

# **GRAZIE ENZO: CONTEMPORARY RESPONSES TO ENZO MARI**

Large Print Guide

**the  
DESIGN  
MUSEUM**



# GRAZIE ENZO

Sometimes a designer's work is so influential that it inspires generations and continues to resonate beyond their lifetime. The Italian designer Enzo Mari (1932–2020) was one of the most significant designers of the 20th century, his work spanning disciplines such as art, graphics, product design and education.

Mari's wide-ranging practice has been a reference point for many and this display features a selection of London-based designers and studios whose work shares an affinity with Mari's. They have connected with Mari's interest in challenging production processes, his attention to the simplification of form, his engagement with toys and games, and his desire to democratise design.

For Enzo Mari, it was vital that design should provide society with the tools to transform itself to become more equal. He also believed that design could inspire the next generations to become active participants in shaping their environment. Mari said: 'The project of design should be something that is felt very profoundly by the community and that impacts upon everyone's life.'

The designers in this display draw upon Mari's legacy to shape the world of design today.

This display accompanies a large-scale exhibition of Enzo Mari's work, currently on view in the ground floor gallery, running until 8 September. Please ask a member of staff for more information or to book tickets.

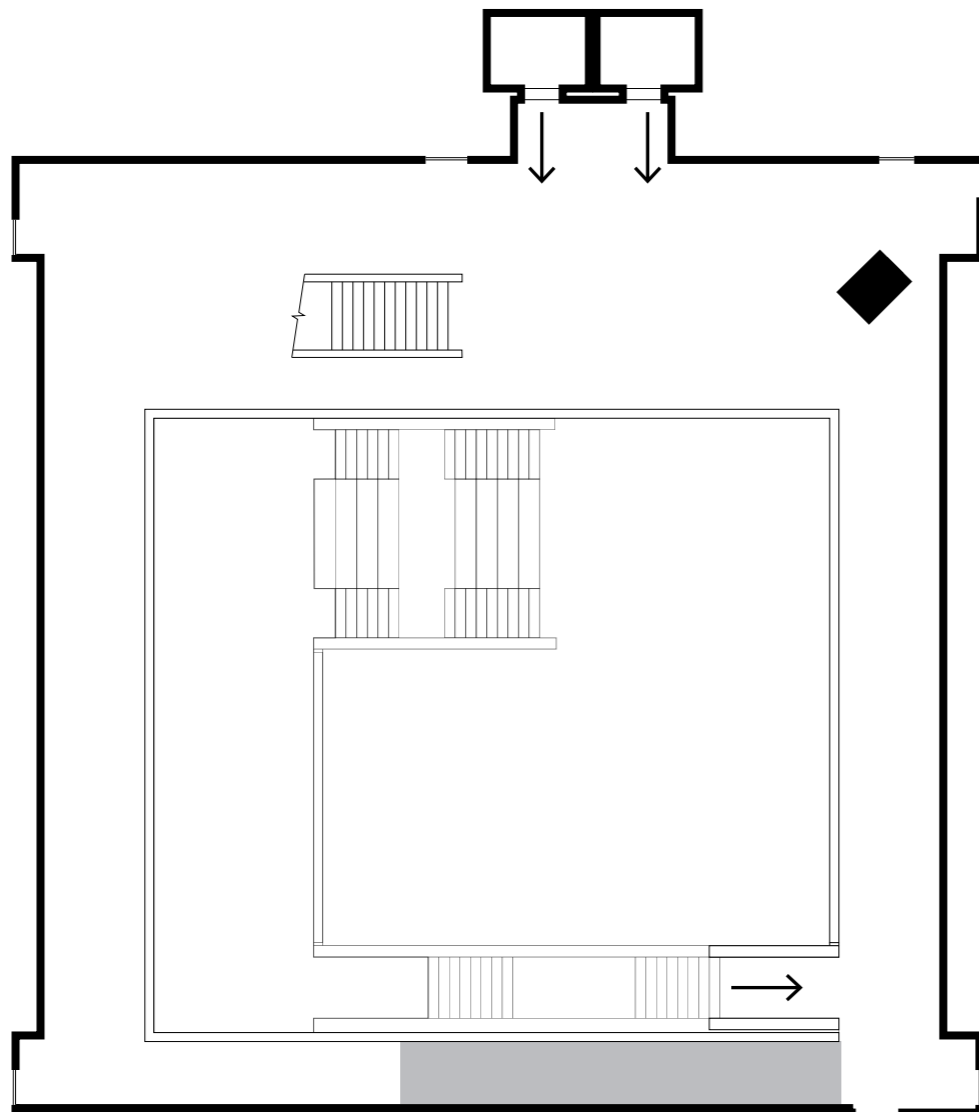
## Enzo Mari in his apartment in Milan

2014

Portraits by Danilo Scarpati

Courtesy of Danilo Scarpati

These photos of Enzo Mari were taken in his apartment in Milan. They accompanied an interview he did with 'Living' magazine where he spoke about his experience as a designer and the changes he had seen in the design world throughout his career.

