



POST
MODERNISM



- Rejection of austere designs of modernism.
- Decoration should reflect the culture in which it exists.
- Ironic acceptance of the “kitsch of high capitalism”.
- In answer to Mies van der Rohe’s **LESS IS MORE**, Venturi said **LESS IS A BORE**.



ROBERT
VENTURI
(1925-)

ROBERT VENTURI

- Born 1925, Pennsylvania
- Worked with Eero Saarinen & Louis I. Kahn before opening own practice in 1958.
- Theories created more impact than actual works.
- Believes that structure and decoration should remain separate entities.

Vanna Venturi
House, 1962



Robert Venturi said of this house, which he built for his mother in 1962:
“The house is big as well as little, by which I mean that it this a little house with big scale. Outside, the manifestations of big scale are the main elements, which are big and few in number and central or symmetrical in position, as well as the simplicity and consistency of the form and silhouette of the whole. The main reason for the large scale is to counterbalance the complexity. Complexity in combination with scale in small buildings means busyness. Like the other organised complexities here, the big scale in the small building achieves tension rather than nervousness.”

ROBERT VENTURI

As Venturi says, the house has the proportions of a monumentally large building on the front façade, but if we go beyond the façade...



Vanna Venturi House, 1962

ROBERT VENTURI

We can see that this disguises, a house of very small scale. The interior of the house is quite complex, and this also contrasts with the simplicity of the façade.

Venturi's architectural theories for this and other buildings he designed in the 1960s led to the development of postmodernism in architecture during the 1970s. His theories advocate the use of historical allusion and symbolism, rejecting the perceived sterility of orthodox modern buildings. His architectural firm designed many of the most influential buildings of the 1970s and 1980s



