



# THE INTERNATIONAL DESIGN YEARBOOK 2000

EDITED BY INGO MAURER

FURNITURE

LIGHTING

TABLEWARE

TEXTILES

PRODUCTS

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Dongnam Books, Inc.  
25-9, Chungmu-Ro 1Ga, Jung-gu,  
Seoul, Korea

EDITOR: **INGO MAURER**  
GENERAL EDITOR: **SUSAN ANDREW**  
ASSISTANT EDITOR: **JENNIFER HUDSON**  
DESIGN: **STATE**

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# INTRODUCTION

BY SUSAN ANDREW

Fifteen years ago the first edition of *The International Design Yearbook* was published – an annual review of domestic design chosen by a leading figure in the design world. It was 1985, midway through a decade of design excess and decadence, of Memphis and Alessi, a decade when household objects became design icons, a time when the Apple Macintosh and the CD had just been born. Then, it was impossible to find a definition of 'internet' in the dictionary and possible to publish a book on twentieth-century design without mentioning Philippe Starck. Fifteen years on, more than 100 million people use the internet, and Starck is widely recognized as the most famous designer of the late twentieth century.

Since that first edition, thirteen different guest editors have made their selections for the *Yearbook*. Initially, many found the task of reducing the mountain of slides overwhelming and some were frustrated that the selection can only represent a minority of the vast quantity of manufactured products around the world. To celebrate the first edition in the new century, this year's guest editor, Ingo Maurer, invited the previous incumbents to comment on how design has changed over the last decade and a half, welcoming strong, uncensored and individual statements on what they think of design today: their contributions have been inserted throughout the book.

The following 240 pages feature over 400 designed objects which inhabit an increasingly fast-changing domestic landscape. Architect Robert A.M. Stern, the first editor of *The International Design Yearbook* and one of the leading exponents of post-modern architecture, considers design in post-post-modern 1999, 'very serious, with everyday objects no longer conceived as playthings ... the emphasis turned to straightforward solutions which are often best found in generic objects, thereby eliminating the "designer" from the process'. Oscar Tusquets Blanca (editor 1989/90) describes the nineties as '...reasonable, circumspect, strict and moral', but fears that 'these years have in reality been conservative, non-risk-taking and simply obsessed with commercialism'. While Philippe Starck (editor 1987/8 and 1997) writes that 'with the increasing speed with which fashions have changed, quality and creativity have been decreasing in reverse proportions', and Borek Sipek (editor 1993) decides: 'Speed! This one word probably epitomizes the essential change in design over the last fifteen years.'

The ideal home at the end of the nineties is often presented by the media as a place of refuge and comfort, a retreat from a confusing, end-of-century, angst-ridden world of cloning, Millennium Bugs, genetically modified foods and health scares. Spaces which suggest we have control over our environment, where we can create our own fantasies and experiences. Multifunctional loft-style living which adapts to the needs of families comprising parents and children of previous marriages, growing numbers of single-

person households, and the blurring boundaries between home and work. Andrée Putman (editor 1992) hopes '...that people will relax, and stop being so tense about what is "in" and what is "out" – let's avoid being design victims (fashion victims seem to have disappeared)!'.

With an overwhelming amount of possibilities, choice and information, what is the design of the near-future domestic world? Perhaps there will be fewer products with more functions, products that are complex on the inside and simple on the outside. More than a few researchers predict a future in which domestic appliances will interact with each other using technology such as Wireless Application Protocol (WAP), and devices which enable us to 'communicate' with our domestic appliances (for example, programme the video recorder and turn on the microwave) via a mobile phone are just a few years away. A situation in which mainframe computers operate all the equipment in the home is further off, but companies such as Philips are conducting research to find out what kind of intelligence we want objects to have. They suggest the new appliance might be intelligent but also 'caring', that hi-fi systems will come in the shape of ceramic pots, and television remote controls will be housed within the arms of sofas. Then there are 'wearable' products (examples on page 208) which combine features such as keyboards and electronic navigation aids.

Fewer products? It may be a slow mutation. As Rem Koolhaas, Professor of Architecture at Harvard, and his students discovered in a new research project investigating the current state of shopping, more than one third of all new construction in the world is for shopping: 'there is no activity which is not intertwined with shopping, from hospitals and museums to religious buildings and naval bases. Shopping is working hard to entrench itself in any programme' (*Blueprint*, September 1999). The internet, too, is changing the way we shop – along with the way we learn and find information. It is estimated that in the UK website shopping will rise to £6 billion by 2003, as consumers are delivered everything from groceries and clothes to books and holidays.

