composed of only four people, two men and two women: Alberto Rosselli, director, Giancarlo Pozzi (1954-1957) architect-designer at the time engaged with the company Cassina, her friend Franca Santi Gualtieri, just graduated at Brera, and Luciana Foschi first employed as a secretary and since 1957 elevated to editor. In April 1955 the team is joined by the graphic designer Michele Provinciali e Mario Galvagni, who works at "Notiziario Tecnico" (1954-1959).

Organized by the critics and designers referenced articles on the emerging discipline of Industrial Design, the magazine will change over time and increases of collaborators with the entry of Angelo Tito Anselmi (since 1957), Elena Viganò Scarpetta (Vittoriano Viganò's

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<sup>12</sup> Claudia Donà (Ed), *Anna Castelli Ferrieri: architecture and design* (Milano: FAAR 1997)

wife), secretary in 1956, later replaced by Gisella Forni. Since 1957 Enzo Frateili writes reviews and technical news that in 1959 switch to another woman, Maria Bottero. In the same year Costantino Corsini and Giorgio Wiskemann dealing with interviews in industry and Giorgio Moretti Madini in charge of technology in industrial design, joined the historical group Rosselli-Anselmi-Gualtieri. Since n. 35 of 1962 the editorial staff expands with two women collaborators Anna Grasselli (reviews) and Letizia Frailich Ponti (news) replacing Maria Bottero work.

The magazine design, whose layout is entrusted by Provinciali since 1955, includes a cover impactful commissioned to revolutionary-masters of visual communication. Meaningful it is the choice of the cover for the first issue of the magazine edited by Albe Steiner presumably with the inseparable wife Lica, of which still today it is hard to distinguish the authorship of the works<sup>13</sup>. Albe, recognized graphic setting proponent of much of the press of the Italian Left, sets the cover of the magazine in four colors - according to solutions of the post-revolutionary Russian avant-garde - choosing the profile of a chair in the sheet by Rima and the Olivetti's typewriter keys identified as production symbols of the Italian industry.

The magazine, first a quarterly than bi-monthly circulation, provides a set of building industrialized and furnishing companies advertising pages and the opening with the editorial signed by Rosselli, generally addressed the moral value research of the correct form of the object, according to recipe made of the relationship between form-function, form-environment, form-fabrication, form-material, form-mechanism. Followed by practical articles written by the main

protagonists of the modern period of the Cultural Revolution (Alfieri, Gio Ponti, Max Bill, Zanuso, Dorfles) divided into three sections: industrial graphics, graphics and packaging<sup>14</sup>. At the end there are news with publications, exhibitions, events, new productions and competitions. Feature of the magazine is the rich photographic material supplied content, with images in black and white and color (still anonymous format) and Italian and English captions that increase the circulation and visibility from a European perspective.

Among the most important results of this editorial experience we note the foundation of the Association of Industrial Design (ADI) on 6 April 1956 that in the footsteps of a new "Deutscher Werkbund" brings together professionals and critics such as Rosselli (president), Ignazio Gardella, Vico Magistretti, Angelo Mangiarotti, Marcello Nizzoli, Enrico Peressutti, Giulio Castelli, Antonio Pellizzari, Gillo Dorfles, Bruno Munari and Albe Steiner, representatives of major Italian companies like Finmeccanica, Olivetti, Pirelli, Motom, Necchi, Borletti, Cassina and la Rinascente for a total of 60 initial members.

The role of women in the magazine is ancillary, always crowning and final assembly of articles by renowned experts and signatures of the design theme, hardly prominent. Franca Santi in her book *Design in redazione* tells how Rosselli relationship with women was sufficiency and tolerance, "Also a woman could do this" the motto with which he used to attend a job he thought was simple. A striking example of the hidden women work can be the article appeared on the numbers 26-27 of 1960 titled 1939-1959 *Appunti per una storia del disegno industriale in Italia* that collects a first

<sup>13</sup> Anna Steiner (ed), *Albe Steiner* (Mantova: Corraini 2006);

<sup>14</sup> Grace Lees-Maffei and Kjetil Fallan (Ed), *Made in Italy. Rethinking a Century of Italian Design* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014)

critical investigation of the design of the last two decades. The article is signed by Bruno Alfieri with Anselmi captions, while article mounting, images search and selection are edited by Franca Santi, but the only name mentioned is Alfieri.