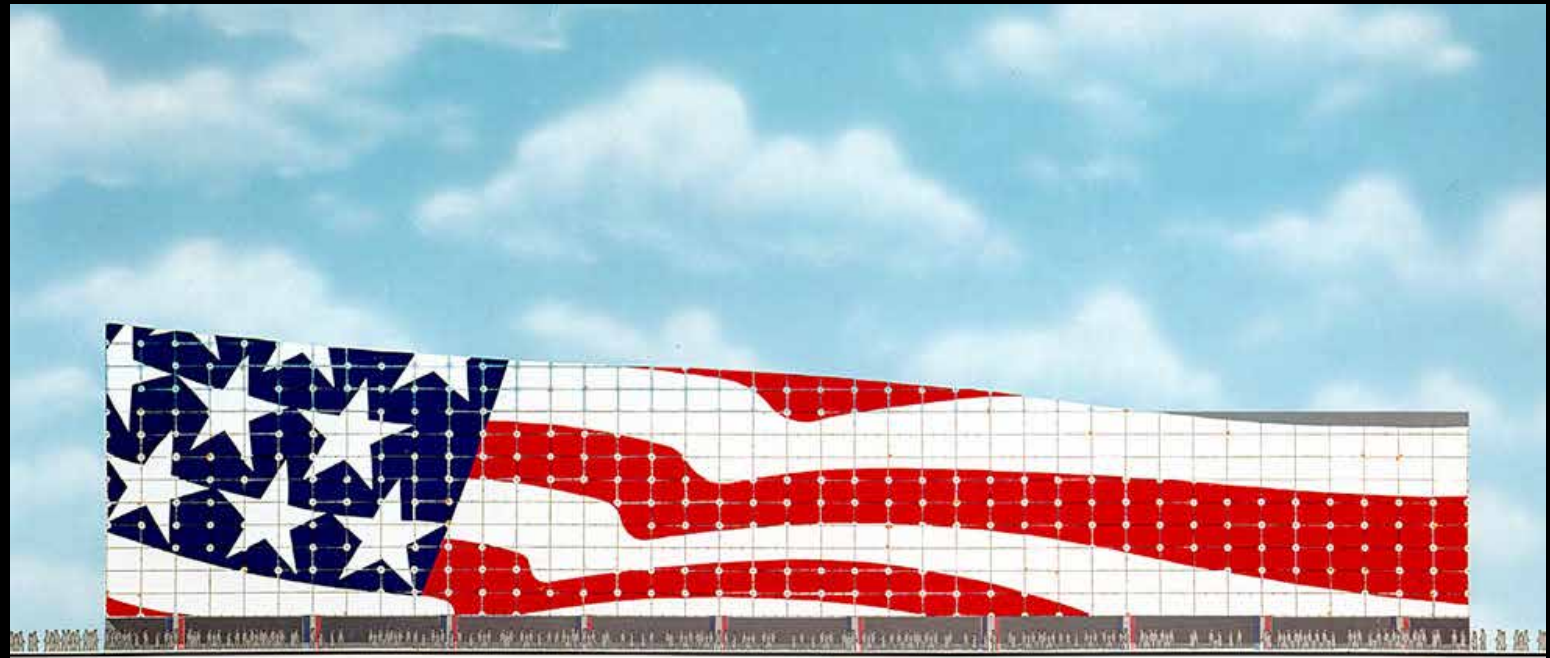
Vanna Venturi House, 1962

ROBERT VENTURI

The brick, limestone trim, and strip windows adhere to the entrance, set off-centre and broadside in the building, is marked by a bold marble and grey granite panel recalling early Renaissance ornament and symbolizing the entrance to the College as a whole as well as to the building itself.' and when asked to comment on the fact that students at Princeton had complained bitterly about the building, Venturi said in effect, 'Sure, why not. It's only architecture, not religion.'