And what happens when we grow tired of all these domestic appliances and products – the car, the computer or vacuum cleaner we bought just a couple of years ago? According to research by the Eternally Yours Foundation, a Dutch product think-tank, 25 per cent of vacuum cleaners, 60 per cent of stereos and 90 per cent of computers still have life in them when they are thrown away. One option is to return our purchases to the manufacturer for recycling. Europe has decreed that by 2001, car manufacturers will produce cars that are 95 per cent recyclable and they will also be responsible for taking back each one they have produced. It may not be long before this is a requirement for the makers of computers, televisions, hairdryers, cameras,

etc., encouraging companies to develop greener products and perhaps to lease products to consumers instead of selling them.

The end of the throw-away society and a linear approach to product lifecycles would require a rejection of short-term thinking when designing and producing objects. As Umberto Eco, novelist and Professor of Semiotics, points out in a recent book *Conversations About the End of Time*: 'The engineers who produced the computers which cannot work beyond the year 2000 indeed thought of their invention as belonging to the short term, like all late-twentieth-century inventions ... It would be so easy to decide to produce [for example] tape recorders that last twenty or more years! ... Petrol-driven cars, for example! It is obvious that they are killing us (not only killing the earth, but also ourselves). Such a realization would require us to move on to electric cars without delay ... But that's still science fiction. No one is ready to negotiate ... Let's get all of us together around a table, engineers, manufacturers and consumers, and engage in intelligent negotiations to find a solution which everyone will be forced to respect.'

Will consumerism and environmentalism go hand in hand in the twenty-first century? Will there be a shift towards more socially responsible design? Can we be encouraged to become more attached to the objects that surround us, so fewer materials are used and less space is required in landfills and incinerators? Richard Sapper (editor 1998) thinks beauty is a key: 'the desire for beauty is something innate in us, something elementary, but also indefinable with rationale, productivity, cost effectiveness, numbers or profits. It comes from somewhere else, a reflection of eternity.' Jean Nouvel (editor 1995) believes 'in the search for the essence: for a demanding design, with no concession to indulgence or the picturesque ... More than ever I believe that poetry is not incompatible with this attitude ...': while the Italian architect Gaetano Pesce in a recent interview stated: 'the beauty of the future is imperfection. It is about giving people the capacity to think that the future will be a fantastic time' (*Blueprint*, September 1999).

Perhaps more personalized products will prevent us falling out of love with objects? The customization of everyday things would provide an alternative to the globalized sameness of many products mass produced in their millions. Consumers would become what US futurologist Alvin Toffler has labelled 'prosumers' (**pro**ducers + **con**sumers). Computer technology has given designers the ability to create almost any form, and now the consumer can join in. Already, buyers in one Levi's store in the United States can have their body measurements machine-scanned and sent off and a pair of bespoke jeans returned: there are cars with adjustable panels that enable the owner to change the colour of the bodywork, and a recent project called Yoo,

involving Philippe Starck and the Manhattan Loft Corporation, allows buyers to select from a catalogue all the components of their new house, the number of bedrooms, bathrooms and balconies, as well as the style and decor.

Alessandro Mendini (editor 1996) writes: '...the only objects that can be justifiably admitted to the next millennium are those that have been designed to have soul, that are capable of relating to human beings in a deep and broad manner.' For the Sony Corporation (it is twenty-one years since it launched the first Walkman) the 'soul' is digital. Toshitada Doi, President of Sony's new Digital Creatures Laboratory, explains, 'The 1980s was the age of the PC and the 1990s was the age of the internet. I think the next decade, the 2000s, will be the age of the entertainment robot. Human beings relate better to digital creatures than to PCs.' Following six years of development, Sony has produced AIBO (Artificial Intelligence roBOt), the digital dog. Derived from Playstation technology, the battery-powered computer-controlled companion can experience six emotions with accompanying physical actions: dislike, fear, sadness, joy, surprise and anger. With a body full of sensors and motors, AIBO communicates via a series of musical tones, body language and wagging tail, and with additional kit it is possible to create your own custom moves and sounds on a PC. AIBO may be just the next in a line of virtual pets, following the Tamagotchi of a couple of years ago: it is certainly a more expensive one at \$2,500. In Japan 90 per cent of the 'early adopters' who snapped up the first 3,000 AIBOs in 20 minutes were male, and nearly half of them were in their thirties.

