

Italy: the new domestic landscape achievements and problems of Italian design

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Italy: The New Domestic Landscape

Achievements and Problems of Italian Design

The Museum of Modern Art, New York



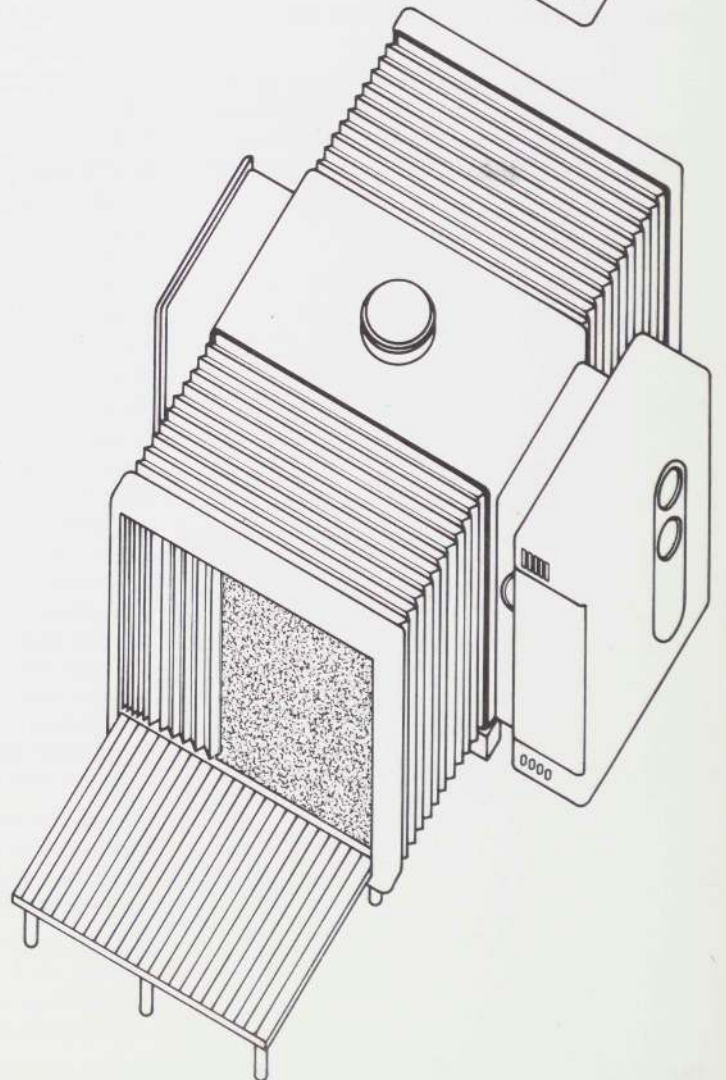
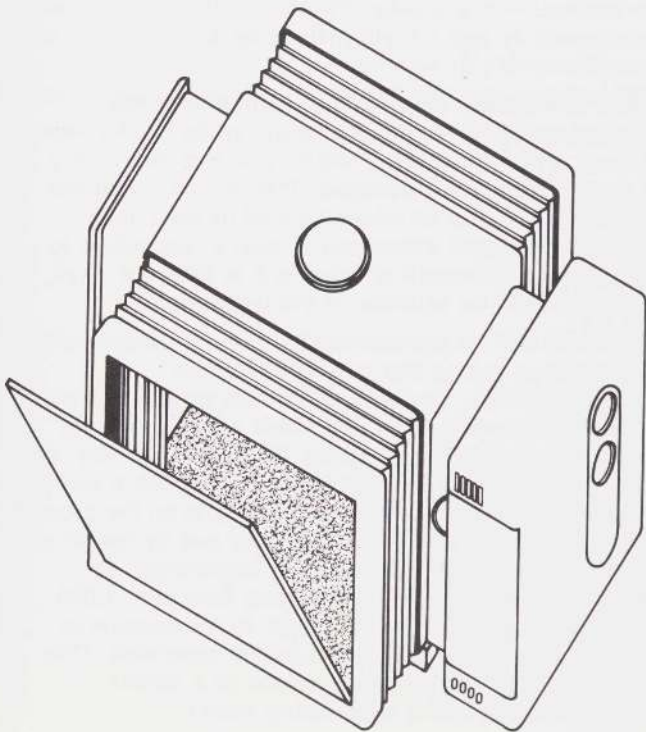
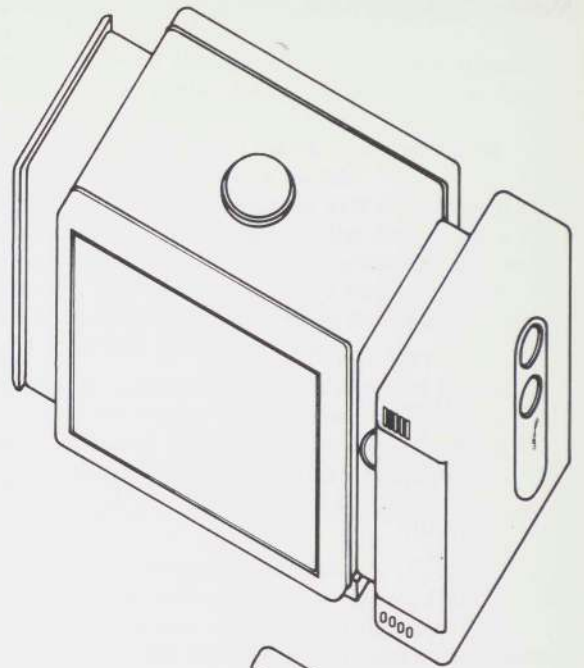
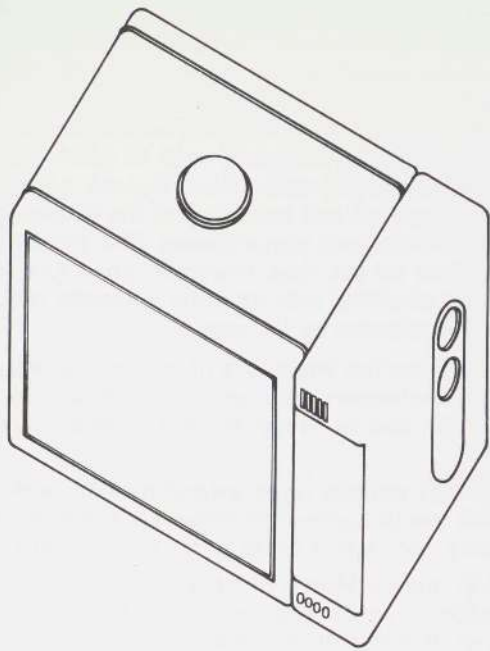
Alberto Rosselli, born in 1921, completed his study of architecture at the Politecnico of Milan, and since 1950 has been active in that city as designer as well as architect. In 1953, he founded the periodical *Stile Industria*, which he continued to direct until 1963. He has served as president of the ADI (Association for Industrial Design) and as a member of its Council. Since 1963, he has been professor of industrial design in the Architectural School of the Politecnico. His activity as designer has included serving as consultant to various branches of industry, including product design, furnishings, and transport. In recent years, he has devoted himself particularly to the designing of transport vehicles and works for mass production, especially furniture and sanitary equipment.

