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IN COPERTINA: LE BALZE IN OPALFLEX DELLA LAMPADA DA SOFFITTO VELI, DISEGNATA DA ADRIANO RACHELE PER **SLAMP**, CREANO UN VIRTUOSO GIOCO GRAFICO CHE RICORDA LE 'MACCHIE DI RORSCHACH', UTILIZZATE IN PSICOMETRIA E IN PSICODIAGNOSTICA PER VALUTARE LA PERSONALITÀ DELLE PERSONE. DISPONIBILE IN SEI COLORI, LA LAMPADA VELI È STATA PRESENTATA QUEST'ANNO NELLA VERSIONE VELI PRISMA REALIZZATA CON SOTTILI VELI IN LENTIFLEX, UNA FINITURA AD EFFETTO LENTICOLARE CHE ESALTA LA LUCE SPRIGIONATA AL SUO INTERNO. SULLO SFONDO DELLA COPERTINA, IN ALTO, I DECORI A INTARSIO CHE IMPREZIOSISCONO LE ANTE DEL MOBILE D.STYLE-C DISEGNATO DA GIANCARLO VEGNI PER **FASEM**.

ON THE COVER: THE OPALFLEX RUFFLES OF THE VELI CEILING LAMP DESIGNED BY ADRIANO RACHELE FOR SLAMP CREATE A VIRTUOSO GRAPHIC EFFECT SIMILAR TO THE RORSCHACH INKBLOTS USED IN PSYCHOMETRICS AND DIAGNOSTIC PSYCHOLOGY TO INVESTIGATE PERSONALITY TRAITS. AVAILABLE IN SIX COLORS, THE VELI LAMP WAS PRESENTED THIS YEAR IN THE VELI PRISMA VERSION, MADE WITH THIN VEILS OF LENTIFLEX, A LENS-EFFECT FINISH THAT ENHANCES THE LIGHT EMITTED INSIDE THE FIXTURE. ON THE BACKGROUND OF THE COVER, AT THE TOP, THE INLAID DECORATIONS OF THE DOORS OF THE D.STYLE-C CABINET DESIGNED BY GIANCARLO VEGNI FOR FASEM.

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IL NEW TASTE RESTAURANT, CON LE SEDIE PIXEL
E I LAMPADARI CAMPANA PRODOTTI DA **EDRA**.

NELLA PAGINA A FIANCO, UN DETTAGLIO
DELLA DECORAZIONE REALIZZATA RICICLANDO
E ASSEMBLANDO, IN COLLAGE A TRE DIMENSIONI,
GLI ARREDI DEL VECCHIO ALBERGO, L'OLYMPIC.



foto di Andrés Otero - testo di Alessandro Rocca

I Fratelli campana SONO DEGLI ESPERTI DEL *wow factor*, SANNO COMUNICARE *idee* ED EMOZIONI ATTRAVERSO *scelte inedite* E SPIAZZANTI, IMMAGINARE UN *lusso aperto* ALLE *tecniche* E AI *materiali* DERIVATI DALL'*artigianato etnico* E DALLA *cultura low cost*. COME IN QUESTO PROGETTO, IL *loro primo hotel*, AD *Atene*, PER LA *catena yes!hotel* DI DAKIS JOANNOU

progetto di Humberto e Fernando Campana

YES!: GIOVANE, ENTUSIASTA e SEDUTTIVO



UNA VEDUTA DELL'EDIFICIO, CHE ALL'ESTERNO HA MANTENUTO LA SUA IMMAGINE MODERNISTA E UN'IMMAGINE DELLA RECEPTION-LOBBY CON LE COLONNE IN STILE "FAVELAS".

Fernando Campana racconta: "Sono laureato in architettura (mentre mio fratello Humberto, che ha 8 anni più di me, è laureato in legge) ma ho capito che quella non era la mia dimensione. Perciò ho rifiutato, per molti anni, di lavorare sugli edifici e mi sono dedicato agli arredi, alla grafica e talvolta anche alla moda, ma mai all'architettura". Chi è stato a fargli cambiare idea? *Young, Enthusiastic e Seductive* sono le tre parole che in acronimo formano *Yes*, un bel Sì, rafforzato dal punto esclamativo, che dà il nome alla catena di alberghi del *tycoon* greco Dakis Joannou.