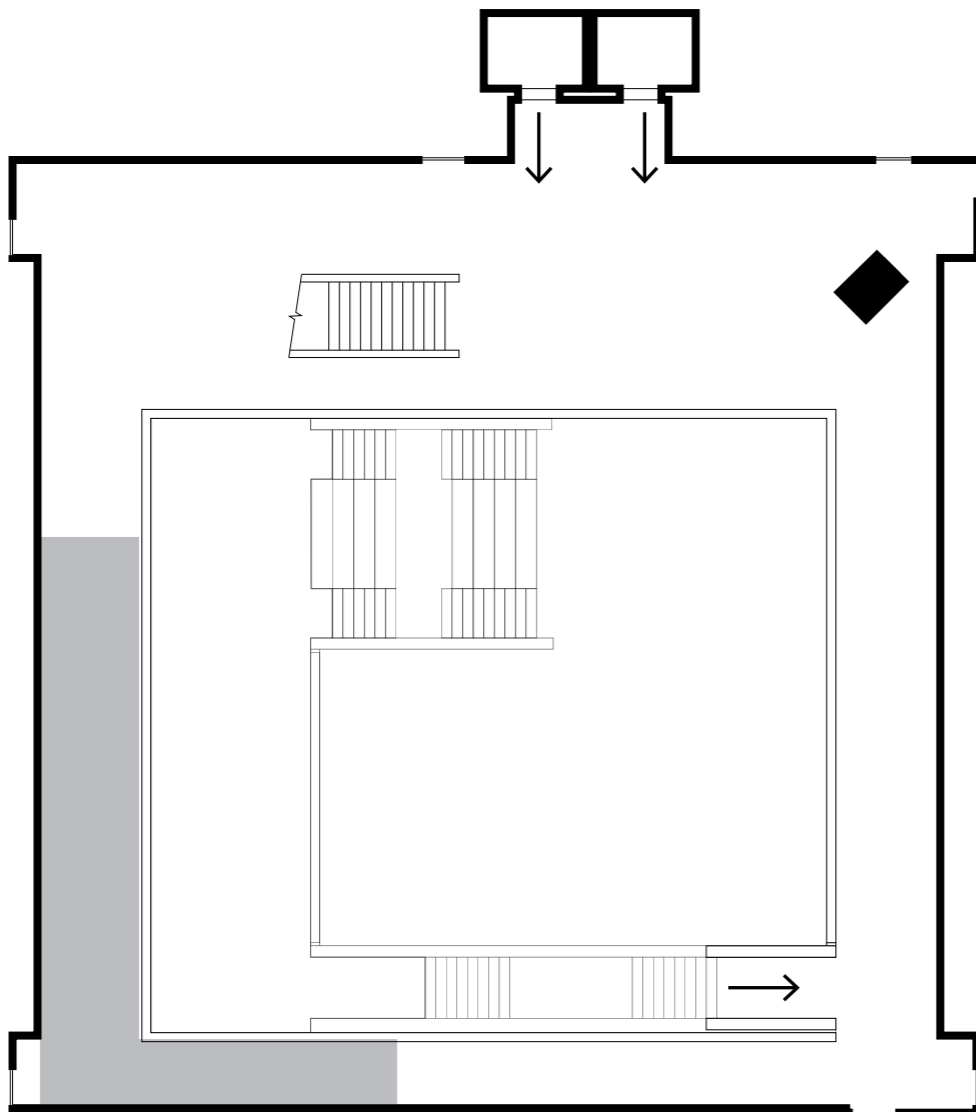


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# 1. CHALLENGING PRODUCTION

Throughout his career, Enzo Mari became increasingly conscious of the need for sustainable practices in design and strove to curb rampant consumerism. He achieved this by using ready-made components, looking to inexpensive, simple manufacturing processes to challenge production methods. His designs put the user at the forefront, offering ways for people to live as flexibly as possible. He also catered for the user's changing needs and living conditions rather than designing objects that would cease to be useful after only a short period of time.



**'Putrella' (Girder) table centrepiece**

2023

Designed by Enzo Mari

Produced by Danese Milano,  
based on a 1958 original

Iron

Design Museum Collection

For the 'Putrella' (Girder) series Mari took different mass-produced iron beams and transformed their functions. With the slightest intervention, by curving the ends of this I-beam upwards for example, a unit of construction becomes a tray.

# MICHAEL MARRIOTT

Michael Marriott is an industrial designer, often making things in small batches and overseeing every stage of the design process. He is interested in making functional objects that are not led by fashion, marketing or fads. Mari's anti-consumerist ideals resonate with him: 'what I love about Enzo Mari, is how he was a kind of a torchbearer for alternative practices; more experimental, more radical, less obviously commercially driven, and in a useful un-egotistical way. He was a rare treat in a world of excess.'

## **Ernö coat hooks**

2016

Michael Marriott

Zytel (nylon-based polymer)

Courtesy of Michael Marriott

These injection-moulded hooks are made from Zytel, a strong plastic that is resistant to scuffs and scratches. Marriot designed the hook to fulfil different functions. The pegs are used to hang things from, while the hole in the middle allows for a coat hanger to be threaded through.

## **Atlas grinders**

2018

Michael Marriott

Beech wood

Courtesy of Michael Marriott

By utilising the form of a bolt head to create an intuitive twisting action, Marriot designed these salt and pepper grinders to be carved out of beech wood. Their form instructs the way they should be used.

