

C O L L E C T I B L E

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What can they do
besides exile me or
make me disappear?
They have no
imagination or
creativity. AI WEIWEI



Nomadic Roaming

MASSIMILIANO GIONI
VALENTINA DE' MATHÀ
ETTORE SOTTASS
SANDRINE & MICHAEL

AYA SATO
TONI THORIMBERT
SERGI PONS
UNSEEN

HOLLY SILIUS
THE COCKETTES
CHELSEA WOLFE
TOM MORAN

PALAIS IDEAL
BATTLE OF MOSUL
LISETTA CARMİ
EIKE SCHMİDT

ON ETTORE SOTTSASS AND RECAPTURING MICROSCOPIC GESTURES, ELEMENTARY ACTIONS AND A SENSE OF ONE'S POSITION

He would have turned one hundred this year. An architect and designer (he didn't like to be called "artist"), Sottsass was one of the most important and nonconformist figures in the landscape of twentieth-century design and architecture. Numerous exhibitions are being held around the world celebrate his contributions: "Design Radical" at the Met Breuer in New York (21 July-8 October 2017); "Rebel and Poet" at the Vitra Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany (14 July-29 September 2017); "Ettore Sottsass, There is a planet" at the Triennale in Milan (15 September 2017-11 March 2018). And in Venice, on San Giorgio island, the exhibition "Ettore Sottsass: il vetro" (Ettore Sottsass: Glass) wound to a close at the end of July 2017.

Professional and creative nomadism is a definition often employed when people attempt to pigeonhole Sottsass's creations within a critical framework. Incomplete and imprecise, but this definition may come closest to the essence of his fascinating, polyhedral personality; to his extremely personal way of exploring all the different fields of a given project, from design to architecture, drawing and poetry.

"What's design got to do with destinies? Perhaps it would be better to get used to drawing dark uncertainty rather than presuming to draw certainties..."

A free spirit and tireless traveler, Sottsass was continuously searching for spirituality. During his travels around the globe he photographed architecture, homes, objects, people and situations, documenting ways of living, man's presence on the planet, and the transitory and precarious nature of mankind. He wrote beautiful, poetic texts that remain a pleasure to read and reread. In them we can intuit that they lead us very close to the essence and root of things in life; things that he experienced, loved and which inspired him.

"...Architecture must be the mark and invitation, and people spontaneously showed us the way: a path made of light, living things; of delicate, tender structures; of sweet, simple materials like wood, sand, ancient canvas and ceramics; a path made of soft, mobile lights found beneath a forest canopy; made especially for humans who want to meet other humans and other worlds, who would rather live than leave something behind for posterity..."

- Ettore Sottsass, "Alberghi e tende" (Hotels and Tents), 1953, in the book Ettore Sottsass, Scritti (Writings) 1946-2001. Published by Neri Pozza Editore 2002.

A rebel and bold individual who could be as charismatic as he could be difficult to get along with, Sottsass continuously employed an unconventional approach throughout six decades of continuous experimentation, one that was untraditional and ran against the logic of "bourgeois good taste." America and its culture were especially attractive to him, and can be seen in many of his projects which, with apparent lightness, unite the spirituality of the hippie era with pop culture.

Another of Sottsass's grand passions was India, from its millennial history to its archetypical daily objects and nomads, all of which helped accentuate the philosophical and meditative aspect of his design vision.

"The land of the tent, unformed, uncertain, temporary, brings together within the limits of the human dimension shreds of cosmic epiphany, as well as a story of the doubts, hopes, fears, anger, joys and hysterias of human adventures."

-Ettore Sottsass, "L'arte dei popoli nomadi" (The arts of nomadic peoples), 1999, in the book Ettore Sottsass, Scritti (Writings) 1946-2001. Published by Neri Pozza Editore 2002.

"...The colors of ancient nomads were not yet imagined in order to represent the comforts of religion, of any religion, of any hope for a great beyond. In the colors of nomads in Asia there's no hope, not even a little bit. There's no comfort, no pact with the celestial darkness: there's merely a profound awareness of the imbalance between cosmic and human destinies. There is consideration of an insurmountable injustice..."

-Ettore Sottsass, "L'arte dei popoli nomadi" (The Arts of Nomadic Peoples), 1999, in the book Ettore Sottsass, Scritti (Writings) 1946-2001. Published by Neri Pozza Editore 2002.

In the early 1970s Ettore Sottsass created "Metafore" (Metaphors), a series of essential, nomadic, ephemeral and light architectural installations created using fabric, rope and rocks in desert landscapes across the United States, Italy and Spain. They were built with images and words of absolute beauty and could boast a powerful emotional impact, where the landscapes are immutable and man is merely a fragile, transitory fragment, calling into question contemporary design and architecture, both of which are more linked to the logic of production and consumption than to the real needs of human beings.

