

DESIGN AND COUNTER DESIGN AGAINST CONSUMPTION:  
“THE NEW DOMESTIC LANDSCAPE” EXHIBITION

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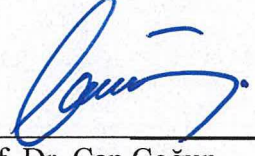
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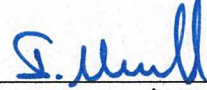
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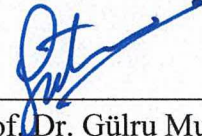
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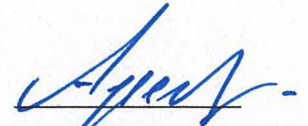
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## ABSTRACT

### DESIGN AND COUNTER DESIGN AGAINST CONSUMPTION: “THE NEW DOMESTIC LANDSCAPE” EXHIBITION

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Due to the economic boom in Western Europe, the period of 1960s and 1970s covered the radical criticism of some European designers against the consumerist society. It is not a coincidence somehow that the most effective criticism raised against consumerism and consumer society came from the Italian designers, but at an exhibition held on the other side of the ocean in Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1972. Announced as “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape,” the exhibition marked a significant moment in design history. The designers who contributed to the exhibition sought the ways to say “stop” to the mass production and consumption, thus they rejected the deterioration of design with stereotypical productions of that time. This study attempts to explore the designers’ role and their opposed approaches towards consumerism in 1970s by analyzing the submitted proposals of Italian designers in MoMA exhibition, presented under “environments” and “counter environments” - “design” or “not to design” dichotomy. The aim is to show the active role of designers in a consumer society while creating our environments and to discuss the difference created by the Italian case who are socially and critically aware of their responsibility towards society.

**Keywords:** *Italian radical designers, the criticism of unconscious consumerism, designer’s role, consumer society, environments and counter environments*

## ÖZ

### TÜKETİME KARŞI TASARIM YAPMAK VEYA YAPMAMAK: “YENİ BİR YEREL PEYZAJ” SERGİSİ

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1960 ve 1970’li yıllarda Batı Avrupa’daki ekonomik patlama sonucunda tüketim toplumunu eleştiren bazı Avrupalı tasarımcılar ortaya çıktı. En etkili eleştiri ise İtalyan tasarımcılar tarafından New York Çağdaş Sanatlar Müzesinde 1972 yılında “İtalya: Yeni Bir Yerel Peyzaj” Sergisi ile gerçekleşti ve tasarım tarihinde önemli bir iz bıraktı. Bu sergideki tasarımcılar kitlesel üretim ve tüketimlere dur demenin yollarını ararken aynı zamanda klasik modernizmin kurallarını ve standart üretimleri de reddettiler. Bu tez 1972’de New York’taki Çağdaş Sanat Müzesi’nde sergilenen “İtalya: Yeni Bir Yerel Peyzaj” sergisinin “Ortamlar” kategorisini analiz ederek tasarımcıların tüketime karşı aldıkları rollerini keşfetmeyi ve sergideki karşıtlığın altında yatan eleştirel sebepleri anlatmayı amaçlamaktadır: “Ortamlar” ve “Karşıt Ortamlar” ya da “Tasarım yapmak” ya da “Tasarım yapmamak”. Aynı zamanda bu tez bir tüketim toplumunda tasarımcıların aktif rol ve sorumluluklarını, sosyal ve toplumsal farkındalığı yüksek olan “İtalya: Yeni Bir Yerel Peyzaj” sergisine katılan İtalyan radikal tasarımcılar üzerinden göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *İtalyan radikal tasarımcılar, bilinçsiz tüketimin eleştirisi, tasarımcının rolü, tüketim toplumu, ortamlar ve karşıt ortamlar*

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Consumerism as a social and economic order and ideology encourages the acquisition of goods and services in ever-increasing amounts. Consumerism explains, economic policies placing emphasis on consumption. In an abstract sense, it is the consideration that the free choice of consumers should strongly orient the choice by manufacturers of what is produced and how, and therefore orient the economic organization of a society. (Mahajan, 2015, p.245)

Consumerism is still a matter of debate between designers. Due to the economic boom in Western Europe, the period of 1960s and 1970s covered the radical criticism of some European designers against the consumerist society. It is not a coincidence somehow that the most effective criticism raised against consumerism and consumer society came from the Italian designers, but at an exhibition held on the other side of the ocean in Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1972. Announced as “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape,” the exhibition marked a significant moment in the design history.

The 1972 MoMA Exhibition Italy: The New Domestic Landscape<sup>1</sup> is considered among the most prestigious and assertive exhibitions that MoMA held during the 1970s. It drew phenomenal attention of both architectural and design world of that day and was signified as one of the masterpieces of Emilio Ambasz as the Design Curator of MoMA. (Tunca, 2009, p. 27)

The curator Emilio Ambasz (1943, Argentina), who was an architect and current director of Architecture and Design Department at MoMA.

“Italy: The New Domestic Landscape Exhibition” was among the best-attended exhibition of the museum with 176,000 visitors and made an overwhelming impression in that time. The designers who contributed to the exhibition sought the ways to say “stop” to the mass production and consumption, thus they rejected the deterioration of design with stereotypical productions of that time.

Especially Italian designers were invited for this exhibition. The reason of that was the transition period of industrial design in the country and the different context of its production. As mentioned in the Ruggero Cominotti’s article in the exhibition catalogue:

In 1950’s and 1960’s socio-economic planning began in Italy with five-year programs about industrial concerns and then with the formal drawing up for plans for entire national economy. In 1950’s three important factors which were important for economic development were; cheap manpower, a strong foreign market and a large backlog of unsatisfied demand for durable goods and these three factors directly affected design in Italy. (Cominotti, in Ambasz, 1972, p.345)

Cominotti states in his article that Italians were designing some elegant television sets, refrigerators and other house furniture with that developing industry. He states that, Italian design was “good” owing to the factories, which were built with modern methods, techniques and materials. (Ibid., p.345-346) It was the previously mentioned socio-economic planning and its aftermath for design world, which attracted Ambasz’s attention. Cominotti claim that, “In the 1971 and 1975 for socio-economic planning, government focused on urban problems and the gains won during the economic boom by directing the new potentials of Italy’s economy toward a higher quality of life.” (Ibid., p.347). Besides the development of economy and industrial environment, there was a new architectural phenomenon, which was called Radical Design.

Radical Design term often used in 1960’s and 1970’s to suggest some extreme shape, structure or the Leftist political positions of its creators. The Notion was propounded largely by the Italian architectural journal *Casabella*. In reality, Radical architecture was often drawn or collage presentation of projects by certain groups questioning what constitutes architecture, usually involving assaults on architecture conceived as a formal language. (Curl and Wilson, 2000, np.)

This movement carried onward the point of view of the Italian designers. They took a multidisciplinary education in Italy. Introduced by Ambasz as “[h]igh level critical consciousness of Italian Intellectuals,” the designers in Italy presented a highly different perspective than American designers. (Tunca, 2009, p133). According to Moffat, on the other hand:

Radical designers’ rebels felt objects should be temporary, as quick to throw away and be replaced by something new and more functional. This would certainly mean consumerism and profits if people keep coming back for more but the message was very different. They wanted people to think about the objects they were buying, even if they ultimately threw those objects away. (Moffat, 2011)

The participants of the 1972 exhibition were significant figures who had extreme political stances. On the other hand, as could be understood from the following words of Emilio Ambasz in an interview, American designers took their education in classic “Bauhaus” technics. In Ambasz’s words: “American designers were upset because they had been brought up in the Bauhaus tradition and Italian designers were using colors, curves and sensuous materials and they saw that the public loved it” (Collard, 2013). The Italian intellectuals in 1972 MoMA exhibition, for Ambasz, caused “the American Intellectuals to understand the mutual relationships and reflect the importance of this to the society with the name of design.” (Collard, 2013)

In the exhibition catalogue, on the other hand, which was also published in 1972, Ambasz refers that there were two categories in the exhibition; one hundred and eighty design objects and eleven environmental installations. For environmental installations, Ambasz mentions that Italian designers investigated the domestic landscape and they inferred some ceremonies and behaviors. Accordingly, selected designers created eleven environmental installations. These installations, solely designed for this exhibition, were categorized under three subtitles: Design as Postulation, Design as Commentary and Counter design as Postulation. Italian designers interpreted those three categories with different perspectives:

In “Design as Postulation” category, the designers aim to bring some solutions to the socio-cultural problems. The proposals of Gae Aluanti, Ettore Sottsass, Jr., Joe Colombo, Alberto Roselli and Mario Bellini were among those physical environments, which were categorized under this category.

In “Counter design as Postulation” category, on the contrary, designers refused to propose solutions unless some structural changes occur in society. The proposals of Ugo la Pietra, Archizoom, Superstudio, Gruppo Strum and Enzo Mari, under this category, were not physical design proposals, but rather art installations or political texts that expressed their political resistance.

While these two categories covered proposals with political rhetoric, the “Design as Commentary” category, only included the proposal of Gaetano Pesce who preferred to concentrate on environmental problems rather than political issues. “Counterdesign as Postulation” category, however, displayed the “negative” approach in profession towards design, which seemed highly anarchist for that day. The leader of the group “Superstudio,” Adolfo Natalini showed their view with the following words,

If design is the only motivation to consume, then we must reject the design; if architecture is the only way to legitimize bourgeois model of ownership and society, then we must reject the architecture; if architecture and urban development are just official framework of today’s unjust social stratification, we must reject the urban development, with its cities until the entire project activity is focused on basic needs. Until then design may disappear. We can live without architecture. (Natalini, Lang in Kovesnikova, et al., 2016, p.3289)

One might say that, radical designers interpreted design as unique for the humanity. They wanted to reveal the free-will and socio-cultural aspects of design. In addition, they approached design in a humanitarian manner and they were aware of their social responsibility. Radical designers also criticized the past and proposed “utopias” for the future of design. The leader of the Superstudio group, Adolfo Natalini narrated the atmosphere of those days in the following words:

In the beginning, we designed rather fantastic objects for production in wood, steel, glass, brick or plastic. That was at the beginning in 1966. Then we turned to the production of usable objects like chairs, tables and cabinets, but these were designed in a deliberately neutral way, a criticism of consumer culture and the continuous drive for novelty. Finally, in 1969, we started designing negative utopias like Il Monumento Continuo, images warning of the horrors architecture had in store with its scientific methods for perpetuating standard models worldwide. Of course, we were also having fun. (Glancey, 2003)

The INDL exhibition in 1972 might be interpreted as a continuation of such approach, especially the proposals designed for “Counter design as Postulation” category. Thus, the designers who chose not to design in 1972 exhibition, wanted to show people the

terrible results of mass production and consumption by designing photo collages. One may say that, they were trying to seek the Utopia for the best, but the situation was not going well and future projection is still ambiguous.

The opposite approaches in the field, which was perfectly defined by “Design” and “Counter design” categories in 1972 exhibition, is the subject of a perpetual debate in design and architectural world which even continues today. This thesis briefly analyses the previously mentioned design and counter design approaches of Italian designers who contributed “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape exhibition, at MoMA, New York, in 1972. With an aim to construct the context of exhibition, this study attempts to explore the designers’ role and their opposed approaches towards consumerism in 1970s by analyzing the submitted proposals of Italian designers in MoMA exhibition, presented under “environments” and “counter environments” dichotomy. The aim is to show the active role of designers while creating our environments and to discuss the difference created by the Italian case who are socially and critically aware of their responsibility towards society. Especially in a consumer society, the role of designers could be diversified as explicitly seen in this exhibition. That is why, it is the proposal of this study that “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape” exhibition which was held at MoMA in 1972, contains the best examples to communicate people in an architectural language regardless of confrontational mindset.

This dissertation asserts the exhibited material at the exhibition through its catalogue with an aim to develop a “radical” perspective by understanding how the “Radical Designers” in INDL exhibition considered the socio-cultural aspects in their “environments”. It attempts to develop a critical stance against the consumer society and unconscious consumerism with that radical perspective. The intention is to unveil the provocative discourse triggered by INDL exhibition due to the togetherness of two negatives “design” and “counter design”.

In this thesis, qualitative method is used with an interpretive document review. The primary source of the study is the 1972 exhibition catalogue, entitled identically, “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape”. In addition to the literature review of related articles and research papers on the subject, online magazines, documentaries and interviews are also examined to reveal the context of the exhibition. As the exhibition



catalogue is the main document of this thesis, it also provides the first-hand information on the achievements and problems of Italian design during 1970s with articles, which gives historical background information on radical architecture and about Italy's economy of post war era. It also contains the objects and environments part of the exhibition, which provides necessary information about the Italian designers.

Secondary sources were also analyzed to achieve necessary information about radical architecture and its development in Italian context. The PhD of Gülru Mutlu Tunca which is called "Doubling: "Italy The New Domestic Landscape" As a Historical Project" in 2009 was one of the most detailed examination of the 1972 "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape" exhibition. Tunca examined this exhibition by making a historical criticism. She examined the history and critical theory of modern architecture by using a methodology, derived from Italian architect and historian Manfredo Tafuri. Tunca explains her work as follows,

It is the project of crises in that particular sequence, a historical project in Tafurian sense. The project begins with the doubling of the INDL catalog. It recomposes the process into autonomous narratives, and then establishes an analytical relationship between those and Italophile inclinations in related texts, published in the periodical *Oppositions* between 1974 and 1984. (Tunca, 2009, abstract)

As an illustration, the article, "The Continuous Monument and the Brown Stone Spire: Radicality in the Architecture of Night Vale", which is written by Alexandra Brown in 2014, highlights the architectural and political podcast which is called "Welcome to Night Vale" released in June 2012 by Joseph Fink and Jeffrey Cranor. The latter was a conceptualization of architecture and the city in non-visual terms and covered information on radical designer groups: Superstudio, Archizoom, and their works. One might say that writers of the "Welcome to Night Vale" podcast were inspired from the works of Superstudio and Archizoom. Another article, "A Home for Everybody? Design Ideology and the Culture of the Home in Italy, 1945-72" written by Penny Sparke in 1990, identifies Italian home culture, its development and change between 1945 and 1972. This article has been beneficial to this study as it reveals the historical background of Italian home culture. Thus, a master thesis on "Italian Furniture Design

After 1945”, submitted by Sedef Aksoy in 1992, which analyzes the changing Italian furniture industry covering the years starting from 1945 until 1991, provides necessary information about Italian industry and its development by giving the examples of manufacturers, producers, together with designers and their products. It also mentions INDL exhibition, especially its “Objects” category and radical designers. It not only provides the suitable ground to understand the historical background and socio-economic situation in Italy of that time, but also portrays the critical roles of Italian designers. “Superdesign: Italian Radical Design 1965-1975” written by Maria Cristina Didero and Francesca Molteni, on the other hand, is another article which looks like an advertisement of the film “Superdesign” released in Toronto March 1-May 2 2018. The article gives information about show and film, which contains interviews with the protagonists of the radical design movement. Another work, which is called “Programming after Program Archizoom’s No- Stop City” written by Kazys Varnelis concentrates on Archizoom’s work before 1972 INDL exhibition. This article analyzes the main reasons and the meaning of Archizoom’s works as a radical design group. It also gives a brief historical background about radical designers. The work is a reinterpretation of Archizoom’s “No Stop City”, which is crucial for this thesis, since it clarifies the main attitude of radical design group Archizoom. The 2017 article, “Mediating an Ecological Awareness in Italy: Shared Visions of Sustainability between the Environmental Movement and Radical Design Cultures (1970-1976)”, written by Elena Formia, examines the cultural background of radical design in Italy with an environmentalist and ecological point of view. The work mentions the INDL exhibition briefly and analyzes the radical designers with an ecological point of view. Another study, which is a PhD dissertation submitted by Kenneth Elflin in 2009, “Superstudio and the Staging of Architecture Disappearance”, examines the historical background of Italian architecture in the Post war era and gives information about Radical Architecture and its pioneer group Superstudio and their works. The 2016 article, called “Reworking the Past, Displaying the Future: Italy the New Domestic Landscape at MoMA 1972” by Ingrid Halland Rashid is about INDL exhibition and the environments category. Rashidi, mostly worked on Gaetano Pesce’s environment in this article, criticizes the environments as non-human places because of the plastic materials that the designers used. He states that these environments are designed to show the social problems and evoke the society with making such dystopias. He

summarizes his point of view about the exhibition as, “The future was evoked through the display. Environmental future shock at MoMA triumph of plastic over wood, of machine over man.” (Rashidi, n.d., p.14) The article of Paolo Scrivano, “Signs of Americanization Italian Domestic Life: Italy’s Postwar Conversion to Consumerism” (2005), on the other hand, analyzes the postwar situation and impact of American consumerism towards Italy and its domestic home environment. Another article, “From Functionalism to Postmodernism: Transformation of the Paradigm of Design Culture”, written by Koveshnikova E.N, Koveshnikova N.A and Pravdyuk V.N in 2016, examines the brief historical period of Postmodernism and Functionalism through consumerism. This article also focuses on radical design and discusses the proposals in INDL exhibition and how radical designers rejected the rules of modernism.

All previously mentioned articles and studies are examined and interpreted with an aim to unveil the necessary scientific knowledge before and after the 1972 MoMA exhibition. As a result of this research, this study contains six chapters. The first chapter, Introduction, gives brief information about the thesis approach. The second chapter gives a general definition of consumer society and the historical background about “Radical Design” movement. The third chapter gives a brief definition about the exhibition and its structure. Special Design Program of Ambasz and its subheadings, Specific and General Considerations are examined briefly since they have significant importance for the “environment” category. The fourth chapter discusses the physical design proposals of Italian architects and designers submitted for the “Environment” category of the exhibition: “Design as Postulation” and “Design as Commentary”. The fifth chapter, on the contrary, analyzes critical proposals of designers who refused to design a physical entity, which were exhibited under “Counter Design as Postulation” category. While the fourth and fifth chapters are for analyzing the behaviors of the radical designers participated to 1972 MoMA exhibition “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape”, the sixth and the last chapter, “Conclusion” discusses the critical discourse triggered by the togetherness of design and counter design categories in Ambasz’s show and the critical role of designer to shape society.