## **700c bottle opener**

2017

Michael Marriott

Aluminium

Courtesy of Michael Marriott

Made from discarded bicycle wheel rims and a single screw, this bottle opener has a simple design, yet is very effective. It is constructed by hand using ready-made materials and requires no complex machinery or production process.



# ANDU MASEBO

Andu Masebo began his career working with industrial fabricators and has continued to do so since setting up his own practice. From his background in making, he has a deep interest in manufacturing processes and the workings of the factory floor. Like Mari, he works closely with manufacturers and tries to find new uses for industrial machinery and to push its limits. He says, 'Mari's work was compelling, not just because it was well designed, but because it had significance beyond its usefulness as furniture.'

## **Tubular chair**

2022

Andu Masebo

Stainless steel, car body paint,  
recycled crumb rubber seat

Courtesy of Andu Masebo

## **Making the tubular chair**

2022

Photographs by Andu Masebo

Courtesy of Andu Masebo

This chair is the result of many conversations with car exhaust fabricators. It is made from 3-inch stainless steel tubes used in the production of exhausts. Masebo worked around a defined set of machining limitations, using only the exact materials and machines that are used by the exhaust manufacturers. The steel is then sprayed with metallic car body paint and upholstered with a seat.

### **Spare Part side table**

2021

Andu Masebo

Steel, car body paint, wood

Courtesy of Andu Masebo

### **Drying parts of the side table**

2021

Photograph by Andu Masebo

Courtesy of Andu Masebo

Using materials to hand, Masebo created this side table using steel tubes and ash wood. He took the steel sections to car bodywork sprayers to be painted in a range of different colours. The parts were then assembled into a series of colourful side tables, each of which is a unique consequence of the different cars that were painted in the garage on that given day.

# LIVIA LAUBER

Livia Lauber creates objects and pieces of furniture that contest traditional functions and production methods. She is interested in low-tech solutions and ways of simplifying the making process as well as the design of her finished pieces. 'As Enzo Mari says, "The quality of the form, when it emerges, goes straight to the heart," or "When form does not seem, it corresponds to the substance of things". These are quotes that I keep in mind when designing or mainly not over-designing!'

## Enzo Shelf

2023

Livia Lauber

Aluminium, nickel castors, netting

Courtesy of Livia Lauber

This shelf subverts the function of prefabricated and readily available materials to create a practical way to display books. Composed of prefabricated aluminium box sections, it has a double function, serving as a two-sided book display as well as a screen or room divider. The plastic netting is used in the packing industry but here it provides a good grip for the books as well as a colourful pattern.

# SPECIAL PROJECTS

Founded by Clara Gaggero Westaway and Adrian Westaway, Special Projects are interested in using design to enhance people's quality of life. The studio focuses on digital wellbeing and how technology can be humanised. They also advise technology companies on how to integrate wellbeing features into their software, aiming to help users find a balance between the analogue and digital. 'Mari's goal was to make design accessible to all. We draw inspiration from his ethos, often aiming to create tangible versions of digital experiences, empowering people to manage their technology in a very human and accessible way.'

## **Paper Phone**

2019

Special Projects with Google Creative Lab  
Courtesy of Special Projects

Have you ever felt that you need a break from the digital world? Paper Phone is an experimental app which can give you just that, by printing out a personalised booklet of the information you need that day – contacts, calendars, maps, to-do lists – taken directly from your phone.

