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design to updates; cataloguing raw materials, semifinished products and finished products according to industry and checking any designs jointly: these integration-focused phases have made it possible for Decoma Design to become successful and offer its assistance. This is what we mean, for the moment, by 'sense of measure'.

When does any piece of furniture interpret changes in living?

It is natural to answer: when you sit on a sofa, when you put dishes in the cupboard, and when shelves do not fall. Using objects is a way of testing them immediately, and their durability is often associated with practical criteria. What is more, practical objects eventually facilitate and change patterns of behaviour. You cannot think of a house without making its walls; in

addition, occupying a house is as easy as living; it is 'easy' in the full sense of the word, as it involves performing practical functions which result in well-being and satisfaction; communication is among such practical functions. Communication may be the only really new factor that has been introduced into our ways of life. The technological windows giving onto the world - they have developed into domestic networks - have been matched by 'friendly', biomorphic objects and the demand for representative - incisive - furniture, which would alone be sufficient to define those occupying any house and their lifestyles. Buyers want to own a world and identify other people who might share it with it.

Technology and aesthetics: how do you reconcile these crucial factors in your designs?

This is the problem of a kilogram of iron and a kilogram of feathers. Within design you might say that technology and aesthetics have become connected with lightness; I mean that you can now devise and - of course - make things, objects and products synonymous with state-of-the-art technology hidden in 'nice' designs. We at Decoma Design believe that the technology of a design is actually what you neither see nor perceive in the end product. It means engineering - the minimum permissible radius in moulding, rubber absorbing impacts, nonshrinkable polymers - as well as patented, exclusive joints, components or movements. Aesthetics means relying on craftsmanship, choosing natural materials, recycling and certification.

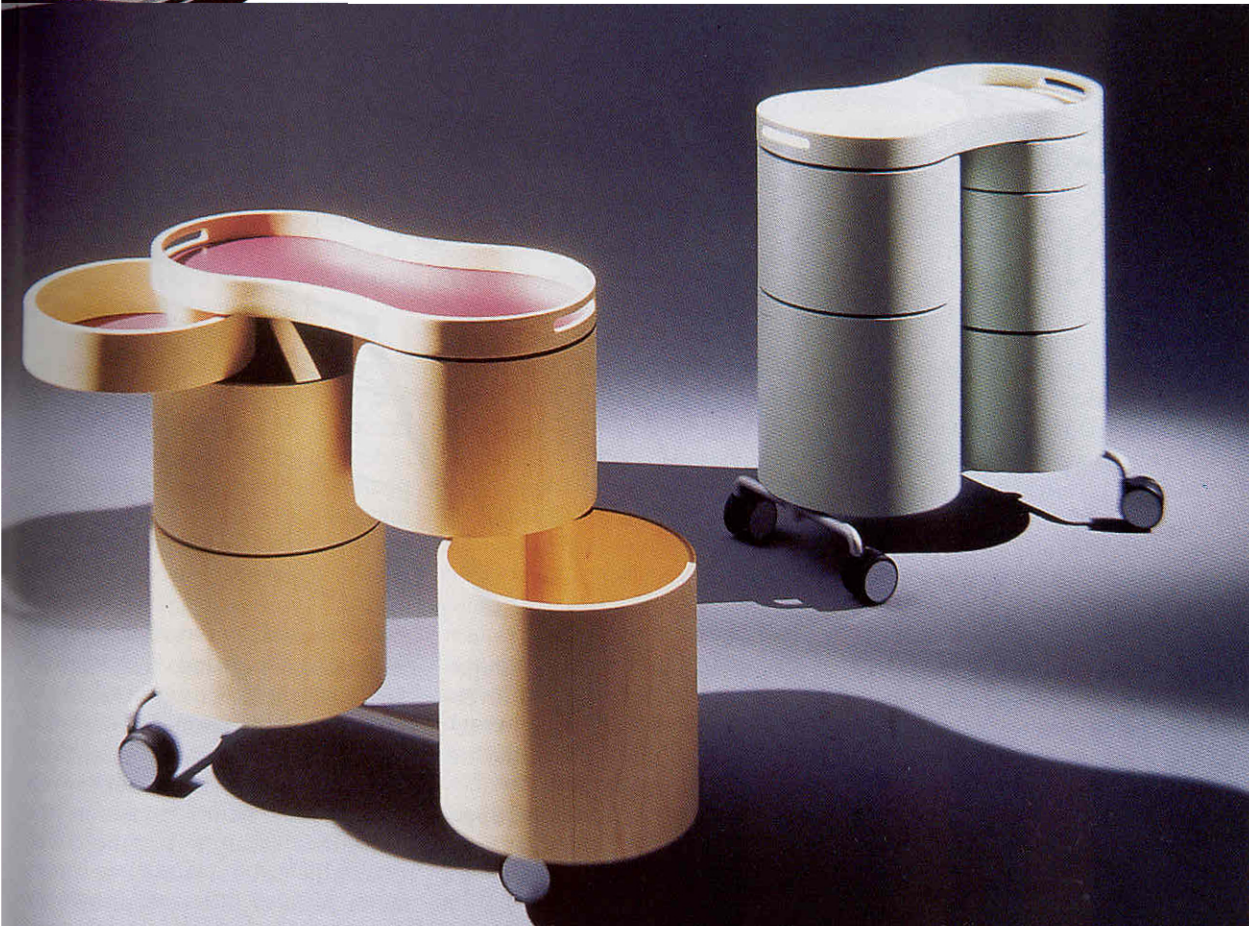
What impact do innovative materials have on design?

According to a Zen maxim, weakness has always meant a temptation to use force; in the last few years the massive, invasive use of new materials has not been supported by as incisive design. For example, in the 1960s Moplen® was still the name for design and innovation; However, Gaetano Pesce's 'experiments' with the molecular instability of plastic polymers or fashion designers' tests with chains (yarns) of elastomers are also the name for challenging 'applied' research. On the other hand, we believe that, maybe for lack of time, we all have

quite passive attitudes towards new materials, on which we should rely on as new materials, because chemical and physical components are what make a difference in relation to innovation. We are provided with these materials as a result of other - military, space, biochemical - research, which crosses our designs fortuitously. Designers may also work on the 'critical' potentialities of a polycarbonate. It is no coincidence that we believe that the best things are discovered in other fields than ours; international fairs focused on chemical and mechanical components are connected with amazing know-how. Let me be a little ironical: if flu is an illness, let us welcome it, as we know that it will eventually pass off and make us immune and stronger. Technical and technological innovation is undeniably associated with design: learning is your main task when you search for freedom.

What has helped you communicate your approach to design best?

Communication has - as paradoxical as that sounds -, broadly understood as travel - and then discovery, knowledge - as well as exchanges of data and information. Cabinet-makers, melters and moulders are as important as production managers and marketing directors. You should have a professional approach to all of them, managing to lead any design to its final destination. In addition, there is a scenario, which is 'speaking' and 'travelling' farther and farther away within IT networks. This will soon allow a straightforward, virtual - rather than physical - relationship to be established with all manufacturing processes. We are prepared for this scenario, with regard to quick exchanges of information and execution resulting from digital instruments rather than in relation to the spectacular side of the whole situation - faithful rendering, videoconferencing etc. However, we will go on drawing lines and curves, silently, maybe holding our heads in our hands.



In questa pagina: in alto, ALSystem, sistema di costruzione degli scaffali dei mobili componibili per Schiffrini; in basso, sistema di contenitori Bitte Roll di Tagliabue. This page: top, 'ALSystem', designed for the frames of Schiffrini's sectional furniture; bottom, 'Bitte Roll' containers, designed for Tagliabue.