

# The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release  
August 1993

## MARCO ZANUSO AND RICHARD SAPPER: SELECTIONS FROM THE DESIGN COLLECTION

August 19 - November 9, 1993

An exhibition of twenty objects designed by Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper opens at The Museum of Modern Art on August 19, 1993. Organized by Anne Dixon, study center supervisor, Department of Architecture and Design, MARCO ZANUSO AND RICHARD SAPPER: SELECTIONS FROM THE DESIGN COLLECTION includes televisions, appliances, chairs, and a variety of other objects designed by Zanuso and Sapper, working both individually and in collaboration, from 1959 to 1978.

The exhibition highlights the ways in which Zanuso's and Sapper's designs manifest an understanding of the relationship of user to object, embodying what Zanuso has called the "metaphoric quality which objects have for those who use them." It is the exploitation of this metaphoric quality that endows their products with a level of emotional and intellectual meaning usually outside the realm of product design.

The range of meanings evoked by the designs is broad. The "Grillo" telephone, for instance, is a pleasing, shell-like object which affirms the intimacy of conversation. The "Doney 14" television, with minimal casing around the picture tube, is an object in which simple design establishes a straightforward dialogue with the viewer, while the "Black 201" television is a solid black cube that reveals the screen behind its translucent face only when turned on. Designed during the Vietnam war -- often called the first

-more-

televised war -- the "Black 201" raises questions about information and power. "Instead of a dialogue between spectator and object, a surreal tension would be created. When switched off, the object is an abstract thing that holds you at a distance; when on, it vanishes, and is replaced only by an image," Zanuso states.

Zanuso's and Sapper's designs are frequently both formally and technically innovative. The rearranged interior components of the "Doney" television, for example, result in a new exterior form; the painted steel "Lambda" chair utilizes auto-body techniques of bending sheet metal to increase strength while minimizing weight; the "Tizio" lamp runs a low-voltage current through its armature, eliminating the need for a wire through the structure; and the polyethylene child's chair of 1964 is the first all-plastic chair manufactured.

Marco Zanuso, a practicing architect, was born in Milan, Italy, in 1916. He began his design firm in Milan in 1945. Richard Sapper was born in Munich, Germany, in 1932, and studied philosophy and business administration before working for Mercedes-Benz on automobile body design. In 1959 he joined Zanuso's studio, beginning a collaboration that lasted for approximately fifteen years. Currently, Zanuso and Sapper each have independent offices in Milan; Sapper works on industrial design, and Zanuso works predominantly on architectural projects. **MARCO ZANUSO AND RICHARD SAPPER: SELECTIONS FROM THE DESIGN COLLECTION** is on view through November 9.

\* \* \*

No. 37

For further information or photographic materials, contact Rynn Williams, the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9755.