## CHAPTER 2

### CONSUMER SOCIETY AND ITALIAN RADICAL DESIGNERS

Consumerism is attributed to the consumption of goods at a high rate. The economy overall is determined by the amount of goods produced and sold. The gross national product is determined by the production sum of total goods and services for a specified period of time. The economic growth rate increases when the total number of goods production and consumption increases. National prosperity is the result of the per capita income of individuals living in it. As long as the purchasing power of individuals is high, the economy of that nation can be specified as "doing well". If a society is classified as consumer, the goods will be replaced by newer ones by the people living in it. In such societies, purchasing power is also high, and failure to consume at higher rates lead to recession or depression which then ends up in increased rates of unemployment. (Shukla, 2017)

French sociologist Baudrillard explains consumption as a “powerful element of social control”. In his words:

Consumption is...a powerful element of social control (by the atomization of consuming individuals), but by that very fact it brings with it a need for ever greater bureaucratic constraint on the processes of consumption - which will as a consequence be exalted more and more energetically as the realm of freedom. There is no escaping from this circle. (Baudrillard, 1998, p.84)

Baudrillard adds that, “Happiness is the absolute reference of the consumer society.” (Baudrillard,1998, p.49) According to philosopher Adorno, one might say that happiness and pleasure in consumers’ mind are unconscious.

Bernstein adds in Adorno's book that, "pleasure always means not to think about anything, to forget suffering even where it is shown". (Bernstein in Adorno, 1991, p.11) One might say that consumers only think their happiness and pleasure while they are shopping, and they are not thinking about the function of the product that they bought or if it is useful or not. One might say that, because of the mass productions consumers deceived with so-called "good" products. The years of post-war period 1960s-1970s is a good example for a consumer society. The radical designers of that time started to criticize about the mass production and consumption. The 1940s and 1970s were categorized as the consumer era in United States by theoreticians of The National Museum of American History. (See URL <http://americanhistory.si.edu/american-enterprise-exhibition/consumer-era>)

According to English historian and writer Hobsbawm, after WW II United States was in a better economic condition than other countries. (Hobsbawm in Demirel and Yegen , 2015, p.120)

During the Consumer Era, production boomed, and consumerism shaped the American marketplace, which spread from cities to suburbs. Business and political leaders claimed consumerism was more than shopping: it defined the benefits of capitalism. After World War II, Americans enjoyed expanded opportunities and material prosperity. But income inequality persisted, and people questioned whether the government should intervene to balance the scales. (See URL <http://americanhistory.si.edu/american-enterprise-exhibition/consumer-era>)

That inequality causes an affluent society due to class differences. United States was the dominant power of that time, but also one might state that, consumerism was higher than other countries. Radical designers were criticizing the situation in general, but they were criticizing mostly the situation in United States.

Radical Design, in fact, emerges due to a criticism towards "Functionalism". To better understand Radical Design, one should first understand the architectural paradigm "Functionalism". Functionalism is an important subject in the design history. The aim was to design a building or product in its best functionality. Form was also an important issue. Modern architects criticized the question of "What is good design?" throughout the design history. Swiss architect "Max Bill's controversial exhibition "Die gute Form" (The Good Form), shown for the first time in 1949, sought to define

“good design” to a burgeoning post-war consumer generation.” (Sudjic, 2015) He defined the “Good” as: “Good is both nice and practical.” (Koveshnikova, Koveshnikova and Pravdyuk, 2016, p.3284) It was like the dominant approach between the professional designers in that time. In the late 1950s, sustained economic growth in Western Europe affected the society and in a short time it turned into a “consumer society.” Whiteley states that, “the consumerist society of the post Second World War years arrived when the rationing and austerity of the later 1940s and early 1950s were superseded at an increasingly rapid pace by prosperity and private affluence.” (Whiteley, 1987, p.109) According to Koveshnikova et al,

Functionalism is inevitably contrary to the doctrine of “affluent society”, which is forced to produce and sell constantly. Finally, functionalism, as a rule, tends to reduce the number of objects and implement the optimum ratio between the products and the needs for them, while industrial production in the affluent society goes in the opposite direction. It creates a system of new kitsch by the accumulation of objects in the human environment. At the moment, the crisis of functionalism is evident... “In this regard, design, along with new advertising and marketing methods, was used as a tool that allows to satisfy the needs of different consumer groups.” (Koveshnikova, Koveshnikova, Pravdyuk, 2016, p.3287)

Because of the consumer society, there were new productions which leads an increase in different shapes and styles in design. The designers aimed to satisfy consumers’ “soul” rather than his/her “needs”. This change meant that design did not have only functionality, efficiency, reliability and durability. By the end of 1960s, designers started to criticize the “Functionalism”. Therefore, two opposing positions emerged. Koveshnikova et al. defines the first position as “the rationalist design, in the spirit of orthodox functionalism, which did not fit into the realities of the market system of production and consumption.” The second position which opposes the former realized that the principles of the rationalist design failed and occurred “the need of existence of design as an independent creative profession became evident.” (Koveshnikova, Koveshnikova, Pravdyuk, 2016, p.3289) The new-rationalist design aims to go back to the essence of the principles of “Functionalism.”

Rationalism as a movement implied the complete devotion to logical, functional and mathematically ordered architecture. Rationalism has often been proposed as a way to create an environment perfect for rational beings. A new rationalist movement claimed the inspiration from both the Enlightenment and early 20<sup>th</sup> century rationalism. (Waghulde, 2017)

On the contrary as mentioned above, new-rationalism was a failure in some designers' mind. The designers and architects began to criticize the Functionalism. Some of the architects and historians also criticized the meaning of architecture. Architectural historian, K. Michael Hays mentioned in an article "The Oppositions of Autonomy and History" which is later publishes in 1998 journal of "Oppositions Reader Selected Essays from 1973-1984", from Italian historian and architect Tafuri who makes the best criticism towards the situation of architecture in that time with a pessimistic point of view,

Tafuri sees architecture not as just the victim of demolition work done on cultural codes by functionalism and instrumentalizing methodologies or by commodification and reification, but as inseparable form and indeed, complicitous with quantification by the commodity system that began in nineteenth century and had arrived fully geared up in the postwar consumer culture of America. (Hays, 1998, p.24)

In 1960s and 1970s Italian designers emerged "the radical design movement, which sought to harness power of design to create objects and living quarters that were unique rather than embracing style, mass production, consumerism, sales and greed. Their designs were meant to be functional, not necessarily beautiful." (Moffat, 2011)

"Radical" design did not accept any strict methodological principles of "good design", or the practice of commercial styling that led to littering subject environment with products of "prestigious consumption" (Koveshnikova, Koveshnikova, Pravdyuk, 2016, p.3290)

One might say that radical designers wanted to associate the individual with the objects or products that they designed. For them the important thing is to make the individual thought about the products that he/she was going to buy. One might say that, radical designers have done their designs with a view to constitute a conscious consumption. The products they designed were intended to make the consumer think and to give up the "good image" that exists unconsciously in the consumer's mind. But many other designers and architects, according to Germano Celant,

...still regard the manufactured object and the constructed building as the sole and inevitable bases for their own activity. Taking refuge in production for production's sake they alienate themselves and lose sight of their own role as designers and their ideological and conceptual aims. (Celant in Ambasz, 1972, p.380)

Again, Germano Celant states that,

All the new Italian architecture- Archizoom, Superstudio, etc.- has asserted that its aims are conceptual and behavioral. Proclaiming itself as radical, it no longer wishes to be commercialized or alienated, or to renounce its own ideas and expressive attitudes. This is an architecture that has no intention of being subservient to the client or becoming his tool; it offers nothing but its ideological and behavioral attitudes. It has no desire to produce or complete objects or buildings, but wants rather to function through ideological behavior and actions disruptive of past architecture and design. (Celant in Ambasz, 1972, p.382)

This movement carried onward the point of view of the Italian designers and introduced by Ambasz as “High level critical consciousness of Italian Intellectuals.” (Tunca, 2009, p.) According to Catalina Dib, from an internet article, “This rebellion towards the appearance of objects blinds us from the true deepness of Radical design proposals. The questioning of consumerism, of self-worshipping architects and designers, of the way of teaching and the way of building society.” (Dib, n.d)

As it can be seen, designers’ roles had changed and got diversified in a consumer society. “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape” exhibition is one of the most interesting exhibitions which clarifies the variations of the designers’ role. Ambasz used following words to describe the Italian design and designers in the 1972 “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape” Exhibition,

The subject of Italian design is too alive to permit dissection, and its elements are too contradictory to be fitted into any single scheme of classification that one might be so careless as to propose. In order to aid comprehension of what the living process of Italian design actually is, a dozen of Italy’s most outstanding designers were selected, on the basis of the formal and ideological positions they represent, and each was invited to give a solo performance as a statement of his position. (Ambasz, 1972, p.12)



## CHAPTER 3

### **“ITALY: THE NEW DOMESTIC LANDSCAPE” EXHIBITION AND ITS RADICAL DESIGNERS, 1972, MoMA**

In 1970's Italian design made a great effort. With changing economic planning, industry was developing day by day. That development was important for the new manufacture techniques and it affected design directly. Unlike classical Bauhaus techniques, Italian designers started to use new design techniques such as, the use of color and uncommon shapes. Using color was an important issue because all so called functionalist buildings before that was in black and white color. In addition to this, there was a new notion which was called Radical Architecture as mentioned. Referring to Oxford Dictionary,

Radical Architecture is a term to define an architectural practice which often used in 1960's and 1970's. It suggests some extreme shape, structure due to the Leftist political positions of its architects. In other words, the works called “Radical architecture” was often drawn or collage presentation of projects by certain groups questioning what constitutes architecture, usually involving assaults on architecture conceived as a formal language. (Curl, 2000, np.).

Cristiano Toraldo di Francia (cofounder of Superstudio group) defines Radical Architecture with following words,

Radical architecture represents- beyond any definite architectural theory a continuous process of critique concerning the structure of society which rejects the use of this discipline in the hands of contemporary neocapitalist reformers. (Heynen, in Byvanck, 2005, p.66)

For Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, this architectural approach can show people to adapt different conditions of presence. (Ibid). This new phenomenon helped architects to realize the deficiencies of the society. They began to approach the problems in a critical and political way. Therefore, their works were for increasing the consciousness about environmental problems.

This consciousness in design was an important development to guide the society. That improvement in design was a result of the multi-disciplinary education, which Italian designers took. In this context, the progress in design ensured one of the greatest exhibitions, held at MoMA, New York in 1972 by the participation of Italian designers. Exhibition was entitled “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape” (INDL). The curator of this exhibition was Emilio Ambasz (1943, Argentina).

Ambasz was very much interested in the complexity of the Italian situation, seeing Italy as the dominant force in a consumer-product design as a micromodel in which wide range of the possibilities, limitations and critical issues of contemporary design are brought into sharp focus. (Dunbar, 2016, p.23)

Emilio Ambasz told the following words about Italian designers in INDL exhibition,

...many designers are expanding their traditional concern for the aesthetic of the object to embrace also a concern for the aesthetic of the uses to which the object will be put. Thus, the object is no longer conceived as an isolated entity, sufficient unto itself, but rather as an integral part of the larger natural and sociocultural environment. This phenomenon is affecting designers the world over, but nowhere is the situation so complex, so well crystallized, and so rich in examples as in Italy. During the last decade, Italy has become one of the dominant forces in the creation and criticism of design; and by focusing on it, The Museum of Modern Art has wished, first, to honour the specific achievement of Italian designers, and second, to examine in general terms some of the problems affecting design today, and the diverse approaches being developed for their solution. (Ambasz, 1972, p.11)

In exhibition, there were 180 design objects and eleven environmental installations. For environmental installations, Ambasz mentions that, “Italian designers searched the domestic landscape and they inferred some ceremonies and behaviors and they included these notions to their designs” (Ambasz, 1972, p. 21). Eleven environmental installations were separated in three categories, which were Design as Postulation, Design as Commentary and Counter design as Postulation. “This relation of design and counter design was meant to show that both positions were capable of producing objects, not just as aesthetic productions, but as ideological content.” (Duncan, 2016, p.23) For designing these eleven environments and showing these different points of view, the director of the exhibition prepared a new special design program. All the participants had to comply this manual, to express their ideas and their opinions about these environments. Based on to the exhibition catalogue the exhibition structure is given in a tabular form: [Fig.1]

**EXHIBITION STRUCTURE**

**CONTENTS**

**A. 1. Orientation Gallery:** *Description of Show's physical organization and layout.*  
*technique: a. 3-D model*  
*b. color-keyed plans*  
*c. folded leaflet (1-page.)*

**B. 2. Introduction to Objects:**  
*a. Presentation of Intentions and premises underlying Exhibition.*  
*b. Explanation of criteria guiding the selection of objects displayed.*  
*(technique: audio-visual presentation.)*

**3. Exhibition of Objects:** *(179 objects produced by over 100 Italian designers grouped into three categories)*  
*i. Objects chosen for formal, technical, or typological reasons.*  
*ii. Objects chosen because their formal characteristics are derived from or motivated by semantic operations upon established socio-cultural meanings, such as 'back to nature,' pop art, anthropomorphism, etc.*  
*iii. Objects chosen because they represent multiple modes of use of single objects, or systems of objects adaptable of multiple modes of use.*  
*(Each category is further subdivided into subcategories according to specific objects; exhibition layout reflects these divisions.)*

**C. 4. Introduction to Environments:** *Description of specific and general considerations for the design of the commissioned environments.*  
*(technique: audio-visual presentation) p.1*

**5. Exhibition of Environments:** *(two categories)*  
**Fixed :**  
*a. "Archeological Environment"*  
*Gaetano Pesce 20'x20'*  
*b. "Design as Postulation"\*\**  
*Joe Colombo 16'x16'*  
*Gae Aulenti 16'x16'*  
*Ettore Sottsass 16'x16'*  
*Achille Castiglioni 16'x16'*  
*Ugo La Pietra 20'x16'*  
*c. "Counter design as Postulation" \*\**  
*Supersudio 14'x14'*  
*Archizoom 7'x14'*  
*DeRossi- Ceretti- DeRosso 7'x14'*

**Mobile Environments:** *(trailer houses)*  
*Richard Sapper- Mario Zanuso*  
*20' x 7' (closed)*  
*20' x 14' (open)*  
*Alberto Roselli*  
*8' x 17' (closed)*  
*17' x 34' (open)*  
*Mario Bellini*  
*7' x 16' x (5' height closed)*  
*7' x 16' x (8' height open)*

**D. 6. Commentary Gallery:** *Critical questions raised by the subject of the Exhibition will be presented via a specially designed audiovisual technique which involves and encourages audience participation.*

\* The ceremonies and its rituals and their modes of use which are contemplated for each of these environments, will be shown by means of color television screens that will present four- to five- minute films prepared by the environments' respective designers.

\*\* The viewpoints of designers who have adopted a counter-design approach will be presented by means of three dimensional and audio-visual display techniques. (contents p.2)

Figure 1 Table of Exhibition Structure (Tunca, 2009, p.21)

Exhibition catalogue includes four chapters as “Objects”, “Environments”, “Historical Articles” and “Critical Articles” part with “Preface” and “Conclusion” which were written by Ambasz. This thesis analyzes and examines Special Design Program and the Environments category and its designers.

In the Environment category of the exhibition, for showing opposite design approaches the director of the exhibition, Ambasz prepared a special design program. As could be understood from the exhibition catalogue, Ambasz's special design program was separated in two categories as, specific considerations and general considerations. Based on the exhibition catalogue the specific considerations were unique for Italy and as Ambasz states,

The competitor is thus asked to propose microenvironments and microevents: designers should design the spaces and artefacts that, singly and collectively, support domestic life; and they should demonstrate the ceremonial and ritual patterns in which they may be used. (Ambasz, 1972, p.139).

Specific considerations are divided in two categories as, "Programmatic Considerations" and "Exhibition Considerations". On the other hand, General considerations part addresses problems in Ambasz's words, "regard problems of a universal nature, not exclusive to Italy." (Ambasz, 1972, p.143). These problems were analysed under following subtitles: "The Domestic Landscape as Urban Society" and "The Domestic Landscape as Family Environment".

Design program is a crucial for the designers to understand the user capacity, size, materials, and relationship of the areas, shape etc. Design program can give information about the concept and it is a necessity for a designer to take some correct decisions about design.

For the "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape Exhibition" preparing a design program was also inevitable. Besides all of the physical features of the designs, there were new categories and opinions. Emilio Ambasz states that, "The aim of this design program was to unveil specific content for domestic environments." (Ambasz, 1972, p.139) According to Ambasz's program, the domestic environments should host private and communal events. For making this, participants should examine ceremonies and rituals for 24 hours of the day and consider providing new points of view with questioning and criticizing the conventional private and collective memory. (Ibid).

In the exhibition catalogue, Specific Considerations section covers two categories such as, programmatic considerations and exhibition considerations. In Programmatic

Consideration part of the catalogue, Ambasz explains the functional requirements of environmental designs as follows,

For creating a domestic environment, the participants of the exhibition should consider and reinterpret the man's act in ceremonial and ritual way. In this context, for construing the relations between these ceremonies and rituals, designers considered at least two considerations. First, they need to evaluate the format if the ritual or ceremony was private or communal. Secondly, they need to define the quality or character of the space, if it is fixed or not. Fixed is specific to only a certain ceremony or ritual. Also, they need to define that place is adaptable or not for the several ceremonies. (Ambasz, 1972, 140).

