

## Ettore Sottsass

Ettore Sottsass (1917-2007) was an Italian architect and founding member of the Memphis group. His versatile repertoire is internationally acclaimed. It includes ceramics, jewellery, works in glass and silver, lighting, furniture, office machines and buildings which inspired generations of architects and designers. Sottsass is noted for challenging the modernist paradigm through an exploration of new materials and technologies. Since beginning his career in 1946, he made numerous significant contributions to the fields of design and architecture.

Early in his career he worked for the Italian firm Olivetti for where he designed the Tekne, the company's first electronic typewriter. Later he would design the Valentine typewriter that, with its shiny red encasement, is now considered an iconic 'pop' product. At Olivetti, he would also help create the Elea 9003, Italy's first electronic calculator. By the 1970s his design objects were regarded as part of the Italian vanguard and were prominently featured in the 1972 exhibition Italy: The New Domestic Landscape in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Invariably, sculptures, ceramics and domestic designs by Sottsass include an abundance of bright colour, a sharp and pristine finish and often a totemic design in which layers veer between functional and nonfunctional.

Sottsass carried a camera with him and took photos everywhere he went. His photography can be considered a form of self-examination and a dismantling of his roles as an architect/artist/designer. The photographs retain sensibilities of his work in these domains such as isolated and highlighted structures and elements. Architecture itself is often a prominent subject used as a backdrop that emphasises human experience.

Sottsass is perhaps best remembered for his role in founding Memphis in 1981, and the ceramics and designs produced at the height of the group's prominence. Memphis, whose name is derived from a song by Bob Dylan, captured the attention of the design world with its radical products. The group's designs, stalwarts of post modernism, were conceptual, fluid and often integrated plastic laminates, asymmetry and vibrant colours.

## SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

- ETTORE SOTTASS: 1955-1969 Friedman Benda, New York , 2015
- TAKE CARE: ETTORE SOTTASS AND JESSE WINE, ARTUNER, 2015
- ETTORE SOTTASS, Azzedine Alaia Gallery, Paris, 2014
- ETTORE SOTTASS: SMALTI 1958 (SOLO), Giacomo Guidi Arte Contemporanea, Rome , 2014
- WHAT'S THE MATTER, R & COMPANY, New York, 2014
- A SURVEY, 2012 - 2007 (SOLO), Friedman Benda, New York, 2012
- VORREI SAPERE PERCHÉ (SOLO), Salone degli Incanti, Trieste , 2008
- ETTORE SOTTASS ET LE DESIGN ITALIEN, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2008
- ETTORE SOTTASS, Ghent Design Museum, Belgium, 2007
- ETTORE SOTTASS: WORK IN PROGRESS (SOLO), Design Museum, London, 2007
- ETTORE SOTTASS (SOLO), LACMA, Los Angeles, 2006
- HUNG: A CENTURY OF COAT RACKS, R & COMPANY, New York, 2003
- ITALY: THE NEW DOMESTIC LANDSCAPE, MoMa, New York, 1972



Ettore Sottsass' work entitled 'Ghiraz' , 1989