

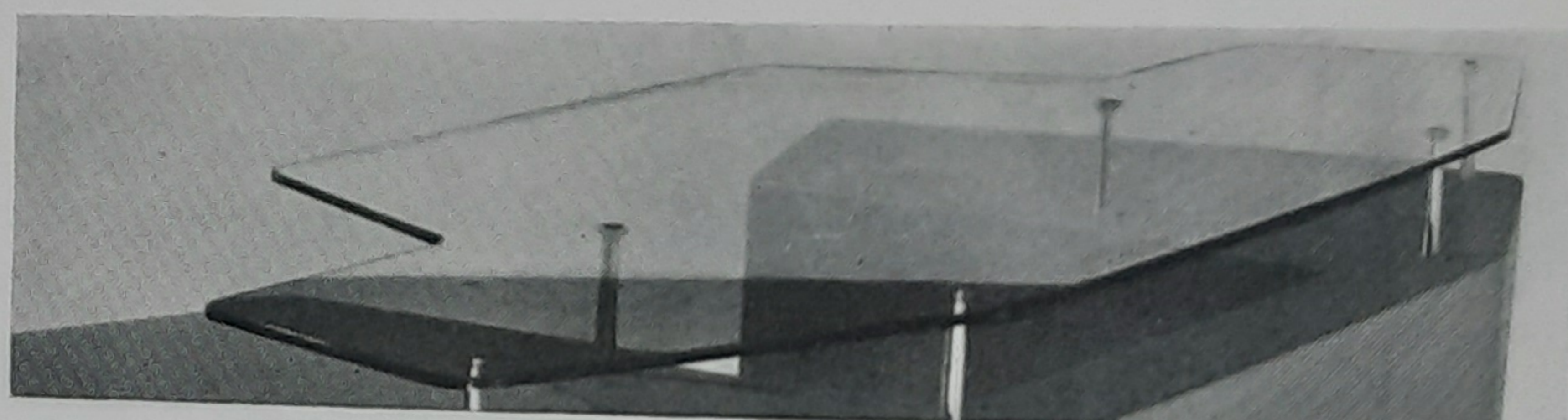
The basic unit: a trapezoidal drawer container with grooved, hook-on shoulder.

Alberto Rosselli, another of those typical Milanese architects who regard three careers as a good day's work, is a commentator on industrial design for *Domus* magazine, and also a consultant for VIS, the Italian safety