



Images from the retrospective of Vico Magistretti held at the Palazzo Ducale, Genoa --- February - May 2003.



Vico was born in Milan on October 6th, 1920.

He graduated in architecture in 1945, and joined his father's studio.

From 1948 onwards he took part in various editions of the Milan triennial exhibition.

He has won a number of prizes and awards:
 Gold medal at the 9th edition of the triennial (1951);
 Grand Prix at the 10th edition of the triennial (1954);
 2 Compassi d'Oro (1967 and 1979); Gold medal of S.I.A.D. (1986).

In the 60's he began designing series production furniture, creating the first plastic chair, but this reached the production lines only in 1967. Most of his lamps and furniture have been best sellers and also long sellers.

His works have been displayed in the major design exhibitions throughout Europe, USA and Japan and are included in the permanent exhibitions of the world's most important museums.

He is a member of the many international architectural academies.



Products currently in production by Depadova displayed in one of the great reception rooms within the Palazzo Ducale, Genoa. Featured are the DePadova shine table, incisa chair and credenza.

In Genoa, at the Appartamento del Doge of Palazzo Ducale (piazza Matteotti 9,) the Fondazione Schiffrini presented Vico Magistretti: design works from the 1950s to the present, a solo show focusing on the work of one of the most famous protagonists of Italian design.

It is the same show seen in 2002, as presented by Cosmit at the Milan Triennale, during the 2002 Salone internazionale del Mobile.

In our present "disposable" consumer society, it is Vico Magistretti who has spared a crowded market yet more throw-away, trend items

Vico Magistretti represents all that an Italian designer par excellence could and should be. He does not stray far from popular tastes, remains true to his own course, keeps an attentive eye on the industry and is in tune with the latest technology.

The retrospective is an in-depth exhibit that seeks to document and offer new insight into the work of Vico Magistretti

Magistretti is a model of finesse, balance and exactitude. His furniture mirrors Italian taste.



Nuvola Rossa bookcase, Veranda sofa, Pascale standing floor lamp and Sinbad horse blanket sofa

Carimate chairs



Armilla wall and table light, Artemide - 1975.



Artillo table light, O Luce - 1977



Eclisse table and wall light, Artemide - 1965



A table and wall light where the 3 unequal sides of the metal sheet are respectively a support for the bulb socket, and a shade for the lightbulb and the base or wall attachment, a reflecting surface. Economical, simple and clever - perhaps that is why it is now unfashionable and therefore obsolete.



Usually lampshades throw the light downwards. Here instead the light hits the dome, descends, is reflected onto the cone and spreads horizontally - producing the ideal illumination for conversation or reading.



This is an icon light of Italian design. The novelty of simply rotating the shade allows the intensity of the light to be controlled. This was the motivation for the 1967 Compasso d'Oro prize. Artemide wanted a night light - since "everyone has a bed" they therefore need a good bed side light.

Tales over the telephone

The number is impressive, the continuity stunning, the quality amazing. "Written" during fifty years of work, these tales are the result of method and passion, culture and intelligence, curiosity taste and style, professionalism and experience.

Unmistakably the result of hard work, they are never pointlessly complicated, perhaps because they are honed by that very same hard work. These are exemplary projects that don't need to raise their voices or show their muscles.

They are deeply innovative essentially because they are, above all, backed up by concepts, the fruit of intuition and ideas, told with his proverbial understatement as if elementary and obvious.

Above all, ideas. And then as a logical consequence, technology, detail, finish and all the rest, but first and foremost ideas and concepts. Brilliant, sharp and incisive. Simple, quick and effective.

So clear as to be easily explainable on the phone.

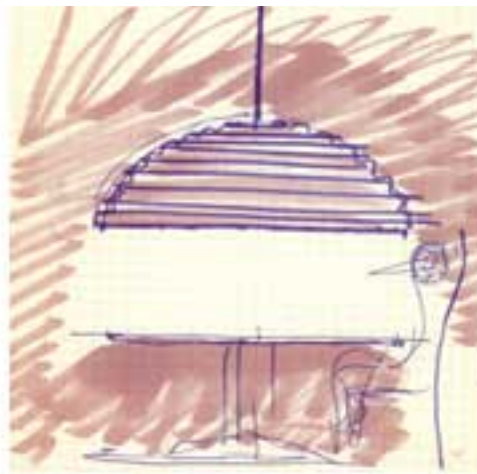
You don't need a lot of drawings to describe a light like the Sonara.

You don't need a lot of prototypes to create a sofa like a Sinbad - where a horse blanket is thrown casually over a padded frame.

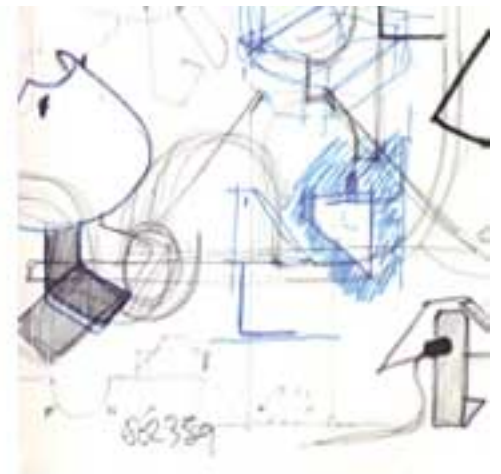
You don't need a lot of details to reinterpret a classic chair like the Silver - the basis for which was a Marcel Breuer 1920's Thonet chair.