Perhaps it's not such a leap to Ray Kurzweil's vision of life in 2019. In his recent book *The Age of Spiritual Machines* Kurzweil, a world expert on artificial intelligence, suggests, 'The vast majority of transactions include a simulated person. Household robots for performing cleaning and other chores are now ubiquitous and reliable ... People are beginning to have relationships with automated personalities ... and use them as companions, teachers, caretakers and lovers ... Computers are now largely invisible and are embedded everywhere - in walls, tables, chairs, desks, clothing, jewellery and bodies ... Keyboards are rare and most interaction with computing is through gestures and natural-language spoken communication ... Paper books or documents are rarely used...' The evidence of the past makes it all too clear that predicting the future is hazardous. It's just over fifty years since the first computer was built and Professor John von Neumann of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton said, 'It would appear that we have reached the limits of what is possible to achieve with computer technology...' (*The Guardian*, 16 January 1999).

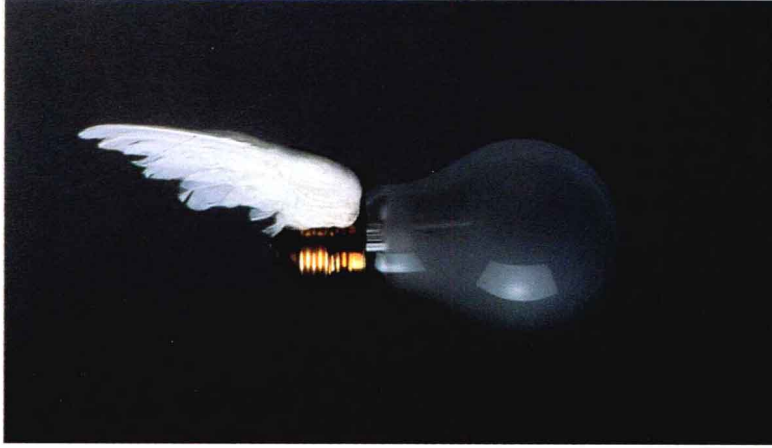
However, for British product designer Richard Seymour the consequence of designers not imagining the future is that 'it may fall to more malign forces (do you really want another technically led blooper, like the fact that you still can't programme your video

recorder after twenty years in the marketplace?).' Emilio Ambasz (editor 1986/7) challenges designers to make the shift from 'further polishing already perfect spheres' and 'concentrate on inventing images of diverse futures, so as to guide our actions ethically in the present. It is a daunting task, no doubt, but one that cannot be relinquished.'

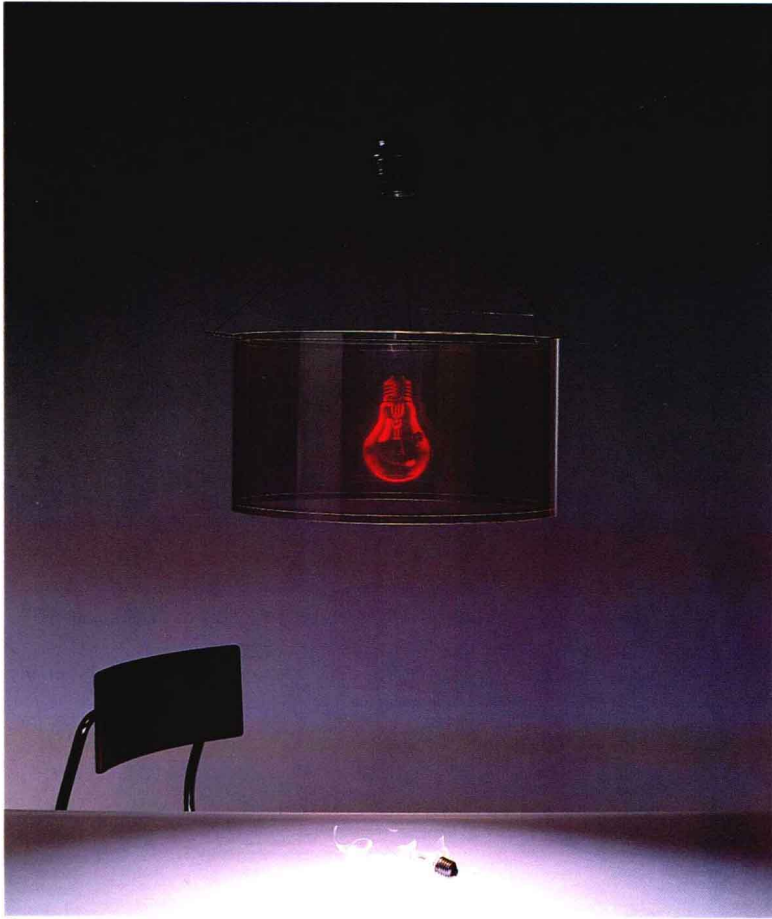
It seems no coincidence that Ingo Maurer is guest editor for the first edition of *The International Design Yearbook* in the new century. Ron Arad (editor 1994), commenting on Maurer's *Birds Birds Birds* light, described him as 'probably the only designer who can get away with attaching bird wings to light bulbs, touch dimmers to tin foil. The mass-manufactured industrial light looks as if it was just assembled *ad hoc* by an artist, and with that it is the light itself that matters not the fitting.' Words such as poetic, conceptual, humorous, exquisite and passionate are frequently used to describe Maurer's distinctive lighting. As the text accompanying a recent exhibition of his work at the Museum of Modern Art, New York stated: 'Be it about joy or rage, playfulness or meditation, future or past, Maurer's lamps have the ability to speak directly to everybody's soul.'