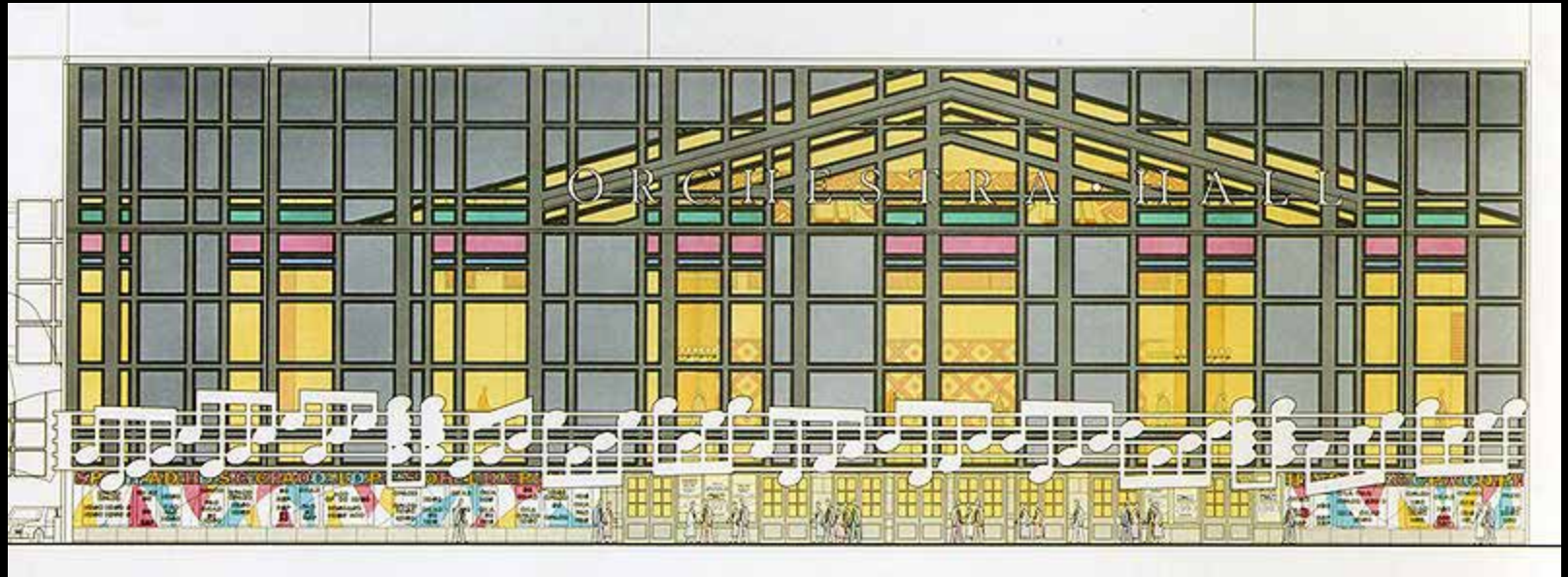


Butler College, Princeton University, 1983

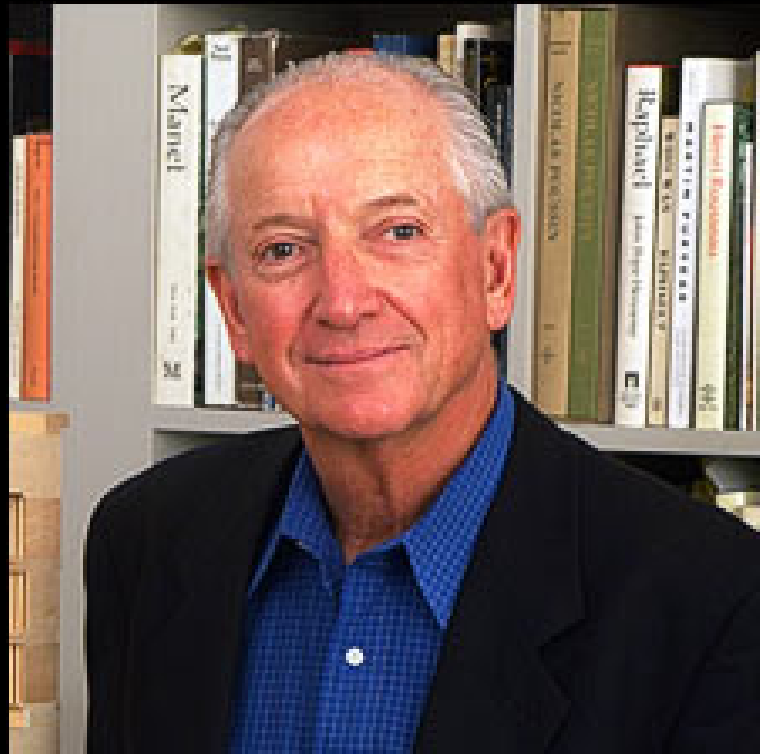


Elevation of the United States Pavilion, Competition Entry,
Expo '92, Seville, Spain, 1989.

ROBERT VENTURI



East elevation of the Philadelphia Orchestra Hall, 1987-96



MICHAEL
GRAVES
(1934 - 2015)

- Born 1934 in Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Moved away from Modernist abstraction towards more contextual and traditional themes.
- Site-appropriate designs melding traditional and contemporary principles.
- Blends classical allusions and whimsy.



Public Library, San Juan Capistrano, 1981-83

In this building, Graves managed a balance between playfulness and worthwhile architecture. The colourful library with its Spanish Mexican influences is more or less in keeping with the prevailing style of the Southern Californian region and has a low-key charm.



Public Library, San Juan Capistrano, 1981-83

Graves has taken the design elements of the local architecture, and combined them in this building, which is almost a parody of itself.



The entrance gateway



The Mickey Mouse fence

Team Disney Building, Burbank, California 1991

One of the projects that was 'over the rainbow, and over the top' according to a critic of the time, was the Team Disney Building in Burbank. In this cartoon-like architecture, Graves saw a way of connecting modern architecture to modern sensibilities. He took familiar motifs and elements, this time Disney characters, and combines them in his architecture.



Team Disney Building, Burbank, California 1991

The seven dwarves (5.7 m) serve as caryatids for the somewhat classical facade

MICHAEL GRAVES

In the home design world, it was the creation in 1985 of the Alessi teapot with its whimsical bird spout that pushed Graves into stardom.



Water Kettle for Alessi of Italy, 1985

MICHAEL GRAVES



Creamer and Sugar Bowl for Alessi of Italy, 1985

MICHAEL GRAVES

Graves blends classical allusions and whimsy. He refines an idea to its essence and then adds a distinctive stroke. It's this educated eye and sense of humour that have made him popular. The list of items he's put his mark on runs the gamut from the unusual to the mundane: charm bracelets, kitchen timers, frames, lamps, personal organizers, vases, t-shirts, salt and pepper shakers, china, book ends, weather vanes, and tuxedo studs are just a sampling.