With this spirit of mission, the new magazine takes headway in June 1954 and ends with n. 41 in 1963, with a section dedicated to the farewell and thanksgiving to who contributed to making important «SI». Ninety-six figures are shown with photos among these are five women: Mia Seerer, Jane Fiske Mc Cullough, Josine des Cressonnières, Franca Santi Gualtieri, Luciana Rosa Foschi.

### **Design and women: critical success of the product made by women**

Analyzing a magazine that aims to defend and define the field of Industrial Design and presenting scientific papers involving the main professionals and critics of the Italian scene of the Fifties, the role of women can be identified in two parallel areas: the drafting work for research and selection of objects to be published under headings (Franca Santi and Maria Bottero as examples) and the work of established professionals in the design field.

Among the first women mentioned on «SI» it is cited Anna Castelli Ferrieri in 1955 (n.3) for housing built in Milan with Gardella and Menghi, and the German Marianne “Mawi” Feldner, graduated from the Academy of fine arts of Monaco and wife, at the time, of the American photographer Hans Wild who works for the magazine «Life», for the textures produced by the famous company Manifattura Jsa of Busto Arsizio<sup>15</sup>. In

accordance with already well-established habit in the Bauhaus school (revolutionary Russia will give more free working area for women), many professional women are directed to carry out work in the more traditional field of textiles and manufacturing.

The interest in Manifattura Jsa, founded in 1949 and constantly quoted in trade magazines («Domus» and «SI»), is taken up in 1960 with an interview with Grampa led by Corsini and Wiskemann (Indagine sul tessuto stampato. Manifattura Jsa, 28/1960) which discusses the drawing vision printed as a natural evolution of modern architecture.

The Manifattura Jsa is at the forefront of technological and production process of the sector, combining vocation for integration of artistic research in manufacturing with a continuous comparison with the large international companies of design textiles such as Artek of Alvar and Aino Aalto, Grantex of Arne Jacobsen and American example of Charles and Ray Eames. The goal of the Italian factory is producing modern decorative fabrics with Italian characteristics and Mediterranean colors. Among the female personality, stable in the company, there are Cecilia Mora, Marta Latis, Marianne Feldner and Margherita Patocchi.

Absence of qualified designers in the textile field and ostracism of the big names to deal with what they consider a too humble field as patterned fabrics are among the main problems in stressing the importance of the printed fabric. Although tissues are still relegated to a mainly female work, it is interesting to note that in committee juries of competitions there are still no women. An example is the renowned competition organized by the XI Triennale di Milano with Jsa in 1957 which has an exclusively male jury (Ivan Matteo Lombardo, Tommaso Ferraris, Giuseppe

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<sup>15</sup> Flaminio Gualdoni (Ed), *La Manifattura JSA e gli anni Cinquanta: tessuti d'arte, tessuti d'artisti* (Busto Arsizio: Museo del tessile e della tradizione industriale, 2002)

Ajome, Johannes Itten, Luigi Grampa, Marco Polacco and Alberto Rosselli).

Particularly it should be noted that in conjunction with the Triennial of 1957 dedicated to the textile sector there is the first woman awarded the "Golden Compass", Ruth Christensen with a higher premium, and Rita Rylander, with an alert, both in the context of production for Manifattura Jsa (15/1958). For another report it must wait until 1961 Raffaella Crespi, with "wicker toy" produced by G. Masciadri and the fabric for curtains designed by Renata Bonfanti (30/1961). Bonfanti will be awarded the "Golden Compass" for her tent fabric "JL" in the edition of 1962 and she is the first Italian woman to win the Prize. Instead to find the first woman to participate in the commission of the "Golden Compass Award" you have to wait 1984 with Cini Boeri<sup>16</sup>.

