Ettore Sottsass

Image:



Ettore Sottsass was born in Innsbruck, Austria in 1917 and grew up in Milan where his father worked as an Architect. Architecture was in his blood. He went to the Politecnico de Torino in Turin, Italy and graduated in 1939 as an Archiect. Surviving military service in WWII and a concentration camp in the former Yugoslavia, he returned home in 1948 and set up his architectural and industrial design studio in Milan.

One of his first commissions for major industrial design was with the firm of Olivetti in1956 where he designed office equipment, typewriters and furniture, bringing color, form and great design into office equipment and into the pop culture of the period. In 1960 along with Mario Tchou and Roberto Olivetti he won the 1960 Compasso D'Oro prize for their design of the Elea 9003, the Italian mainframe computer. Other great designs included the portabe Valentine typewriter in red plastic in 1970. In 1981 Sottsass along with a group of architects and designers formed the Memphis Group. Its first introduction was of 40 pieces of furniture, lighting, glass and textiles which were lop sided shapes and bright colors and quiggly patterns.

In 1981 Sottsass' firm Sottsass Associati created showrooms and buildings in the Memphis style for companies such as Esprit and the leading design innovators of the period. As an industrial designer, his clients included Fiorucci, Esprit, the Italian furniture company Poltronova, Knoll International, Serafino Zani, Alessi andBrondi. 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 Aldo Cibic, James Irvine, Matteo Thun, In 2006 the Los Angeles County Museum of Art held 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 'in the National Museum in Stockholm in 1969. We are proud to have the Telefono Enorme designed for Brondi which is part of the MOMA Collection.

Life Span:

1917 - 2007

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