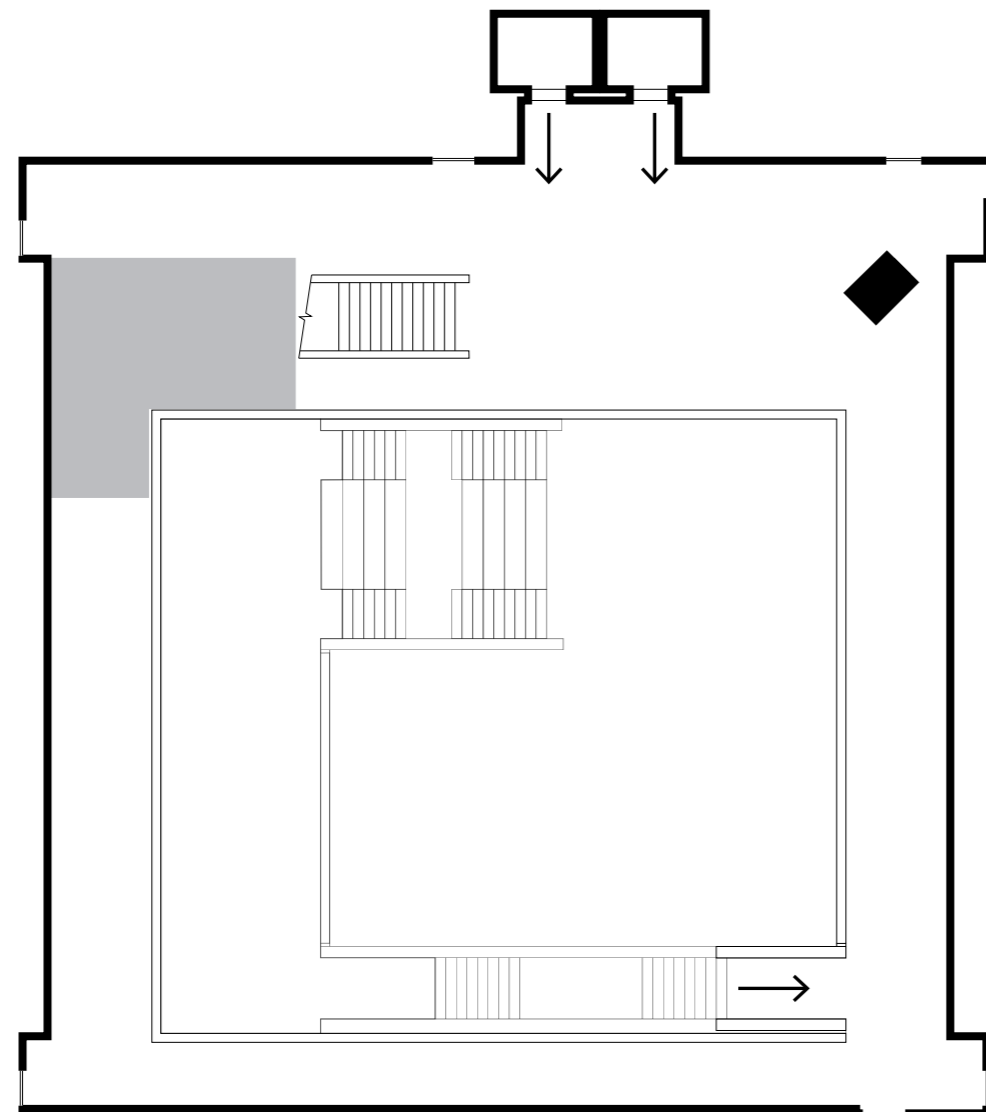
## **Envelope**

2020

Special Projects with Google Creative Lab  
Courtesy of Special Projects,  
prototype by ONN Studio

As an extension of the Paper Phone project, 'Envelope' can transform a smartphone into a calmer, simpler device, aiding digital detox. One envelope turns your phone into a very basic device that can only make and receive calls, while the other turns it into a camera with no screen, helping you focus on what's in front of you

## 2. THE POWER OF COLLABORATION



Enzo Mari often used his designs as well as writing, exhibitions and installations to express his philosophical, ideological views. In the 1970s and 1980s he increasingly stated his opposition to consumer society and gained a sense of responsibility to change things. He believed that if the user was more directly involved in the production of what they consumed then radical change could happen. To this end, he proposed that control should be taken away from industries and corporations and given back to the people.

The designers in this section seek to democratise design and to invite active participation of the user to incite change.

**‘Proposta Per Un’autoprogettazione’**

**(Proposal for a self-design)**

2002

Enzo Mari

Published by Corraini Edizioni,

based on the 1974 original

Design Museum Collection

**‘Proposta Per Un’autoprogettazione’**

**(Proposal for a self-design)**

1974

Enzo Mari

Published by Corraini Edizioni

Design Museum Collection

Perhaps Mari’s most iconic project, ‘Proposal for a self-design’ sought to democratise design and subvert the market. By engaging the public in the production process directly, Mari hoped they would re-evaluate their judgement of good design. Using the simplest carpentry techniques, he designed 19 models of furniture comprising only wooden boards and nails and published the instructions so anyone could self-build the items.

# SOUND ADVICE

Founded by Joseph Henry and Pooja Agrawal in 2020, Sound Advice is a platform dedicated to tackling inequality and racial discrimination in the architecture and built environment industry. Fed up with the often academic discussions around inequality, they started by creating slickly designed slogan-like statements. These led to articles, podcasts and events that focus on inequality in London. Known for being direct and often hard-hitting, they say, 'our tips make people feel quite uncomfortable, but that is the point. In getting people to emotionally respond to difficult issues, it opens the doors to having nuanced conversations in meaningful ways.'

## Now You Know

2021

Edited by Joseph Henry and Pooja Agrawal

Published by Sound Advice

Designed by Joel Antoine-Wilkinson

Courtesy of Sound Advice

This ground-breaking publication was crowdfunded by over 180 supporters and brought together over 60 architects and urbanists of colour to reflect on their experiences of inequality and discrimination in the built environment industry. The contributors' essays, poems and interviews are accompanied by bold advice and song recommendations.

# A PRACTICE FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

The graphic design studio A Practice for Everyday Life (APFEL) was set up by Kirsty Carter and Emma Thomas in 2003. They design graphics and publish a growing library of typefaces based on research and centred on the user, 'whether furniture, print, books, Mari involved people as an active and essential part of the work. Putting this interaction at the centre influenced how we were approaching design, particularly book design and print, thinking about the book as something tactile, interactive, re-thinking its role and format, always thinking of the reader as an active participant, or context as activator.'

## **Type As Readymade**

2020

A Practice for Everyday Life (APFEL)

Published by A Practice for Everyday Life

Design Museum Collection

This publication announced the launch of APFEL's first four retail typefaces, presenting an essay exploring the notion of type as a form of readymade. They positioned their typefaces as tools, encouraging designers to explore their qualities and character or subvert them into something new.