As Ingo Maurer said in a fax following the invitation to be this year's editor: 'Let's work hard, but have fun too!'

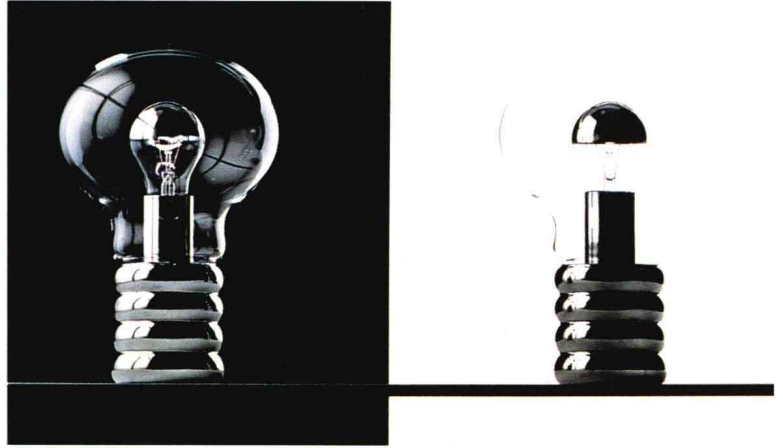
Lucellino  
1992



Wo bist Du, Edison...?  
1997



Bulb  
1966



Subway Station Munich Westfriedhof  
1998



# INTRODUCTION

BY INGO MAURER

There are some situations that can drive almost anyone to despair – choosing the works to be featured in *The International Design Yearbook* must surely be one of them. Imagine being stuck in a basement opposite the British Museum in London. There is a big table, with a light-box at one end. You sit in front of it on a tubular steel chair with a seat that is far too low. The space is cluttered with lever-arch files and mounds of slides, black and white photos and CD-Roms, all waiting to be inspected.

At this point I felt like the loneliest person in the world. Who am I to decide whether something is good or bad? Why did they choose me as their guest editor? Me, an untrained designer whose main business is making lamps? What on earth have I got myself into? I can see I'm going to end up making myself unpopular. There's nothing wrong with having one or two decent enemies – but hundreds?

Shortly before I started, I met Jasper Morrison. I confessed to feeling nervous. 'Don't worry,' he said, 'Jennifer will be a great help.' And indeed she was. *The International Design Yearbook* without Jennifer Hudson – inconceivable. Her knowledge of design and her memory for detail are astonishing, and her preparation of the entries was meticulously organized – a formidable task, since most of the material arrives in a state of total disarray.

And a book is only as good as the available material. In a visual age, good pictures are essential for a good result. Over 4,000 entries had to be seen and assessed in the space of three days. I sat in the low chair – a Bauhaus icon – with my chin slightly above the surface of the light-box. The first slide was put in front of me. Silence to the left and right, the tension mounting. 'It's a no', I said. Sighs of relief all round the table. And so the day continued, with remarkably little chat (except for information purposes), just endless hours of staring at transparencies, punctuated only by litres of tea and a short break for lunch. I must admit I found myself hankering for the long lunch breaks in Italy.

I included a good deal of trash design and kitsch. Some of the things I chose were downright ugly, but they all conveyed a sense of vitality and freedom that struck a chord with me.