Designer: Alberto Rosselli; collaborator Isae Hosoe

Patron: FIAT

Producers: Carrozzeria Renzo Orlandi, Carrozzeria Boneschi, Industria Arredamenti Saporiti, Boffi; with the assistance of Valenti, Nonwoven, Rexedil

Film: CINEFIAT (Ernesto Prever and Osvaldo Marini)



The idea of transforming, or better still, expanding space is closely linked to the idea of the mobile house. The intrinsic mobility of the house-object that is transported from one place to another suggests that the object in fact depends on two conditions, movement and repose, with their differing requirements. Since movement is governed by the circumstances intrinsic to transport, such as road conditions and safety, it demands a small, compact form. Repose means living, and thus a maximum expansion and extension of the potential space available for life and technological requirements. The strictly habitable parts of vehicles designed for the road, therefore, often turn out as a miniature form of a real dwelling, with all living functions reduced to the very meager scale demanded by the road.

But surely we can overcome the limitations of the mobile house by giving it a new form of expression, discovering in it the concept of the mobility of interior space, and of its transformation and connection with other spaces.

Contemporary technology permits us to extend mobility and expansion through the use of lightweight materials and more highly developed mechanisms, for various types of land or air transport.

I wish to propose, first, the possibility of transforming the house-object through an organization of space and technology that would permit an increase not only in its dimensions, but also in its quality.

Together with this is a proposal for a new scheme of land use, introducing into the landscape more suitable living receptacles that can be set up or removed with a greater margin of safety: a proposal for the aesthetics of mobility and transformation, as an alternative to a solid block, either stationary or on wheels.

It is indeed possible to envisage a house that conforms to the psychological requirements of life, an object that can be transformed according to the various uses to which it will be put, and that after a certain time can be completely reassembled. This means giving the house not only mobility, but also an interior life of its own, thus offering the user a psychological dimension of space responsive to his own will, with the added pleasure of living in it in different ways, according to the climate and its situation in the landscape.

This mobile environment can be transported by a motor vehicle with a load capacity of between two to two and three-quarter tons (1,500 to 2,000 kilograms). The total size of the vehicle, together with the object to be transported, have been kept within the limits allowed by current European road regulations. During the journey, the object is firmly fixed on the top of an open truck, from which it can be unloaded on arrival and placed on independent supports on the ground. The object has been developed to provide space for use by five or six people, together with modern conveniences and furnishings. Its special characteristic is that it can be transformed from over 1,000 square feet (100 square meters) when in transit, to a maximum of 3,230 square feet (300 square meters) when totally expanded. This expansion takes place on all four sides, by means of a simple system whereby the sides run along telescoping tracks.