In the catalogue, the requirements above showed in a tabular form; [Fig.2]

	fixed	fixed- adaptable	adaptable
private	1	4	7
private- communal	2	5	8
communal	3	6	9

Figure 2                      *The Table of the Categories (Original from the Catalogue) (Ambasz, 1972, p.140)*

Ambasz exemplifies this table in following words:

A treehouse is a fixed private domain, until its owner invites his friend, at which point it becomes a communal place; so it is numbered as 1 - 2 - 3. The shade of a tree is an adaptable space, can serve as the setting for personal reverie and meditation, for quiet conversation with a friend, or for a picnic; so it is numbered as 7 - 8 - 9. In between fixed and adaptable artefacts, sandbox has given as an example. It is circumscribed in space, but adaptable to provide physical support to a child's imagine. A child who is playing alone finds it a very personal place, although a group of children may enact a communal ceremony of very private meaning; so this place is numbered as 4 - 5 - 6." (Ambasz, 1972, p. 140).

For creating a domestic environment, identifying the users of space and their roles, thus defining a ceremonial function is crucial for categorizing the design proposals. In

this context, Ambasz creates a table [Fig.3] which categorizes alternative user role and ceremonial function assignments under two options. In his words:

Participants had to choose two programmatic options which are, users role and the ceremonial function of the object. Users in option one shall be a young couple and shown as M/W. Users in option two, shall be a couple with children shown as M/W (or M/W w or m). (Ibid).

	OPTION 1	OPTION 2
USERS ROLE	M/W communal-personal (a fusion of the Italian <i>stanza</i> and <i>camera</i> )	M/W w or m communal ( <i>stanza</i> )
CEREMONIAL FUNCTION	1. <i>living</i> : conversation relaxation work play reception entertaining — — — 2. <i>cooking-eating</i> 3. <i>sleeping</i>	1. <i>living</i> : conversation relaxation work play reception entertaining — — — 2. <i>cooking-eating</i> 3. <i>sleeping (optional)</i>

Figure 3 Table of Users and Ceremonial Functions (Original from the Catalogue) (Ambasz, 1972, 140)

Ambasz describes the environments, designed according to Option 1 as proposals that answers communal and personal needs and hosts both kinds of ceremonies. The environments designed according to Option 2, for Ambasz, are only for communal needs, with changing ceremonial functions as listed in the table. (Ambasz, 1972, p.141)

In Exhibition, the material selection for proposals were identically important. With the developing industry and techniques in Italian design the sponsors of the exhibition wanted from the participants to explore the potential of the synthetic materials (like plastics) and fibers. Also, environments should have manufactured in large quantity and envisioned as industrial prototypes. The environments designed for low and

middle-income families. The environments should be economic. (Ambasz, 1972, p. 141).

The exhibition catalogue refers that, “The Exhibition Considerations”. part describes how the dimensions of these environments should be, the light sources which are used in the displays and the constructions of the structures. [Fig.4]

<b><u>Dimensions of Environments:</u></b>	
Height	3.60 meters
Width	4.80 meters
Depth	4.80 meters
<b><u>Light Source:</u></b>	Provided for by the competitor
<b><u>Exhibition Hall</u></b>	Paint: Matte Black Light Source: Not be lit.
<b><u>Construction and Shipment:</u></b>	
Construction	Italy
Shipment	USA
Measurements	5.9x2.3x2.2 meters (internally) 2.2x2.1 meters (having an access door measuring)

Figure 4 *Exhibition Considerations (Ambasz, 1972, p.141)*

According to Ambasz, “General Considerations regard problems of a universal nature, not exclusive to Italy. General Considerations are not part of a precise ideological sequence, but rather a collage of related thoughts.” (Ambasz, 1972, p.143).

In this context, in order to evaluate “Domestic Landscape” as universal nature, the issue was approached from the “Urban Society” point of view, in terms of “Family Environment” and “Private Domain.”

In “The Domestic Landscape as Urban Society”, Ambasz states, “The domestic environment becomes a theatre for re-enactment of forms and scripts introduced from the outside.” (Ambasz, 1972 p.143). However, in this process the structures will modify and change. These changes are exported to the outside world, so, to the other domestic environments. If that domestic environment is taken from its private domain and put into a new social environment, Ambasz believes that may help to rebuilt stereotypes of urban patterns. (Ibid) It is necessary to give a new form to exist and to support it with a political imagination to create the environments that will be designed

by the Participants with their individual contributions and opinions. This will create a domestic environment that is not only social but also private. (Ibid).

In Domestic Landscape as Family Environment, the modern nuclear family is based on maintaining the incompleteness of its individual members so that “mother”, “father” and “child” have become relatively simple and unyielding roles. In social analysis, the family is characterized as that social institution most resistant to change. (Cooper in Ambasz, 1972, p.144).

For Ambasz’s opinion changing the psychological structure of the family is not easy and enough. Therefore, he suggested proposing an environment for the individual needs of every family member. Ambasz defines “The Domestic Landscape as Private Domain” as,

The artifacts, spaces, and ceremonies of the private domain can thus be seen, on the one hand, as directly determined by physiological needs (for example, food), but, on the other hand, they can be seen as icons whose symbolic contents are, in part, intrinsic to them and, in part, culturally assigned as layers of semantic change. (Ambasz, 1972,p.145)

The word “Semantic” which Ambasz used in the definition “is used to describe things that deal with the meanings of words and sentences.” (Sinclair, 2001, p.1407) For him, some values affect people by society from the outside. It is necessary to create a domestic environment, where people can experience themselves freely and perform the mentioned ceremonies. Besides that, the cultural influences of the society, which are obtained from the outside should be a denominator. (Ambasz, 1972, p.145)

As mentioned environments category separates three as Design as Postulation and Commentary and Counter Design as Postulation. Especially Design as Postulation and Counter Design as Postulation is important for this thesis to understand the Italian Radical designers and their designs to explore their roles in a consumer society. After Economic boom in Western Europe in post war era there was mass productions and consumptions. One might say that The Radical designers sought the ways to say stop to these mass productions and consumption but also, they were criticizing uncontrolled disorder, the designs without human aspects, some of them wanted to solve the problems with ecological attempts. Design as Postulation and Counter Design as Postulation category was the certain way to say “design” or “not to design”.



## CHAPTER 4

### DESIGN AS POSTULATION AND COMMENTARY

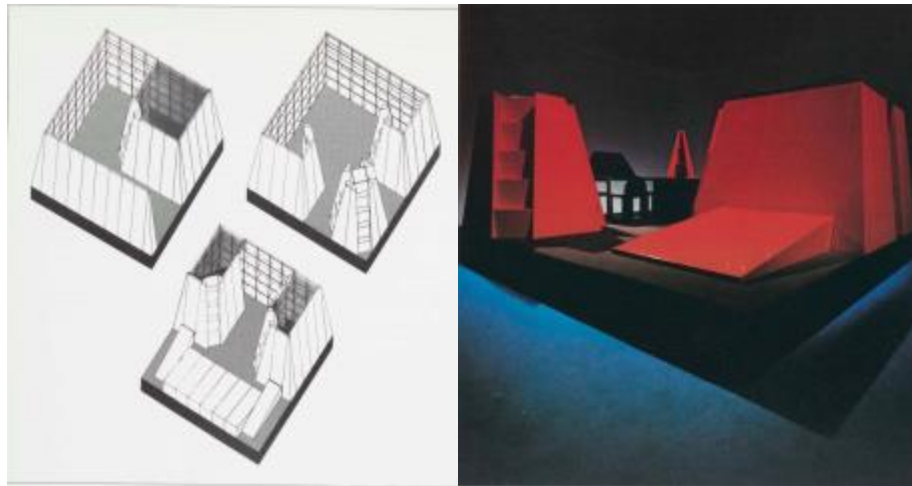
Emilio Ambasz wanted to design microenvironments from Italian designers for the exhibition with considering “domestic environment” as mentioned. Eleven environmental installations were separated in three categories, which were Design as Postulation, Design as Commentary and Counter design as Postulation. The Radical designers in Design as Postulation and Commentary category chose the way of “design”. They rejected the rules of the modernism but also one might say that they rejected stereotypical designs. The environments that they designed were the places for us to think about our living environments. They used different shapes and colors while designing. They obeyed the requirements of the Special Design Program. With this program they designed their environments as communal, personal and communal and personal. They showed their utopian attempts with considering human aspect. They also criticized social problems that they saw in the society. In Design as Postulation category there were six designers. Three of them designed in House environment category and the other three designed in Mobile environment category.

In Design as Postulation category, Ambasz first introduces the work of Gae Aulenti (1927-2012) who is, an Italian Milanese designer, graduated from Politecnico in Milan. During 1972, Italy: The New Domestic Landscape exhibition she was forty-five years old and her proposal was presented among “House Environments”

At the age of forty-five she joined the exhibition of “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape”. Her proposal is exhibited in the category of “House Environments.” (Ambasz, 1972, p.149)

Gae Aulenti aims for her environment to create and reinterpret new areas for the new experiences for everyone with combining some different kind of concave and convex spaces.

The places, other than these concave and convex structures, are for originating new areas. (Aulenti, in Ambasz, 1972, p.153)



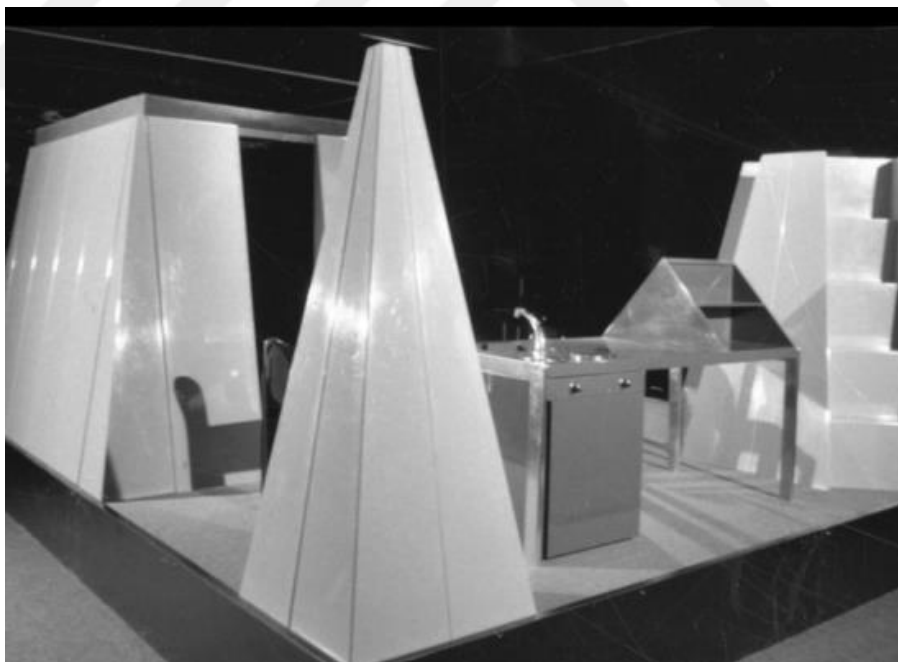
*Figure 5 Picture of Gae Aulenti's Domestic Environment organization. Original from the Catalogue (Aulenti, in Ambasz, 1972, p.154-155)*

According to the exhibition catalogue, Aulenti's domestic environment fulfills the requirements of three categories: Objective descriptions, Subjective Descriptions, Critical Descriptions.

Objective Description part is about physical properties of Aulenti's environment. Red colored is a system, composed of three different structures (one linear and two angular). There were multifunctional elements, which generated bed, cupboard, bookcase, shelves and seats by changing the positions. (Fiberglass, rubber joints, cages of structural metal used as material.) There were also one extendable table, which consisted of a plain surface and a storage surface. Material of the table was steel structure with ABS plastic facing. Domestic environment was also contained one corrugated form chair, which was fiber glass or rigid polyurethane and one metal lamp with eight rotating elements. (Aulenti, through Ambasz, 1972, p.153)



*Figure 6 Picture of Gae Aulenti's Domestic Environment organization. Original from the Catalogue (Aulenti, in Ambasz, 1972, p.157)*



*Figure 7 Picture of Gae Aulenti's Domestic Environment. From Museum of Modern Art exhibition archives, New York (<https://www.moma.org>)*

In Subjective description part, Aulenti's environment is discussed in terms of "meaning and function",

- a. Pyramids: form as a precise sign to be placed within reality serve as the measure for the process of transformation.
- b. Ruler and the triangle: geometry as the matrix of everyday mutability.
- c. Shell: nature as the generating force whereby things come into being, and of their properties and qualities.
- d. Fire: allegory as a synthetic and comprehensive representation of an idea through images. (Aulenti, through Ambasz 1972, p.153)

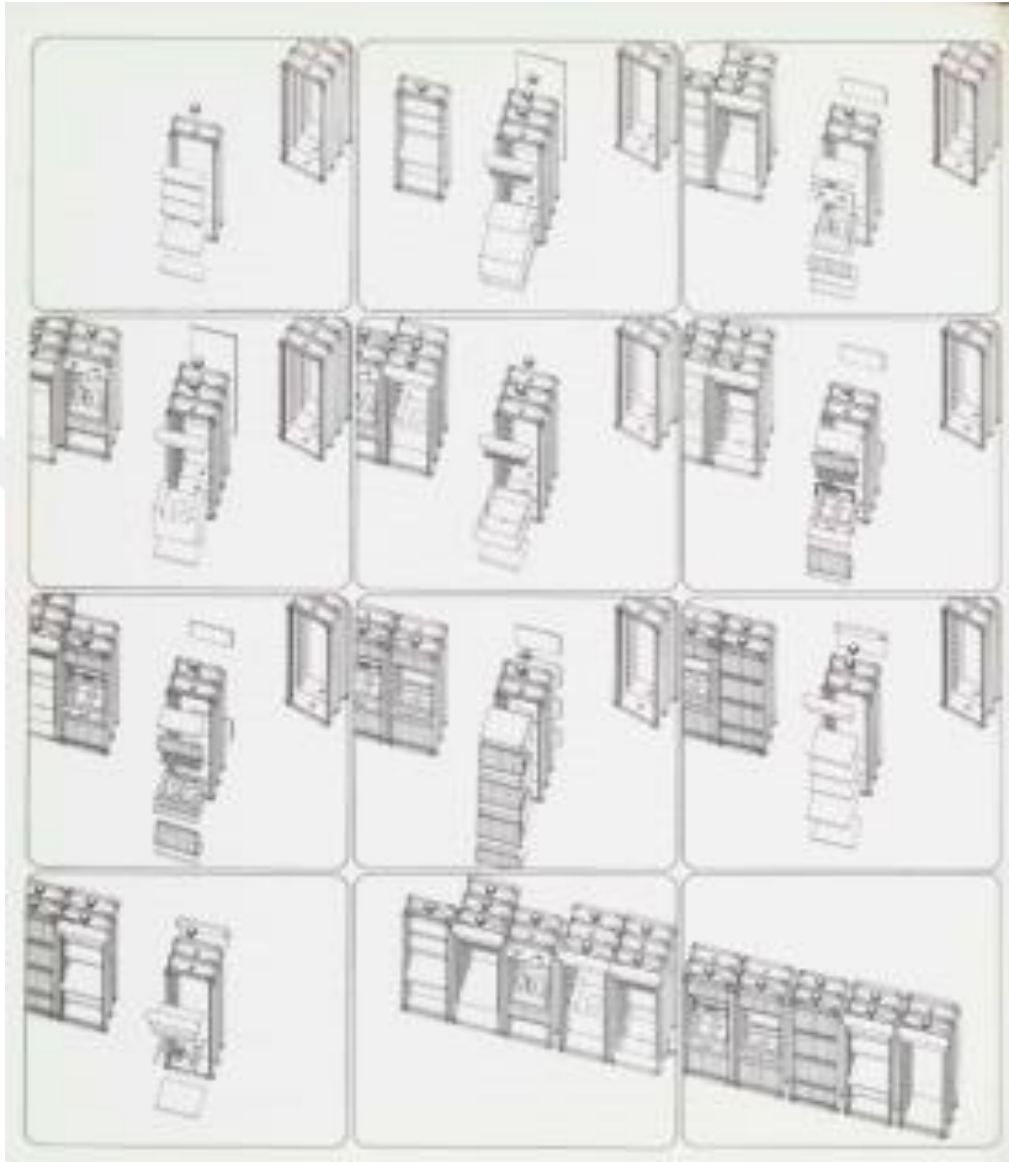
In Critical description part, Aulenti discusses the complex relationship between the elements in the domestic environment. Aulenti indicated the elements in the domestic environment, which became bed, cupboard, shelves etc. and extendable table. She approached critically to those elements in terms of "experience" with following words,

- a) and b) are single elements that express in themselves values that are not self-sufficient, symbolic of a will to create experiences. c) and d) are two objects that express autonomous values, a self-sufficiency symbolic of a rational will. (Ibid)

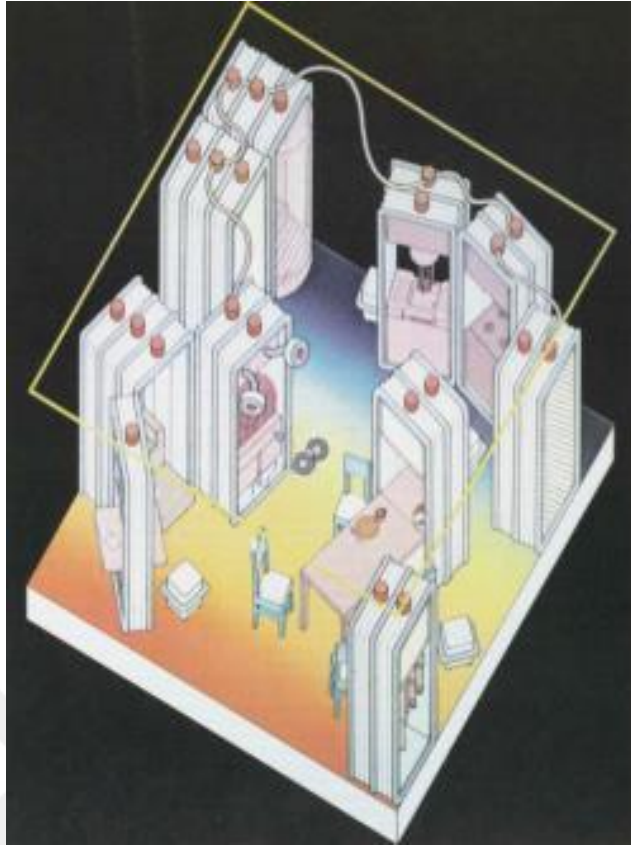
In this context, in my point of view, multi-functionality of Gae Aulenti's domestic environment comes from its capability to be arranged freely, either horizontal or vertical positions. When these modules are used in vertical positions, they provide private and personal spaces. Therefore, its vertical use can be evaluated as a private domain, but the overall environment is also adjustable for other facilities and users. The horizontal use of modules, for instance, creates seats and extendable tables for communal use. Because of this, multi-functionality Aulenti's domestic environment can be evaluated as both private, private – communal, communal and adaptable categories of Ambasz, delineated in the design program. Aulenti's environment therefore, meets both private and communal uses as Ambasz categorized in Option 1. For the ceremonial functions, it is suitable for relaxation, conversation, sleeping, working and eating. All these facilities present that the designer considered the humanitarian and independent way of design with connecting it in a socio-cultural point of view.

