

Memphis design- michele de lucchi and ettore sottsass

[Art & Culture](#), [Artists](#)



Postmodernism- Memphis Design-Michele De Lucchi and Ettore Sottsass

Postmodernism- Memphis Design-Michele De Lucchi and Ettore Sottsass

One of the best examples of postmodernist design that shows a postmodern use of history is the Italian furniture work of Michele De Lucchi and Ettore Sottsass for Memphis design group (McDermott, 2007, p. 163). The Memphis was a renowned Italian design group founded in Milan in 1981 primarily for the design of most modern furniture, ceramics, fabrics and other objects. Originally dubbed the new design, the postmodernist furniture works of Michele De Lucchi and Ettore Sottsass were particularly characterized by ephemeral design featuring asymmetrical shapes and colorful decorations that occasionally alluded to the earlier modernist styles (Barbara, R. 1981, p. 25). With inspirations derived from earlier movements such as Pop Art and Art Deco, the colors were used in both a graphic and dynamic way.

Fig 1: Post Modernist Memphis Furniture Design

The use of history in the Memphis post modernist furniture is particularly evidenced by the way their colorful designs that were reminiscent of the 1950s and 1960s 'op' art movement. The use of history and drawing of inspirations from the past in post modernism was particularly meant to counter the modernist concepts of writing history or starting from scratch after all was lost during the war (Butler, 2002 p. 57). The social and cultural changes in 1970 led to the reaction against modernism. Designers embraced popular consumerism and culture. The modernistic principle required all objects to functional. Radical designers started to define a new language for design and moved away from functional well-designed goods. Ettore sottsass

<https://assignbuster.com/memphis-design-michele-de-lucchi-and-ettore-sottsass/>

and De Lucchi were particularly frustrated by the rigid attitudes of the international design community (Design Museum 2001).

As opposed to the modernists, the post modernist artists were inspired by cultural, emotional philosophical, ancient, and contemporary influences. Together with De Lucchi and other designers, he founded Memphis to explore a visual language for design based on the popular culture and kitsch (Ettore and Musoe, 2007, p. 15). The group wanted to experiment with new designs and materials. Ettore wanted to discover new and unique ways of using materials to bring a wealth of historical, cultural, and artistic influences, including contemporary references from films, sci-fi, and computer games to design. The group believed fashion was for a season and did not consider functionality in their designs. They produced diverse range of products and interiors' using different materials like textiles, furniture, glass, and ceramic. They combined expensive and cheap materials like plastic laminate. Their products were manufactured in small numbers for the educated few and the wealthy.

One of Memphis fundamental objective was to make design into a unique, conscious instrument of communication. According to Sparke (2008, p. 87), this departed sharply from cultural altitude of design as the tool to change the world using rational design. They designs drew influences from the past, present and from different cultures. Their products were colorful, often asymmetrical, multi-patterned, and playful. Many of their designs were costly due to the unique design and skills required to produce a single object. Their work proposed use of alternative materials that concentrated in the expressive and emotional relations between man and objects.

References

Barbara, R. 1981. Memphis: Research, Experiences, Results, Failures and Successes of New Design. New York: Rizzoli.

Butler, C. 2002. Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction. London, UK: Oxford University Press.

Ettore, S. & Museo, A. 2007, Design Interviews: Ettore Sottsass (Omegna (Verbania): Mantova: Museo Alessi.

McDermott, C. 2007. Design: the key concepts. London, UK: Routledge Publishers.

Sparke, P. 2008. Italian Design: 1870 to the Present. London, United Kingdom: Thames & Hudson Publishers.