Along one axis, the expansion takes place by letting down two platforms and lengthening two folding walls, made of plastic. Along the other axis, two metal capsules containing services and a storage box extend outward.

All necessary furnishings are stored in the interior space during transit; thus, when the object is closed, it is a general container for furnishings and modern conveniences. Two people can easily effect the expansion without the use of any special equipment.

When the area is open, it offers various possibilities for arranging and

subdividing the space for both night and day use. It can be divided into three basic areas:

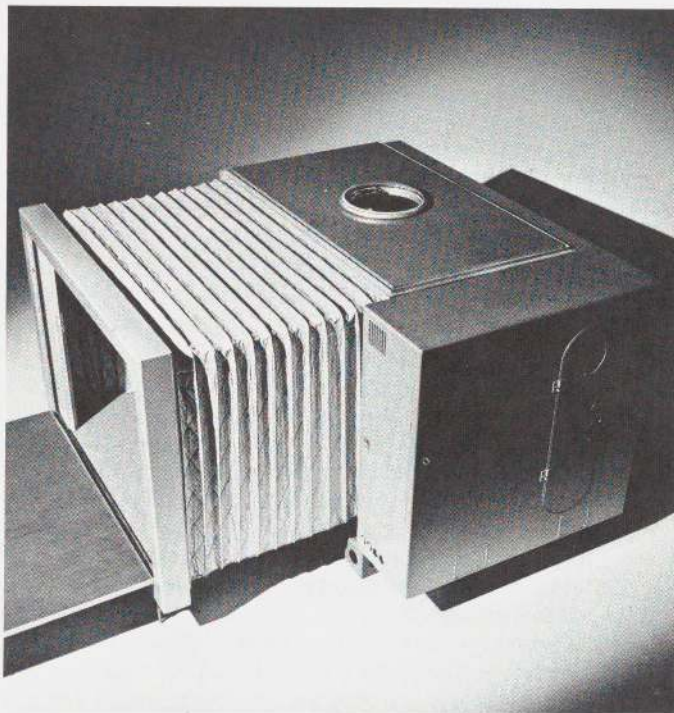
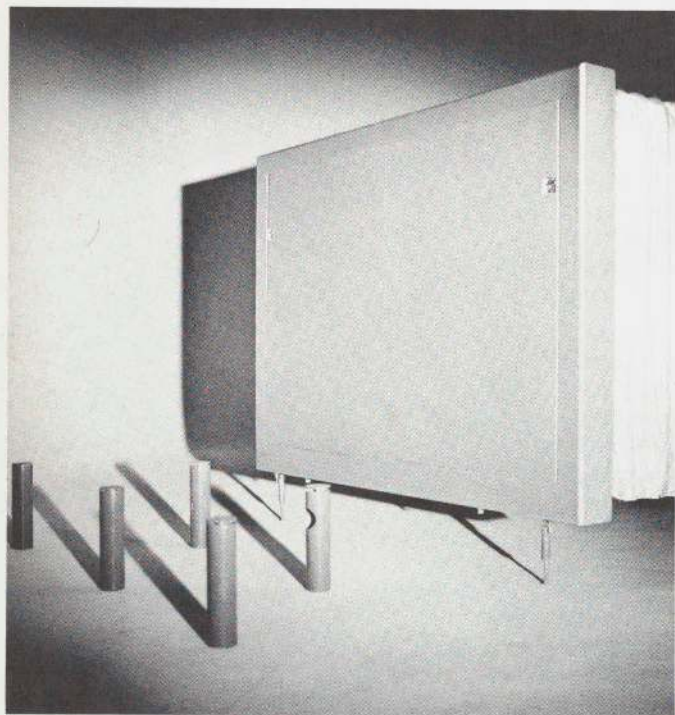
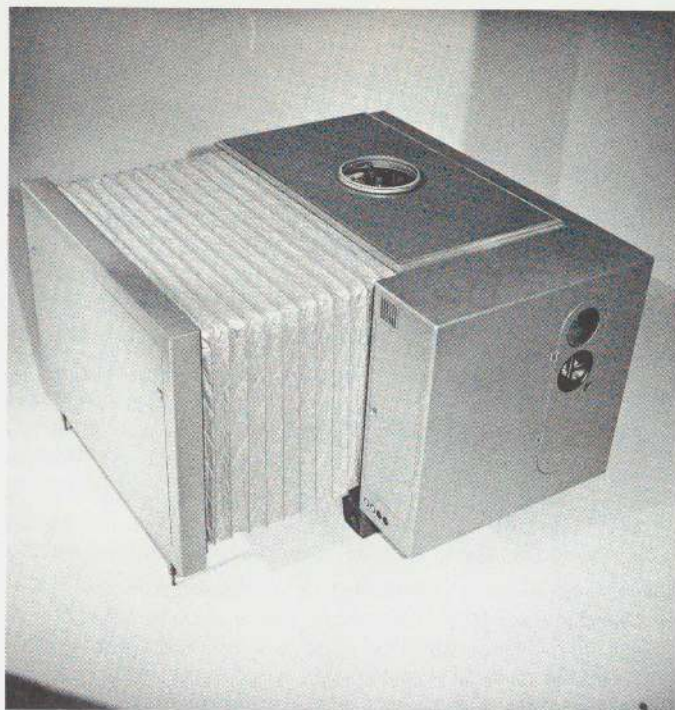
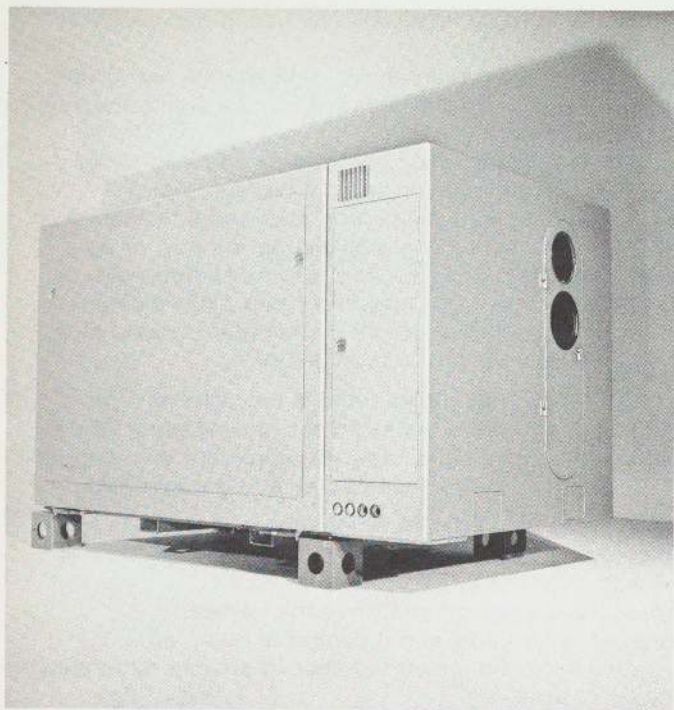
1. A central area, illuminated from above, with service and closet capsules opening off it. It is chiefly intended for use during the day, as a general or dining area.
2. A rear area, with two folding beds and closets attached to the outside walls. It can be shut off by drawing a curtain.
3. A front area, connecting with the central area and a terrace. It is flexible, and can be used as a living area during the day, or as a space for two or three beds at night. The terrace platform can be drawn up to seal off the area. Light plastic curtains allow a simple subdivision of this area according to the wishes of the users, or to allow the furniture to be arranged in different ways.

