

The Museum of Modern Art

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RELEASE NO. 41

ITALY: THE NEW DOMESTIC LANDSCAPE

Design as Postulation

Director: Emilio Ambasz

House Environment

May 26, 1972 - September 11, 1972

Total Furnishing Unit

Designer: Joe Colombo, collaborator Ignazia Favata

Patron: ANIC - Lanerossi

Producer: Elco, Boffi, Ideal Standard with the participation of:

Arnolfo di Cambio, Brionvega, Kartell, Pozzi, Sormani, Stilnovo

This environment is made up of four independent volumes: the first, central, block contains under its raised floor two beds and a table on castors. at an upper level it contains two small chambers which act as private retreats, separated from each other by small built-in closets and an outward-facing bookshelf.

The second, third and fourth volumes are a wardrobe (on castors), a kitchen block and a bathroom block. The volumes may be composed in a number of ways in spaces of a variety of shapes.

Material: central block: plastic shell, plastic-laminated doors, mirrored rear walls of studies;
wardrobe: plastic shell and drawers, plastified cloth screens;
bathroom: shell designed for plastic, executed in plastic-sprayed wood for exhibition purpose; fittings in plastic and aluminum;
kitchen: shell in wood (as bathroom), fittings in steel, cloth curtain.

Color: White, yellow, red, purple.

Color film for TV directed by Livio Castiglioni and Gianni Colombo.

"TOTAL FURNISHING UNIT" - Design by Joe Colombo in collaboration with Ignazia Favata, arch. Statement by designers.

If we accept the premise that homogeneity is the concept on which our designs are based, then the methodology characterizing them can be divided as follows:

- a) Relationship between city and dwelling unit
- b) Relationship between parkland and dwelling unit
- c) Relationship between man and dwelling unit

(over)

The fact that urban centers are not integrated with parkland, and that their expansion is becoming more and more chaotic, conditioning life to an ever greater degree, does not mean that our choices are of a necessarily compensatory nature. Indeed, if our home were to become our refuge, we should be obliged to face the daily nightmare of integration with the world outside.

Thus arises the necessity for a dwelling unit to cater for the realities of life today and tomorrow, ever closer to the requirements of the inhabitant, and thus less restricting and less representative of personal tastes, prestige, etc. The dwelling should be adapted more and more to the man, and never the contrary.

The concept of a unit in which every function should be perfect, is, therefore, valid, for this is what is required by external reality.

The area within the unit must be dynamic, that is, in continual transformation, so that a volume which is smaller than the conventional norm can be exploited to the maximum, with maximum economy of interior arrangement. At this point it is easy to envisage the form such a proposal should take: a series of suitably "furnishing units" placed freely in their allocated areas.

Such furnishing units, developed to serve the various functions of the home and private life, have been differentiated in such a way as to be, in their turn, adaptable to various types of area, or to differing requirements.

Thus we have 4 different units:

- Kitchen
- Cupboard
- Bed and privacy
- Bathroom

Their functions are relative to the various moments at which they are in use.

(more)

It is worth noting that while the kitchen and bathroom serve only their original purposes, the cupboard acts as a screen between entrance and possible night area, or, at any rate, separates two areas, and the night-day unit (bed and privacy) serves all the functions of living, from sleeping, eating, reading, receiving friends, etc. to withdrawing to an internal room especially designed for this purpose.

Table 2 illustrates possible modifications of this dynamic area. Table 3 illustrates the various possibilities for arrangements of the units.