## **Sheila Hicks: Off Grid**

2022

A Practice for Everyday Life (APFEL)

Published by The Hepworth Wakefield

Design Museum Collection

APFEL rethought one of their foundry typefaces for a publication to accompany an exhibition of work by the American artist Sheila Hicks at The Hepworth Wakefield. They used their font to amplify the processes used by Hicks, who pioneered fibre as a sculptural material. On the cover they elongated the letters like the artist's hung textile works and inside the text mimics the look of woven fabric.



## **Yayoi Kusama: Festival of Life**

2018

A Practice for Everyday Life (APFEL)

Published by David Zwirner Books

Design Museum Collection

APFEL were asked to design a cover for the catalogue of Yayoi Kusama's 2017 exhibition at the David Zwirner Gallery in New York. They decided to use bold graphics to reference the red dots of one of the artist's installations – 'With All My Love for the Tulips, I Pray Forever' (2011). The dots are reproduced at 1:1 scale, so that the publication can camouflage itself within the installation in a participatory way.

# RESOLVE

RESOLVE is an interdisciplinary design collective founded by Akil Scarfe-Smith and Seth Scarfe-Smith combining architecture, engineering, technology and art to address social challenges. An integral part of their practice involves designing with and for young people and under-represented groups in society. They see design as more than its aesthetic value; it is also a mechanism for political and socio-economic change. 'For us, design – as much as process – is an exercise in re-seeing and reconsidering the things around us, it's about how we can positively transform people's neighbourhoods in their everyday lives.'

## Furniture from Breaking the Façade

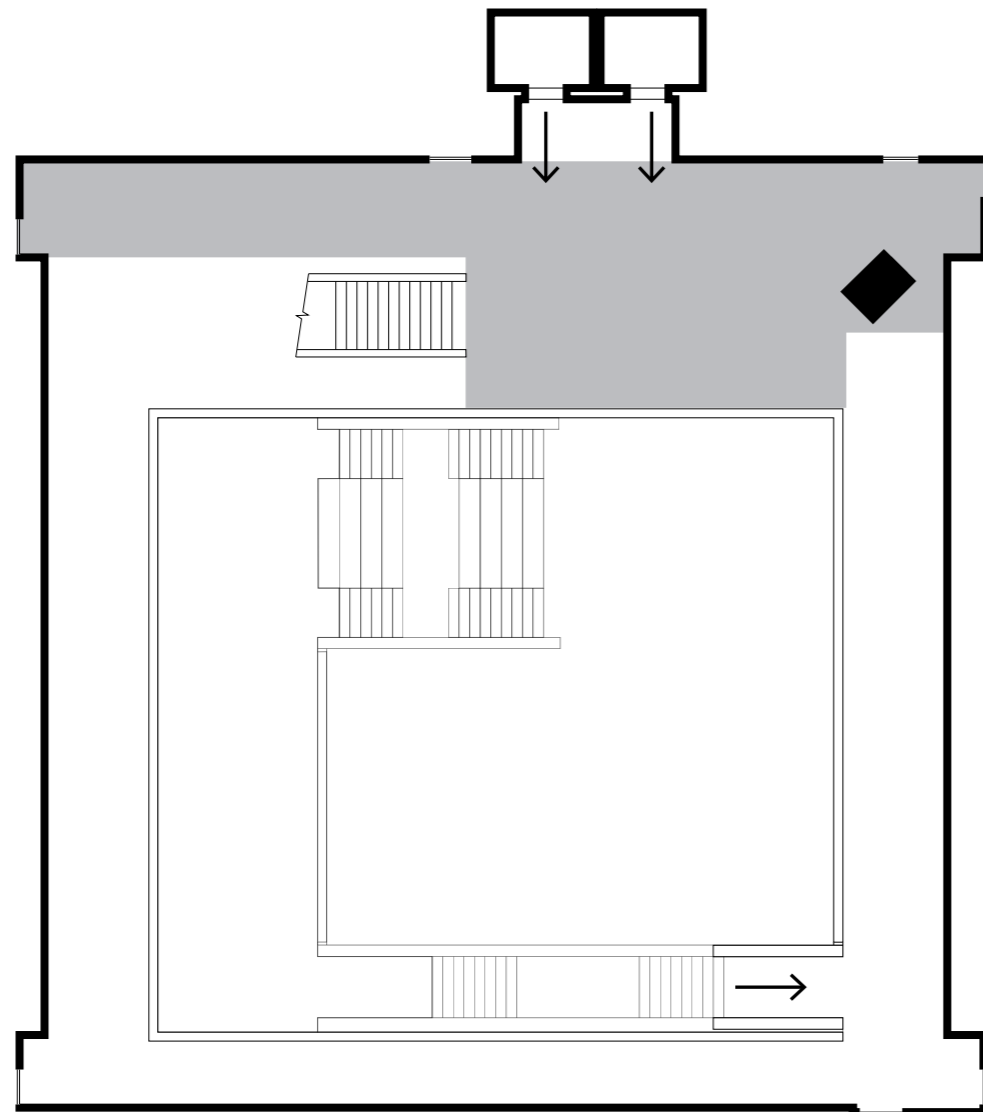
2021

Ardagh Young Creatives (Studio Crypt)  
in collaboration with RESOLVE Collective  
Found wood

Courtesy of the Design Museum Learning department

These stools were made by the Ardagh Young Creatives, a programme at the Design Museum to create pathways into design for under-represented 14- to 16-year-olds. Co-designed with RESOLVE Collective, they constructed furniture as a place to gather within the theme of Care. The furniture is constructed using found pieces of wood and innovative joinery, considering the story of the materials.