The capsule is of aluminum throughout and is mounted on a steel frame, to which are attached the tracks for the moving parts. The light materials used for both mobile and fixed structures are the result of technological research on automobile bodies and aeronautics.

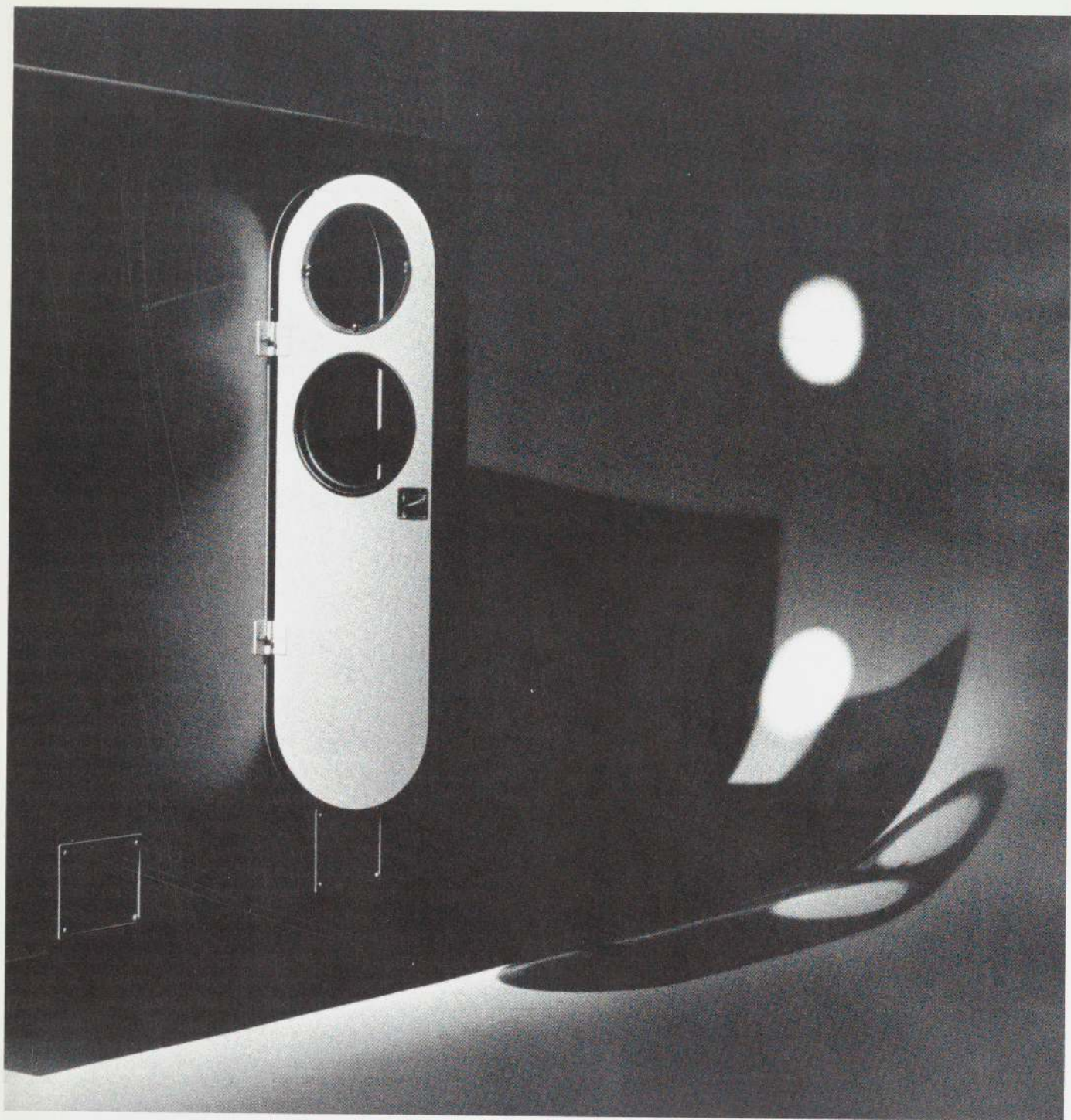