One of the first cases in which the magazine dedicates an important space to the product of a woman is in 6/1956, when it is described a modular stand Balzaretto and Modigliani, designed by Luisa Castiglioni architect, graduated in 1946 at Milan Politecnico. The stand, with its modular structure and easy to assemble, is appreciated for its ability to rationally solve the problem of the stands. Two pages are dedicated to project with captions in Italian and English, images, and drawings to complete. The works of Luisa Castiglioni, Albini and De Carlo's pupil and collaborator, are published on «Metron» and «Domus» since 1947, while on «SI» it remains an isolated case.

The attention to the female work in the «SI» remains generally anchored to the textile world, the Italian prominent figure is Renata Bonfanti art director of Rossifloor. Besides she is the architectural culture of northern Europe to excel.

In 1958 (n.16) about Sergio Asti review on Stockholm exhibition of five industrial designers (Stig Lindberg, Sigurd Persson, Sven Palmqvist, Carl Axel Acking and Alice Lund) about the technical innovation in homeware, mentioning the male figures but not Alice that in 1930 opened her own textile atelier.

In the field of analysis on teaching in European and Italian schools for the construction of industrial design sections are mentioned courses taught by Lidia Nicolisi and Marialuisa Scalvini at School of Naples.

The 1960 seems to open new frontiers to professional women, thanks to the industry highly sensitive to the Italian industrial design. Although the reports of their work are still marginal and confined to sections of exhibition or secondary articles, greatly increase women's works often laced with short but incisive critical comments. An example takes place in the packaging sector (26/1960) with the catalog of the exhibition "Packaging" at the Museum of Modern Art organized by Mildred Constantine which from 1943 to 1970 worked in the department of architecture and MOMA design<sup>17</sup>. The review reports Constantine opinion about an extension of the consideration of packaging-term also addressed the "bodywork" of the mechanical devices (telephone, radio, fridge) resulting publicity shock due to the rapid aging tied to market forces. This annotation allows the drafting to highlight the importance of a good design with quote Banham. Or the mobile toilets designed by Dorothy Lee (with attached photo) and full page published in the magazine «Design» of March 1960 as "the pace setters", that «SI» comes very close to Gerrit Rietveld'

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<sup>16</sup> Cecilia Avogadro (ed), *Cini Boeri, architetto e designer* (Milano: Silvana Editoriale, 2004).

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[https://www.moma.org/explore/publications/mofrdern\\_women/history#lexicon7](https://www.moma.org/explore/publications/mofrdern_women/history#lexicon7)

works of 1917, raising questions on originality of the woman's design.

In the same section "Notizie. Mostre ed Esposizioni" of 1960 it is mentioned the opening of "The four Seasons" restaurant in the Seagram Building (closed July 16, 2016), where it is not cited the architect Mies van der Rohe but the designer couple Louis and Ada Louise Huxtable for designing tableware. Ada L. Huxtable (Landman's maiden name) wins in 1970 the first Pulitzer Prize for Criticism for the first time bringing the debate on architecture to the general public<sup>18</sup>.

1960 opens the door to the great theme of Italian design crisis enshrined in the non-award of the National "Golden Compass Award"; to this crisis Rosselli devotes a lengthy report (Crisi del disegno o crisi del Premio?, 26/1960). The article shows forty interviews to Italian and foreign designers including one feminine opinion, that of Jane McCulloch Fiske, New York's magazine «Industrial Design» editorial director. Jane, better known by her married surname Thompson, at that time working with Walter Gropius in a new American Bauhaus project. Jane brings a breath of fresh air in a long and serious debate considering herself "as every American" confused and amused to hear about the crisis of Italian design. The cover of the magazine announcing the Italian design crisis is curated by Gae Aulenti already graphics of «Casabella Continuità». Crisis that «SI» also locates in the Mostra di nuovi disegni per il mobile italiano addressed to Neoliberty and proposed by a group of young architects, with the graphic catalog edited by Gae Aulenti. Next to the news finds place the attack of Bruno Zevi to new trends (Masochismo e neoliberty).

