

Ettore Sottsass

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Ettore Sottsass (14 September 1917 – 31 December 2007) was an Italian architect and designer of the late 20th century. His body of designs included furniture, jewelry, glass, lighting and office machine design.

Contents

- 1 Early career
- 2 Memphis Group
- 3 Sottsass Associati
- 4 Other works
- 5 Bibliography
- 6 References
- 7 External links

Ettore Sottsass

Born	14 September 1917 <div>Innsbruck, Austria-Hungary</div>
Died	31 December 2007 (aged 90) <div>Milan, Italy</div>
Nationality	Italian
Practice	Sottsass
Buildings	Mayer-Schwarz Gallery <div>Beverly Hills, California</div>
Design	Olivetti Valentine typewriter <div>Nine-0 Chair</div> <div>(http://www.emeco.net/productline/nine-0.html)</div>

Early career

Sottsass was born on 14 September 1917 in Innsbruck, Austria, and grew up in Milan, where his father was an architect.

He was educated at the Politecnico di Torino in Turin and graduated in 1939 with a degree in architecture. He served in the Italian military and spent much of World War II in a concentration camp in Yugoslavia. After returning home in 1947, he set up his own architectural and industrial design studio in Milan.

In 1959 Sottsass began working as a design consultant for Olivetti, designing office equipment, typewriters and furniture. Sottsass was hired by Adriano Olivetti, the founder, to work alongside his son, Roberto. There Sottsass made his name as a designer who, through colour, form and styling, managed to bring office equipment into the realm of popular culture.^[1] Sottsass, Mario Tchou, and Roberto Olivetti won the prestigious 1959 Compasso d'Oro with the Elea 9003, the first Italian mainframe computer.

Throughout the 1960s, Sottsass traveled in the US and India and designed more products for Olivetti culminating in the bright red plastic portable Valentine typewriter in 1969, which became a fashion accessory.^[1] Sotsass described the Valentine as "a brio among typewriters." Compared with the typical drab typewriters of the day, the Valentine was more of a design statement item than an office machine.



Typewriter *Valentine* (1969)

While continuing to design for Olivetti in the 1960s, Sottsass developed a range of objects which were expressions of his personal experiences traveling in the United States and India.^[2] These objects included large altar-like ceramic sculptures and his "Superboxes"; radical sculptural gestures presented within a context of consumer product, as conceptual statement.^[3] Covered in bold and colorful, simulated custom laminates, they were precursors to Memphis, a movement which came more than a decade later.^[4] Around this time Sottsass has said,

I didn't want to do any more consumerist products, because it was clear that the consumerist attitude was quite dangerous.^{[5][6]}

The feeling that his creativity was being stifled by corporate work is documented in his 1973 essay "When I was a Very Small Boy",^[7] As a result, his work from the late 60's to the '70s was defined by experimental collaborations with younger designers such as Superstudio and Archizoom,^[8] and association with the Radical movement, culminating in the foundation of Memphis at the turn of the decade.

he designed memphis work and people are studying it at school.

Memphis Group

In 1981, Sottsass and an international group of young architects and designers, came together to form the Memphis Group. A night of drinking and listening to Bob Dylan's "Stuck Inside of Mobile With the Memphis Blues Again" gave the group its name. Memphis was launched with a collection of 40 pieces of furniture, ceramics, lighting, glass and textiles which featured fluorescent colors, slick surfaces, intentionally lop-sided shapes and squiggly laminate patterns.

The group's colourful, ironic pieces were hailed as one of the most characteristic examples of Post-modernism in design and the arts. Sottsass described Memphis in a 1986 Chicago Tribune article: "Memphis is like a very strong drug. You cannot take too much. I don't think anyone should put only Memphis around: It's like eating only cake."^[9]

Sottsass Associati

Whilst the Memphis movement in the eighties attracted enormous attention around the world for its energy and flamboyance, Ettore Sottsass was simultaneously assembling a major design consultancy which he named Sottsass Associati. The studio was established in 1980 and gave the possibility to build architecture on a substantial scale as well as to design for large international industries.



Knoll Mandarin Chair Ettore Sottsass



Olivetti Praxis 48 Typewriter Ettore Sottsass



Olivetti Lettera 33 Typewriter Ettore Sottsass

Sottsass Associati, primarily an architectural practice, also designed elaborate stores and showrooms for Esprit, identities for Alessi, exhibitions, interiors, consumer electronics in Japan and furniture of all kinds. The studio was based on the cultural guidance of Ettore Sottsass and the work conducted by its many young associates, whom over the years often left to open their own studios. Sottsass Associati are presently based in London and Milan and continue to sustain the work, philosophy and culture of the studio.

Other works

As an industrial designer, his clients included Fiorucci, Esprit, the Italian furniture company Poltronova, Knoll International, Serafino Zani, Alessi and Brondi. As an architect, he designed the Mayer-Schwarz Gallery on Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, California, with its dramatic doorway made of irregular folds and jagged angles, and the home of David M. Kelley, designer of Apple's first computer mouse, in Woodside, California. In the mid-1990s he designed the sculpture garden and entry gates of the W. Keith and Janet Kellogg Gallery at the campus of Cal Poly Pomona. He collaborated with well known figures in the architecture and design field, including Aldo Cibic, James Irvine, Matteo Thun.