Imprenditore, distributore della Coca-cola in 27 Paesi e collezionista di livello mondiale dei massimi artisti d'oggi, da Joseph Kosuth a Vanessa Beecroft, da Maurizio Cattelan a Urs Fischer e Takashi Murakami. Per averne un'idea, basti pensare che l'anno scorso il *New Museum* di New York ha ospitato una mostra, curata da Jeff Koons, che si intitolava *Skin Fruit: Selections from the Dakis Joannou Collection*, e che presentava un centinaio di opere scelte tra le oltre 1500, di cui 400 di arte contemporanea, in possesso del magnate greco. Koons che, tra l'altro, qualche anno fa, ha firmato il variopinto yacht personale di Joannou, chiamato *Guilty*. Ad Atene, Joannou ha altri 4 *Yes!hotel*, tra cui il *Semiramis* di Karim Rashid, che manifestano in modi diversi un rapporto diretto e intenso con l'arte contemporanea. La decorazione delle camere del



I CORRIDOI SONO RIVESTITI CON UNA CARTA DA PARATI CHE SI OTTIENE DALLA CORTECCIA DI UNA PIANTA AFRICANA, UNA MORACEA UGANDESE.

NEI BAGNI, I LAVABI SONO TRATTATI COME ROCCE GEOMETRIZZATE E HANNO LAVELLI IN OTTONE MASSICCIO.

SONO MOLTI GLI ARREDI ORIGINALI, SU DISEGNO, COME LA SEDIA PORTA QUOTIDIANI IN LEGNO, OPPURE I PEZZI DI RECUPERO COME IL "CAVALLO", ATTREZZO GINNICO ACQUISTATO AL MERCATO ANTIQUARIO ATENIESE.

Twentyone, per esempio, è affidata a giovani artisti mentre il *Periscope* ha, in ogni camera, suggestive *light box* con vedute della capitale greca. Nell'idea di Joannou, la catena degli Yes!hotel non si deve riconoscere per il ripetersi di soluzioni standard ma, al contrario, per l'alto tasso di individualità e originalità e per un rapporto forte con la creatività dell'arte contemporanea. Per la ristrutturazione del vecchio *Olympic Palace Hotel*, un edificio modernista costruito nel 1958 che si trova nei pressi di Sintagma, la piazza centrale di Atene, a ridosso del quartiere turistico della Plaka, ha voluto una firma di livello internazionale che fosse capace di interpretare la situazione in modo inconsueto. Perciò la scelta, imprevedibile, è caduta su uno studio che, per l'architettura, è veramente molto anomalo: quello dei fratelli Campana, a cui è stata affidata l'invenzione di un

albergo che, non a caso, si chiama *New Hotel*. Per usare un modo di dire americano, i Campana sono degli esperti del "wow factor", sanno comunicare idee ed emozioni attraverso scelte inedite, spiazzanti, e immaginare un lusso non convenzionale, aperto alle tecniche e ai materiali derivati dall'artigianato etnico e dalla cultura *low cost*, come il riciclo e il *bricolage*.

Per esempio, Fernando spiega che "abbiamo deciso di non buttare niente, niente scarti, ricicliamo tutto", e nella *lobby* le pareti e le colonne sono ricoperte dei frammenti della mobilia trovata nel vecchio albergo. La tecnica del *collage* tridimensionale, già usata nella celebre sedia *Favela* disegnata nel 1991 e prodotta da Edra, è applicata alle pareti della *reception*, alle colonne e al banco del *New Taste Restaurant*, in uno spettacolare diorama dell'albergo precedente.

UN'IMMAGINE DEL NEW TASTE RESTAURANT CON LE SEDIE PIXEL, IL LAMPADARIO IN ALLUMINIO ANODIZZATO DISEGNATO DAI CAMPANA PER EDRA E IL RIVESTIMENTO FAVELA, CHE RICICLA I VECCHI ARREDI DELL'OLYMPIC HOTEL.







LE CAMERE DA LETTO SONO DECORATE CON COLLAGE DI CARTOLINE GRECHE DEGLI ANNI CINQUANTA E SESSANTA. LA SCRIVANIA A PARETE, BRASILIA, È RICOPERTA DA UNA IMPIALLACCIATURA IN ROVERE. SEDIE VOLUME, ALLO SCRITTOIO, E LADDER, DALL'ALTO SCHIENALE A SCALETTA. DECORI E ARREDI REALIZZATI DAL WORKSHOP CAMPANA, ALLESTITO AD ATENE PER QUESTO PROGETTO.

