

The conquest of space

Fondazione studio museo Vico Magistretti
From 30.03.2023 to 29.02.2024
Opening 29.03.2023, h 7pm

On 29 March 2023 Fondazione studio museo Vico Magistretti presents the exhibition *The conquest of space*, curated by Matilde Cassani, Gabriele Neri and Luca Poncellini, of the Scientific Committee of Fondazione Vico Magistretti.

Vico Magistretti was one of the protagonists of the exhibition *Italy: the New Domestic Landscape*, organized at MoMA New York in 1972 as a tribute to Italian design. Seven products designed by Vico were featured in the *Objects* section, containing the most paradigmatic pieces of Italian design at the time, according to the curator Emilio Ambasz. Until today, there has been no trace of Magistretti in the other section of the exhibition, *Environments*, where the installations by 12 Italian architects and designers illustrated habitat proposals for the future.

Nevertheless, archives – as we know – can become an endless resource, and those of Vico are no exception. Magistretti had in fact submitted a concept around the theme of future habitation, but the project was not selected by the museum in New York, and was thus never implemented: it exists only on paper, in the foundation's files.

Though simply outlined in nascent form, with unresolved doubts and a few theoretical reservations – “*I don't know how this can be made*” or “*I do not believe in the problems of a very distant future*,” Vico wrote – the project provides many insights into his approach to the theme of living space, through drawings and notes.

The central issue is “the conquest of space” – as Magistretti put it – namely reflections taken forward across a lifetime on the optimization of spaces in our homes, to offer better quality of life even in small spaces.

Vico succinctly described his project as follows: “*From analysis of the use of volume in the home we can observe that in comparison with a very suffocating utilization of floorspace, there is only very limited or completely non-existent use of the volume available in the upper part of rooms. In particular, we can say that most of the furniture we require (above all the most bulky items) could be positioned elsewhere with respect to the floor. I am thinking about all the storage furniture, such as wardrobes, bookcases and so on. I would like to experiment with the possibility of ‘parking’ these items in the upper portion of the volume, creating a load-bearing ceiling from which to hang this furniture.*”

The exhibition also examines many other projects, from the postwar era to the 2000s, which bear witness to Vico's interest in the themes of space and habitation, flexibility and transformability: from the lodgings created for the prefab company MBM to the temporary living of the Residence Siloe in northern Milan; from the Piccy folding chair of 1946 to the design of an umbrella, Magistretti's favourite object, a perfect synthesis of functionality and simplicity.

The installation coordinated by Chiara Corbani and Valentina Cerra develops and applies, in the spaces of Fondazione Vico Magistretti, the project proposed by Vico for MoMA New York: all the stories and insights are suspended from the ceiling, ready to be lowered to the floor by the visitors.

In this way, Fondazione Vico Magistretti conquers space and can welcome, in its small rooms, various conversations, workshops and encounters on the themes of the exhibition. The calendar of these events will soon be announced.

Exhibition curated by Matilde Cassani, Gabriele Neri, Luca Poncellini

Exhibition design by Chiara Corbani with Valentina Cerra

Graphic design by Lorenzo Mazzali

Model by Università IUAV di Venezia

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Fondazione studio museo Vico Magistretti – Opening hours

Tuesday 10am/6pm

Thursday 2pm/8pm

Last Saturday of the month 11am/3pm

Entrance fee with guided tour 5€

Admission by booking. For information and reservations www.vicomagistretti.it

During Salone del Mobile, from April 18 to 23, the foundation is open every day from 11am to 8pm, free entry and no reservation required

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