At the Milan Fair (which is still the Mecca of design) in April 1999, I went round the stands with Jennifer and Susan. The general impression was one of great effort, with endless expensive and boastful presentations, and an awful lot of 'good' taste. All those carefully styled and well-chosen fabrics, sofas, chairs, tables and so forth: aesthetically sound, but all so calculated, studiously avoiding any kind of risk. The results were boring, devoid of energy and commitment, lacking the vital spark of real creativity.

As far as I could see, nothing had remained of the radical spirit of the 1960s and early 1970s, when Italy began to dominate the design world. Instead, what I call the '*Borghese* feeling' had taken over. Where, I asked myself, was the boldness and vigour of Gaetano Pesce, Ron Arad or Marc Newson?

But perhaps, I thought, I had failed to see the wood for the trees. It was in Milan that I decided to base my selection for the *Yearbook* on the opposition between creativity and 'good' taste. A further theme I wanted to explore was the need to sharpen our perceptions, to the point where we can see beauty even in ugliness.

I am keenly aware that, to many readers, this publication is a source of inspiration and encouragement – which we all need from time to time. I have abandoned the conventional *Yearbook* approach, featuring beautiful products designed by well-known colleagues, and I hope they will understand the point I am trying to make. It was difficult for me not to include some of their work, but I trust they will understand my preference for the unknown designers/creators, the risk-takers, the mavericks and rebels. We should not be disdainful of newcomers, self-taught designers and others who are not 'real' professionals. The raw power of an idea or a vision is what counts and what drives design forward. Why exclude ugliness or kitsch if it is genuinely powerful?

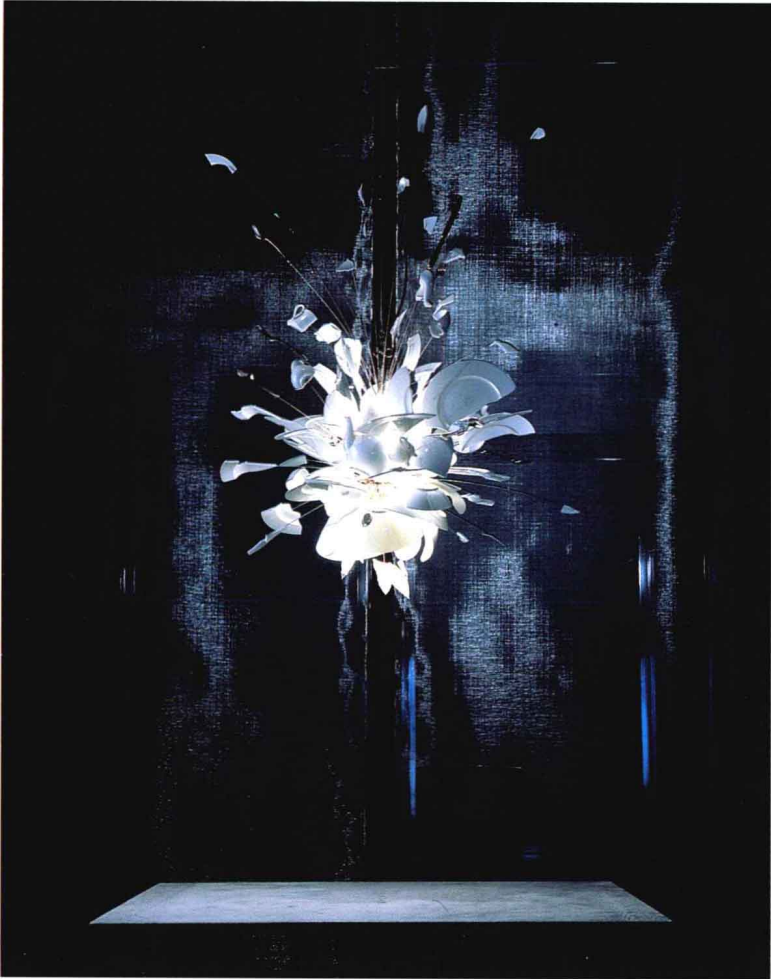
While wandering through Milan, I suddenly remembered an exhibition I had seen years ago at the Centre Georges Pompidou. It was a show about the 1950s, curated by Jean Nouvel, whose strategy was to heap all manner of products from the period together, mixing rubbish with famous, exemplary designs. I wondered what such an exhibition of today's design would look like in the year 2050. Would one be able to speak of a period, a style, as strong as the 1950s? I doubt it. At present, I can't see any general trend, except the preference for an anaemic form of 'good' taste.

I was asked to separate the good from the bad. But that's something I don't really like doing because I respect the individual's creative impulse. And objectivity is a fiction. Everything is political.