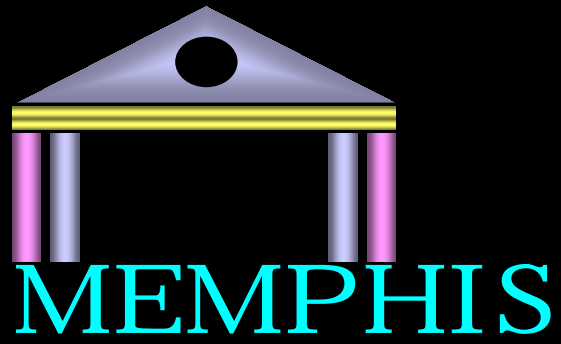
Pepper Mill & Salt Shaker
for Alessi of Italy, 1988

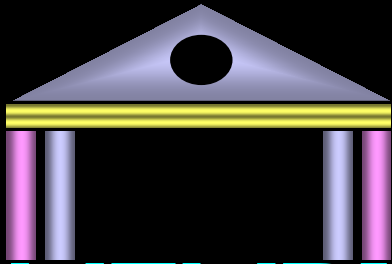


MGPF Coffee Press for Alessi of Italy, 1989



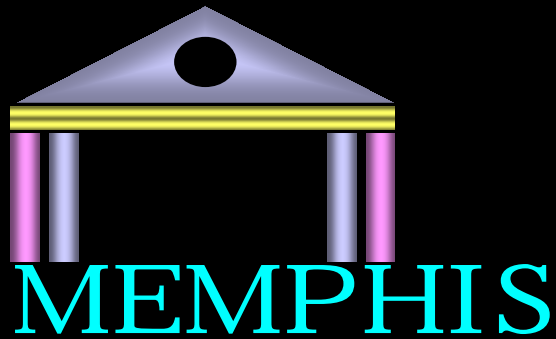
Kitchen Timer for Alessi of Italy, 1992





MEMPHIS

- Formed in 1981 in Milan.
- Loosely formed group of international designers tired of constraints of Modernism.
- Limited production of unusual objects and functional designs.
- High class and low class should intermingle and collaborate.
- Lasted less than a decade but had huge influence on contemporary design.



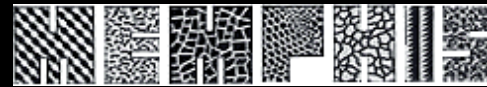
- Playful colours and patterns
- Cheap materials
- Kitsch motifs
- Use of Neo-Fifties laminates.

Named after Bob Dylan's album – a group of designers were discussing the new project at Ettore Sottsass' home while playing again and again the 'Memphis Blues' album, Sottsass said: *'Let's call it Memphis'*.

MEMPHIS



Memphis Book Cover
1981



Memphis Logos 1982-3

Memphis was a landmark in design history. The playful colours, cheap materials and kitsch motifs of the furniture, ceramics and glassware unveiled by Memphis designers at the 1981 Milan furniture fair split the design world and caused a media sensation after years of drab rationalism.

MEMPHIS

Memphis designs like this caused turbulence in the design world. Sottsass and his group were making a political statement: high class and low class should intermingle and collaborate. To some, this concept was irreverent, for others it was a gateway to freedom.



Clocks, 1981

MEMPHIS

Memphis was about juxtaposition, a stepping stone imagination. An inspiration for the designs that followed and the designs of the future. Though Memphis lasted less than a decade, its impact on the world of design remains. Take a look around, you'll see Memphis!