The Second designer from Design as Postulation Category was Austrian designer Ettore Sottsass, Jr. (1917-2007), who has worked in a different variety of mediums and

materials including painting, architecture and ceramics, etc. In the exhibition, Sottsass's proposal is also exhibited in the category of "House Environments." (Ambasz, 1972, p. 149).



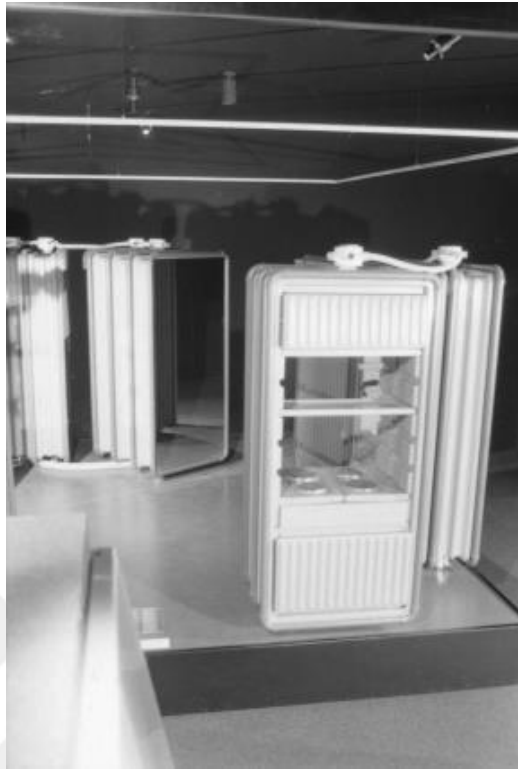
*Figure 8 Picture of Ettore Sottsass's Domestic Environment Original from the Catalogue (Sottsass, in Ambasz, 1972, p. 161)*



*Figure 9* Picture of Ettore Sottsass's Domestic Environment Original from the Catalogue (Sottsass, in Ambasz, 1972, p. 161)

According to exhibition catalogue, Ettore Sottsass domestic environment was composed of several “ugly” wheeled, adjustable boxes. In these boxes, there were a stove to cook on, a refrigerator to keep the food in, a cupboard for storing clothes, a shower for bath, a place to sit and read, a jukebox and a bookcase. The major feature of these boxes was their mobility. Even a child can move them easily and adjust the environment according to his/her needs. Other areas between these adjustable boxes were creating new and different living spaces. By this way, environment allows different users to perform different ceremonies. As an illustration, it can be used as storage and a person can carry the box whenever he wants. In this context, Sottsass, aimed to create a convenient environment for any ceremony that could be actualized at any moment. Sottsass defines his environment as “ugly”. As the units in the environment are not that attractive, people who are using these units, for Sottsass, are careless to it. (Sottsass, in Ambasz, 1972, p. 162). Therefore, Sottsass believes that the

environment does not have to be aesthetic. He uses the word “possession” to define precious furniture for the users and says that,



*Figure 10 Picture of Ettore Sottsass's Domestic Environment from Museum of Modern Art exhibition archives, New York (<https://www.moma.org>)*



*Figure 11 Picture of Ettore Sottsass's Domestic Environment from Museum of Modern Art exhibition archives, New York (<https://www.moma.org>)*

I mean the possession of objects. I mean the pleasure of possessing something that seems to us precious, that seems to us precious because it is made out of a precious material, it has a precious form or perhaps because it was difficult to make, or maybe fragile etc. (Sottsass, in Ambasz, 1972, p. 162)

Sottsass clarified his idea as,

To explain this more simply, let's say that the idea is to succeed in making furniture from which we feel so detached, so disinterested, and so uninvolved that it is of absolutely no importance to us. That is the form is, at least in intention, designed so that after a time it fades away and disappears. (Sottsass, in Ambasz, 1972, p.162)

Sottsass criticized the notion of “form” and related furniture solely to its function. For him, the “form” of environment did not matter but the events it housed give the design its character that is why he discussed the idea of the relationship between events and environment. He states that, “If there is such a relation, making an environment that has such mobility features can provoke a great awareness of creativity and freedom.” (Sottsass, in Ambasz, 1972, p.163)

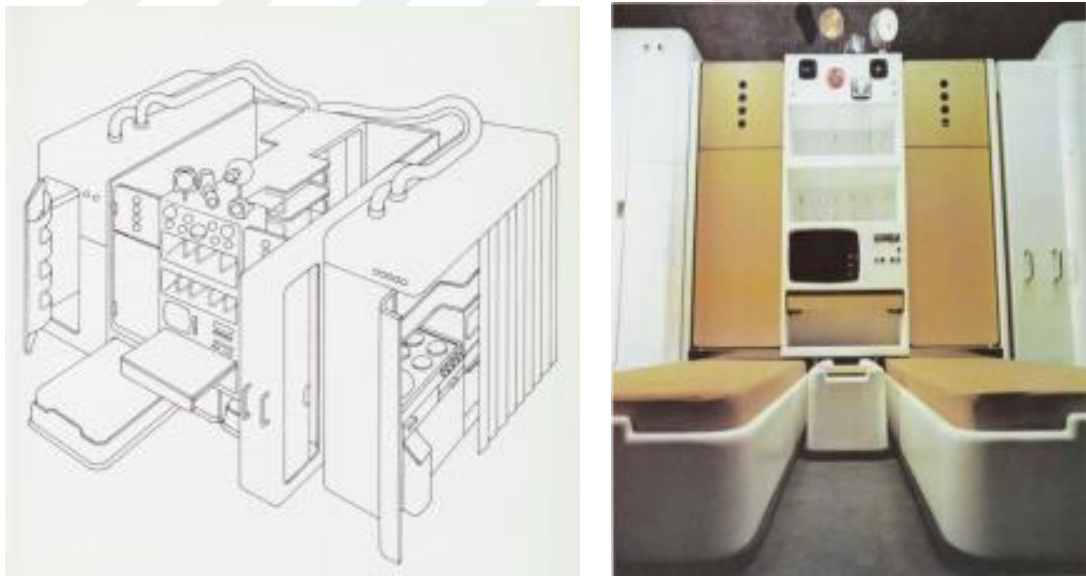
To evaluate this domestic environment from my point of view, adjustability provides opportunities for not just environment itself but also for its users. As mentioned before in Special Design Program of Ambasz, if an environment can be adapted more than one situation, it is possible to consider this environment as adaptable design. Due to mobility feature of Sottsass's environment, it can be categorized as an adaptable system, which can provide several different areas for several different ceremonies. In this way, it can be also categorized under all kinds of use: private, private – communal, communal (7-8-9). The adjustable modules of the environment can serve all needs and all ceremonies for all kind of users. So, for the programmatic option category, it is possible to describe the “Users Role” as, Communal (stanza-Option 2) Sottsass's environment is one of the best examples that best represents the designers role in that time. His environment shows the socio-cultural aspect and reveals the free-will in design. By rejecting the “aesthetic” concerns, it shows the meaning of the term “radical” clearly and by criticizing the “heroic design” it also criticizes the unconscious consumerism which the individuals need to be aware and think about the products while they were consuming.



Thus, Sottsass emphasizes that his environment is “ugly” and the opposite of being “beautiful” has no significance for him because he believes that individuals should be associated more with design. His aim was to show the need to leave a stereotypical beautiful image that had already existed in individuals’ mind. That stereotypical beautiful image could be unconscious in individuals’ mind and related with the standard-stereotypical productions. One may say that such intention can be related with the Adorno’s theory about Cultural Industry, since “it pictures the audience of the cultural industry as the dupes of mass deception, denying thus the relative autonomy of consciousness.” (Bernstein in Adorno, 1991, p.21)

The third designer in the “Design as Postulation” category was Joe Colombo (1930-1971) who was a Milanese industrial designer. His proposal is exhibited in the category of “House Environments.” As Ambasz mentioned,

The sudden and untimely death of Joe Colombo, one of Italy’s best-known designers, took place during the summer of 1972, while his project was in preparation. On the basis of detailed drawings that he made for it, however, his prototype was built under the supervision of Ignazia Favata and other members of his studio, to whom we extend our special thanks. (Ambasz, 1972, p.14)



*Figure 12 Picture of Joe Colombo’s Domestic Environment original from the exhibition catalogue (Colombo, in Ambasz, 1972, p.175)*



*Figure 13 Picture of Joe Colombo's Domestic environment, original from the exhibition catalogue (Colombo in Ambasz, 1972, p.179)*

Man's habitat was Colombo's major problem. According to Colombo, "homogeneity" is the main principle to design a domestic environment. The relation between city and dwelling unit, the relation between green spaces and dwelling unit and the relation between man and dwelling unit, for Colombo were crucial considerations to develop a uniform domestic environment. However, this domestic environment should be in relation more with man. In this context, Colombo designed a dynamic furnishing unit that fulfilled various pattern of use. It was an adjustable space composed of four different modules: Kitchen, a cupboard, bed and privacy and Bathroom. These modules were mobile, so that different possible combinations of them in the area which could serve for different patterns of usage. (Colombo, in Ambasz, 1972, p.172)

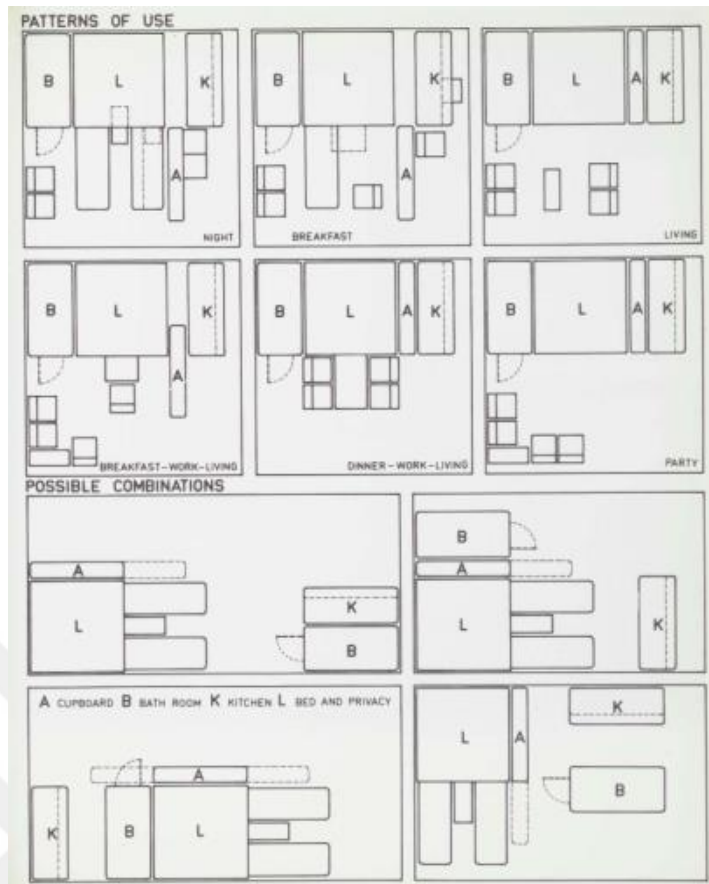


Figure 14 Picture of Joe Colombo's Domestic Environment organization- pattern of use, original from the exhibition catalogue (Colombo in Ambasz, 1972, p. 173)

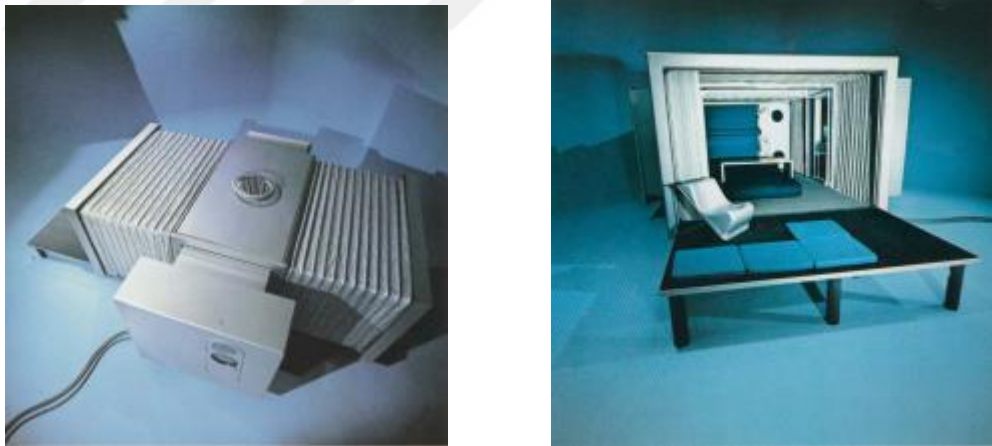
The modules in Colombo's environment are described as,

They function according to the various moments in which they are in use. It is worth noting that, while the kitchen and bathroom serve no other purposes than those for which they were originally intended, the cupboard also acts as a screen between the entrance and the area that will eventually be used at night, or at any rate, it separates the two areas; whereas the day-and-night (bed and privacy) unit comprises within itself all the functions of living — from sleeping, eating, reading, receiving friends, etc., to withdrawing privately to an inner space specifically designed for this purpose. (Colombo, in Ambasz, 1972, p.172)

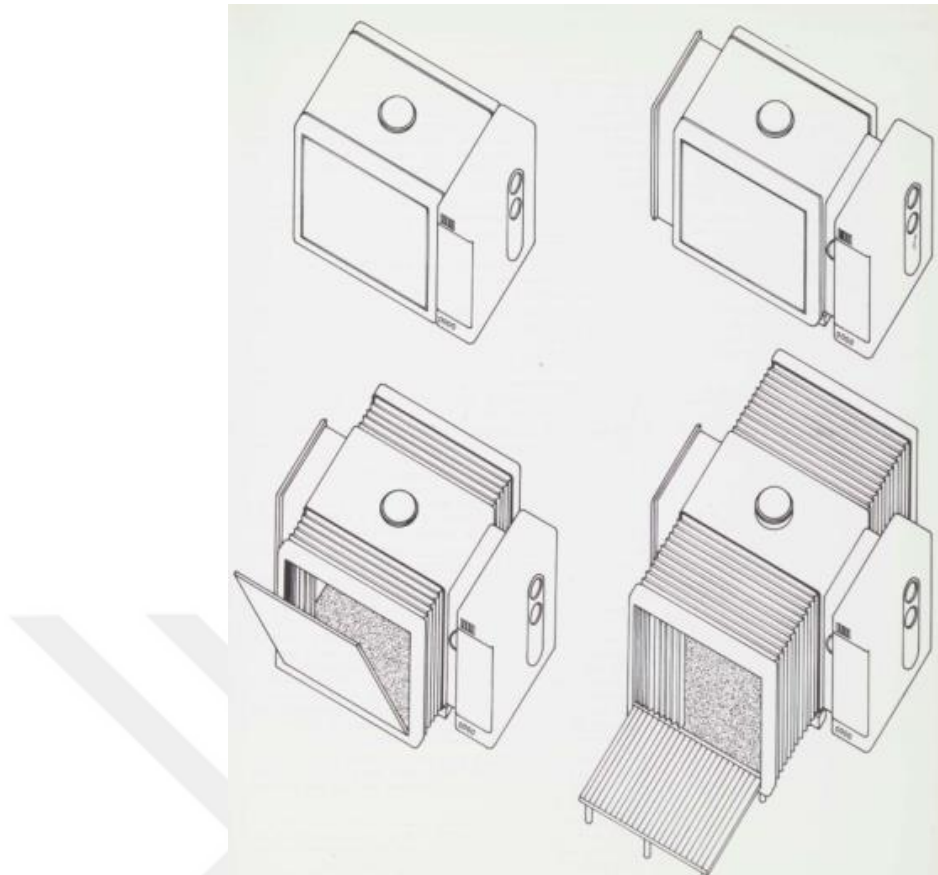
As mentioned above, the furnishing unit should fulfill the requirements of special design program. Therefore, I think, all the environments should be evaluated according to the physical characteristic features of the design proposal on one side and the ceremonies it offers for its users on the other side. In this context, a separated area for

the bed and privacy is particularly mentioned in Colombo's domestic environment. Cupboard provides two different functions: All the modules are mobile and adaptable except bathroom and kitchen. So, Colombo's environment can be considered as private and private-communal (7,8) but not just communal. Therefore, it can be defined as Option 1 (stanza and camera). It is suitable for all activities as defined in ceremonial functions. For the "Users Role", it can be used as a communal and personal space. As it can be seen from the facilities of the "environment" that it reveals the independent way of design. The users could use the modules according to their needs. This situation clearly represented the inclusion of the individual with the object. This environment is showing that the designers' attempt is to break the stereotypical design and to relate it again more with the individual. With creating communal and personal spaces, it shows that Colombo considered the socio-cultural aspects.