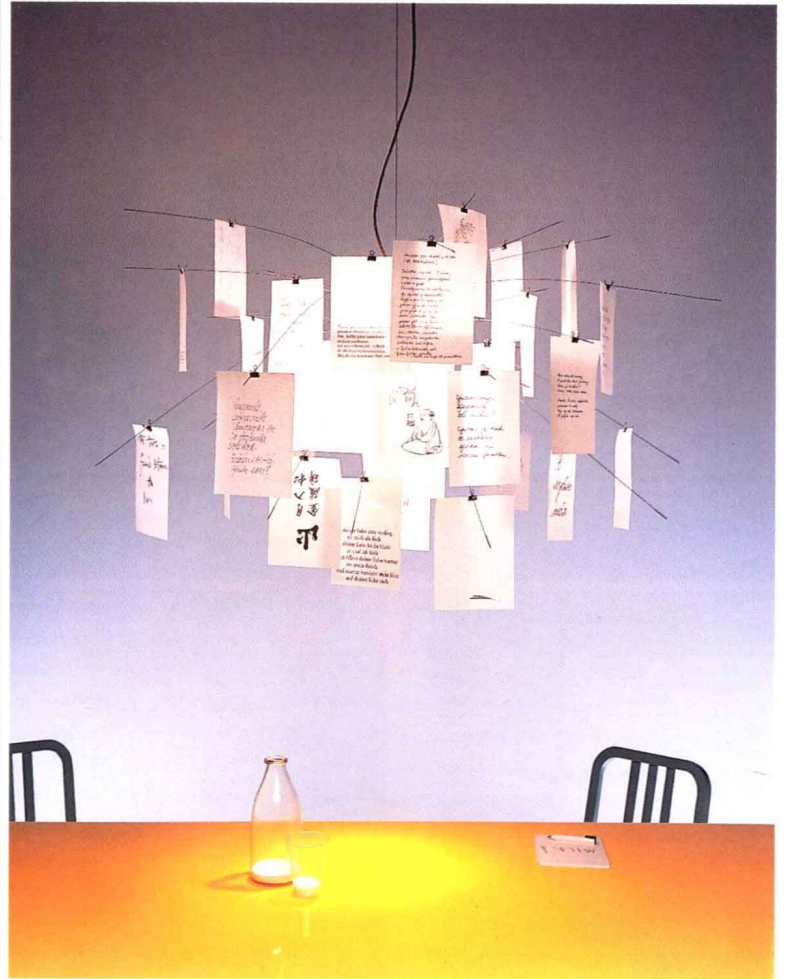
Since this is the first edition of the *Yearbook* in the new millennium, I decided to ask all the former guest editors for a statement summarizing their feelings and thoughts about design at the moment. I am very grateful for their contributions.

What impressed me most was work from The Netherlands – not only that of Droog, but also the individual Dutch designers producing intelligent solutions and results that reflect the way people – at least north of the Alps – think and live today. Bob Copray