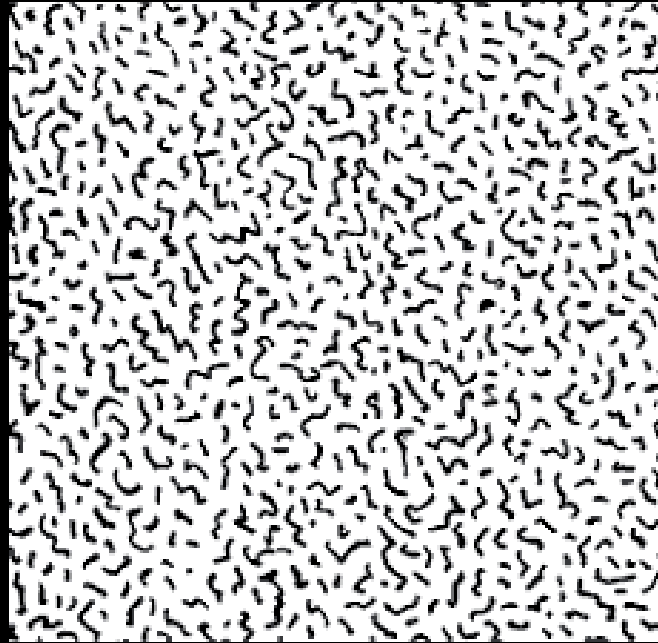
"Oberoi" chair,
George Sowden, 1981



**ETTORE
SOTTASS
(1917 – 2007)**



- Born in Austria, educated & lived in Italy
- Leader of Memphis group.
- Aimed to eliminate peaceful conformity of furniture design and present concrete alternatives.
- Died in Milan, Italy.



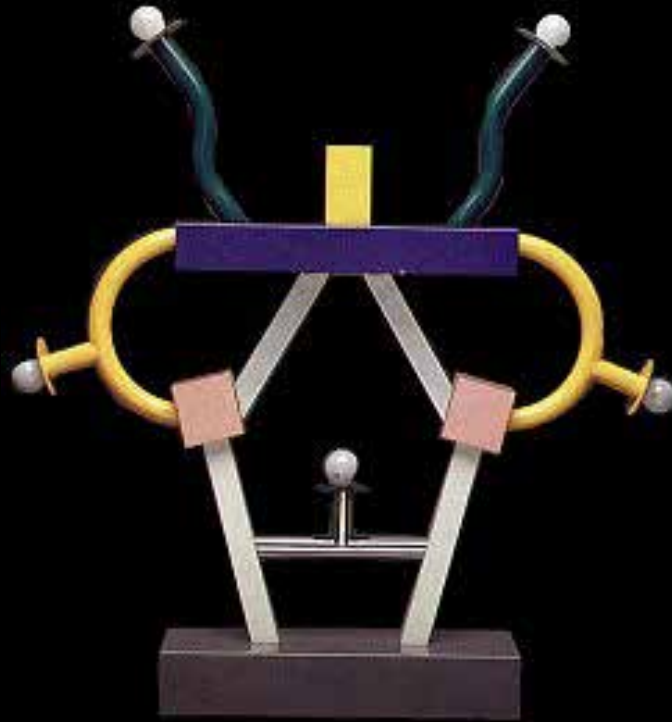
'Bacterio', laminate print 1978

'I'm always offended when they say that I play when I do Memphis work; actually I 'm very serious, I'm never more serious than when I do Memphis work. It's when I design machines for Olivetti that I play.'