glass manufacturers. It is for them that he experimented with a very familiar idea—that of demountable or component office desk units—with quite unfamiliar results.

Nevertheless, the application of glass is not the most original thing about his system. The other materials he has used are unusual too—and practical: molded plywood frames tightly sheathed in colorful, cleanable, everything-proof vinylite. But the materials, unusual though they may

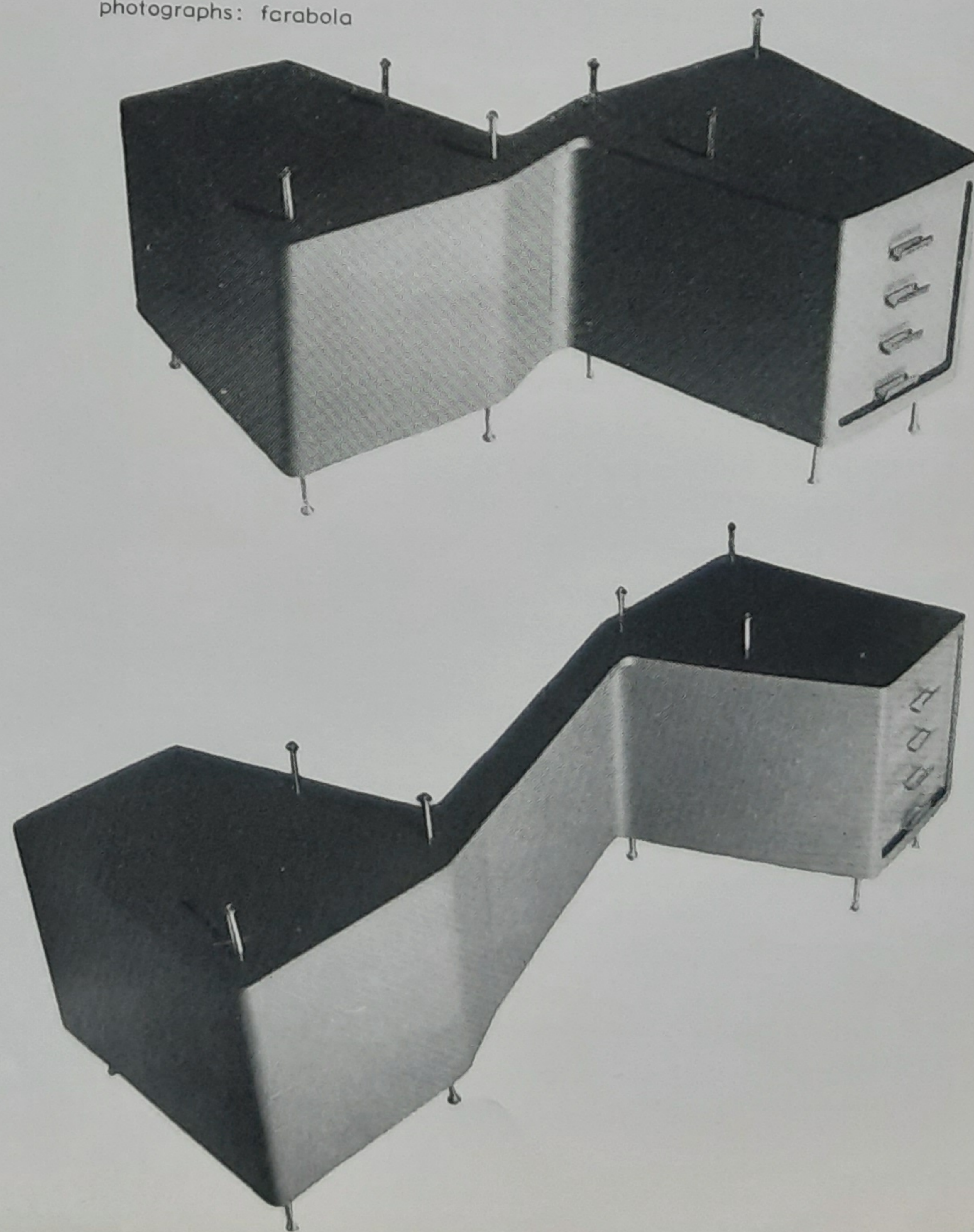


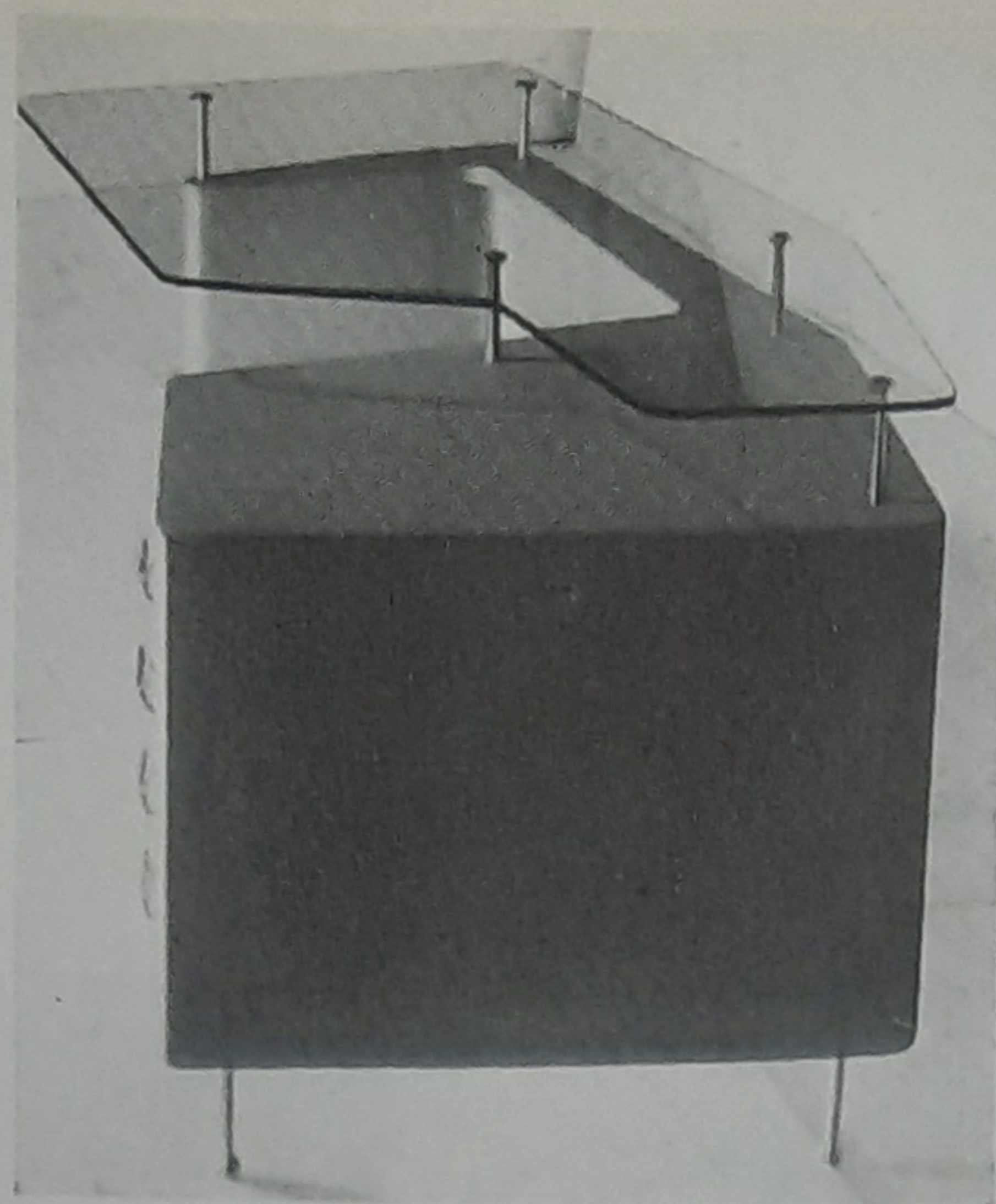
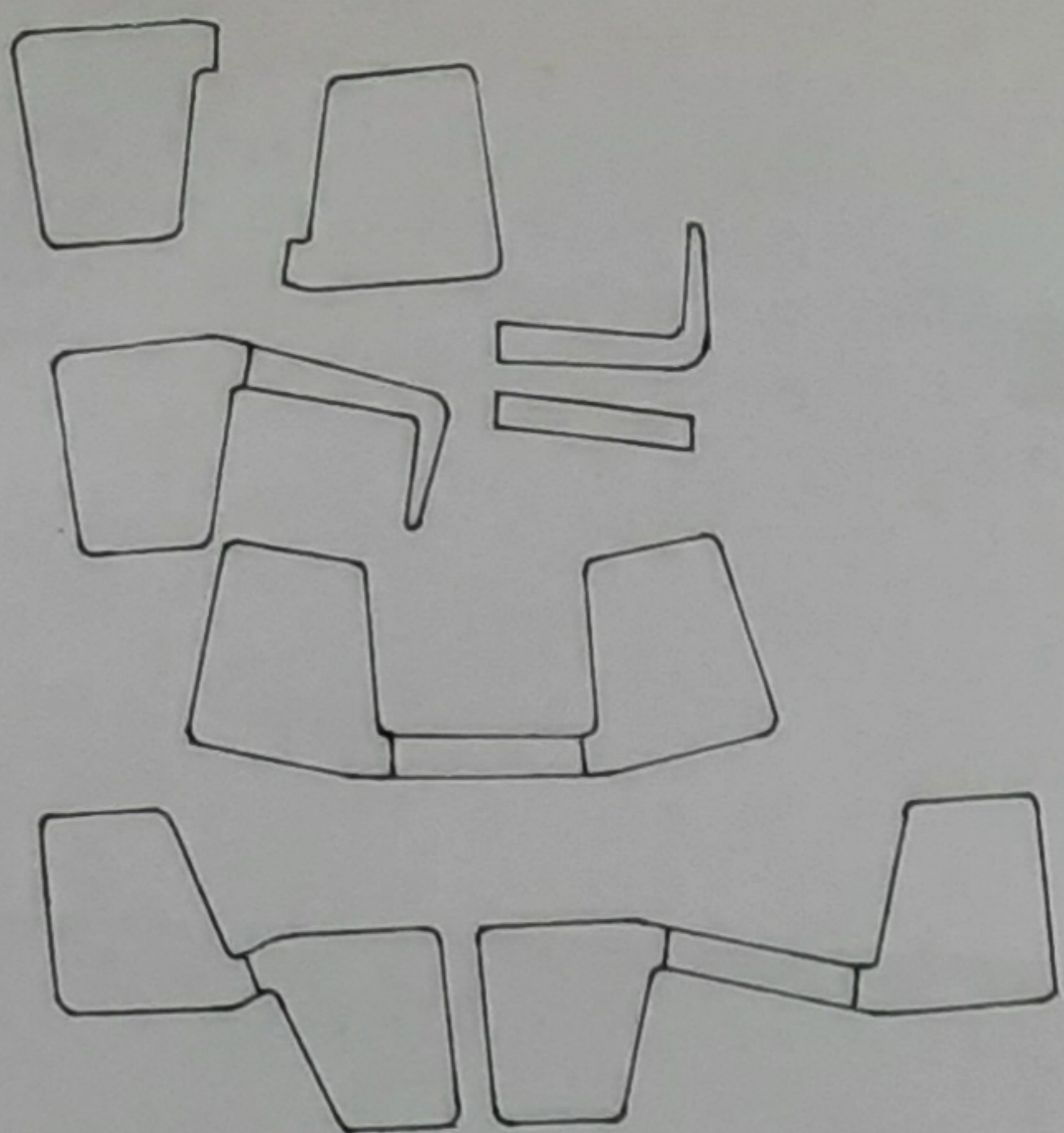
## Rosselli's demountable desks and tables



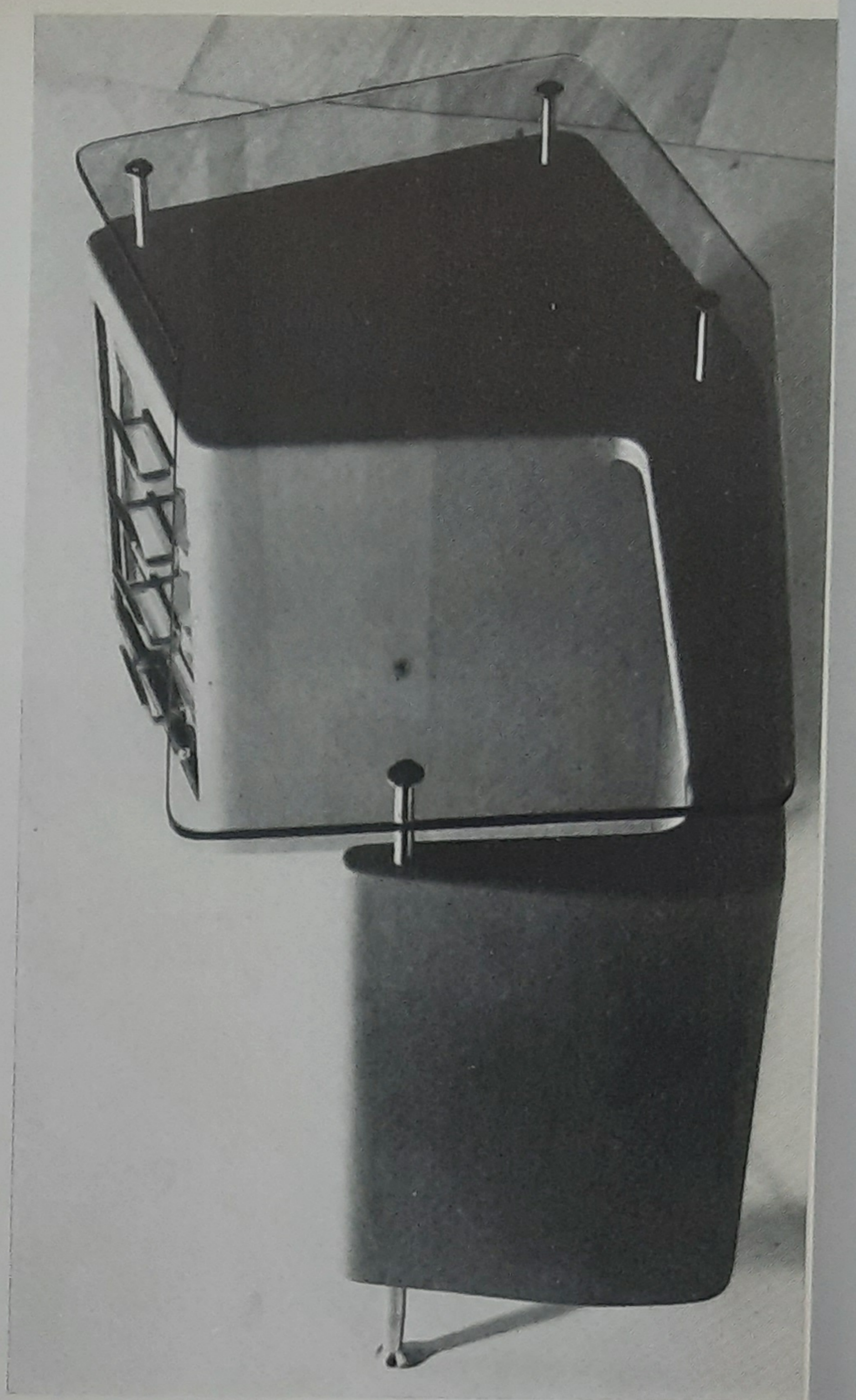
Glass tops vary in shape according to the arrangement desired, but are invariably cantilevered towards the worker's chair. Below: for a compact face-to-face zig-zag set-up, units are hooked at their grooved shoulders. Bottom: for a more elongated zig-zag and a longer work surface, an arm unit is inserted. Left: plywood drawers have glass fronts, brass pulls, pins and legs.