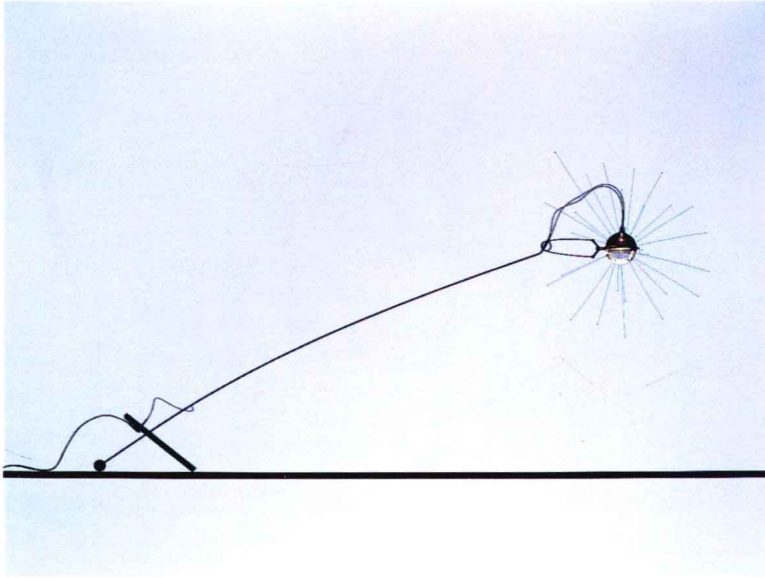
Porca Miseria!  
1994



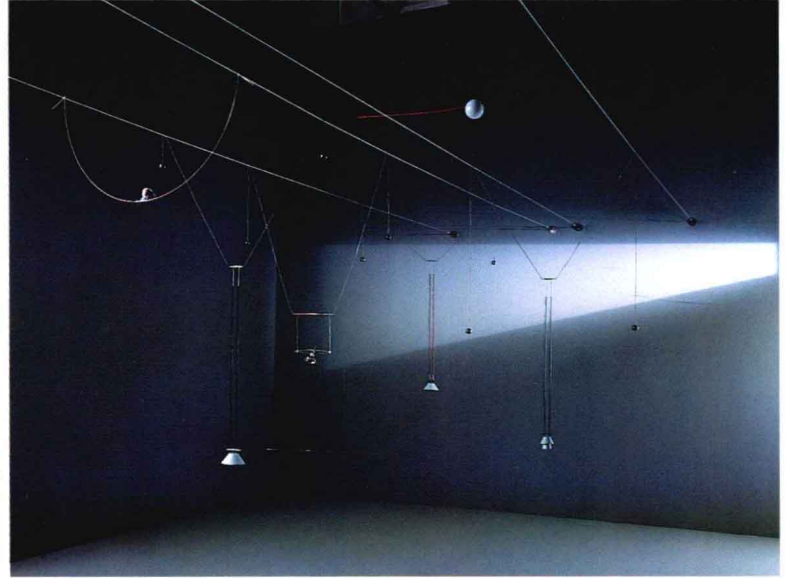
Zettelz  
1997



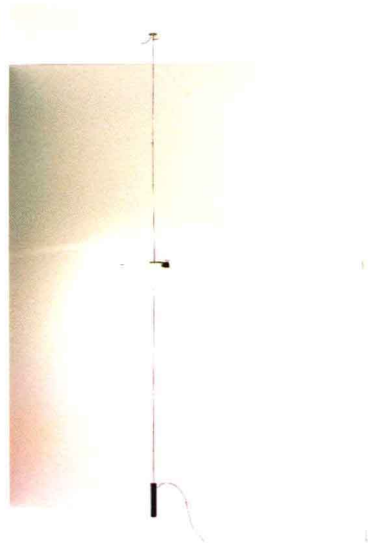
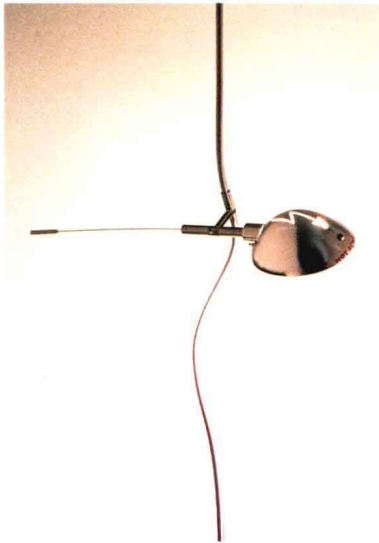
Mozzkito  
1996



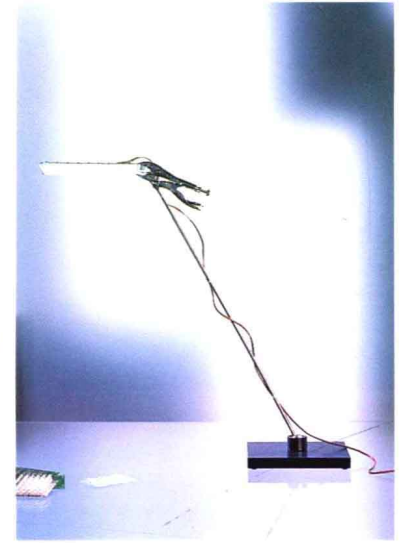
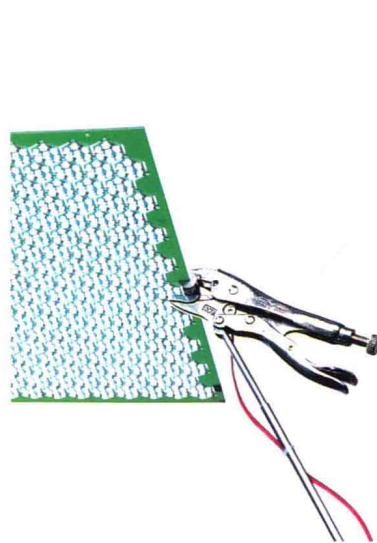
Ya Ya Ho  
1984



Hot Achille  
1994



El Ee Dee  
1999





and Stefan Scholten are very powerful and convincing: their Units are refreshingly free of "designer" mannerisms. Back to basics! (page 16). Jurgen Bey, who works for Droog Design, shows his exceptional strengths as a creator (pages 61, 64, 65).