Following are other possible ways in which the basic sections might be arranged:

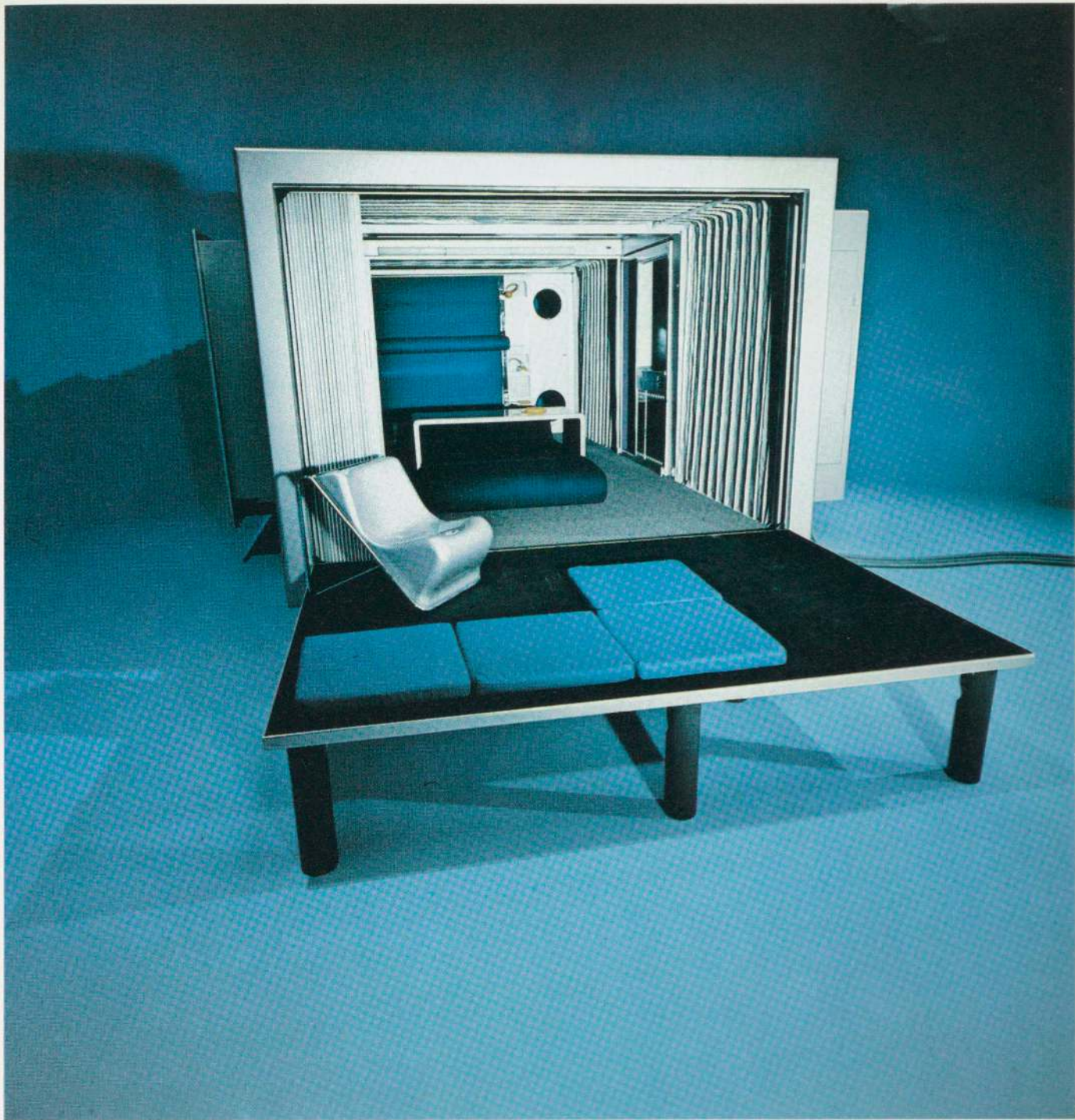
1. As a house with only one expandable side wall.
2. With windowed walls as an alternative to the terrace.
3. With two side walls for beds, and a central or living area.
4. Several capsules might be joined together to provide more space and a wider range of uses.