### 3. MAKING IT PLAYFUL



Games and books for children were among Enzo Mari's first projects. Early in his career, Mari became a father and was struck by the speed at which children absorb knowledge through trial and error. He believed that the more freedom children had in play, the greater their enjoyment – but that adults could also benefit from the joy of playfulness. Through simplified silhouettes and a great economy of form, Mari's designs encouraged independent play and sparked imagination.

The designers in this section explore ways in which design can and should be playful.

**'16 Fish' puzzle**

1974

Designed by Enzo Mari

Produced by Danese Milano

Resin

Design Museum Collection

This toy's components can be played with individually or assembled into a puzzle. Mari drew the outlines of simple sea creature forms with one continuous line, which was then cut from resin or wood.

# STUDIOMAMA

Designers Nina Tolstrup and Jack Mama set up Studiomama in 2000. Their work is driven by a dedication to sustainability, recycling materials and using new forms of upcycling. Their design process is often spontaneous and playful in nature, and much like Mari their work explores imaginative play. ‘We love how Enzo Mari’s body of work incorporates a playful and experimental spirit – whilst seamlessly traversing the fields of art, industrial design, architecture and graphic design.’

## **Selection of creatures made for the Off-Cuts project**

2009

Studiomama

Wood

Courtesy of Studiomama

## **Sketches of creatures made for the Off-Cuts project**

2009

Studiomama

Pen on paper

Courtesy of Studiomama

Studiomama made these wooden creatures with left-over bits of wood for fun and to avoid waste. The off-cuts came from their Palette project, in which they made furniture from discarded wooden pallets with open-source instructions. This was part of 10 TEN X in 2009, for which ten designers created products using materials sourced from within a ten-mile radius of their studios with a budget of £10.

### **Worm Alphabet animation**

2019

Studiomama and Otto Mama

Duration: 33 Seconds

Courtesy of Studiomama

Inspired by the humble worm, Studiomama created this playful alphabet. Each letter is formed with a continuous line incorporating two dots for the eyes, giving every worm its own unique character.

### **Worm Alphabet poster**

2019

Studiomama and Otto Mama

Courtesy of Studiomama

# STUDY O PORTABLE

Founded by Bernadette Deddens and Tetsuo Mukai, Study O Portable looks to transform mundane and ordinary objects into pieces that challenge the imagination and invite engagement. They say, 'Mari's work is an inspiration as well as a source of interpretation and interpolation for many but regardless of the nature of influence, the impact it has seems to be due to his intensity and determination, always critical and occasionally humorous'.

## **Incomplete Copy 5/9**

2023

Study O Portable

Aluminium, wood, foam, cotton jacquard fabric

Courtesy of Gallery Fumi

The puffed-up, upholstered structure behind you is an experiment in seating. Its form is inspired by Sol LeWitt's 'Incomplete Cubes' artwork but blows it up to useable proportions to create a playful and conceptual seat. The jacquard covering it features versions of LeWitt's Incomplete Cubes.

## **Variations of Incomplete Open Cubes**

1974

Sol Le Witt

In the 1970s and 80s, the American artist Sol LeWitt systematically explored all the ways to create an incomplete, open cube shape. He found there were 122 possibilities which he documented in the form of diagrams and models.

# RIO KOBAYASHI

Born in Japan to a family of artisans, Rio Kobayashi's work approaches fine craftsmanship with a twist of light-heartedness. Often working in wood, he experiments with fabrication techniques and colours, blending elements of his cultural heritage to create objects that are sophisticated yet playful. For Kobayashi, it is important that 'a toy keeps one company all the way from childhood to adulthood'.

## **Chiro Chiro Mobile**

2022

Rio Kobayashi

Walnut wood

Courtesy of Rio Kobayashi

The design of the mobile hanging from the column behind you invites imagination. The name 'chiro chiro' is borrowed from a Japanese expression whose pronunciation resembles the sound some reptiles make. Yet the subject of the mobile is open to interpretation – it could be a bird, an aeroplane, a flying fish, a snake, or anything else we imagine it to be.