One of the few really interesting things I saw in Milan was a shelving system by the German designer Lorenz Wiegand (page 25). The system, entitled *Italic*, is an example of minimalism at its best, without a hint of pretension – unlike Claudio Silvestrin's bathtub, which I see as an example of minimalism with pretensions (pages 218–19). Wiegand's result is genuine, instead of being intellectually constructed, and he deserves whole-hearted congratulation. Then there is Maarten Van Severen, from Belgium, whose chairs are brilliant (page 33). I like the thinking behind these and, again, the lack of affectation.

In my own field, lighting, I noticed that people are thinking more about the quality of light than the shape of the lamp. An outstanding example of real imaginative flair is to be found in the work of two Czech designers, Radim Babák and Jan Tuček (page 103). Lacking access to sophisticated technology, they have nevertheless managed to transform an ordinary, almost vulgar material into a poetic expression.

Design is beginning to flourish in other parts of eastern Europe, too. I have also included a piece by an Estonian designer called Priit Verlin (page 49). In a way it looks hideous, but it embodies a special kind of energy, coupled with a keen urge to become part of the European design scene. Welcome, and keep up the good work! The piece featured here has an emotional quality that I like very much.

There was some wonderful feedback from my own hologram lamp *Wo bist Du, Edison...?* in the shape of lamps – though without holograms – by Jurgen Bey (page 99), Radi Designers from France and Carlo Tamborini from Italy (page 98). These pieces I found interesting and, obviously, rather flattering.

Uwe Fischer, from Germany, has a technically brilliant solution for a standing lamp (page 97), and Sottsass Associati from Italy has done a wonderful job for Zumtobel (page 113). Georg Baldele, from Austria, the creator of the Caveman standard lamp, is a promising young talent (page 106).

I'm always impressed by textiles, although I don't know much about the subject. Some remarkable designs were submitted. Artistically as well as technically, Japan still leads the field. Here I have to say that one depends heavily on photographs. There is no direct contact with the material, with its specific feel and colour.

I certainly musn't forget to mention the 'Home Alone' project for Post Design, the new Memphis trademark, which commissioned work from a group of students at the Royal College of Art in London. This presentation was perhaps the most stimulating event in Milan. The remote-controlled table *Abstract Animal 2* by Karl Pircher (page 21), the mirror by Pascal Anson which puts stars in the viewer's eyes (page 203), and a number of further entries show enthusiasm, intelligence and poetry.

In my private life I don't spend too much time obsessing over tableware, but I do appreciate good and functional solutions or objects that have a certain emotional impact. The most impressive piece in this field is Ron Arad's champagne glass (page 131), proving once again that he has a remarkable talent for reconciling form with function, although this is not always apparent from a superficial glance at his work. I like the work of the young Frenchman Ronan Bouroullec (pages 138, 139), and Konstantin Grcic is already a classic designer who continues to produce excellent things (page 126).

Nina Tolstrup from Denmark has created a Cutlery tool, combining the functions of spoon, fork and knife in a single utensil (page 162). It is a beautiful object, although if I used it at the dinner table I'm afraid I might still be hungry after the meal.

Having seen over 4,000 slides, I notice that most of the entries are classified as "prototype" or "limited batch production". Only a minority of the items are produced in any substantial quantity. This reflects my firm belief that the spontaneous idea is only 5–10 per cent of a design; the rest is a matter of technical imagination. As a manufacturer, I know what I'm talking about. To carry an idea through, from the initial flash of inspiration to the marketing of a finished product, demands a specific combination of willpower, stubbornness and sensitivity. However, I think prototypes and limited editions are very important, particularly in this book, which I see, as I said earlier, as a source of creative inspiration rather than a design bible or a sourcebook of commercial classics.

I am sure that some of my choices will be controversial, but perhaps they may encourage some readers to take a different view of ugliness and kitsch. Without the willingness to take risks, to engage with things that don't quite match our established notions of beauty, our ideas will grow stale and the aesthetic quality of our work will gradually deteriorate. And that we must avoid at all costs. To paraphrase, yet again, a certain well-worn maxim – sometimes, less taste is more taste.