



The Hot House: Italian New Wave Design

Andrea Branzi

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The Hot House is in part a manifesto and in part a noncanonical history of the most progressive and heretical experiments in the applied arts and design. Covering two centuries of avant-garde designs, but concentrating on the 1950s to the present, the book looks at architecture and urban design as well as graphic, interior, exhibit, industrial, and fashion design. It discusses the role that such magazines as *Casabella*, *Domus*, and *Modo* have played on this lively front, and provides an insider's view of such figures and groups as Alessandro Mendini, Gaetano Pesce, Alchymia, Global Tools, Michele De Lucchi, Ettore Sottsass, and—the design world's hot new movement—Memphis. It also elucidates such concepts as banal design, soft design, radical architecture, and color cultures, and relates these and other design developments to social and political issues.

Protagonist of many of these experiments, Andrea Branzi calls for a theory and practice in which the old methods and instruments—pencil, square, and compass—are rendered obsolete, and the formal commandments of modernism—comfort, function, and style—are banished. If Branzi's vision of the new domestic landscape bears any relation to the future home, the places we live and objects around us are on the verge of being radically transformed.

The Hot House dramatically expands the theoretical and operative limits of design. While precedents to *Il Nuovo Design* (The New Design) can be found in everything from Art Deco to De Stijl to Pop Art to California funk, Italy is the center of this new phenomenon and the "hot house" of its most intense activity. Beginning in the 1960s, there emerged a number of design studios that went by names like Archizoom, 9999, Superstudio, and UFO; their products redefined the basic architecture of furniture and clothing and polemicized an entire discipline.

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