UNA STANZA DECORATA CON L'OCCHIO BIANCO, AZZURRO E BLU DELL'AMULETO GRECO CONTRO IL MALOCCHIO.

Una decorazione che introduce una nuova dimensione materica e spaziale senza che ci sia il bisogno di trasformare il *layout* e la struttura del vecchio edificio. Infatti, le scale in marmo nero sono state mantenute così come i corridoi, che però sono stati rivestiti con una carta da parati che si ottiene dalla corteccia di una pianta africana, una moracea ugandese. Per l'allestimento delle stanze, i Campana hanno adottato elementi ricorrenti, come le scrivanie in rovere impiallacciate e i pavimenti in bambù, i bagni con i lavabi trattati come rocce geometrizzate e le luminose vasche in ottone massiccio. Ma il fatto più innovativo è stato la suddivisione delle stanze in tre categorie tematiche diverse.

“Per gli arredi, racconta Fernando, abbiamo organizzato tre gruppi di studenti, una ventina in

tutto, delle scuole di architettura e design dell'università della Tessaglia, che hanno lavorato con l'obiettivo di collegare *folk* e contemporaneo”. E con loro hanno messo a punto arredi e complementi legati a tre temi, alla storia e alle tradizioni popolari greche. Il primo tema, applicato in 27 stanze, è il *Karagiozis*, il personaggio principale del teatro delle ombre, uno spettacolo popolare molto diffuso in Grecia e in Asia minore. Le *silhouette* delle marionette sono state intagliate, dorate e attaccate ai muri delle stanze come fotogrammi di una favola in movimento. Le storie raccontate sono quattro, e vedono *Karagiozis* protagonista nei ruoli del dottore, del marinaio, dello sposo e dell'astronauta. Il secondo tema è quello dell'*Evil Eye*, l'amuleto che protegge dal malocchio e che si distribuisce in costellazioni bianche e blu lungo le pareti di 24





UNA DELLE 27 STANZE DECORATE CON IL KARAGIOZIS. LE SILHOUETTE DELLA MARIONETTA SONO STATE INTAGLIATE, DORATE E ATTACCATE AI MURI DELLE STANZE COME FOTOGRAMMI DI UNA FAVOLA IN MOVIMENTO. SI NOTA UN PARTICOLARE DEL BAGNO, CON IL LAVABO IN OTTONE A FORMA DI ROCCIA GEOMETRIZZATA.

stanze. Nelle restanti 27 stanze si realizza il terzo tema: cartoline d'epoca, montate in modo molto informale, che mostrano l'Atene degli anni Cinquanta e ricordano un sistema di comunicazione che oggi è quasi del tutto abbandonato. Naturale e artificiale, moderno e contemporaneo, etnico e industriale... nell'eccentrico programma dei fratelli Campana il sincretismo che impronta la cultura del loro Paese d'origine, il Brasile, diventa una strategia globale. Un modo per capire la nostra realtà, sempre più composta di frammenti separati, e di darne una visione unitaria in un'immagine che può sembrare instabile, sempre in cerca di un equilibrio impossibile, ma che forse trae la propria energia proprio dal suo irrequieto dinamismo e dal fatto di cercare sempre un contatto, attraverso i modi più imprevedibili, con il mondo della natura.



TETRIS IN HONG KONG p. 26

project **Coldefy & Associates Architects Urban Planners (CAAU)**
 photos and text **Sergio Pirrone**