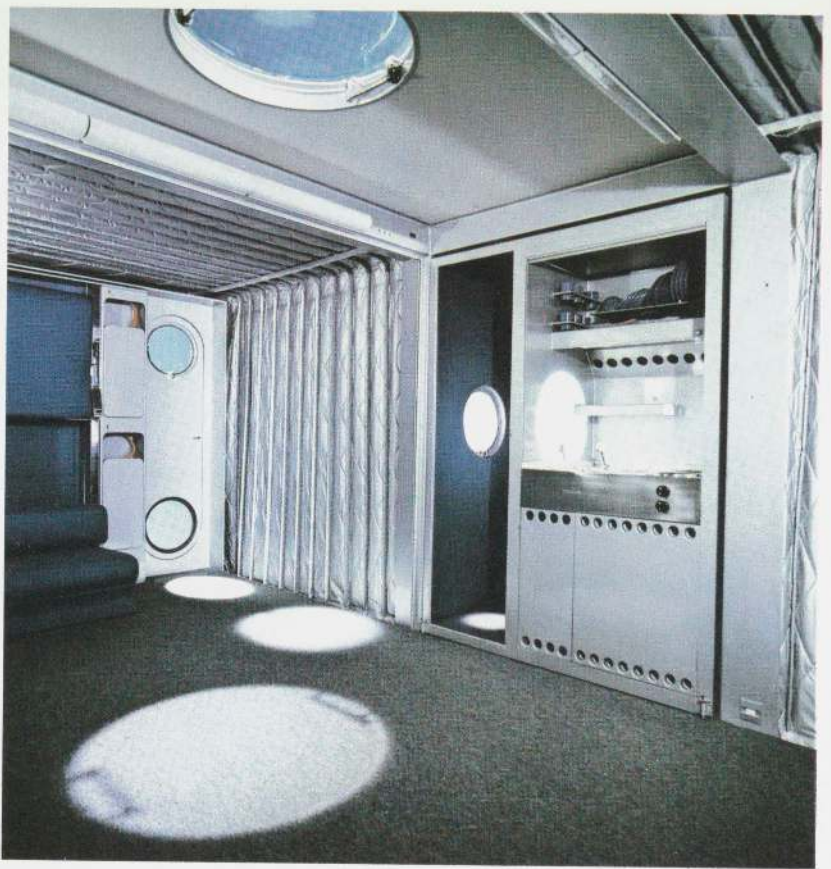
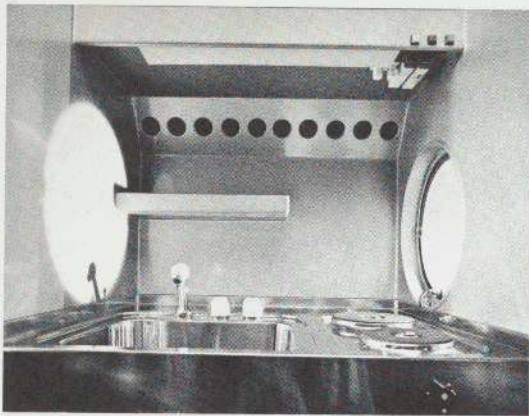
This mobile house could serve as a model for either individual or group living. In urban and holiday areas, the houses could be so disposed as to make use of common service and utility systems and could be scattered over a stretch of land unencumbered with vehicles.