To this announced Italian furniture crisis, it contrasts the reporting of work in the field

of Jsa tissues of the painter Hella Henner Schmit and the work of Ponti's daughter, Letizia, about the exhibition of Design in London. Among women, famous wives of many influential architects, it mentions the birthday card drawn by the journalist Fernanda Pivano and Ettore Sottsass Jr., her husband.

Of particular relevance to the issues and for greater involvement in the women's debate, the contributions that appear from number 28 of 1960 on the XII Triennale devoted to the themes of the house and the school, where Rosselli opens an "invitation to the discussion" to involve visitors themselves in the debate on Industrial Design. A footer there is inserted the images and opinions of twenty-one professionals, industrial and critics among the most influential of the period, including four women, the American journalist Janice Elliott, the German designer Mia Seeger, the editor of «Domus», Henrietta Ritter, and Alima Backer. In the next number (29/1960) it starts publishing the opinions of journalists, critics and designers. Thirteen critics are consulted, including Banham, Misha Black, André Bloc, and the journalist of English magazines, as Arianne Castaing of «Woman», Janice Elliott of «Sunday Times», Monica Pidgeon, director of «Architectural Design», Patience Gray of «The Observer», Ann Ferebee of «Industrial Design» of New York and Margit Staber of «Neue Zürcher Zeitung» of Zurich. The main critical points that emerge are: the recognition of a dead Italian architecture with a fallback to mannerism, a return to class-differentiations (neo-liberty), lack of useful contributions on the theme of the design and of the house, nothing new in the field of school, still turned to crafts items and not to the industry, failure of the productive and social progress of the Italians, and in particular shortage of

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<sup>18</sup> Carter Wiseman, *Twentieth-Century American Architecture* (New York: Norton & C., 2000).

communication skills of Triennials for regular visitors. The article is completed with photos about general views and urban accommodation details on this Mannerist trend. Among the several comments, Patience Gray also notes the work of the Swedish Hertha Hillfon (1921-2013) about her ceramic innovative technique.

Also in 1960 in the "Notizie – Premi e varie" it reports the news that the prize Kaufmann International Design is won by Charles and Ray Eames (29/1960). The short article announcing the prize and introduces a short bibliography of Charles where he indicates that he has always worked in collaboration with his wife, Bernice Alexandra Kaiser, which only lately the historiography has re-evaluating the role. This recognition of Ray's work in 1960 is the result of the American environment more open to women's work and of Charles who say "Anything I can do, Ray can do better".

In "Recensioni e Segnalazioni" (29/1960) it is very positively reviewed the catalog of the painter Jean Fautrier edited by Palma Bucarelli for Saggiatore, at the time Rome National Gallery of Modern Art's director (1942-1975). Bucarelli, Adolfo Venturi and Pietro Toesca's student prodigy and Giulio Carlo Argan's friend, is the first woman director of a public museum in Italy, with a strong personality and recognized scientific value, operating in a male dominated scene. The Sixties were dotted with numerous public recognitions for her work.

Meanwhile, in the section awards at the XII Triennale (1960) it is once again the textile sector to report women, often faces already known and awarded by the Commission of the Triennale (particularly for the 1957 event sponsored by Manifattura Jsa). All are foreign from northern Europe (Finland and Denmark) or Czechoslovakia. They are rewarded with a

gold medal the weaver Paula Trock (1889-1979) for hers sophisticated processes and colorful Danish wool; the innovative designer "Nanna" Dennie (1923) with her husband, Jorgen Ditzel, rewarded for strokes produced by Georg Nesen Solvsmedie; the Finnish textile artist Ritva Puotila (1935), working paper yarn and linen; the designer Marjatta Metsovaara Nystrom (1927) for fabrics produced by Metsovaara Oy in Finland; the architect-craftsman Ibi Trier Mørch (1910-1980) with silver pots with handles in ivory; the award-winning Finnish artist Uhra-Beata Simberg-Ehrström (1914-1979) awarded the Triennial of 1951, 1954, 1957 and 1960 for her textiles; the artist Kyllikki Salmenhaara (1915-1981) as a reformer of teaching ceramics in Finland, already reported at the Triennale of 1951 and winner of the gold medal with ceramic prod. Wartsila Arabia; the artisan Sigrun Berg (1901-1982) in particular known in Oslo for her production of garments and shawls, awarded with an honorary diploma at the Triennale of 1954 and in 1960 with a gold medal for fabrics; Grete Korsmo (1917-2010), born Adelgunde Margrethe Prytz, considered the queen of Scandinavian design for her works of jewelry with enamels, she already awarded in 1954; and finally the first woman to open an independent studio reporting of silversmith, Vivianna Bulow-Hube (1927-2004), Swedish, awarded with silver medal at the X Triennale and gold to XII with her jewels. In 1958 Pablo Picasso knows Vivianna and organizes an exhibition for her in Antibes.