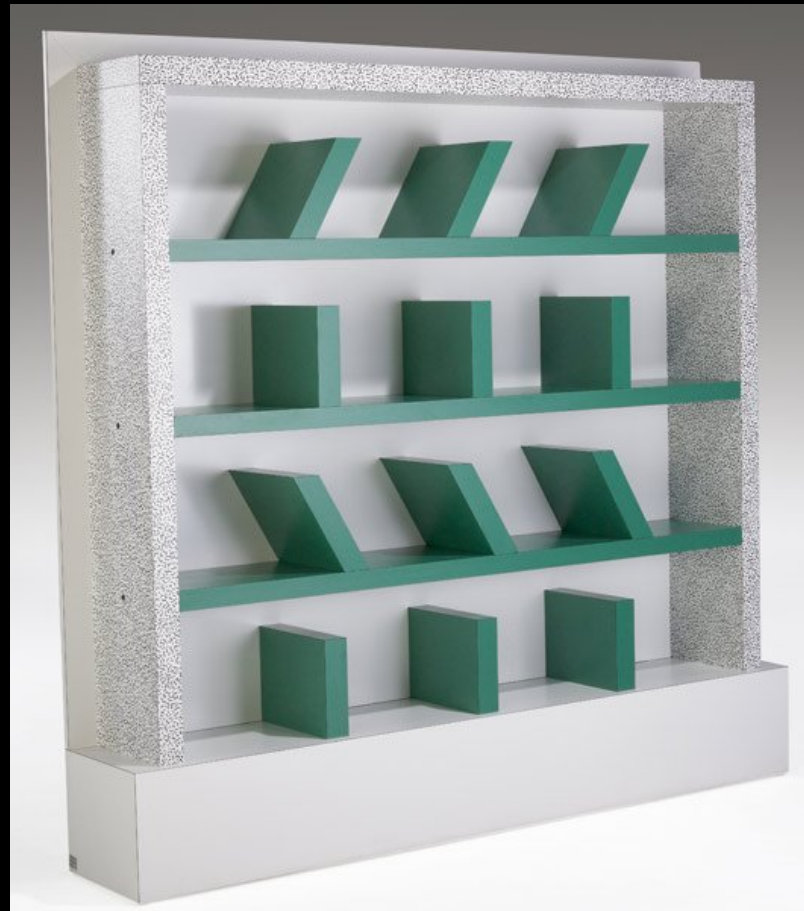
Sottsass



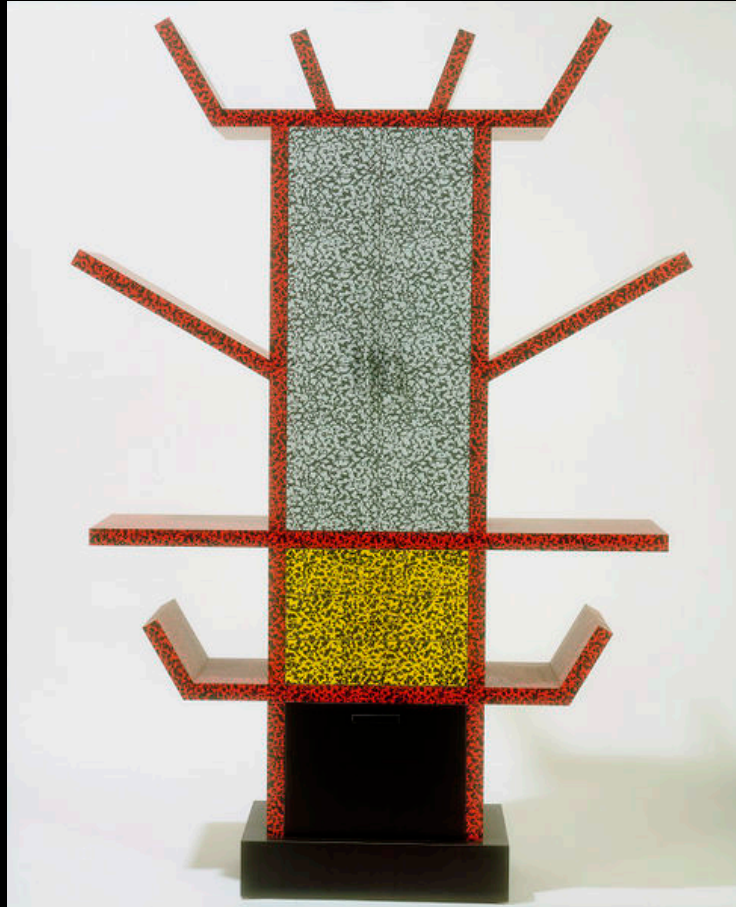
Carlton room divider, 1981



Ashoka lamp, 1981



"Suvretta" bookcase, 1981



"Casablanca" storage, 1981



“City” table, 1983



Giallo storage unit, 1989

IN CONCLUSION.....

Lots of brightly coloured, neo-1950s plastic laminates covering everything from crazy sideboards to bonkers beds. Was this gimcrack stuff really so influential? Had the brown-and-orange 1970s been so boring that product design had to descend into these cartoon capers? Well, it was about turning the design world upside down. The ideas of the Memphis collective and other Post Modern designers, were embraced by design students of the time: Memphis was the major influence on Philippe Starck, Jasper Morrison and Marc Newson, and herein lies the importance of the style.

THE END