As the fourth participator, Ambasz introduces Italian designer Alberto Rosselli (1921-1976) who was fifty-one years old when he participated the "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape" exhibition. Particularly specialized on product design, furnishings and transportation, Rosselli proposed a "Mobile Environment" (Ambasz, 1972, p.180).



*Figure 15 Picture of Alberto Rosselli's Domestic Environment original from the exhibition catalogue (Roselli, in Ambasz, 1972, p.185)*



*Figure 16 Picture of Alberto Rosselli's Domestic Environment Organization drawing.  
Original from exhibition catalogue (Rosselli, in Ambasz, 1972, p.181)*

Alberto Rosselli designed a mobile environment to provide two conditions, which are “free movement” and “repose”. According to certain concepts and ceremonies, this mobile environment offered the possibility to be expanded by using technological innovations. Rosselli considered the aluminum unit to be adjustable for day and night and divided it into three basic areas: the first one was “Central Area” which can be used as a general or dining area. The dining area contains opening service and closet capsules. The second are was “Rear Area” which contains two folding beds and closets that were fixed to the outside walls. The third one was “Front Area” which had a relation with central area and a terrace. During the day, it functioned as a living area; at night, it functioned as a bedroom with two or three beds. As the terrace platform is adjustable, it can be also used for enclosure. (Rosselli, through Ambasz, 1972, p.183)

As Rosselli states, there were alternative ways to arrange the unit,

1. As a house with only one expandable side wall.
2. With windowed walls as an alternative to the terrace.

3. With two side walls for beds, and a central or living area.
4. Several capsules might be joined together to provide more space and a wider range of uses.

This mobile house could serve as a model for either individual or group living. In urban and holiday areas, the houses could be so disposed as to make use of common service and utility systems and could be scattered over a stretch of land unencumbered with vehicles. (Rosselli, through Ambasz, 1972, p.183)

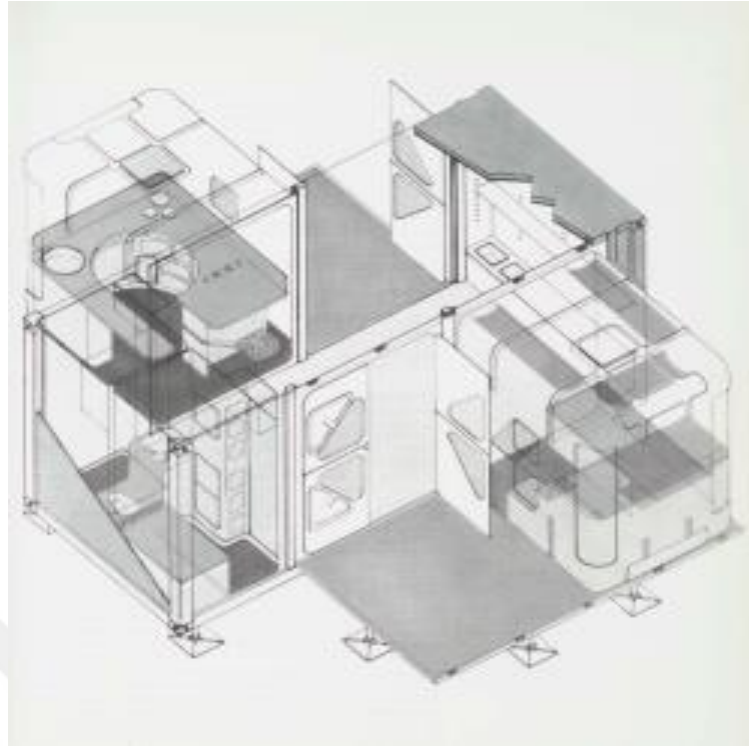
In this context, Rosselli's mobile environment, I believe, is suitable for all kinds of situations or ceremonies. As mentioned before, in special design program, Ambasz defined such environments as “adaptable” spaces. Since Rosselli considered his “adaptable” environment for both single and group living, it can be characterized as both private, private-communal and communal. (7,8,9) Therefore it can be categorized as Option 1 (camera-stanza) personal-communal in terms of “User’s Role”.

The fifth proposal from Design as Postulation category was designed by Milanese designer Marc Zanuso (1916-2001) and German designer Richard Sapper. (Munich 1932- Milan 2015). Ambasz introduced Marc Zanuso as the Director of the Institute of Technology in the faculty Architecture at Politecnico in Milan, where he acted as a professor of industrial design and technology. Richard Sapper, on the other hand acted as the consultant of FIAT since 1970 for its safety program. They designed several products together for Brionvega, Kartell and Siemens. Their proposal was exhibited in “Mobile Environment” category.

Zanuso and Sapper explains the design problem as follows,

The theme suggested not so much single habitations to provide city-bound families with a place of occasional retreat, as living quarters for entire communities, transported far from metropolises and urban areas. (Zanuso, Sapper through Ambasz, 1972, p.192)





*Figure 17 The Picture of Marc Zanuso and Richar Sapper's Domestic Environment, original from exhibition catalog (Zanuso and Sapper in Ambasz, 1972, p.191)*

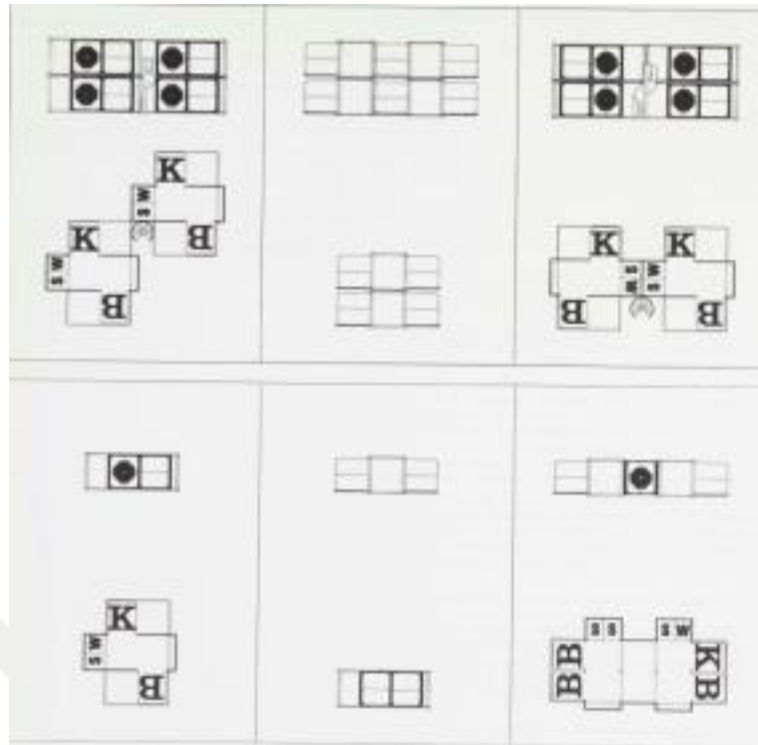


Figure 18 Picture of Marc Zanuso and Richard Sapper's Domestic Environment organization, original from exhibition catalog (Zanuso and Sapper in Ambasz, 1972, p. 194)

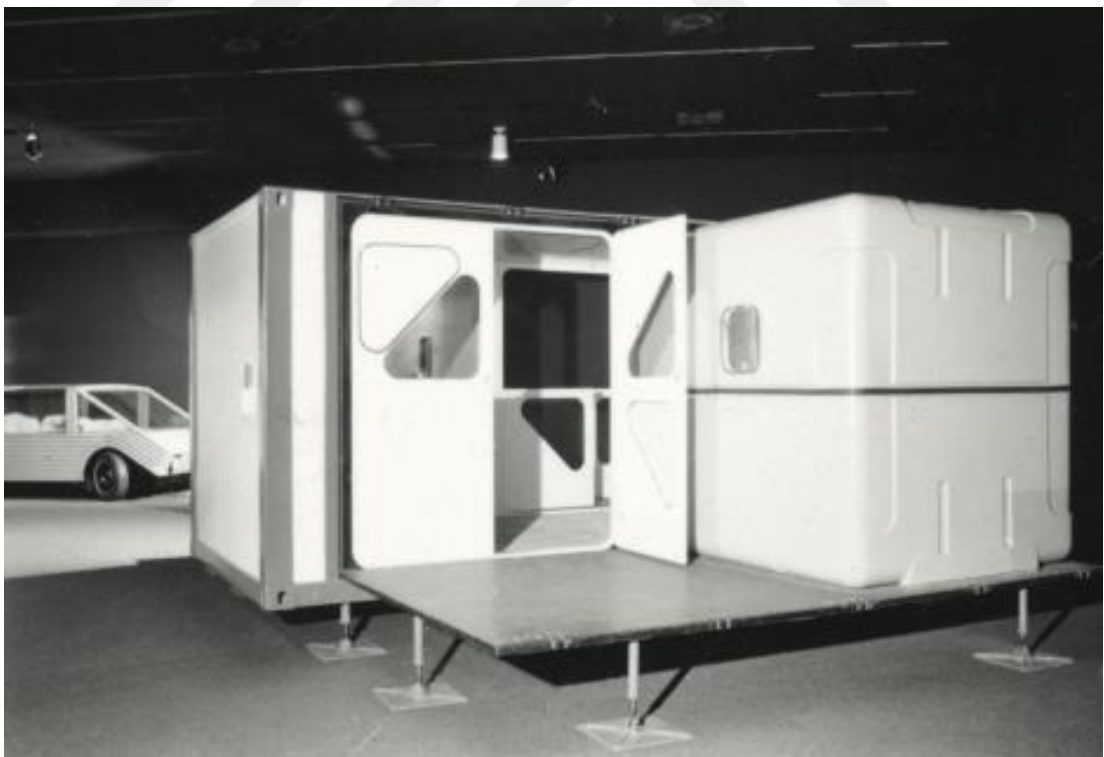


Figure 19 Marc Zanuso and Richard Sapper's Domestic Environment from Museum of Modern Art exhibition archives, New York (<https://www.moma.org>)



They proposed a mobile environment composed of containers which could be used in living quarters for any use profile for any immediate use, or for any kind of situation. Following words from catalog summarizes the idea:

- a. Working communities engaged in large-scale public works — road and dam construction, land reclamation — for which quarters of a provisional and highly mobile character are needed.
- b. Communities of rescue workers carrying out first-aid operations in areas struck by catastrophe, where ready-made, fully equipped living quarters should be available if the workers are not to be diverted from the job in hand.
- c. Tourist colonies, where it is necessary to respect the natural surroundings, and where living quarters must be strictly temporary, without permanent structures. (Ibid).

The units can be used as horizontally and vertically. It can be used for aid and rehabilitation in an emergency situation, such as natural disasters. It contains storage, depots and first aid kits etc. It was transportable and very easy to construct and appropriate for community facilities (Ibid). This domestic environment, I believe, if examined insight of special design program, is transportable and convenient for several circumstances.

Based on the catalog, it contains bedroom, bathroom and kitchen, which can be used in any combinations. Because of the fact that it was developed for emergencies it can both be used as a single housing for private use or a sanctuary. For communal use, it can also be transported and constructed easily at any site, and multiple use of the proposal provides a community living. The characteristic of this proposal therefore can be defined as “fixed and adaptable” The user profile includes both single users and communal user groups, which was delineated by Option 2 communal (stanza).



*Figure 20 Picture of Marc Zanuso and Richard Sapper's Domestic Environment from inside, original from exhibition catalog (Zanuso and Sapper in Ambasz, 1972, p.197)*

The sixth and last designer who participated “Design as Postulation” category was the Italian architect Mario Bellini (1935, Milan) He maintains his studio for architecture, industrial design and city planning. He was the vice - president of the Association for Industrial design. (ADI) At the age of 37 he participated to “1972, Italy: The New Domestic Landscape” exhibition. His proposal “Kar- a Sutra” which was a concept car, was exhibited in “Mobile Environment” category.



*Figure 21 Picture of Mario Bellini's Domestic Environment Kar- a Sutra, original from the exhibition catalog (Bellini in Ambasz, 1972, p.208)*



*Figure 22 Picture of Mario Bellini's Domestic Environment Kar- a Sutra, original from the exhibition catalog (Bellini in Ambasz, 1972, p.208)*

Bellini presented Kar- a Sutra in a video interview in following words,

Kar-a Sutra is not a real product. it's something to talk about the meaning of moving. a new territory, visiting around and having people involved with this adventure.” (Designboom, 2017, 3:24)

Bellini analyzed, classic auto-mobile and he decided to reinterpret the “auto-mobile” concept as a “Mobile Human Space”. As Tunca Stated, “Kar-a-Sutra was actually an

ecological automobile. The criticism beyond was rather reactionary against the ultimate threat of automobile upon nature, and natural environment.” (Tunca,2009, p.141)

Kar- a Sutra could carry up to twelve people. It had same dimensions with a normal sedan car. Bellini stated in the interview, that “Renault Espace” brand automobile waste man inspiration of design. Two side doors provided the entrance of the mobile environment. Interior of Kar- a Sutra was covered by some plastic cushions, which can be moved and rearranged for various uses such as, bed, armrest or sofa etc. The top of the car can be raised almost two feet that, people can stand up and with the movable cushions and change places for a much more comfort. (Bellini in Ambasz, 1972, p.206)  
Bellini stated in a video interview that:

You can open the top and stand out and take photos. You can charter half a concert piano and move it from somewhere to elsewhere. You can really say something about cars which hasn't been told already. (Designboom, 2017, 3:24)

Bellini also explains other specifications of Kar- a Sutra with the following words,

Two continuous trays of different widths run along the sides at different levels. They hold in easy reach not only maps, guidebooks, and sunglasses but also bottles, drinking glasses, cameras, purses, etc. Next to the dashboard are a small refrigerator and a container for cumbersome objects. The central crossbar in the roof houses lighting panels, air ducts, and two rows of handrails. (Bellini through Ambasz, 1972, p. 206)

Kar-a Sutra, if interpreted in light of the special design program, I believe fulfills the adaptable features with adjustable cushion organization. The ceremonies mentioned in the special design program, therefore, were mostly left to the freewill of the users. As car was designed for communal use, individual use was contradicting its design purpose. For this reason, it is possible to categorize this mobile environment as “communal” and “adaptable” (6), which indicate Option 2 (stanza) for its users.

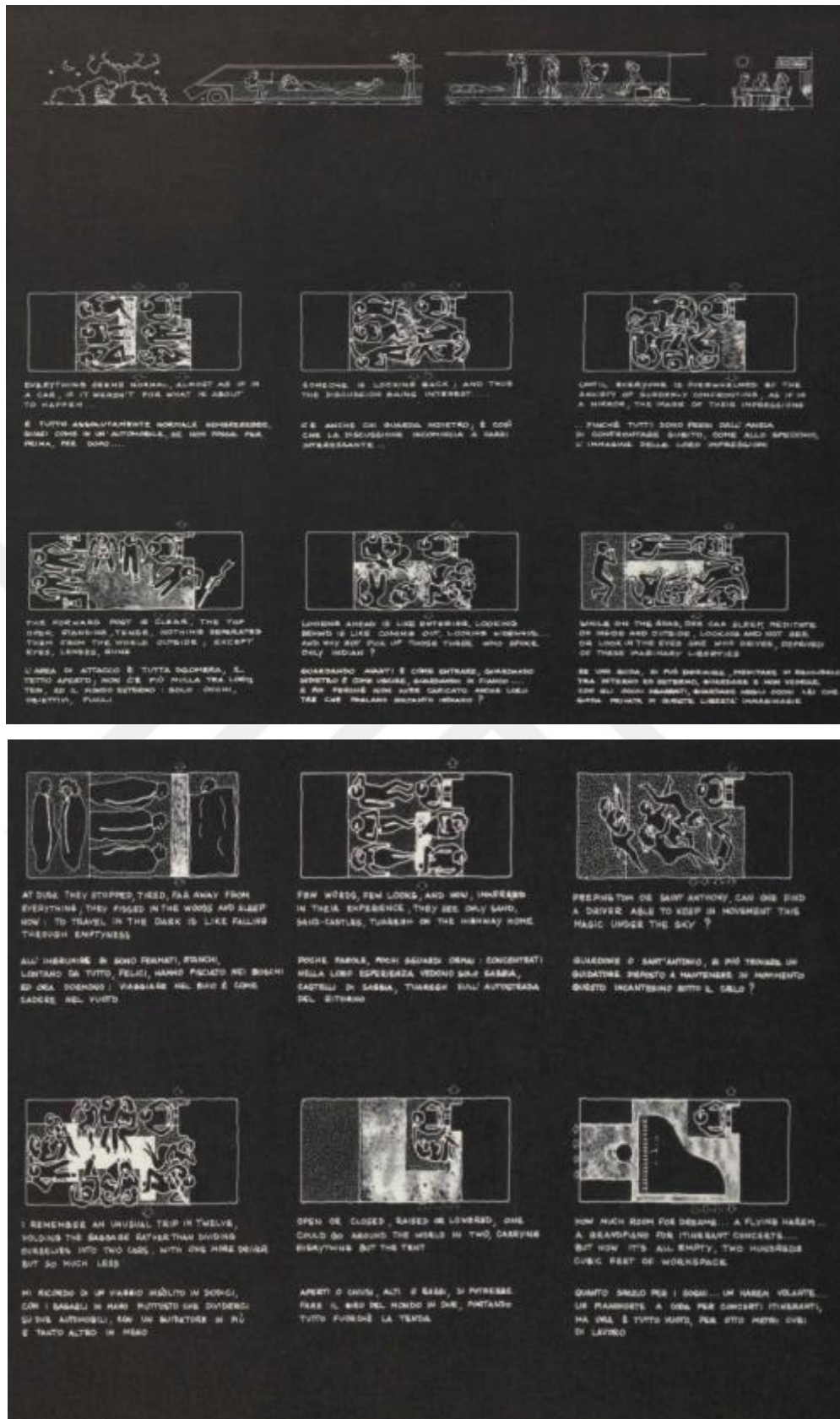


Figure 23 Picture of Mario Bellini's Domestic Environment Kar- a Sutra possible organization, original from the exhibition catalog (Bellini in Ambasz, 1972, p.208)





*Figure 24 Picture of Mario Bellini's Domestic Environment Kar- a Sutra from Museum of Modern Art exhibition archives, New York (Retrieved from URL page <https://www.moma.org>, 12.12.2017)*

With his mobile environment, Bellini criticized the fact that classical cars are produced like machines and cannot be incorporated into humans. There is again a situation that criticizes the standardization and autonomy in production. This proposal, therefore, aims to provide an environment in which people can both travel and experience this journey more comfortably.