1961 opens with the n. 30 of January and for the first time appears an article written by a woman, Billa Zanuso (30/1961) dedicated to Buoni giocattoli e sussidi didattici alla Triennale. Billa, histrionic woman of good Milanese bourgeoisie, in 1951 founded with Franca Valeri and Vittorio Caprioli the Teatro dei Gobbi and



then get on television<sup>19</sup>. Degree in philosophy and specialized in psychology Billa, for her skills, is called by Rosselli to take care of infant education through the games and school play areas and identifying areas-study, adequate arrangements and sizes for baby items. The toys exhibited at the XII Triennale are reported, with a particular focus on innovative productions of the British Hilary Page (1904-1957) that since 1932 she changes the face of the English toy industry. Among her best-known toys, the patent for the interlocking brick building now known as LEGO brick. On the productions of Page, Billa appreciates the attention to security from non-flammable material, the edges rounded off to such dimensions as not to be swallowed. The only flaw of English productions are not be directed by a stable team of educators. By contrast, the Ulm school opened in 1954 a "Committee for Quality toy" with annual prizes to the manufacturers of the best toys.

Also in 1961 n. 32 it is cited the entry in ADI the designer Renata Bonfanti from Bassano del Grappa. Bonfanti, artistic consultant of Rossifloor, called "Miss" in the report Wall to wall: il tappeto pavimento by Corsini and Wiskemann (37/1962), is interviewed on the samples she designed for moquettes in wool and in Leacril using 20 colors. The designer explains how to work with colors on large sizes and the stranded technique (twisting multiple wires of different colors and of equal value) to obtain the melange effect, using handlooms to reproduce as closely as possible to the final result given by machine and to have certainty on the designed effect.

One last important space is dedicated to Josine Des Cressonieres, figure of international prominence, referring to the

future of Design in the number 36 of 1962. Now the disciplinary matter has been debated and with the number 41 «SI» closes.

## Conclusions and ideas for research

The magazines become a litmus test for identifying critical fortunes and work of women in the mid-twentieth century. In the editing staff, the ancillary role, but absolutely irreplaceable, of women's work, there was sorting and careful selection of the design objects that appeared on the market, and as recalled Koenig "there was a percentage of "news", good and bad, vastly greater than today"<sup>20</sup>. In many cases this ancillary work has proven to be the launching pad for bright careers. In the practical field is rather interesting to note that women often rise in the textile sector, generally regarded as feminine vocation - field in which takes place the first award of the "Golden Compass" to woman, Christensen Ruth -, or in the area of childhood and education. Rarely women are present in the building sector (only cases Luisa Castiglioni and Anna Castelli).

Through the magazines of the period, however, it is also possible to develop an alternative and less known history of women. The visibility given to the many competitions organized by companies (Soc. Montecatini, Manifattura Jsa, Pirelli-Ferrania S.p.a., Pavoni ecc.), resulting in the reporting of the winners, allows you to build a new and nurtured geography of professional women, in particular in relation to northern Italy, competing and winning awards, through which broaden the horizons of the future research on the subject and help limit an absence important historiographical as the lack of

<sup>19</sup> Emanuela Martini (ed), *Franca Valeri - Una signora molto snob* (Torino: Lindau, 2000).

<sup>20</sup> Giovanni Klaus Koenig, "Alberto Rosselli", in Fracassi and Riva, *Rosselli*, 13-36.

many, almost all, biographies of  
professional women who have

contributed to the artistic and social  
history of the Second World War.

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