## **Fatty Tuna table**

2023

Rio Kobayashi and James Hague

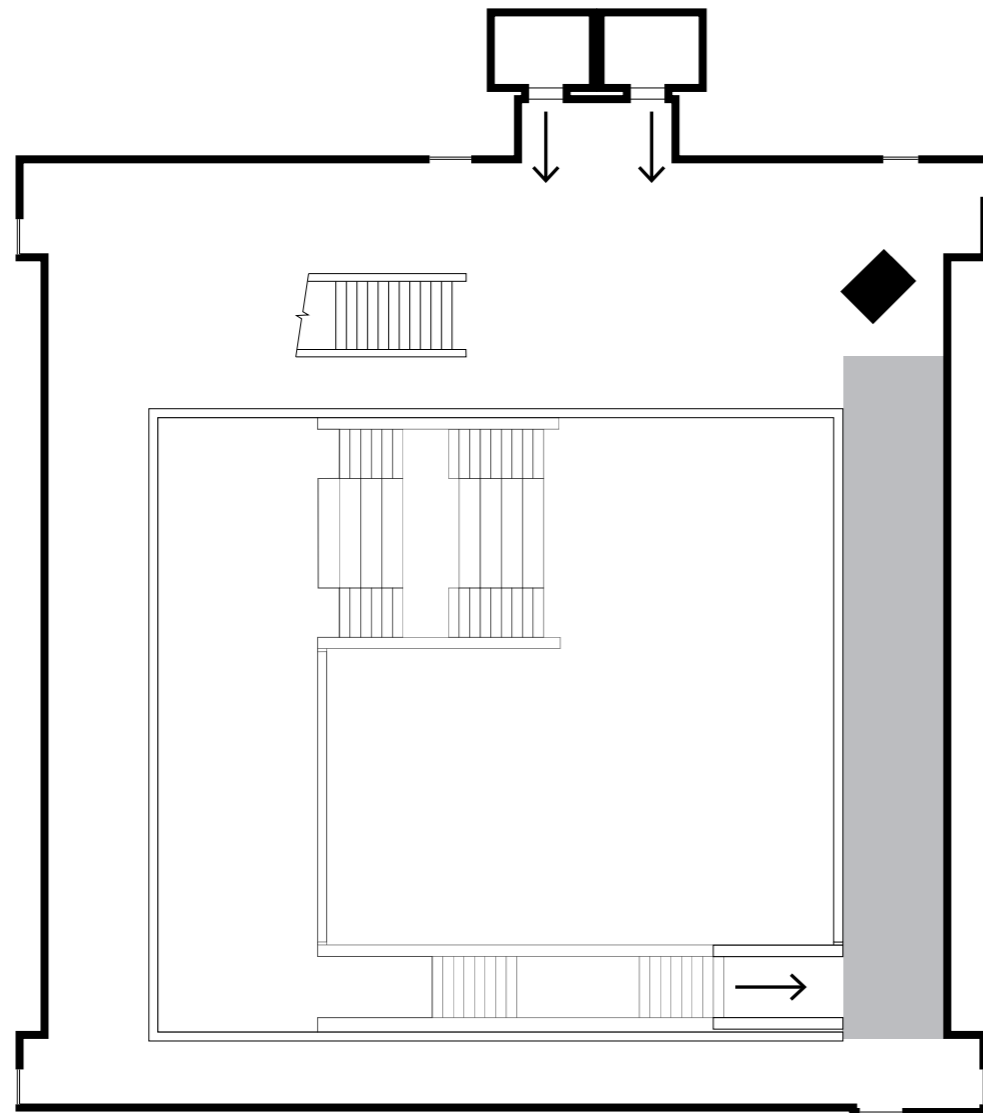
Oak, acrylic paint

Courtesy of Rio Kobayashi

Behind you, this unusually shaped table is a collaboration with painter James Hague, the tabletop taking the shape of Hague's painting of a fish. Kobayashi had the idea to turn the fish into a four-legged creature, featuring a shark fin that doubles up as a serving board.



## 4. SIMPLIFYING FORM



Throughout Enzo Mari's career the idea of different object archetypes was dominant. Avoiding anything new for the sake of it, Mari honoured forms which had stood the test of time. He often spoke about his horror at the over-complication of other designers' work and sought ways to simplify his own. His designs for everyday objects were intended to be affordable, durable and multi-functional. Stripped to their bare essence, they exemplify his singular pursuit of reduction – both of form, and of industrial processes.

The designers in this section explore how design can be simplified, economised and made to function better.

## **Smith & Smith cheese grater**

1987

Designed by Enzo Mari

Produced by Danese Milano

Stainless steel, aluminium

Design Museum Collection

Many of Mari's designs sought to optimise form and simplify everyday objects so that they worked better for those who used them. When rethinking the design of a humble cheese grater, he decided to put the handle on the side for increased stability and ease of use

# JASPER MORRISON

Jasper Morrison is known for the apparent simplicity of his designs. Uncomplicated and understated, his work questions what 'good design' is and he strives to create objects that are understated, useful and made responsibly. He shares Mari's interest in 'true form', saying 'I greatly admire his conceptual approach to design, and though I am less conceptual in my approach, we share an appreciation of archetypes and arriving at a design by elimination of possibilities.'

## **A World Without Words**

1992

Jasper Morrison

Duration: 14 minutes, 34 seconds

Courtesy of Jasper Morrison

For his first lecture at the 'Istituto Europeo di Design' in Milan, Morrison decided not to say anything. Instead, he made a slide show of images that had made an impression on him, including Mari's designs. He used the flat-bed camera at the Royal College of Art Library in London to make the slides, which he projected alternately on two slide carousels so each image was shown alongside another. People could ask him questions in the bar afterwards.

## **Zampa chair**

2019

Designed by Jasper Morrison

Produced by Mattiazzi

Ash wood

Courtesy of Jasper Morrison

Morrison was inspired to distil the idea of a chair to its core function by looking at a commonplace country stool, handmade with curved legs and a roughly connected circular seat. The chair has only a few elements, keeping joints to a minimum to enhance the design's simplicity and as a 'protest against fashion and fakeness' in the furniture industry.