To sum up, in “Design as Postulation” category, every Italian participant tried to explain their point of view with their anticipated designs. This category was an opportunity to offer genuine design proposals to resolve the social problems and irregularities. They were rejecting the principles of the rationalist design and their attempt is to break the mold structures of the design. One might say that they were against to standard productions and unconscious consumption of the consumers. They want consumers to think about the object while they were buying it and they wanted to allow the user to participate in the design. They wanted also from the individuals to break the mold in their minds as “good or beautiful”. One might say that, the designers’ role can be differentiated in a consumer society. In Design as Postulation category,

they thought mostly about breaking the stereotypical designs and associating them with the people more. According to Tunca,

As the main entry of the term postulation, is to postulate, which meant, demand, require as a necessary condition, claim, take for granted, one could understand that Ambasz's use of the term contents a delicate apprehension of the conditions that lead the designers to such proposals. (Tunca, 2009, p. 141-142)

The only designer in "Design as Commentary" category was the Italian designer Gaetano Pesce who was born in 1939, La Spezia. He was thirty-three years old when he joined "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape" exhibition. Pesce states in "The Architecture Foundation" film that his environment or better to call his "habitat" is still being displayed in Centre Pompidou (Paris). In the catalogue, Ambasz introduces Pesce with following words,

Besides his activity as an interior designer, a field he first entered in 1962, he has worked in many mediums, including silk-screen, programmed art, kinetic art, serial art, assemblage and bricolage, film, audio-visual presentations, and multimedia events involving light, movement, and sound. (Ambasz, 1972, p. 212)

Pesce explains the critical context that he based the design of his domestic environment in following words:

It is nevertheless possible to state with a fair degree of certainty that the communities of the 'Great Contaminations' (to give them a name) exploited underground cavities for their settlements, having first drained off mineral oils, water, etc. The immense hole made in the course of excavations was then closed by a huge stone, hermetically sealing off the interior from the outside world. Once inside, the men of the 'Great Contaminations' began to spread out, looking for further possible spaces in which to settle. (Pesce in Ambasz, 1972, p. 214).

Pesce designed two units, which had pyramidal shape. The base of the environment was square shaped and there were steps, which were leading to the entrance. There was just one door. All the furnishings were made of rigid polyurethane except the seats. Seats were made of soft polyurethane. He designed this environment for commune life with twelve people. He also explained his model with these words, "The model, showing a longitudinal section of the ground, represents our hypothetical reconstruction of the city; it is the result of deductions drawn from very miscellaneous documents." (Pesce in Ambasz, 1972, p. 214)

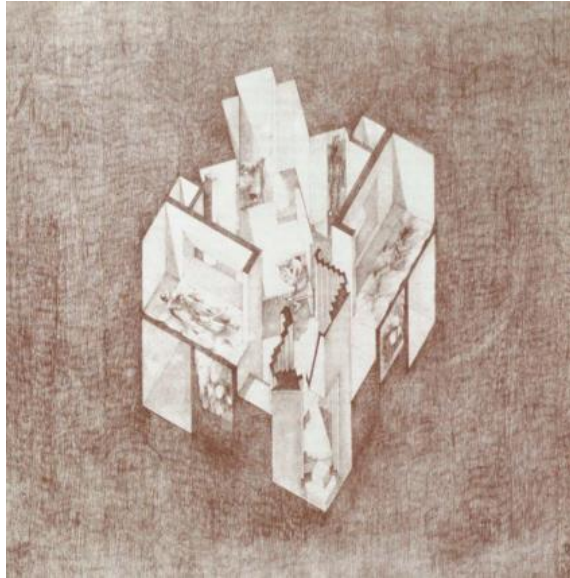


*Figure 25 Picture of Gaetano Pesce's Domestic Environment, original from the exhibition catalog (Pesce in Ambasz, 1972, p. 220)*



*Figure 26 Picture of Gaetano Pesce's Domestic Environment, original from the exhibition catalog (Pesce in Ambasz, 1972, p. 217-219)*





*Figure 27 Picture of Gaetano Pesce's Domestic Environment, original from the exhibition catalog (Pesce in Ambasz, 1972, p. 213)*

Pesce explains his intention in “Design as Commentary” category in a video interview with the following words,

I educated in [multidisciplinary] way, to be open any possibility of expression...There was no relationship between reality and what I was doing...When I present this habitat I decided to present it like an archaeologist not as a designer not as an architect. But I said I am an archaeologist of the year three thousand who discover in the North of Italy, underground a huge cavern, empty. Supposedly from oil. This cavern is empty... I said people decided to live inside the earth. Why? Maybe because in the outside it is impossible to breathe. Later the story came out, the air pollution etc. With a project you can evoke the situation that were coming two or three years later...I was interested in political aspects in Italy. Political is everything in the outside. Personally, I was never interested in partisism. I think this project is very political. Why? Because usually an architect is always to answer yes which is wrong. A painter like Picasso can say no to a reality. When the reality was involved with Nazism. Why not an architect? Why an architect is always to be positive? So, this project is a project in a certain way to say no. (The Architecture Foundation Film, 2014, 40:46)

One might say that Design as Postulation and commentary categories and following designers: Gae Aulenti, Ettore Sottsass, Joe Colombo, Alberto Rosselli, Richard Sapper and Marc Zanuso and Mario Bellini and Gaetano Pesce designed critical environments that refers to discourses on Adorno's Cultural Industry. As it is well-known, Adorno examines sociopolitical dimensions and effects of products designed

for commercial purposes. He proposes that this kind of so-called artistic products include embedded messages that shapes our mentality and behavior. In this case, Ambasz's desire for a special design program is manipulated in order to sustain critical states of current economic and political order and that of consumerism and its configuration in our behaviors and our mentality. According to Adorno,

...the culture industry changes this reified consciousness all the more, that is, for purposes: it actually, prevents that consciousness from changing on its own, as it secretly and, deep down admittedly desires. The consumers are made to remain what they are: consumers. That is why the culture industry is not the art of consumer but rather the protection of the will of those control onto their victims. The automatic self-reproduction of the status quo in its established forms is itself an expression of domination. (Adorno, 1991, p.185)



## CHAPTER 5

### COUNTER DESIGN AS POSTULATION

The designers in “Counter Design as Postulation” category chose “not to design”. They rejected designing a physical domestic environment. They demanded structural changes in the society. Instead of designing a physical domestic environment, they preferred to show lack of the society by alternative art mediums. One might say that the preference of “not to design” was of great importance for that time and Radical designers who refused to design a physical environment showed their direct point of view by revolting against the consumerism promoted by the design world. Considering the relation of product design and consumer society, they criticized mass production and consumption, mass media and communication, uncontrolled disorder, socio-economic problems, capitalism and so on. In Counter Design as Postulation category, there were the proposals of five Radical designers.

The first designer in “Counter Design as Postulation” category was the Italian designer Ugo La Pietra who was born in 1938, Bussi sol Tirino. Ambasz introduces Pietra as a researcher who “have focused not only on practical problems of mass production and the uses of new materials but also on theoretical problems regarding the morphology and social role of design.” (Ambasz, 1972, p.224). Pietra was thirty-four years old when he participated to the INDL exhibition. Entitled as “The Domicile Cell: A Microstructure within the Information and Communications Systems,” La Pietra’s design was a critical proposal, especially “critical of the consumption culture, organized by productivity-oriented system and man’s unconscious participation to this hegemony” (Tunca, 2009, p.143).

He aimed to remove the oppressive attitude of the society, which hindered the freedom of society and allowed it unconsciously. He should have revealed this with reality.

Therefore, he aimed to remove the filters between the individual and the reality. In order to do this, he found it appropriate to use audio-visual tools. “His intention was to operate a reverse logic and to provide the necessary tools of rediscovering the concealed levels of liberty and the subordinating forms and behaviors” (Ibid). For explaining this, he proposed six comprehension models to show man’s black out:

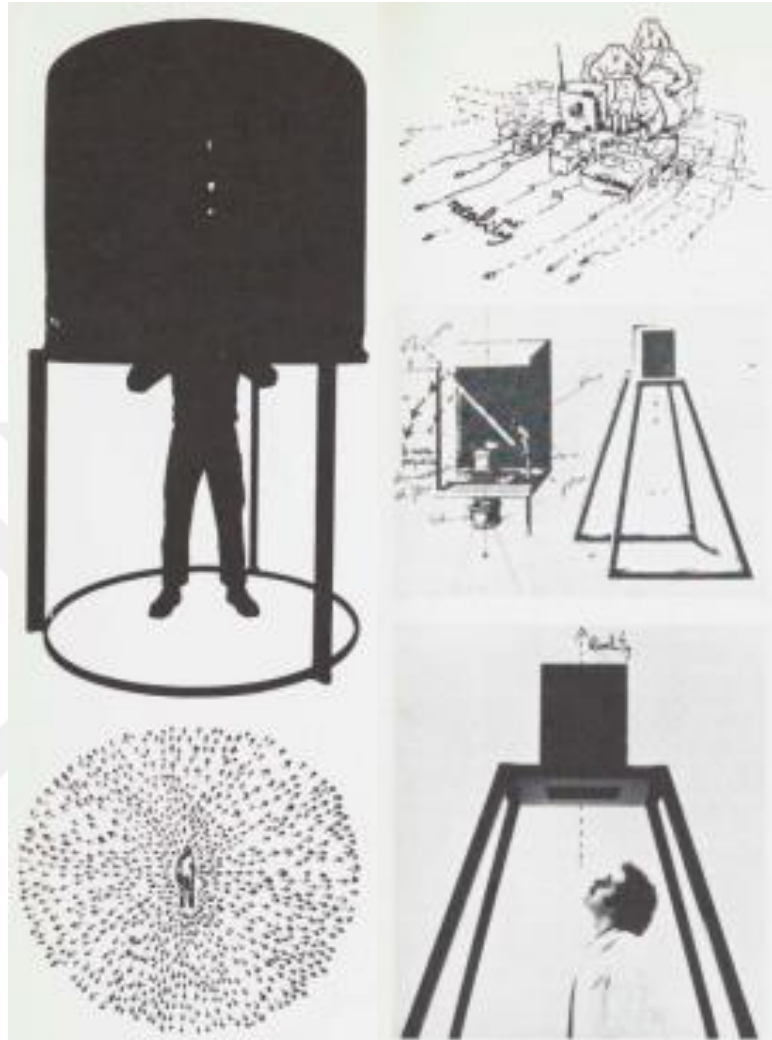
Comprehension Model A: “Immersion” is the first model. It was a metallic container with protective methacrylate coating. For Pietra, “Immersion is an invitation to a behavior that departs from reality to discover a kind of ‘privacy’... with the free behavior of the individual giving meaning to the potentialities inherent in the spatial presence.” (Pietra in Ambasz 1972, p.226)

Comprehension Model B: Perspective Chamber is the second model, which shows reality by removing the obstacles between individual and reality. In this model, La Pietra reinterprets “camera obscura” by removing the mirrors and lenses that were used as a “filter” to transpose the real image. When these materials were removed from the design, the “filter” between individual and reality disappears. La Pietra explains the chamber with the following words,

In this case, the object (recovered from history; cf. the camera obscura used by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century landscape painters for their perspective renderings of landscape) has been reproduced without the mirror tilted at a 45° angle and without the lens — elements that represented the indispensable technical 'filter' required to transpose the real image into the fictive one, projected onto the horizontal plane (the plane of the drawing). Once this filter has been eliminated, it is possible to see the landscape (reality) directly. (Pietra in Ambasz, 1972, p. 227)

Comprehension Model C: “Microenvironment”, Model C was the third model. Tunca explains this model as “a folding triangular volume, stuffed by the instruments of information and communication, symbolizing a control mechanism by concealing the tools of intermediation.” (Tunca, 2009, p.143)

Comprehension Models D, E, F were installations, which criticized the “privacy” in urban structure.



*Figure 28 – Comprehension Model A and Comprehension Model B*

*Comprehension Model A: Immersion, Progressive flooding of a container. Comprehension Model B: The New Perspective, Perspective chamber with instruments: mirror and lens. Perspective chamber without instrument: The New Perspective. Original from the exhibition catalogue (Pietra in Ambasz, 1972, p. 226-227)*

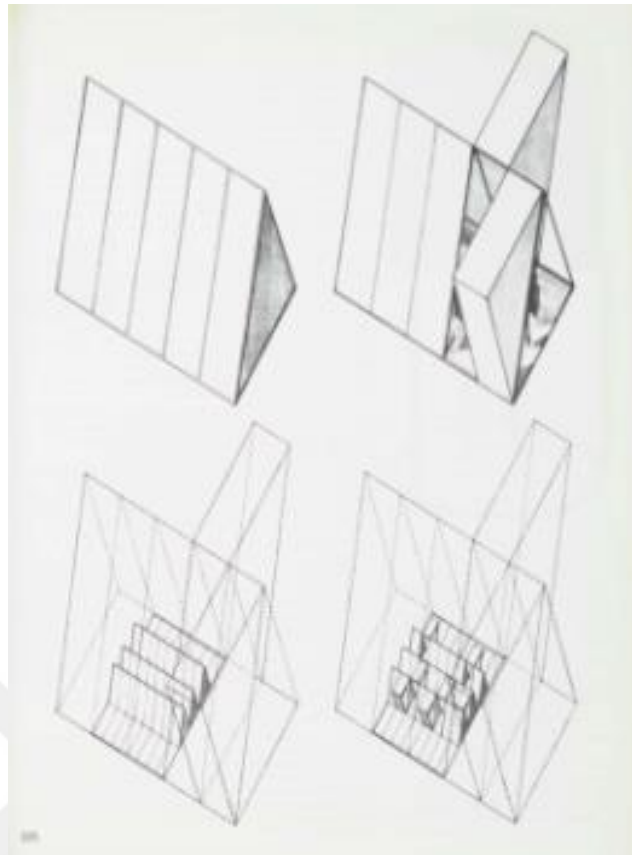


Figure 29 *Comprehension Model C: Micro environment Original from the exhibition catalogue. (Pietra in Ambasz, 1972, p. 225)*

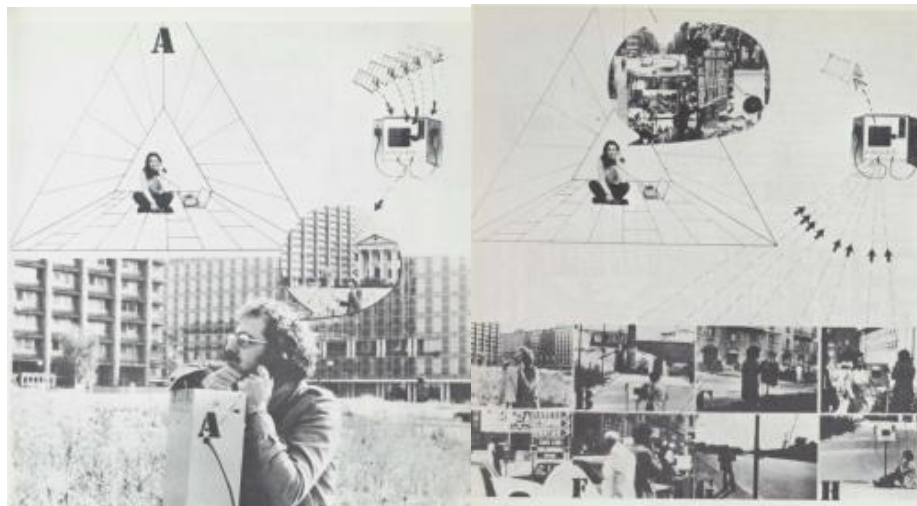
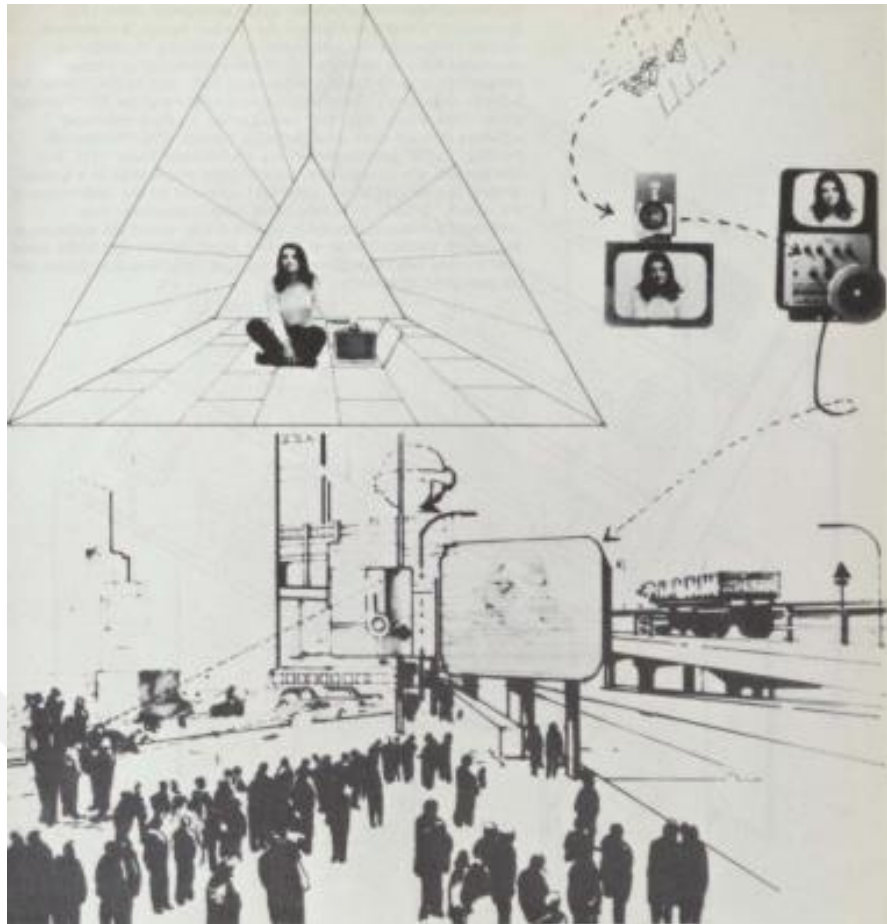


Figure 30 *Comprehension Model D and Comprehension Model E*

*Comprehension Model D and Model E: Audio Micro Environment. Original from the exhibition catalogue (Pietra in Ambasz, 1972, p.229-230)*



*Figure 31 Comprehension Model F: Audio-visual micro environment, urban privacy system. Original from the exhibition catalogue (Pietra in Ambasz, 1972, p. 231)*

Comprehension Model D; the fourth model, was recording all the private messages and later it was getting ready to listen by anyone in the society.