The Design Institute, for 4000 students, is like a new icon, an urban center of gravity, a pole of creative energy in the off-scale context of a zone filled with towers, where it seems to have landed by mistake. Once upon a time there was the future. Some thought it would be exciting, others feared it, but everyone would have time to get ready. When China woke up everything changed, and the present bid a permanent farewell to the past: it was already the future. In Hong Kong, during the British retreat, the virtue of patience vanished, and the real estate opportunities could no longer be postponed. It was time to pay attention to the New Territories. Tiu Keng Leng, in the area of Tseung Kwan O, the southern zone of the Sai Kung district: nothing to report until October 2008, when dense strips for residential cages, long structures packed with shopping centers, began to stretch these 42,000 sq meters of suburban metropolis. The Tetris dream was coming true. From above, 50-floor towers 'rained down', ochre yellow towers, eliminating the small, dark nooks, deprived of the centering force that could only be offered by random descent. Already, in 2006, the VTC (Vocational Training Council) had held an international competition for the new Hong Kong Design Institute, a large design platform that would gather the many departments scattered around the city. The architecture would become a center of gravity, a pole of energy, the characteristic sign of a previously inexpressive visage. Like a white sheet of paper on which to write the future of a young city, the Blank Page of the young outsiders Coldefy & Associates Architects Urban Planners (CAAU) came as a surprise, becoming the first work of architecture entirely designed by a French studio in Hong Kong. Not yet forty, Thomas Coldefy and Isabel van Haute 'beat' the urban void with three vertical moves: the 'set down' a quadrangular podium, 'pierced' it with four vertical towers, which they blocked with a floating glass platform. A Chinese marvel, boundless playground for white men who experience the gigantic and achieve the improbable in exchange for the death of the detail. From King Ling Road, the geometric simplicity is inversely proportional to the impressive scale. To its relationship with the pedestrians crossing at the light, to the students who cross the street on the elevated walkway that connects the HKDI to the nearby shopping center. The two platforms 'descend' onto the main streetfront and lock in at different heights. The lower one contains the sports area, with a swimming pool and basketball court, while the higher one becomes an urban park, a semi-open space for events and informal gatherings. From the street level, two ramps of panoramic escalators construct the spinal column of the vertical movement to the floating 'hat', while the agora next to the existing HKDI is joined by an auditorium, a gallery, a cafeteria and an indoor sports center. The four educational 'legs' in dark gray concrete have a white steel skeleton, diagonal like the nets of the fishermen who once lived here. They rise and support the weight of the structural complex, protecting the four different departments and opening them to the city. Classes, seminar rooms, lab spaces rise up, higher and higher, towards the end of the game. The white diagram can be seen behind the cyan glass of the last Tetris. Two floors for administration offices, a library, a research center, suspended lightly 33 meters above ground level, with 360-degree glazing. The neighborhood, lacking in harmony from any vantage point, now has a new icon: the blinding mist of noon cannot hide this unconventional worksite, known as the future. - **Caption pag. 28** On the previous pages, overall view of the Hong Kong Design Institute in the context. The raised walkway connects the HKDI to a nearby shopping mall. The dynamic composition of volumes and spaces seen from the 'galleria' that connects the various levels, like an accessorized promenade. - **Caption pag. 30** Below, some of the spaces of the four different departments, including seminar rooms, workshops, a library and research centers. The four vertical towers have a white steel skeleton positioned diagonally on dark gray concrete bases. On the facing page, the impressive ramps of panoramic escalators that form the 'spinal column' of vertical access, from the street level to the floating glazed platform.

YES!: YOUNG, ENTHUSIASTIC, SEDUCTIVE p. 32

project **Humberto & Fernando Campana**
 photos **Andrés Otero**
 text **Alessandro Rocca**

The Campana brothers are wow factor experts. They know how to communicate ideas and emotions through unusual, surprising choices, imagining a luxury open to techniques and materials drawn from the ethnic tradition and low-cost culture. As in this project, their first hotel, in Athens, for the Yes! chain of Dakis Joannou. Fernando Campana: "I took a degree in architecture (while my brother Humberto, 18 years my senior,