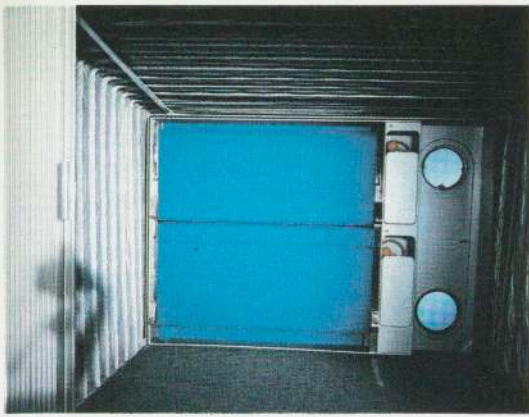










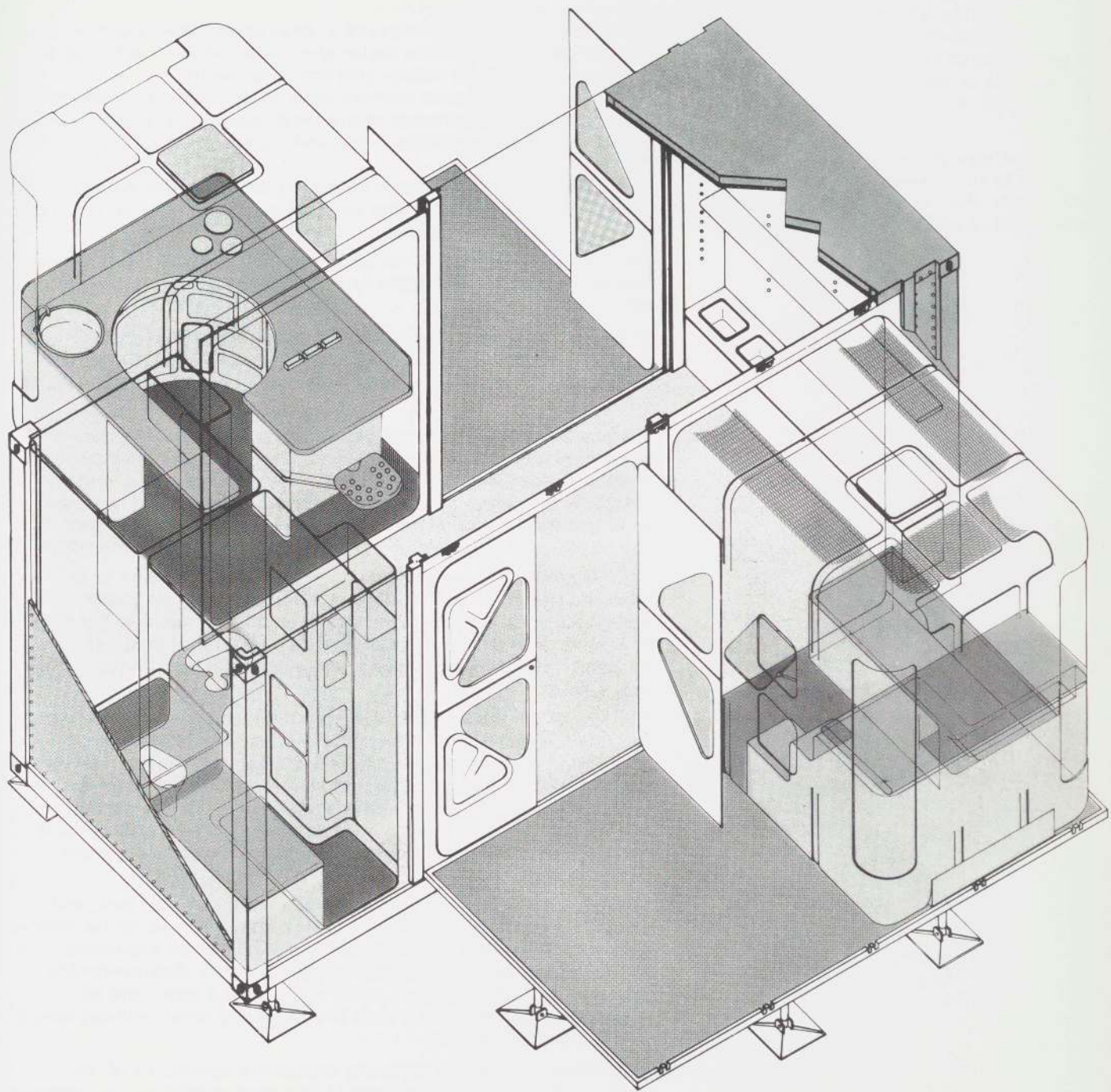


MARCO ZANUSO
RICHARD SAPPER

Marco Zanuso was born in Milan in 1916, and since 1945 has been active in that city in the fields of architecture, design, and city planning. He served as editor of *Domus* from 1947 to 1949 and of *Casabella* from 1952 to 1956. In 1964, he was appointed by the Council for Cultural Cooperation of the Council of Europe to compile and edit a comprehensive study, 'Creation and Industrial Production for Everyday Life — 20 Years of European Experience.' From 1966 to 1969, he was president of the ADI (Association for Industrial Design). He has won numerous prizes for products he has designed and in 1966 received the award of the INA (National Architectural Institute) for Lombardy and Venetia. Since 1970, he has been Director of the Institute of Technology of the Faculty of Architecture at the Politecnico, Milan, as well as holding a professorship there in industrial design and technology.

Richard Sapper, born in Munich in 1932, worked in the styling department of Mercedes-Benz before coming to Italy in 1958. After working first with Gio Ponti and the Rinascente, he became associated with Marco Zanuso in designing products for Brionvega, Kartell, and Siemens. Since 1970, he has been consultant to FIAT for its experimental safety-vehicle programs, and to Pirelli for advanced pneumatic structures.

Designers: Studio Zanuso, Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper
Patrons: ANIC-Lanerossi, FIAT, Kartell, Boffi
Producers: FIAT, with the participation of Boffi; Kartell
Film: directed by Giacomo Battiato



Complete and fully equipped habitations, easily transportable and ready for immediate use. This is the theme.

The theme suggested not so much single habitations to provide city-bound families with a place of occasional retreat, as living quarters for entire communities, transported far from metropolises and urban areas:

- a. Working communities engaged in large-scale public works — road and dam construction, land reclamation — for which quarters of a provisional and highly mobile character are needed.
- b. Communities of rescue workers carrying out first-aid operations in areas struck by catastrophe, where ready-made, fully equipped living quarters should be available if the workers are not to be diverted from the job in hand.
- c. Tourist colonies, where it is necessary to respect the natural surroundings, and where living quarters must be strictly temporary, without permanent structures.

The units are designed for all situations that require immediately available, easily transportable living quarters that do not spoil the natural environment.

This proposal relates less to mobility at the family level than to mobility at the urban level: the immediate transport of communities and living quarters to any part of the world by conventional means of transport.