Comprehension Model E; the fifth model, La Pietra explains Model E “was designed with a similar intention but this time it transmits messages recorded by anyone in the urban area, and then available for listening to within the private domicile area.” (Pietra in Ambasz, 1972, p. 228)

Comprehension Model F; the sixth and the last model, was an Audio-microenvironment in urban-privacy system. Tunca explains this model in following words: “The third one was a model that collected all the recorded audiovisual documents, either private or public use, and offered the possibility to be watched either in the privacy of a home, or in public spaces by big television screens.” (Tunca, 2009, p.144)

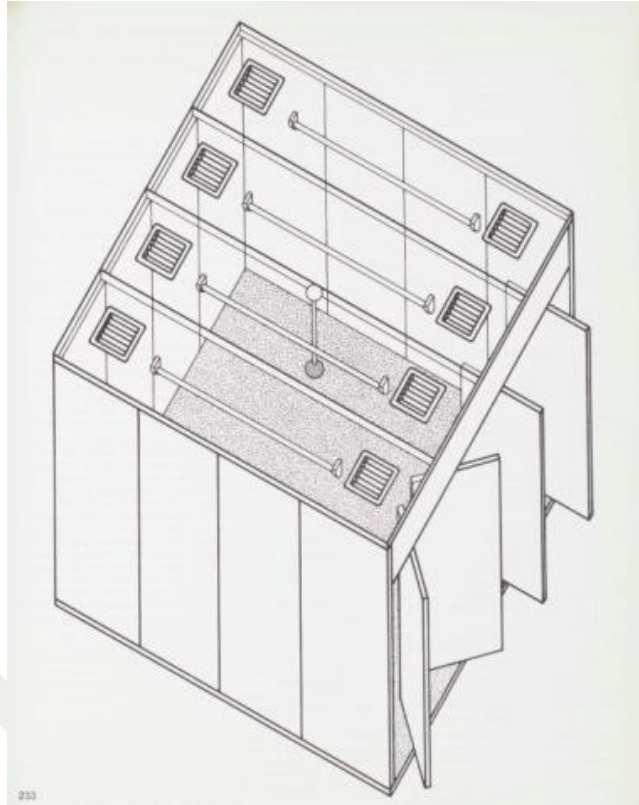
The evaluation of these six models proposed by Ugo La Pietra in terms of the “Special Design Program”, I think, reflects viewpoints, which can be rather difficult to express. Since the design was not a physical living environment proposal that criticizes the use and dominance of technological tools (audiovisual particularly) over the urban system and society, then these models can neither be categorized as “fixed” nor “adaptable”. Their intention was rather to make user realize different problems in the society, in each model, by adapting to a critical situation itself. Ugo La Pietra did not interpret the “ceremonies” as defined in the Programmatic Option (living, cooking-eating, sleeping etc.). He designed these models not to create a “domestic environment” but to reflect a mirror to the problems of society. In a MoMA article, Ambasz summarizes La Pietra’s work as follows,

La Pietra operates on the premise that the designer's materials are not physical entities but communication bits. Rather than manipulating formally the elements, which give meaning to our behavior, he is more interested in directly dealing with the production, transmission and feedback of meanings through available communication techniques. His criticism to the present communications structure is that, except the telephone and the rare case of a ham operator, all the communication equipment we have in the house are only one-way in direction. His "stand" is a didactic box, measuring 16' x 20', triangular in section, although the shape is not important. Dividing the box is a mesh screen; behind it are stylized present-day electro domestic and cinema/photographic equipment. The mesh becomes a screen on which, by means of projections, the designer expounds his views. (Ambasz’s article, 1972, n.p)

The second designer group was Archizoom (Andrea Branzi, Gilberto Corretti, Paolo Deganello, Dario Bartolini, Lucia Bartolini, Massimo Morozzi) from “Counter design as Postulation” category. Ambasz introduces Archizoom as a group of architects who were together since 1966, maintaining a studio in Florence for product design, architecture, interior design, and the installation of exhibitions.” (Ambasz, 1972, p. 232). Archizoom was one of the pioneers of “Radical Architecture”. Adolfo Natalini clarified that context of those years with following words,

The years between 1969 and 1972 saw the birth of all the “classics” of Radical Architecture: Archizoom published “No- Stop City in *Casabella* (July- August 1970) under the explanatory title, City-assembly line for the social: ideology and theory of the metropolis, which it continued to elaborate on and improve until it achieved graphic and linguistic perfection. (Natalini in Byvanck, 2005, p. 30)





*Figure 32 Picture of Archizoom's environment, original from the exhibition catalogue (Archizoom in Ambasz, 1972, p.233)*



*Figure 33 Pictures of Archizoom's environment from Museum of Modern Art exhibition archives, New York (<https://www.moma.org>, 12.01.2018)*

Archizoom also refused to design a physical living environment. Instead, they designed a cubic space. This cubic space contained a sound system and a tape, which was describing the physical properties of an environment. The aim of this proposal was to make sure that people were aware of their own beings, their own time and in brief every feature that is related to them. For Archizoom,

The problem is no longer that of trying to understand what kind of freedom man is seeking, or perhaps even trying to foresee it in terms of current reality. The problem, instead, is to give man the kind of freedom that will enable him to obtain it for himself. (Archizoom in Ambasz, 1972, p. 235)

In addition, they intended to go beyond the common “home” and “city” concept. They wanted to bring a new perspective to the “modern models” and “concepts” that existed in that time and they tried to add a new meaning to the already existed “city planning”. According to their own political views, they were showing a new attitude towards people who were changing the existing environment according to their own will. (Archizoom in Ambasz, 1972, p. 234-239) Archizoom explains their point of view with the following words:

Creating culture today is no longer – at least, it should not be – the privilege of a few intellectuals, who provide users with the critical apparatus with which to explain the world and organize the form of their environment too. The right to go against a reality that lacks “meaning” (because it is a reality produced by a system that is —meaningless itself) is the right to act, modify, form, and destroy the surrounding environment. This is an inalienable right, and a capacity each one of us possessed. (Archizoom in Ambasz, 1972, p. 234)

In this context, the best way for them to express themselves and to enable people to adopt different “meaning” and “values” to this “hollow space” was possible with “words”. For Tunca, “[t]hey refused to make a model, refused to translate a single utopia into physical design, since it meant to ignore infinite number of other utopias” (Tunca, 2009, p.144). Thus, the concept of the “domestic environment” is left to the imagination of the people who would experience this cubic proposal and listen to the internal sound recordings.

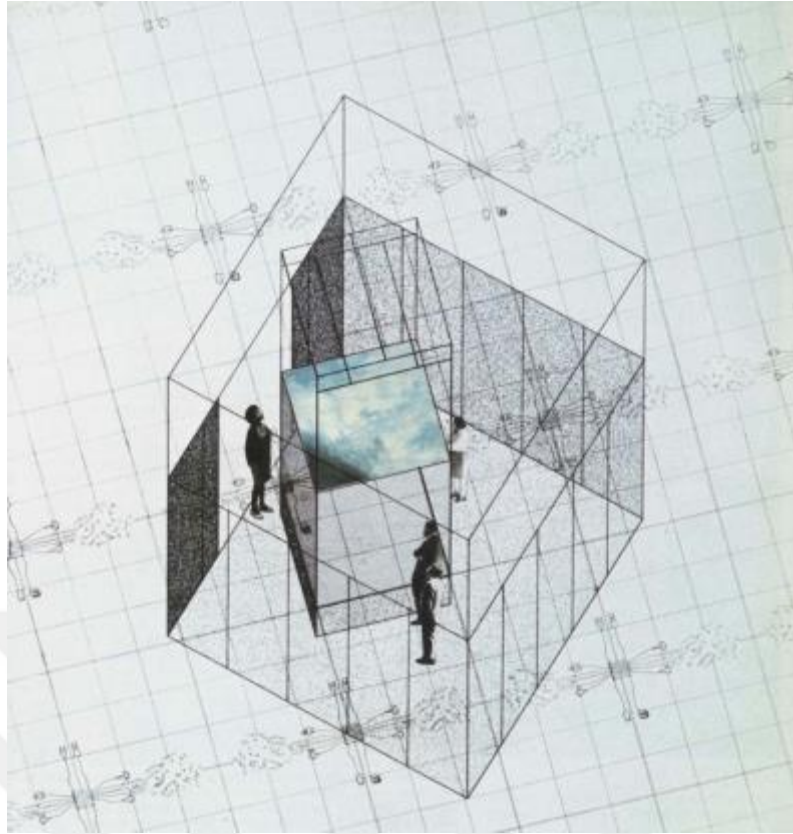
For making a comment on this proposal, which Archizoom annotated in terms of the Special Design Program, in my view, Archizoom presented this “imaginary environment” with a political point of view as mentioned above. This environment was not a physical environment but rather an art installation. The aim of Archizoom

was to enable the individual, experiencing this “hollow space” by revealing the meanings of his own existence. In this context, the environment can be categorized as “private” space, but it does not offer any “User's Role” or “Ceremonies” listed under Ambasz’s programmatic options. It is an installation, which forces the individuals imagine by the sound played inside describing the rituals. According to Archizoom, “Violent conflicts, uncontrolled disorder, and the spontaneous growth of means of communication are the shock tactics that the city adopts to compel the citizen to integrate himself within consumer society.” (Archizoom in Ambasz, 1972, p.237)

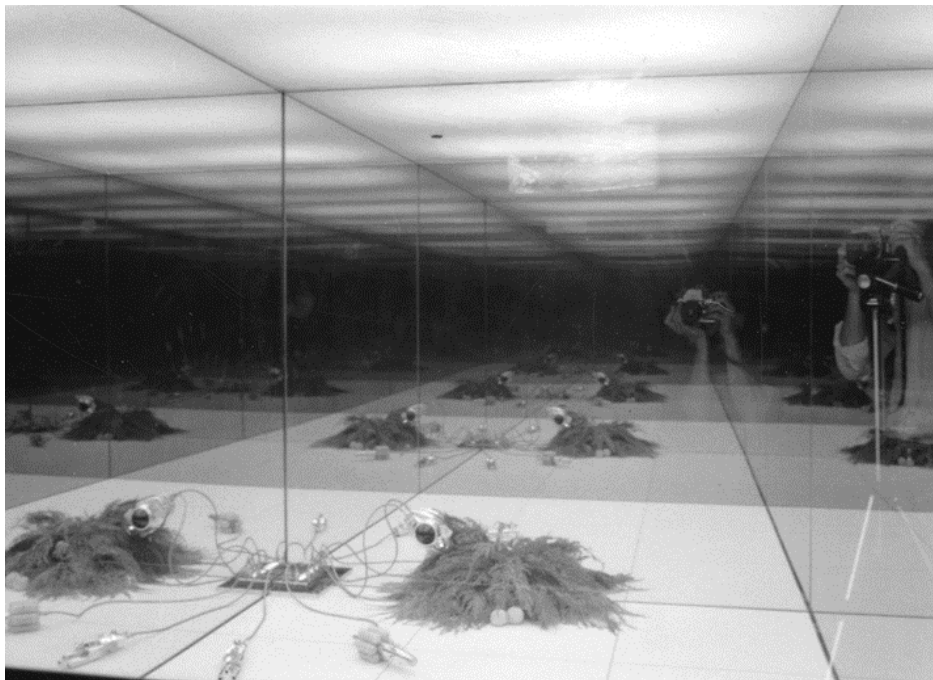
The third designer group was Superstudio (Piero Frassinelli, Alessandro Magris, Roberto Magris, Adolfo Natalini, Alessandro Poli, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia) from “Counter design as Postulation” category. Ambasz introduces Superstudio as, “a group of Florence architects who come together in December 1966, working in the fields of architecture and interior and industrial design.” (Ambasz, 1972, p.240) Adolfo Natalini later narrates the group’s point of view as follows:

Superstudio was a situationist movement that used architecture’s traditional instruments (drawing and projects) to criticize not only architecture and its trends, but also society...For this reason it was a real avant-garde... We tried to destroy the existing system, free divisions, cultural colonialism, violence, and consumerism. We were chasing after the utopia of a free world and a life free from work, a “life without objects”. (Natalini in Byvanck, 2005, p.25)

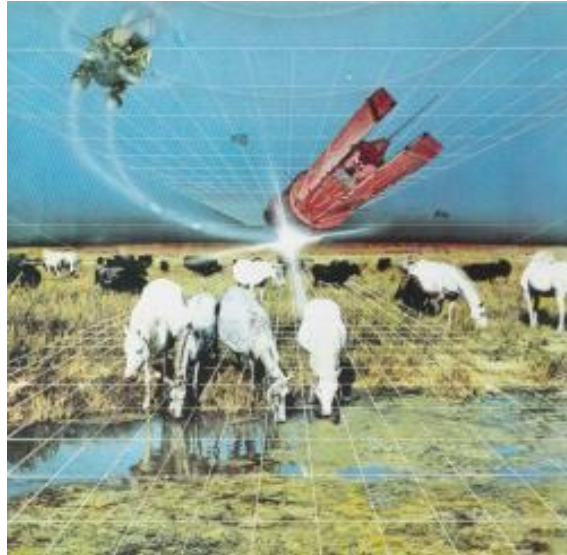
Superstudio’s microenvironment was not a physical environment as well. It was “like a room with walls”. They covered the ceiling and floor with black felt and thin luminescent lines. They placed a mirror cube in to the center. Three façades of this cube were covered with polarized mirror to show the word “infinity” to the people who would experience the environment. With a help of a machine, which was connected to a TV screen, they projected a three-minute film on meteorological events to the laminated plastic borders, such as sunrise, storm, clouds, night, and so on. Thus, a soundtrack gives some information about the original concepts for the model.



*Figure 34 Picture of Superstudio's environment, original from the exhibition catalogue (Superstudio in Ambasz, 1972, p.241)*



*Figure 35 Picture of Superstudio's environment from Museum of Modern Art exhibition archives, New York (<https://www.moma.org>, 16.01.2018)*



*Figure 36 Picture of Superstudio's environment, original from the exhibition catalogue (Superstudio in Ambasz, 1972, p.243)*



*Figure 37 Picture of Super Superstudio's environment, original from the exhibition catalogue (Superstudio in Ambasz, 1972, p.247)*



*Figure 38 Pictures of Super Superstudio's environment, original from the exhibition catalogue (Superstudio in Ambasz, 1972, p. 249-250)*

Super Studio described the Specific Considerations and General considerations of design proposal. In specific considerations, they defined their proposal with the following connotation; “In this exhibition, we present an alternative model for life on earth.” (Superstudio in Ambasz, 1972, p. 242). As Natalini mentioned above, they chased after a utopia, which was “life without objects”. In other words, they thought of a network that would reflect the world without objects. In their newly designed world, people should connect more with themselves and with the people around. Superstudio emphasized it with following words,

By finding a connection between data taken from the various humanistic and scientific disciplines (from the technique of body control to philosophy, the disciplines of logic and medicine, to bionomics, geography, etc.), we can visualize an image-guide: the final attempt of design to act as the 'projection' of a society no longer based on work (and on power and violence, which are connected with this), but an unalienated human relationship. (Ibid)

In this context, they brought a different meaning to the concept of “domestic environment”. Superstudio believed in “...the elimination of all formal structures, the transfer of all designing activity to the conceptual sphere. In substance, the rejection of production and consumption, the rejection of work, are visualized as a physical metaphor: the whole city as a network of energy and communications.” (Ibid) According to Adolfo Natalini,

If design is the only motivation to consume, then we must reject the design; if architecture is the only way to legitimize bourgeois model of ownership and society, then we must reject the architecture; if architecture and urban development are just official framework of today’s unjust social stratification, we must reject the urban development, with its cities until the entire project activity is focused on basic needs. Until then design may disappear. We can live without architecture. (Natalini in Lang in Kovesnikova, et al., 2016, p.3289)

In the General Considerations section, they aimed to bring the problems that they generally criticized in the society to the forefront. The first one was “life without objects” or “The destruction of objects.” With that connotation, they tried to explain that man should “live with objects” not “for objects”. Hilde Heynen explains Superstudio’s point of view in the following words:

Ultimately, Superstudio's object is to get people used to live without objects. They have to learn to understand that objects they are used to, the consumer goods, are means of repression through which the social system is able to maintain itself. (Heynen in Byvanck, 2005, p.66)

The second one was "The elimination of the city". They were criticizing the hierarchy and the social model in the society. For them, man should have the equal starting points. The third one was "The end of work".