has a law degree), but I soon understood that was not my dimension. So I have refused, for many years, to work on buildings, concentrating only on furnishings, graphics, sometimes fashion, but never architecture". Who convinced him to change his mind? Young, Enthusiastic and Seductive are the three words that form the YES acronym, the name of the hotel chain of Greek tycoon Dakis Joannou. An entrepreneur, distributor of Coca-Cola in 27 countries, and a world-class collector of today's leading artists, from Joseph Kosuth to Vanessa Beecroft, Maurizio Cattelan to Urs Fischer and Takashi Murakami. Last year the New Museum in New York hosted an exhibition curated by Jeff Koons, entitled "Skin Fruit: Selections from the Dakis Joannou Collection". Koons has also created a colorful personal yacht for Joannou, named "Guilty". In Athens Joannou has four more Yes!Hotels, including the Semiramis by Karim Rashid. They represent different takes on the intense, direct relationship with contemporary art. The rooms at the Twentysone, for example, have been decorated by young artists, while the Periscope features lightboxes in every room, with views of the Greek capital. Joannou wants to avoid repetition of standard solutions, making each facility unique and original. For the renovation of the old Olympic Palace Hotel, a modernist building constructed in 1958 near Syntagma Square, he was looking for an internationally renowned talent to come up with an unusual interpretation of the situation. The result was a highly unusual choice, when it comes to architecture: the Campana brothers, called in to invent what is now, in fact, called the "New Hotel". Fernando explains their approach: "we've decided that nothing should be thrown away, we recycle everything", so in the lobby the walls and columns are covered with fragments of the furnishings that were once used in the old hotel. The technique of 3D collage, already applied in the famous Favela chair designed in 1991 and produced by Edra, is seen in the walls of the reception, the columns and counter of the New Taste Restaurant, in a spectacular diorama of the previous hotel. Decoration that introduces a new matter and spatial dimension without any need to transform the layout and structure of the building. The black marble staircases and the corridors have been conserved, though the latter now feature wallpaper made by waving the bark of an African plant. For the rooms the Campana brothers have opted for recurring elements, like veneered oak desks and bamboo floors, bathrooms with sinks like geometric rocks, with other, luminous features in solid brass. The most innovative touch is the subdivision of the rooms into three thematic categories. "For the furnishings - Fernando continues - we organized three groups of students, about twenty in all, from the schools of architecture and design of the University of Thessaly, who worked with the goal of connecting folk and contemporary". Together, they developed furnishings on three themes from the Greek tradition. The first theme, in 27 rooms, is that of Karagiozis, the main character of Greek shadow-puppet theater. Silhouettes of puppets have been cut out, gilded and attached to the walls of the rooms. They tell four stories in which Karagiozis plays the roles of a doctor, a sailor, a bridegroom, an astronaut. The second theme is that of the Evil Eye, the amulet for protection against spells, organized in white and blue constellations on the walls of 24 rooms. The remaining 27 rooms feature the third theme: period postcards, displayed in a very informal way, showing 1950s Athens. Natural and artificial, modern and contemporary, ethnic and industrial... in the eclectic program of the Campana brothers the syncretism of their native country, Brazil, becomes a global strategy. A way of understanding our reality that is increasingly composed of separate fragments, offering a unified image that might seem unstable, in search of an impossible balance, but also gets energy from its own restless dynamism. - **Caption pag. 32** The New Taste Restaurant, with the Pixel chairs and Campana chandeliers produced by Edra. On the facing page, detail of the decoration made by recycling and assembling, in a 3D collage, the furnishings of the old Olympic Hotel. - **Caption pag. 34** View of the building, which conserves its modernist image on the outside, and the reception-lobby with the columns in the "favelas" style. - **Caption pag. 35** The corridors feature wallpaper made from the bark of an African plant. In the bathrooms the fixtures are like geometric rocks, with parts in solid brass. There are many original custom pieces, like the chair newspaper-rack in wood, or salvaged pieces like the "horse", a piece of exercise equipment found at an Athens flea market. - **Caption pag. 36** Image of the New Taste Restaurant with the Pixel chairs, the chandelier in anodized aluminium designed by the Campana brothers for Edra, and the "favela" covering that recycles the old furnishings of the Olympic Hotel. - **Caption pag. 38** The hotel rooms are decorated with collages of Greek postcards from the 1950s and 1960s. The Brasilia wall desk has oak veneer. The Volume chair, at the desk, and Ladder, the high ladderback chair. Decorations and furnishings made by the Campana workshop set up for this project in Athens. A room decorated with the white and blue eye of the Greek amulet against evil spells. - **Caption pag. 39** One of the 27 rooms decorated with the image of Karagiozis. The silhouettes of the puppet have been cut out, gilded and

attached to the walls like frames of a film fable. Detail of the bathroom, with the brass washstand in the form of a geometric rock.