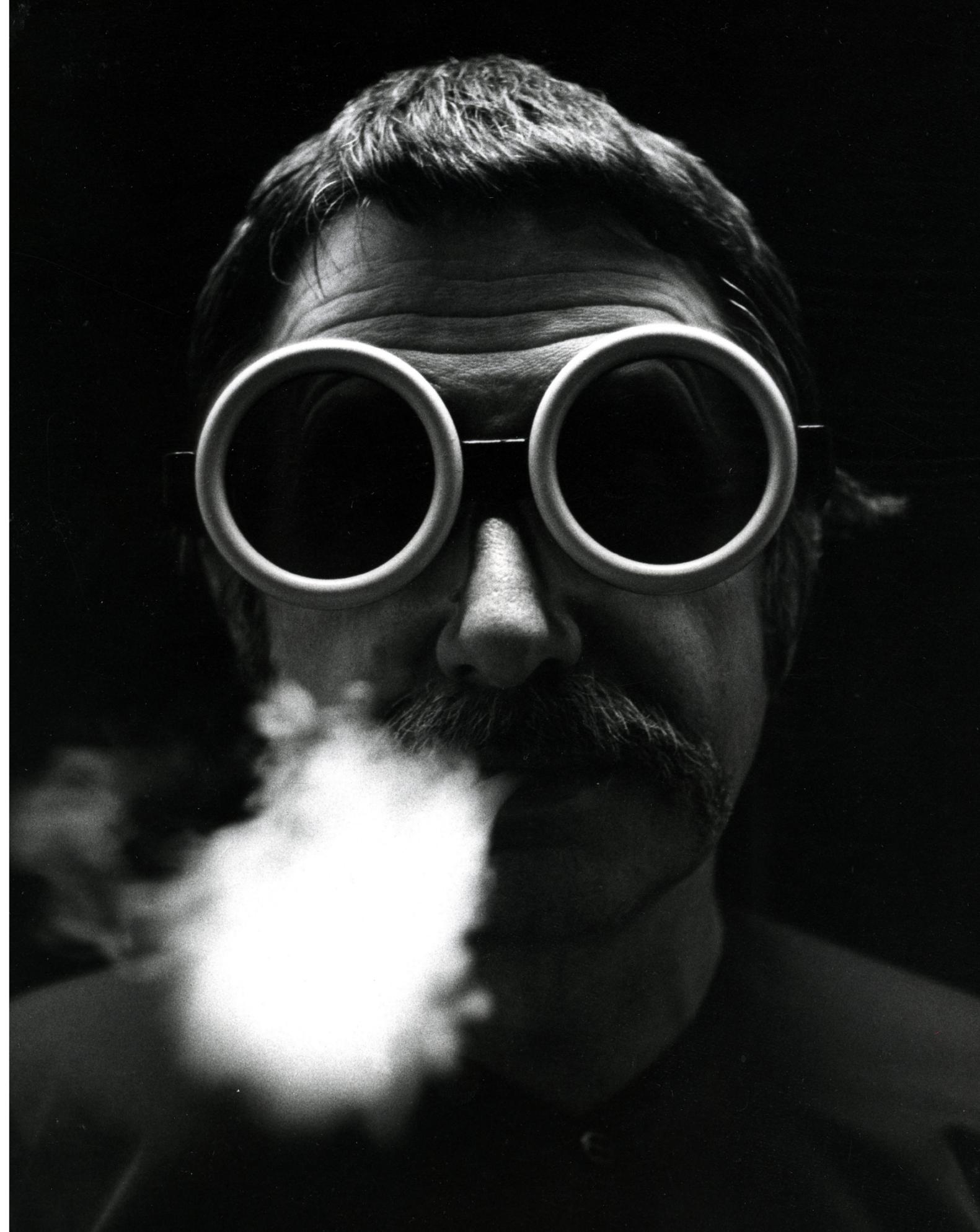
"I felt a great need to visit deserts, mountains, to reestablish a physical relationship with the cosmos, the only real environment, precisely because it is not measurable, nor foreseeable, nor controllable, nor knowable... I felt that if we want to recapture something, we need to start by recapturing microscopic gestures, elementary actions and a sense of one's own position."

The "Metafore" project was collected by the author and included in a sort of posthumous story/private diary in which he establishes a dialogue with his history and memory, and published in Ettore Sottsass, edited by Achille Bonito Oliva and published by Photology (2004), as well as in Ettore Sottsass, Metafore, edited by Milco Carboni and Barbara Radice, published by Skira editore, Milan (2002).

During the early 1980s, the "Memphis" project brought Sottsass global recognition. Together with Barbara Radice and a group of young architects and designers - including Matteo Thun, Marco Zanini, Aldo Cibic, Nathalie du Pasquier and George Sowden - Sottsass created a visionary movement that produced never-before-seen home furnishings: free volumes, bright colors, elementary forms that all helped produce a domestic visual panorama that was completely different from anything in the past, now literally swept away by this new vital, joyous and disruptive scenario. This creative project would attract participation from people all over the world, including the spontaneous participation of part of an entire generation of young designers who found in the Memphis movement a much longed-for revolution of the status quo.

Sottsass's influence was - and continues to be today - enormous in the evolution of design thinking and contemporary architecture. Each and every one of us, perhaps without even being aware of it, has changed his or her own way of thinking about everyday objects in the wake of the sea change this gifted Italian generated.

Portrait of **Ettore Sottsass, 1974** Photo by Bruno Cecchelli, Courtesy of SIAE 2017





Images **Ettore Sottsass "Rebel and Poet"** Exhibition at Vitra Museum in Weil am Rhein until September 2017

Ettore Sottsass ^ image from the series **Metafore** Balaguer, 1974. Courtesy of Studio Ettore Sottsass

Ettore Sottsass v image from the series **Metafore** Banolas, 1973. Courtesy of Studio Ettore Sottsass

