

# DESIGN MUSEUM

DESIGN MUSEUM, SHAD THAMES, LONDON SE1 2YD  
TICKETS: Adults £7; Students + Concessions £4; Free to Under 12s  
OPENING: 10.00-17.45 Daily. Last Admission: 17.15  
PUBLIC INFORMATION: 0870 833 9955. [www.designmuseum.org](http://www.designmuseum.org)

## ETTORE SOTTASS - A Life in Design 29 March to 10 June 2007



Ettore Sottsass has been a towering presence in Italian design for more than half a century. He has produced an enormous breadth of work across many disciplines, including glass and ceramics for Alessi and electronic products for Olivetti, but is best known as founder of the groundbreaking 1980's design group Memphis. To mark his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2007 the Design Museum will exhibit Sottsass' most iconic designs in **Ettore Sottsass – A Life in Design from 29 March to 10 June**.

Born in Innsbruck in 1917 to an architect father, Ettore Sottsass Snr, Sottsass was destined to be an architect from an early age. His family moved to Italy so that he could study architecture at Turin University, but upon graduating in 1939 he was immediately called upon to join the Italian army where he served until the end of World War II. He began his professional career working with his father before forming his own practice. Inspired to focus on industrial design after spending time in New York in the late 50's, Sottsass became consultant to the new electronics division of Olivetti, the Italian industrial group. Here he created a series of technically innovative products – including the first Italian computer, the Elea 9003, and the bright red plastic 1970 Valentine typewriter – which, in their aesthetics, reflected his love of pop art and Beat culture.

In 1980 Sottsass formed Memphis with a group of younger avant-garde designers from around the world, including Andrea Branzi, Alessandro Mendini, Martine Bedin, and Michele De Lucchi. With the aim to revive Radical Design, and breaking the rules of the slick minimalism of the 70's, they produced products that featured plastic and laminate surfaces, kitsch geometric patterns and bright colours. Memphis captured the attention of the mass media, and dominated the early 1980's design scene. Sottsass parted with the group in 1985 to concentrate on Sottsass Associati, his Milan based architecture and design practice where he still works to date. In a return to architecture he has since completed a series of private houses and public buildings, notably the Malpensa 2000 airport near Milan, and continues with projects in glass and ceramics.

**Sponsored by Bonar Floors and Zumtobel Lighting**

To request further information and images please contact Amelia Webb on 020 7940 8787 or email [media@designmuseum.org](mailto:media@designmuseum.org)