INSIGHT

INARTS

THE VENETIAN CONTAGION p. 40

by **Germano Celant**

The location of the Biennale seduces you, and forces you to come to grips with the past as a way of approaching contemporary knowledge. In an atmosphere where memory feeds on real or fake traces that are constantly shared by people. The image of Venice is contagious. When an artist or a curator enters this arena, he or she is inevitably carried away by the delirium of history, by the iconic and urban itineraries. A penetration of the ghosts of a culture enamored of the memories of the past, the thrives on the triumph of death, the masks shaped on the bodies of the deceased, like the *Stealing of the Dead Body of St. Mark, 1562-1566*, by Tintoretto, used as the introductory symbol of the 54th Venice Biennale, curated by Bice Curiger. An iconic choice that tries to radiate energy from the dead to the living, so that the prolonging of the present is sublimated by the powerful figure of history. It is a way of utilizing the image, prior to ideas, trying to communicate that the illuminations of yesterday (the title of the Biennale is *IllumiNations*) can be resurrected and embodied in the present. This is not precisely the case, though the presence of Tintoretto in the central pavilion at the Giardini seems to deploy the body of the deceased to insinuate the perception of continuing to enter a space that is consecrated, no longer to the sacred, but to art. Nevertheless, the beyond does not correspond to the prior. The light that blesses with belief, today, is translated only into decoration, so much so that – introduced and justified by the visions of Gianni Colombo and Jack Goldstein, where the environmental and informative invisible was the historical subject – many artists, from James Turrell to Haroon Mirza and Navid Nurr are included for their work on languages where light is a tool of perception and decoration. The danger is the mummification of an iconic substrate, in the hope of finding, in Venice and its history, a mirror that unfortunately functions as the double of the dead. This is the case of the video installation by Pipilotti Rist, which takes the veduta of an anonymous Venetian master, enlivening it with a New Age sequence, almost in a ritual attempt at survival that makes use of the landscape double as protection from something worse. The same can be said of Monica Bonvicini, whose earlier constructions were critiques of a certain macho stance; here she engages in a subtle, light metaphorical game about the staircase of mirrors, inspired by the *Presentation of the Virgin*, again by Tintoretto, the true star of this Biennale. Another attempt at Venetian reincarnation is offered by Gelitin, a group of artists who call into play the image of the glass industry of Murano, producing an event at the Giardino della Calandre, where the ritual of the melting of glass in an outdoor oven became a critique of the exhibition ceremony of the Biennale itself. Perhaps a non-fetishist gaze, not focused on what lies beyond the tomb, could be found in exhibitions and pavilions that are somehow in tune with Venice without sinking into the muck of its imaginary canals. In those contributions that preserve the vital presence, disassociated from the double of the cadaver, avoiding the lugubrious to narrate a mythical circulation of a place of power, capable of interacting, through indirectly, with other societies. Thus we have the regeneration of Venezia in Venice California, which brought the Hollywood abstraction of a lagoon city on the Pacific Coast to Palazzo Contarini. A word game, “Venice in Venice”, where the incarnation of the name is an invitation to see a contemporary Californian history, with roots in the late 1950s. A reflection on a village of tamed canals and beaches steeped in the odor of petroleum, pumped by rigs located at sea a few hundred meters from the wooden houses, which became the fulcrum, before New York, of New Dada and Pop research, so much so that at the urging of artists like Ed Kienholz and Bruce Conner, Warhol showed his work there for the first time. Not to mention the first American solo shows of Bill Bengston, Ed Ruscha, Llyn Foulkes, and Europeans like Yves Klein. A Venice rich in encounters that does not feed on nostalgia, but sinks its critical and polemical roots into American politics, the wars in Korea and Vietnam, speaks of the identity and narration of Afro-Americans, from David Hammons to Jesse Jackson, of Simon Rodia’s construction of the Watts Towers, or approaches the argument of feminist art for the first time, with the creation of the Woman’s Building, the works and performances of Suzanne Lacy, Wanda Westcott, Judy Chicago. The image of Venice draws nourishment from that fertile era, when artists like Ed Moses, Larry Bell, Bill Bengston, Vja Celmins, Ken Price and, later, Doug Wheeler and Maria Nordman, Robert Irwin and Eric Orr, worked on the definition of a language in which the