Telegono table light, Artemide - 1966



Sonora hanging light, O Luce - 1974



Porsenna table and wall light, Artemide - 1976



The concept of the "Eclisse" transformed into a plastic lamp. A semi-circular shade attached to a mushroom-shaped structure means you can filter, modulate and direct the light source towards the work surface.



'It was all clear right from the first sketch. A large light - initially made from metal , but later made using blown Murano glass - is able to lend character to a whole room with its presence and devised to ensure the right amount of illumination only over the dining table.



A design that stems from the fact that a lot of space is wasted by using traditional lights such as those with a round base. The Porsenna can be placed on the edge of the table hard against the wall thereby reducing desk top space used.

CHANGES

Magestretti chases after a dynamic world, free from rules that stultify and inhibit the life of objects, far removed from the stillness of long, consolidated logic.

He has designed a host of objects that can move and satisfy the primary need to live, changing.

Many of Vico's products use change as a recurring premise ie height, intensity, depth. They represent not only physical agility but also mental, conceptual and theoretic agility as well.

A fight against traditional shapes, against restrictive banality and aging lack of movement.

ECONOMISING

Expertly theorised by Munari - The folding object was one of the Vico Magestretti's great loves.

Projects that combine economy with practicality, resistance and lightness, ergonomics and optimised production as well as an authentic technical-constructed inventiveness that always arouses our curiosity and amazement - and fills us with emotion.

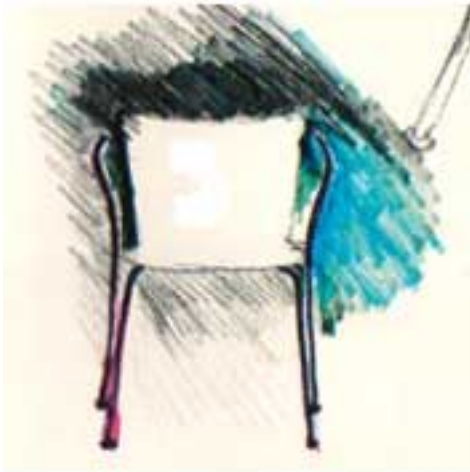
The Compasso d'Oro a Ignoti (designs without names) for objects capable of losing one of their dimensions (when folded) and thereby increasing their practical value eg the painters easel, the music stand, the deckchair.

INVENTING

Every so often the history of design, with its creative energy and bubbly brilliance - finds its way to the patents office.

A large number of registered patents have emerged from Magistretti's studio. they include "industrial inventions" , "ornamental industrial models" and "useful" inventions. eg Selene chair press moulding techniques.

It is a never ending pleasure to search for new ideas, proffering improvements by changing direction, coming up with new answers eg shelving with height adjustable supports and shelves.



Vicoduo chair with arms, Fritz Hansen 1997



Shigeto cupboard on wheels, Depadova 1988



Carimate chair with arms, Cassina - now Depadova, 1960



Vicoduo is a chair made of a bent plywood shell mounted on an aluminium plate. the tubular steel legs give it a dynamic look without sacrificing its severity and composedness.



A cupboard with 2 doors - on wheels ready to follow us about as we perform our daily routines. without betraying the idea of a completely domestic piece of furniture. Familiar yes, but not banal.



The carimate chair was designed specifically for the Club house restaurant of the Carimate Golf Club. It is a comfortable and discrete chair made with traditional materials and methods, and a simplicity of execution and durability

REDESIGNING

"At times I focus my interest on the importance of not forgetting the past. I redesign things by borrowing from old models to prevent them from becoming extinct"

To Magistretti, redesigning means cohabiting happily with the past and recognising the qualities of others, respecting previous landmarks and humbly taking a step back.

It means updating a traditional wooden and straw chair adding technical know-how (such as the strengthened sections at the points where leg and rails meet on the Carimate chair)

It means taking a new look at the precision of a small Breuer / thonet chair and making it suitable for mass production eg Silver chair system.

SMILING

There is also a more unpredictable side to Vico. A master who every so often allows himself to play happily and with wit. Controlled though.

Magistretti threw a horse blanket over a steel frame to create the beautifully crafted Sinbad sofa.

Magistretti has been able to be humorous in his designs but within measured style and elegance.

It wasn't until the 1970's though that he allowed himself the luxury to "play more freely"

This was probably due to the fact that by then he had received critical acclaim and commercial successes.

350 products developed over 50 years





Incisa armchair, Depadova - 1992



Silver chair with or without armrests, Depadova - 1989



Vidun large height adjustable screw table, Depadova - 1986



Cover of the book about Vico Magistretti by Beppe Finessi, Edizioni Corraini - 2003



At Depadova showroom 2002



Vico Magistretti with his 'tutor' Luigi Caccia Dominioni, at Genoa 2003



Vico and his Golem chair - 1970