The prototype is one of a number of similar elements that can be assembled and coordinated to provide living quarters for communities of varying sizes. The units are constructed entirely in the workshop; their outer shell also serves as protective packaging during storage and transport. Like containers, from which they are derived, the units can be stacked, reducing storage and transport space to the minimum.

Eight hundred units — living quarters for sixteen hundred to two thousand people — can be stacked in an area of about 27,000 square feet (2,500 square meters), the size of a normal courtyard. The same number of units can be transported by a 10,000-ton ship; a train could transport up to two hundred and fifty, a large airplane twelve, a truck two, a helicopter one.

The size of the units and their structural characteristics, which are the same as those of a 20-foot container, enable them to be transported by all the above-mentioned means of transport, which means that they can be set up without loss of time anywhere on the face of the earth. Once the unit has been placed on the desired site, it takes only a few minutes to make it ready for use: the time needed to open the two lateral doors and slide the two alcoves out along them horizontally.

The unit is equipped with a water tank, a waste-disposal tank, and an electrical system. With the aid of water distribution and refuse removal by tank trucks, and with electrical power supplied by a generator, the unit is independent of permanent installations for distribution and drainage. The limited weight of the unit (about 3 tons) and its adjustable supports make it easy to erect on any terrain without having to construct foundations.

A 10,000-ton ship would suffice to transport a community of, for example, fifteen hundred persons to any coastal point on any continent in the world. Unloading and placing the units in position could be done by helicopter; the units would then be ready for immediate use. The prototype is designed to provide living accommodations for two persons, but it can be combined with similar units to furnish living quarters for four, six, or more persons.

The units can be combined either horizontally, or vertically up to a

height of three or four stories, making it possible to achieve groups of considerable complexity. The units are to be regarded as provisional living quarters, and therefore their presence on the site will be only temporary, respecting the natural surroundings to the maximum. Once removed from the site, the units are immediately available for further use. A particular advantage of these units for aid and rehabilitation in emergency situations due to natural disasters (earthquakes, cyclones, floods, fires) is that they can be stockpiled in suitably distributed storage depots, making it possible to provide completely equipped living quarters in a very short time, without diverting the work force from their most urgent tasks.

A study of the prototype and its derivatives points the way to the development of similar units suitable for the construction of such community facilities as schools, hospitals, assembly halls, etc., which may be needed to complement living quarters in isolated communities.