# JACLYN PAPPALARDO

Jaclyn Pappalardo's practice is informed by her background in set design. She has a particular interest in seating and looks at chairs as a study of the body and form itself, not just as functional objects. She likes to use unconventional techniques and works with repeating patterns with the aim of distilling the design's final form. In her attempts to simplify her designs she looks towards Enzo Mari and his legacy: 'the reason why his pieces are still around is because he's been obsessively trying to perfect his way of designing'.

## Chair prototypes

2019

Jaclyn Pappalardo

Cardboard, latex, modelling lead

Courtesy of Jaclyn Pappalardo

These chair prototypes were part of Pappalardo's design process, which culminated in the Meta chair. Originally intended to create a bench called La Curva, Pappalardo took the simple profile of a person's seated position, distilling the form down to its simplest parts. This linear pattern was then repeated to create a never-ending possibility of furniture pieces.

## Meta chair

2019

Jaclyn Pappalardo

Pine, upholstery foam, fabric

Courtesy of Jaclyn Pappalardo

The Meta chair series explores how a sequence of patterns could create a chair with infinite possibilities, turning it into a wider seat or even a bench. The design uses interlocking systems that join the sections together, making it interchangeable based on the user's needs and choices. The chair can be extended to have as many parts as desired.

# INDUSTRIAL FACILITY

The work of Sam Hecht and Kim Colin, founders of Industrial Facility, is characterised by a thoughtful consideration of form and a sensitive and well-researched approach to how objects are used day to day. It is what they call 'a duty to ensure the project has not just commercial credibility but also usefulness, appropriateness and longevity.' The approach has a close affinity with Mari, whom Industrial Facility worked with at Japanese retailer Muji.

## **Ishinomaki chair**

2021

Design by Industrial Facility

Produced by SCP Ltd., England for SCP × Ishinomaki

Redwood pine, steel

Courtesy SCP Ltd.

This chair explores the minimum elements needed to transform something from a stool to a chair. The simple backrest is formed from tubular steel, without sacrificing comfort. Made from red cedar wood, the size of the seat and legs derive from the most efficient way of using a standard plank of wood.

## **Two-Timer clock**

2008

Designed by Industrial Facility

Produced by Established & Sons

Two clock movements, aluminium pressed housing, screen printed glass

Courtesy of Industrial Facility

This clock is designed to allow the time in two time zones to be displayed on one clock face. You can gauge what your family or colleagues abroad might be up to at any given point in the day: an analogue design for a digital, globalised world.

**Design development showing 'found' disposable  
wooden cutlery with form studies for the MUJI knife,  
alongside the final MUJI cutlery set**

2007

Industrial Facility

Wood, stainless steel

Courtesy of Industrial Facility

The cutlery on the right takes the form of single-use cutlery but is made from durable stainless steel. By taking the ergonomic and space-saving form of disposable cutlery but switching the material, Industrial Facility transform it into something sustainable, affordable and long-lasting

# MARTINO GAMPER

Gamper's work spanning furniture, interiors and books is playful, intuitive and resourceful. It centres around the necessity of creating something useful while also being imaginative. Gamper met Enzo Mari when he was studying at the Academy of Applied Arts, Vienna in the 1990s. He says, 'it didn't take long until we realised that this specific designer had a very different singular approach to looking at design but a very strong and a very deep and intellectual way at looking at design too'.

**'Proposta Per Un'autoprogettazione'**  
**(Proposal for a self-design)**  
**revised 'L'ultimo mobile per Enzo'**  
**(The Last Furniture for Enzo)**  
2024

Martino Gamper  
Courtesy of Martino Gamper

**'Proposta Per Un'autoprogettazione'**  
**(Proposal for a self-design)**  
**revised 'L'ultimo mobile per Lea'**  
**(The Last Furniture for Lea)**  
2024

Martino Gamper  
Courtesy of Martino Gamper



**'L'ultimo mobile per Enzo'  
(The Last Furniture for Enzo)**

2020

Martino Gamper

Wood, nails

Courtesy of Martino Gamper

**'L'ultimo mobile per Lea'  
(The Last Furniture for Lea)**

2020

Martino Gamper

Wood, nails

Courtesy of Martino Gamper

To pay tribute to the late Enzo Mari and his wife, the art critic Lea Vergine, following their deaths within hours of each other in 2020, Gamper designed these two scale coffins created in the style of Mari's seminal 'Autoprogettazione'. He applied Mari's restricted use of standard sized wood and nails to make the coffins at 1:5 scale. He says, 'creating an object for someone you care for could be an interesting process for all of us. Sawing and hammering and remembering the person.'

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## **Curator**

Esme Hawes

## **Project Management**

Susanna Pousette Okudzeto

## **Exhibition and Graphic Design**

Wolfe Hall

## **Lighting Design**

Beam Lighting Design

## **Interpretation Editor**

Susan Dymond

## **Exhibition Build and Object Installation**

Rowan Newton and freelance team

## **Graphics Production**

Seacourt

The Design Museum wishes to express its sincere thanks to the museums, institutions, studios, design practices and individuals who have generously lent objects and shared intellectual property to support this exhibition.

## **Images**

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