‘environmental’ connotation – which went from the fullness of Hollywood and marine imagery to the void of architecture, as possible sublimation of an acorporal sensation, close to oriental philosophies – could find a possibility of being perceived. At the same time, in Venice, inhabited at the time by serene retired people, surfers and body builders, a ‘superficial’ language was constructed, inspired by the culture of Sunset Boulevard, by life on the highways, by knowledge of nearby deserts. A landscape that has no counterpart in New York and permits, therefore, a discourse on both the artificial and the natural environment. The reutilization of history is a refuge in the age-old power of art and the city that hosts it, Venice (Italy), though it is all implemented with a temporal and linguistic shift. An energy of perpetual innovation that thrives on celebration of the new that has roots in the ancient. To avoid this risk of indirect survival, Mike Nelson seeks an equivalent in which to materialize his awareness of inevitably finding himself a ‘prisoner’ of Venice. He does so by looking for a double that comes from an earlier work, the construction of a photography studio in a room in a neighborhood in Istanbul, the other Venice. But instead of re-presenting it as it was, inside the UK pavilion he reconstructs it, erecting around it part of the complex of buildings and courtyards, rooms and staircases of which it was a part in the Turkish city. Entering the pavilion, the visitor finds himself retracing, without the noise and confusion typical of such a market, an urban itinerary made of rooms and nooks full of objects and tools, rusted, dusty, with a 19th-century look. A labyrinthine, thrilling voyage, a scenario of dark and luminous moments. The visitor experiences an atmosphere where memory feeds on real or fake traces, continuously shared by people. Just like Venice. - **Caption pag. 40** Larry Bell, *Conrad Hawk*, 1961. Bruce Conner, *Homage to Jay De Feo*, 1958. - **Caption pag. 41** Mike Nelson, *Impostor*, 2001 (detail). - **Caption pag. 42** Llyn Foulkes, *Lucky Adam*, 1985. - **Caption pag. 43** Llyn Foulkes, *Washingtonland*, 2006. Mike Nelson, *Impostor*, 2001 (detail). - **Caption pag. 44** Monica Bonvicini, *Untitled (15 Steps to the Virgin)*, 2011. Llyn Foulkes, *Mount Hood*, Oregon, 1963. Ed Kienholz, *John Doe*, 1959. - **Caption pag. 45** Llyn Foulkes, *Death Valley, USA*, 1963. - **Caption pag. 46** Pipilotti Rist, *I Don’t Want to Go Back (Hospital)*, 2011. Ed Ruscha, *The Los Angeles County Museum of Art on Fire, 1965-1968*. - **Caption pag. 47** Ed Ruscha, *Large Trademark with Eight Spotlights*, 1962.

INSCAPE

HOSTILE DESIGN p. 48

by **Andrea Branzi**

After the exhibition at the MAXXI in Rome, reflection on the work of Gerrit T. Rietveld: an anti-graceful design, with angular, uncomfortable, hard, even intentionally unpleasant forms, to offer to a society too ingenuously credulous regarding its own luminous future. The show in Rome “Universo Rietveld”, which ended in July, was a major retrospective on the work of Gerrit Thomas Rietveld (Utrecht, 1888 - 1964), coproduced by the Centraal Museum of Utrecht, the NAI of Rotterdam and the MAXXI of Rome, and curated by Maristella Casciato, Domitilla Dardi and Ida van Zijl, vice-director of the Centraal Museum. The exhibition featured vast, often unknown documentation on this great Dutch architect-designer. I too, supervising the doctoral thesis of Angela Rui, had been reflecting on this figure for some time: the case of Rietveld is, in fact, an ‘exception’ within the exceptions the historical avant-gardes produced in the first decades of the 20th century. Rietveld was the only one to explore a ‘hostile design’, as described above. His “primordial object nuclei” point to an intuition of the tragedies modern society would have to face, and the deep scars the crisis of bourgeois culture would leave on history. His objects contain two opposing energies: the luminous energy of ‘constructivism’ and the dark energy of ‘deconstructivism’ (ante litteram). Objects that seem to exist on the ambiguous threshold of their own ‘coagulation’ and ‘deflagration’, indicating a branching of destinies for nascent modernity. The current (and easiest) interpretation sees Gerrit T. Rietveld as the father of neo-plasticism, the assembly of simple geometric forms that met with legitimation in the Bauhaus of Walter Gropius, like a spontaneous compliance with the objective laws of machines. This passage contains a fatal misunderstanding, where the mission of design is no longer seen as that of “making the world devastated by industrialism more inhabitable” (Wekbun, 1907) through aesthetic use of the machine, but as that of constructing the universe of objects with machines. The means becomes the end. But there is something worse: following this line of interpretation, his Schroeder house (1924) is seen as the beginning of that process of breakdown into ‘components’ of architecture, which the European rationalists would continue to pursue for decades, as the harbinger of a “future in order” that would never be reached. The other movement that starts with Rietveld is that of ‘deconstruction’ of