By this, they referred to freeing oneself from work, which was foreign to his nature. Those three systemic factors, for Superstudio, were the logical imperatives of creating a new revolutionary society, in which man would achieve maximum freedom to act in proportion to his capacities. (Tunca, 2009, p.147).

Superstudio summarized the idea of "a new revolutionary society" with the following captions,

Once clarified that:

- a) Design is merely an inducement to consume;
- b) Objects are status symbols, the expressions of models proposed by the ruling class. Their progressive accessibility to proletariat is part of a leveling 'strategy intended to avoid the conflagration of the class struggle;
- c) The possession of objects is the expression of unconscious motivation underlying their desirability may be reached; ... then it becomes urgent to proceed to destroy them... or does it Metamorphoses become frequent when a culture does not have sufficient courage to commit suicide (to eliminate itself) as has no clear alternatives to offer, either. The theory of intermediate states is the book of changes? (Superstudio in Ambasz, 1972, p. 245)

As a result, they addressed two titles (Specific Considerations and General Considerations) with this proposal; they expressed and reflected their own political views and the society's unconsciousness on these issues. Superstudio's words reflect their concerns and their critique of capitalist excess:

This beyond the convulsions of overproduction a state can be born of calm in which a world takes shape without products and refuse, a zone in which the mind is energy and raw materials and is also the final products the only intangible object for consumption. The designing of a region free from the pollution of design is very similar to a design for a terrestrial paradise... This is the definitive product this is only one of the projects for a marvelous metamorphosis. (Superstudio in Ambasz, 1972, p. 251)



In “Counter design as Postulation” category, fourth design group was Gruppo Strum-Group for Instrumental Architecture. (Piero Derossi, Giorgio Ceretti, Carlo Giammarco, Riccardo Rosso, Maurizio Vogliazzo). Ambasz introduces Gruppo Strum as follows: “Their common interest is in the use of architecture as an active instrument for political propaganda, by means of activities and theories connected with the physical organization of the space. The group was working in the fields of architecture, scientific research and teaching” (Ambasz,1972, p.252).



*Figure 39 Picture of Gruppo Strum’s contribution-The Struggle for Housing, original from the exhibition catalogue (Ambasz,1972, p.257)*

Gruppo Strum approached the topic “domestic environment” with a unique perspective. They did not design objects or spaces that could be found in the home, such as comfortable armchairs, beds or kitchen units. They wanted to deal with the problems in society at the time. To show these problems they created, three newspapers, “photo-stories” with white, green and red color. Gruppo Strum explains them as “Each series illustrates an aspect of design that we believe to be of particular importance.” (Gruppo Strum in Ambasz, 1972, p. 254)





Figure 40 Picture of Gruppo Sturm's contribution-Utopia, original from the exhibition catalogue (Gruppo Sturm Ambasz, 1972, p.259)



Figure 41 Picture of Gruppo Sturm's contribution-The Mediator City, original from the exhibition catalogue (Gruppo Sturm Ambasz, 1972, p.261)

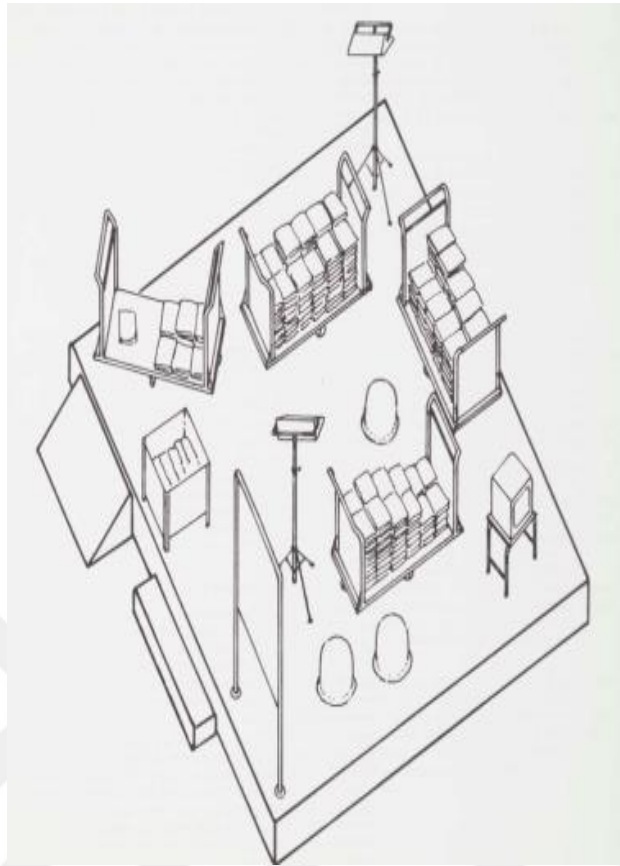


Figure 42 Picture of Gruppo Strum's contribution, original from the exhibition catalogue (Gruppo Strum Ambasz, 1972, p.253)



Figure 43 Picture of Gruppo Strum's Environment from Museum of Modern Art exhibition archives, New York (<https://www.moma.org>, 20.01.2018)

The first one was with white color and named it as “The struggle for housing”. Gruppo Strum tried to show “...how these struggles for housing continually reshape cities, by attacking and defeating the capitalist organization of the territory together with the symbolic values that formalize it.” (Gruppo Strum, 1972, p.254) The second photo-story was “UTOPIA” with green color. For “UTOPIA” they dreamed to create a new world that is completely different, where technology is at the top, people live happier etc. Gruppo Strum explains the aim of “UTOPIA” with following words,

UTOPIA as an act of provocation, and as a negation of the objectivity of the present-day system of production; in short, we want to try to use UTOPIA as a means of intervention, directly linked with the organization of the struggles against the programmed reorganization of capital. (Gruppo Strum in Ambasz, 1972, p.255)

The third photo-story was “The mediatory city” with red color. For Tunca, “Gruppo Strum analyzed the patterns of behavior, imposed by bourgeois city, and provoked the new patterns of resistance against the impositions of a capitalist system.” (Tunca, 2009, p.149)

In this context, one can state that the contribution of Gruppo Strum was a total refusal against designing a physical environment. The aim was to criticize the problems on an intellectual level in society. Therefore, the “photo-stories” which they thought of cannot be interpreted in terms of the characteristics of the environments addressed by Ambasz’s Special Design program, but rather a refusal which specifically criticizes the points addressed by the program in the current political context.

In “Counterdesign as Postulation” category, the fifth and the last Italian designer was Enzo Mari, who was born in Milan, in 1932. He was forty years old during 1972 MoMA exhibition. Ambasz introduces Mari as follows:

Beside his extensive activity as designer, since 1952 he has devoted himself intensively to theoretical research, especially on the psychology vision, systems of perception and methodology of design...In recent years, he has been especially concerned with the role of the designer in relation to contemporary society. (Ambasz, 1972, p.262)

As stated in the catalogue, Enzo Mari did not design an environment. Instead, he wrote a criticism, which he found very rewarding for the designers. The content of the article was described by Ambasz's following words:

[Mari] proposes, instead, that the only valid sphere of action is for the designer is that of communications, and that, the only honorable strategy open to him is that of renewing language, the alphabet included.” (Ibid)

Mari saw “communication” as a very important tool in social relations. According to him, any revolutionary activity was directly related to communication. In fact, the aim is to emphasize that a research should be investigated only in a political framework. In this respect for Tunca, “Mari accredited the mere necessity of a specified demarcation of the means of political communications for linguistic research.” (Tunca, 2009, p.150)

In this activity, he addressed two social identities, the first one was “who believed in the cause of the subjugated class”, and the second one was, “the ones who acted according to the -privileges of ruling class”. For Mari, there was no difference between these two situations. For him, the aim of the first one was to separate actions from the second. For Mari, designers need to develop a consciousness about the second statement. (Mari in Ambasz, 1972, 264)

Also, Enzo Mari proposed a scheme which should involve “all communication of the artists or critical activity should take place”:

- I. Enunciation of his own utopian vision of the development of society.
  - II. Definition of the strategy deemed fitting for the attainment of this ideal.
  - III. Statement of what tactical moment of this strategy he has now reached.
  - IV. Synchronization of his research with that tactical moment.
  - V. Communication of the work of research in question (being at pains to remember that this should be with special reference to the foregoing points).
- (Mari in Ambasz, 1972, p.265)

According to Tunca,

Mari emphasized the necessity to correlate a critical work with both the real constructs of daily practice, and the free ideological posture of its creator. Mari, in fact, defined his paper, or better to say his manifesto, as an attempt. (Tunca, 2009, p.150)

In the end of his essay, Mari summarized his object with the following words,

That this attempt, too, can easily be manipulated. Quite so. But perhaps it will allow such manipulation to become more clearly apparent. That this proposal will be ignored by many of those to whom it is directed. This may well be suspected; but precisely in the sense that what is 'suspected' is not so much their avowed adherence to the dominating class, as their feigned adherence to the class that is dominated. (Mari in Ambasz, 1972, p.265)

In light of Ambasz's "Special Design Program", Mari's contribution is inevitably out of consideration since rather than a "domestic environment", the idea of an environment exists in that contribution. As a result, Italian designers, who have chosen the category "Counter design as Postulation", are more interested in social problems regarding organization, communication problems, rather than creating a physical environment. They have tried to bring about critical points of view to these problems. In this context, they dealt with these problems with their manifestos, political approaches and proposals with the aim of raising awareness in the society.

As a conclusion, the "environments" section, which has been examined in three sections ("Design as Postulation", "Design as Commentary", "Counter Design as Postulation"), covers various lines of thoughts, expressed by Italian radicals either by suggesting a physical environment or by offering a political / ideological contribution.

With all these achievements, MoMA made one of the best exhibitions of the time, owing to Emilio Ambasz's broad perspective and "negative" attitude of Italian designers have brought this exhibition to a better spot. According to Tunca,

In Ambasz's brief overture of those designs and the articles, one can also see that the importance of Italian design was highlighted for the first time in terms of its incompatible development regarding other countries in Europe, due to apparent ideological positions it presented. (Tunca, 2009, p.151).

The designers: Ugo La Pietra, Archizoom, Superstudio, Gruppo Strum and Enzo Mari, in "Counter design as Postulation" category rejected to propose physical designs. Instead, they wanted to give a political message and show consumer society that design has other facilities. They interpreted design as tool to criticize the general problems that they saw. One might say that, with rejecting to propose a physical design, they also rejected consumerism, mass media, uncontrolled disorder in cities and capitalism; thus, they shared Adorno's critiques on "high art" and "industrially produced consumer art". Bernstein explains Adorno's thoughts as follows,

[For Adorno,] both high art as well as industrially produced consumer art bear the stigmata of capitalism...Under capitalism all production is for market; goods are produced not in order to meet human needs and desires, but for the sake of profit, for the sake of acquiring further capital. (Bernstein in Adorno, 1991, p.2-5)

As contextualized by Adorno, interpreted by Bernstein, the designers of counter design category succeeded to project the diversification of consumption habits due to human behaviors.



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

Consumerism and consumer society is still open to debate. The analysis of “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape” exhibition reveals out that the designers should revolt against the suppression of consumer society. Italian architect and historian Tafuri also criticize the architects of the postwar era in following words:

Today, he who is willing to make architecture speak is forced to rely on materials empty of any and all meaning: he is forced to reduce to degree zero all architectonic ideology, all derams of social function and any utopian residues... In their own way, those architects from the late fifties until today have tried to reconstruct a common discourse for their discipline, have felt the need to make a new morality of content. (Tafuri, n.d., p. 38)

The attitudes of the Italian radical designers in this exhibition can be one of the best criticisms towards the problems of unconscious consumer society and mass productions. As mentioned, “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape”, curated by Emilio Ambasz at MoMA, New York in 1972 shows the American intellectuals of that time that Italians handled the concept of domestic environment in a multifaceted way. Eleven environments designed by Italian radicals for this exhibition reflected the social problems that they encountered, and every proposal was an opportunity to express their ideological views.

While designing those eleven environments, Italian radicals interpreted the special design program of Ambasz in three different approaches, exhibited under three different categories entitled as, “Design as Postulation”, “Design as Commentary” and “Counter design as Postulation.” Each category raised a critical view towards design and the concept “environment”.

The designers in “Design as Postulation” category (Gae Aulenti, Ettore Sottsass, Jr, Joe Colombo, Alberto Rosselli, Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper, Mario Bellini) have designed environments in which the roles of users and their lifestyles were identified and examined. Accordingly, the “House Environments” of Gae Aulenti, Ettore Sottsass, Jr and Joe Colombo” and the “Mobile Environments” of Alberto Rosselli, Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper, Mario Bellini focused on two major obstructs of domestic environments: The flexibility that lacks in any house environment, and the mobility of the domestic environment according to the will of the user. Their physical design proposals were rather architectural solutions of societal and environmental problems. The designer in the “Design as Commentary” category, Gaetano Pesce reflected the problems with an installation and discussed the environmental problems and air pollution in the metropolis. The designers in “Counter Design as Postulation” category, Ugo La Pietra, Archizoom, Superstudio, Gruppo Strum and Enzo Mari preferred to reflect their criticism towards social problems and their own political / ideological views with a refusal to design a domestic environment. They have designed art installations that show the utopian worlds they have built.

“Design as Postulation” and “Counter design as Postulation” categories presented the negative stance of the designers towards the same problems and showed that the role of designer is to raise the critical awareness of the society regardless of their stances. For the first category, the designers of “Design as Postulation” chose to design physical environments but not in a stereotypical way. They designed their environments by considering the socio-cultural aspects and with rejecting “heroic design”. They brought a new perspective to the design development. One might say that they considered the consumer society and made people think about the product design and industry. They wanted to reveal “human” aspect in their environments. On the other hand, in “Counter design as Postulation” category, designers rejected the act of design in such a societal order. They chose not to design and criticize all the problems they saw such as, mass production, mass consumption, mass media, uncontrolled disorder, unconscious consumption etc. They wanted structural changes in the society.

Two opposite attitudes of the radical designers as “design” and “counter design” portray the society. INDL exhibition accommodates both original and free ideas of the radical designers. With hosting two oppositions, it clearly shows the liberal attitudes



of design and designers. It accommodates opposite intention and attitudes of the designers in a consumer society. One might say that in “Design as Postulation” and “Design as Commentary” category, all designs searched for alternative spatial and environmental solutions regarding the free will of its users. Gae Aulenti’s red triangular modular units which creates flexible personal and communal spaces, Ettore Sottsass’ “ugly” wheeled adjustable boxes which was important for demolishing the already existing beautiful image in consumer’s mind, Joe Colombo’s possible combinations of the modular units, Alberto Rosselli’s modular which could answer any personal and communal ceremonies, Marc Zanuso and Richard Sapper’s sanctuary for the communal ceremonies, and Mario Bellini’s mobile environment Kar-a Sutra which was a contemporary reinterpretation of classic automobiles focused on the flexibility and mobility of environmental solutions according to the user’s needs. Gaetano Pesce’s environment, which was in the “Design as Commentary” category, proposed underground living due to environmental pollution. Overall environments in Design as Postulation and Commentary categories were proposals that discuss the rules of the modernism and subject the consumer society to think about the objects and places that they were living. One might say that, by criticizing unconscious consumerism, designers wanted to demolish the already existing beautiful image in consumer’s mind. Moreover, one might say that, as in Adorno’s thoughts about culture industry, the standard and mass productions are the deceptions to effect consumer’s consciousness. According to an article of Andy Blunden about culture industry,

The might of industrial society is lodged in men’s mind. The entertainments manufacturers know that their products will be consumed with alertness even when the costumer is distraught, for each of them is a model of the huge economic machinery, which has always sustained the masses. (Blunden, 1998, n.p)

In “Counter Design as Postulation” category, designers rejected this mentality. They focused on general social problems and showed their denial by rejecting designing physical environments. Their attitudes were critical and highly ideological. Ugo La Pietra’s six comprehension models that criticize mass media and mass communication, Archizoom’s a cubic empty room that forces the users to “imagine” the environments, Superstudio’s infinity room with walls on which collage photographs were projected, Gruppo Strum’s red, white and green colored magazines on the struggle for housing,

utopia, mediatory cities, and finally Enzo Mari's article were all political and Marxist proposals criticizing mass production, consumption, disorder in the cities, and differentiation between classes because of the city organization.

In Conclusion, this exhibition accommodates two opposite views and this opposition emerged with the decisions of Italian radicals towards design in a consumer society: design or counter design. One might say that both categories support the same Marxist stances but one part that chose to "design" wanted to connect the designs more with humans by considering socio-cultural aspects and rejecting the mold structural designs. The second part that chose "counter design" considered the general social problems pessimistically and believed in the impossibility to propose any physical environment in such a socio-political environment, unless structural changes occur.

The INDL exhibition, due to the togetherness of two negatives "design" and "counter design," gives the whole panorama for creating a critical "environment" and proves that designers have always a role to shape society and bring the consumer society some consciousness with their designs. With examining INDL exhibition, gaining a radical perspective will be a choice for every designer. The two oppositions: design and counter design are two stances in opposition but they both intend to serve for "human." When appropriate, a designer can refuse to design and adopt a role that will directly counteract the problems of the society and it can be the certain way to say no. According to designer, Torelodo di Francia from Superstudio, "It is the designer who must attempt to re-evaluate his role in the nightmare he has helped to conceive." (Glancey, 2003)

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