

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

ITALY: THE NEW DOMESTIC LANDSCAPE

RELEASE NO. 34

Fact Sheet

Director: Exhibition directed and installation designed by Emilio Ambasz*

Dates: May 26 to September 11, 1972

Sponsorship: Presented by The Museum of Modern Art with the sponsorship of the Ministry of Foreign Trade of Italy and the Italian Institute of Foreign Trade (I.C.E.) and the Gruppo ENI; with contributions from ANIC and Lanerossi (companies of the Gruppo ENI), Fiat, Olivetti, Anonima Castelli, Alitalia and Abet Print; and with the collaboration of a large number of Italian industries.

Summary: This exhibition reports on current design developments in Italy, examining a number of widespread design concerns of a more universal nature as represented in the recent work of Italian designers. The major emphasis is on 11 environments for living. These environments, especially designed for this exhibition, are intended for two modes of contemporary living -- the permanent home and the mobile home or trailer. Some of these environments illustrate the viewpoints of those Italian designers who have adopted a counter-design approach, based on their belief that the problems of modern living are social and political as well as physical.

Complementing the environments is a display of 180 objects produced in Italy during the last decade by more than 100 different designers. These examples of product design (furniture, lighting fixtures, electro-domestic appliances, flatware and china) were selected to illustrate the various intellectual design positions which have evolved in Italy in the last 10 years.

Background: The emergence of Italy during the last decade as the dominant force in product design has already influenced the work of every other European country and is now having its effect in the United States. What is of particular interest about this burst of vitality among Italian designers is not simply a series of stylistic operations of product design -- although that too is certainly involved -- but a fundamental and growing awareness of design understood as an activity whereby man creates artifacts in order to mediate between his fears and aspirations and the pressures imposed by the natural and cultural world.

Italy has assumed the characteristics of a micro-model where a wide range of possibilities, limitations and critical problems of contemporary design are brought into sharp focus. Many of the concerns of contemporary designers throughout the world are represented by the diverse and sometimes opposite approaches being developed by Italian designers.

* With the collaboration of Thomas Czarnowski (coordination), and Anna Tucci (documentation and collection of objects).

(more)

Exhibition
Content:

The exhibition is organized into two parts: Environments and Objects. The environments, especially designed and produced for this exhibition, constitute the show's major emphasis. Their purpose is to explore the domestic landscape with a concern for its places: the artifacts and spaces which give them form, the ceremonies and modes of behavior which assign them meaning. Special attention was paid by the designers to the new forms and usages that are emerging as a result of the changing patterns in our lifestyles, our more informal social and family relationships, evolving notions of privacy and communal life, as well as the availability of new production techniques and materials. Within each environment, the modes of use are shown on color television screens through short films prepared by the designer of the work. In addition, a number of Italian designers who believe that substantial solutions to the problem of modern living can emerge not from physical design but from social and political involvement, were also invited to present their points of view. These counter-design approaches are shown by means of three-dimensional and audio-visual displays.

A display of 180 objects selected to describe the different design positions developed in Italy in the last decade complements the environments.

Publication:

An accompanying book, published by The Museum of Modern Art, documents the environments and objects shown in the exhibition and also includes an historical analysis of Italian design written by major Italian design critics and historians.

Additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 St., New York, N.Y. 10019. Phone: (212) 956-7501, -7504

The Museum of Modern Art

To City Editors, Assignment Editors, Critics
From Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art
Date May 12, 1972
Re ITALY: THE NEW DOMESTIC LANDSCAPE

The schedule of previews for our major summer show is as follows:

Tuesday evening, May 23, 1972 - Invitational black tie preview for designers, sponsors, Italian Ambassador
Wednesday, May 24, 1972 - 11 am to 4 pm Press preview
Wednesday, May 24, 1972 - Gala benefit party and preview, 9:30 to midnight
Thursday, May 25, 1972 - Museum Members preview 11 am to 11 pm
Friday, May 26, 1972 - 11 am show opens to the public.

If you would like to assign a film crew or photographer to cover any of these, please let me know so we can make arrangements for you. Phone: (212) 956-7501, -7504.

We have additional written material, guest lists, black-and-white and color photographs. We will also be glad to set up interviews with the designers, many of whom are coming from Italy for the occasion.

The Museum of Modern Art

To College and University Professors
From Elizabeth Shaw
Date May, 1972
Re Student Group Admission Rates

Students visiting ITALY: THE NEW DOMESTIC LANDSCAPE exhibition in groups of 10 or more may arrange to pay a special reduced admission rate.

Student group rate is 75¢ per person (as opposed to the regular adult admission of \$1.75). It is available every day except Wednesdays which is "pay-what-you-wish."

In order to take advantage of this special rate, please schedule your group visit at least 2 weeks in advance.

Telephone 956-7540, or write: Group Visits, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53 St., New York, NY 10019.