









blowing

engraving

tiling

sempering

process and pattern in architecture and design





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Cino Zucchi, architect, Full Professor in Architectural and Urban Design at Politecnico di Milano, principal of CZA – Cino Zucchi Architetti. "If someone were to ask me about what I've meant to say, I reply that I haven't wanted to say anything, but wanted to make something, and that it's this intention of making which has wanted what I've said".

Paul Valéry, Varlété III, 1936

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Thinking with the hands, leaving traces

Beppe Finessi



Bracciale con le impronte dell'artista (Bracelet with the artist's fingerprints) / Gerd Rothmann

There is a book written by Gianni Rodari Storie di re Mida, Einaudi, 1983 with one of the most successful book covers of all time, imagined by one of the greatest designers of the last ten centuries: Bruno Munari. For his friend, the author, he put a golden handprint against a white background on the front page, instantly symbolizing the legend.

Piero Manzoni had done something similar, but only with a - duly and ironically - sacrilegious intention, when twenty years earlier he had used his fingerprints to render some real eggs unique and copyrighted (*Uovo con impronta*, 1960), certifying them as art works with his 'signature'. From the same marks, many years later, Giuseppe Penone started some of his most poetic works (L'impronta del disegno, 2001). He made a stamp of the middle finger of his left hand, and from this image he began the meticulous enterprise (with pencil and patience!) of concentrically reproducing them until he 'found' the diagrams of tree growth, demonstrating (magic, amazement and truth) one of the many overlaps between the natural universes. Some of the works from the Moroccan period of our own Corrado Levi (Trasloco. 2006), who "leaves light footprints, transparent comets of fire" (Giancarlo Politi, 1996), are like footprint clues that tell us about everyday actions. Some authors have brought something similar into play in other fields, applying

their ingenuity to the world of objects of use in our lives: thus, one of the most surprising contemporary designers of precious objects, Gerd Rothmann, ventures to engrave easily decipherable traces on bracelets and rings (Vier-Finger-Armreif and Familienring, 1992). or on a plate, a tray and a silver cup (Nehmen, Halten e Greifen, 1998); thus, Emili Padrós characterizes a simple glass with the prints of 'two fingers', an idiom and unit of measurement for the drinks to be consumed, a perfect match of ornament and function (Measuring Drink, 1999); thus, Judith Seng connotes a large ceramic bowl with a huge print reminiscent of its profile (Fingerbowl, Industreal, 2005); thus, not lastly, Fabio Novembre focuses his thoughts on the theme with a transparent stool containing the cast of a large thumb that says 'yes' in body language (OK, Kartell, 2011): for those who, like him, like us, 'think positive'.

Well-designed architecture and objects always show a meaningful resonance between means and ends. Their generating process is not a neutral vehicle that leads from the idea to the result, but rather a meeting of form and material, which may take the mode of a free experiment or confirm well-tested crafting practices.

Within a varied contemporary panorama, the exhibition displays a selection of 'design events' of different kinds and of different scales, organised into eight possible actions; eight metamorphoses capable of transforming materials or components into 'artefacts', into active elements of our daily lives and culture.

The four categories formulated a hundred and fifty years ago by Gottfried Semper, and doubled in number to bring them up to date with contemporary conditions, are used as a grid to organise the complex structure of the artificial environment; and as the instrument for a possible revision of the axioms and methods of 'modern design', in its constant attempt to adapt them to the problems and aspirations of a complex world.

Sempering looks at architecture, landscapes and objects of the last decade crossing the established boundaries of every possible system of the arts, of every division in skills and sectors. Actions such as stacking heavy blocks, connecting light structures, moulding soft materials, engraving fine casings, folding tin sheets, weaving threads, arranging tiles or blowing air can be seen as basic actions capable of inventing unexpected forms by the use of new technologies, but also as the testing of well-established 'customs' or formal traditions in their response to new conditions.



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