Sottsass had a vast body of work; furniture, jewellery, ceramics, glass, silver work, lighting, office machine design and buildings which inspired generations of architects and designers. In 2006 the Los Angeles County Museum of Art held the first major museum survey exhibition of his work in the United States. A retrospective exhibition, *Ettore Sottsass: Work in Progress*, was held at the Design Museum in London in 2007. In 2009, the Marres Centre for Contemporary Culture in Maastricht presented a re-construction of a Sottsass' exhibition '*Miljö för en ny planet*' (*Landscape for a new planet*), which took place in the National Museum in Stockholm in 1969.^[3]

One of his works, Telefono Enorme designed for Brondi, is part of the MOMA Collection.

Bibliography

- Hans Höger, *Ettore Sottsass jr. - Designer, Artist, Architect*, Wasmuth, Tübingen/Berlin 1993
- Barbara Radice, Ettore Sottsass, Electa, Milano, 1993
- F. Ferrari, Ettore Sottsass: tutta la ceramica, Allemandi, Torino, 1996
- M. Carboni (edited by), Ettore Sottsass e Associati, Rizzoli, Milano, 1999
- M. Carboni (edited by), Ettore Sottsass. Esercizi di Viaggio, Aragno, Torino, 2001
- M. Carboni e B. Radice (edited by), Ettore Sottsass. Scritti, Neri Pozza Editore, Milano 2002
- M. Carboni e B. Radice (edited by), Metafore, Skirà Editore, Milano 2002
- M. Carboni (edited by), Sottsass: fotografie, Electa, Napoli 2004
- M. Carboni (edited by), "Sottsass 700 disegni", Skirà Editore, Milano, 2005
- M. Carboni (edited by), "Sottsass '60/'70", Editions HYX, Orléans, 2006

References

1. [^] ^{*a b*} "Designer who helped to make office equipment fashionable and challenged the standard notion of tasteful interiors" (<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article3118052.ece>). Timesonline.co.uk. Retrieved 2013-06-13.
2. [^] Radice, Barbara. ETTORE SOTTASS: A Critical Biography. London, Thames and Hudson, 1993.
3. [^] ^{*a b*} "We Were Exuberant and Still Had Hope. Ettore Sottsass: works from Stockholm, 1969 - Marres Maastricht - Centre For Contemporary Culture" (http://www.marres.org/en/program/exhibition/we_were_exuberant_and_still_had_hope_ettore_sottsass_works_from_stockholm_1969). Marres.org. 2010-01-10. Retrieved 2013-06-13.
4. [^] [1] (<http://www.studio-international.co.uk/books/sottsass.asp>)

5. ^ http://www.iconeye.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2413:ettore-sottsass--icon-046--april-2007
6. ^ "superunfoldedbox" (<http://guykeulemans.com/stuff/superunfoldedbox>). Guykeulemans.com. Retrieved 2013-06-13.
7. ^ "When I Was a Very Small Boy: Observatory" (<http://www.designobserver.com/observatory/entry.html?entry=7937>). Design Observer. 2007-12-31. Retrieved 2013-06-13.
8. ^ "Ettore Sottsass @ Art + Culture" (<http://www.artandculture.com/users/129-ettore-sottsass>). Artandculture.com. 2009-03-26. Retrieved 2013-06-13.
9. ^ "Designer melded emotion and utility" (<http://articles.latimes.com/2008/jan/05/local/me-sottsass5>). *Los Angeles Times*. January 05, 2008.

External links

- Sottsass design collection and other Memphis design (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/memphis-milano/>)
- *A conversation with designer Ettore Sottsass* (<http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/1159>), television interview with Charlie Rose, 29 November 2004, video.
- Ettore Sottsass. Existential Design (http://www.domusweb.it/magazine/article.cfm?id=35196&lingua=_eng), published by Hans Höger in domusWeb, Milan 2005.
- Emeco Nine-0 by Ettore Sottsass (<http://www.emeco.net/article/content/collaborations/designers/sottsass.html>)
- The Life and Times of Ettore Sottsass (<http://www.emeco.net/article/content/emecocinema/processfilms/sottsass.html>)
- Jennifer Kabat on Ettore Sottsass (http://www.frieze.com/comment/article/this_is_not_a_love_song/)
- STORIES OF HOUSES: Ernest Mourmans' House in Belgium, by Ettore Sottsass (<http://storiesofhouses.blogspot.com/2005/11/ernest-mourmans-house-in-belgium-by.html>)
- Hans Höger on Ettore Sottsass: Existential Design (http://www.domusweb.it/magazine/article.cfm?id=35196&lingua=_eng), DomusWeb, April 2005.
- Olivetti official site (<http://www.olivetti.it/>)
- Obituary in *The Times*, 2 January 2008 (<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article3118052.ece>)
- *Design Museum Collection* (<http://designmuseum.org/design/ettore-sottsass>)
- *Sottsass Associati* (<http://www.sottsass.it/>)

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ettore_Sottsass&oldid=559732395"

Categories: 1917 births | 2007 deaths | Italian architects | Italian industrial designers | Olivetti people

-
- This page was last modified on 13 June 2013 at 14:59.
 - Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy.
- Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.