photographs: farabola





All the component parts are outlined in the drawing. The conventional executive desk arrangement of two units connected by a shield is shown both in the drawing and in the narrow photograph of the glass top on the opposite page. Photographs on this page show the minimal set-up—storage unit and curved shield—from different angles. The cut-away in the glass top is for a telephone. Look sharp on the inner side of the desk at right for the keyhole.



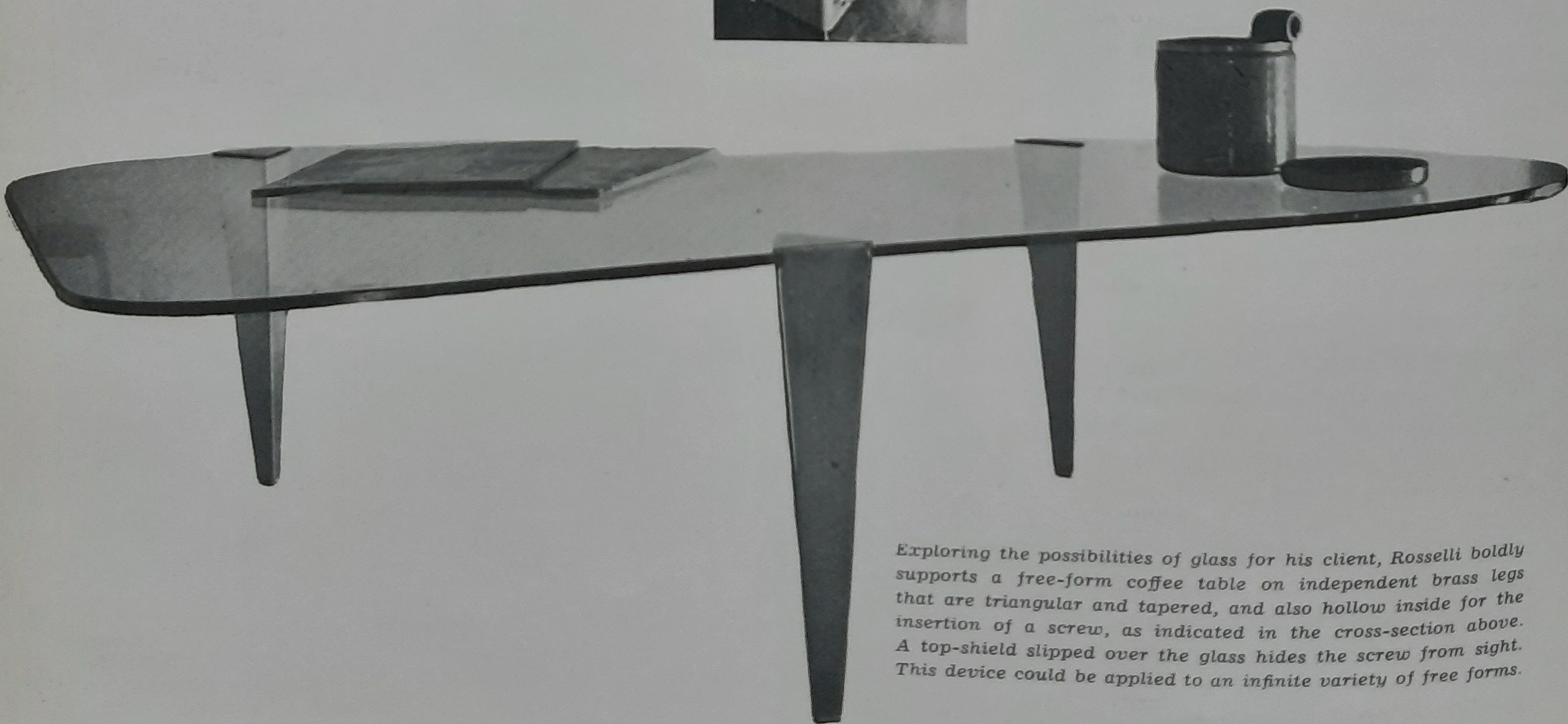
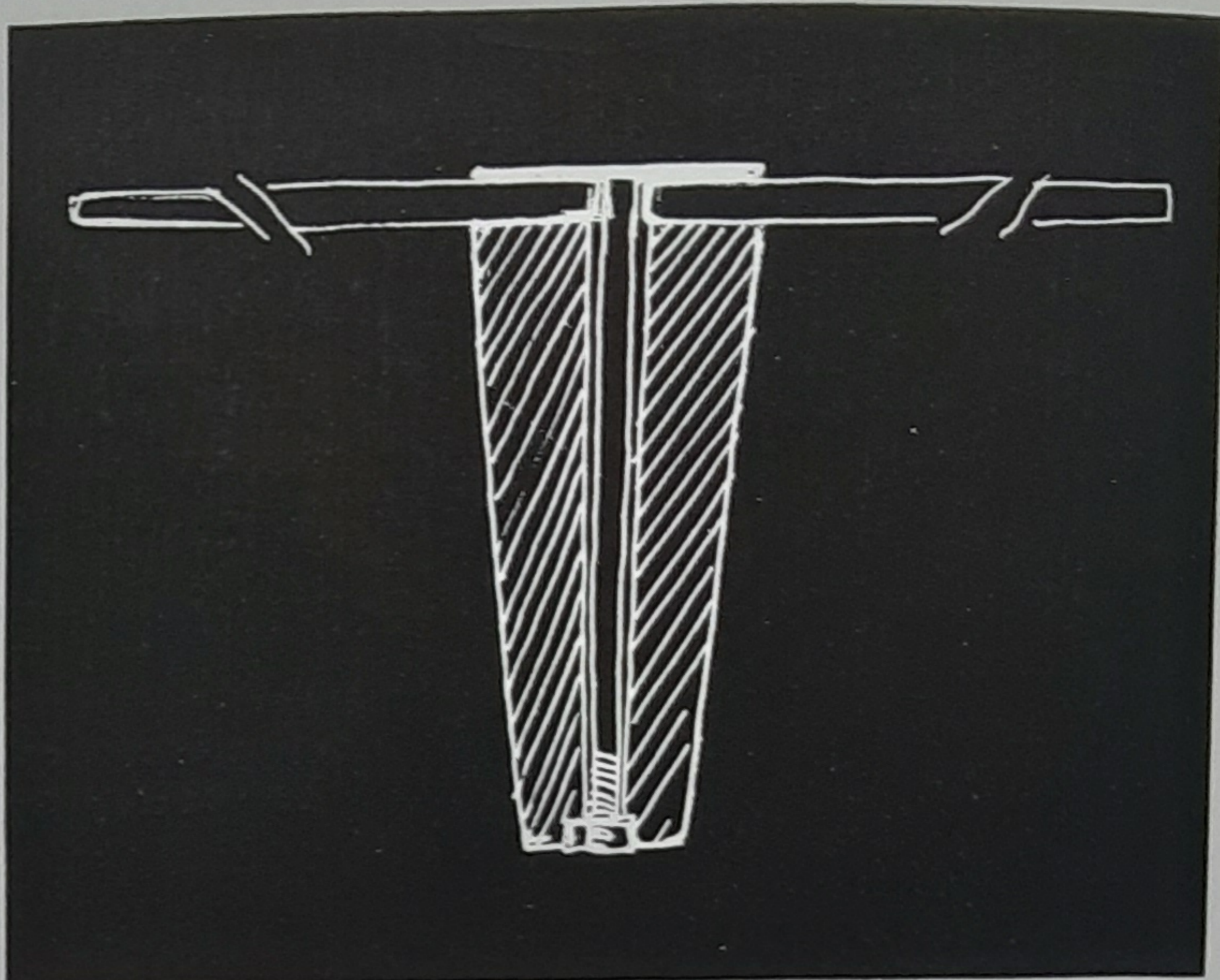
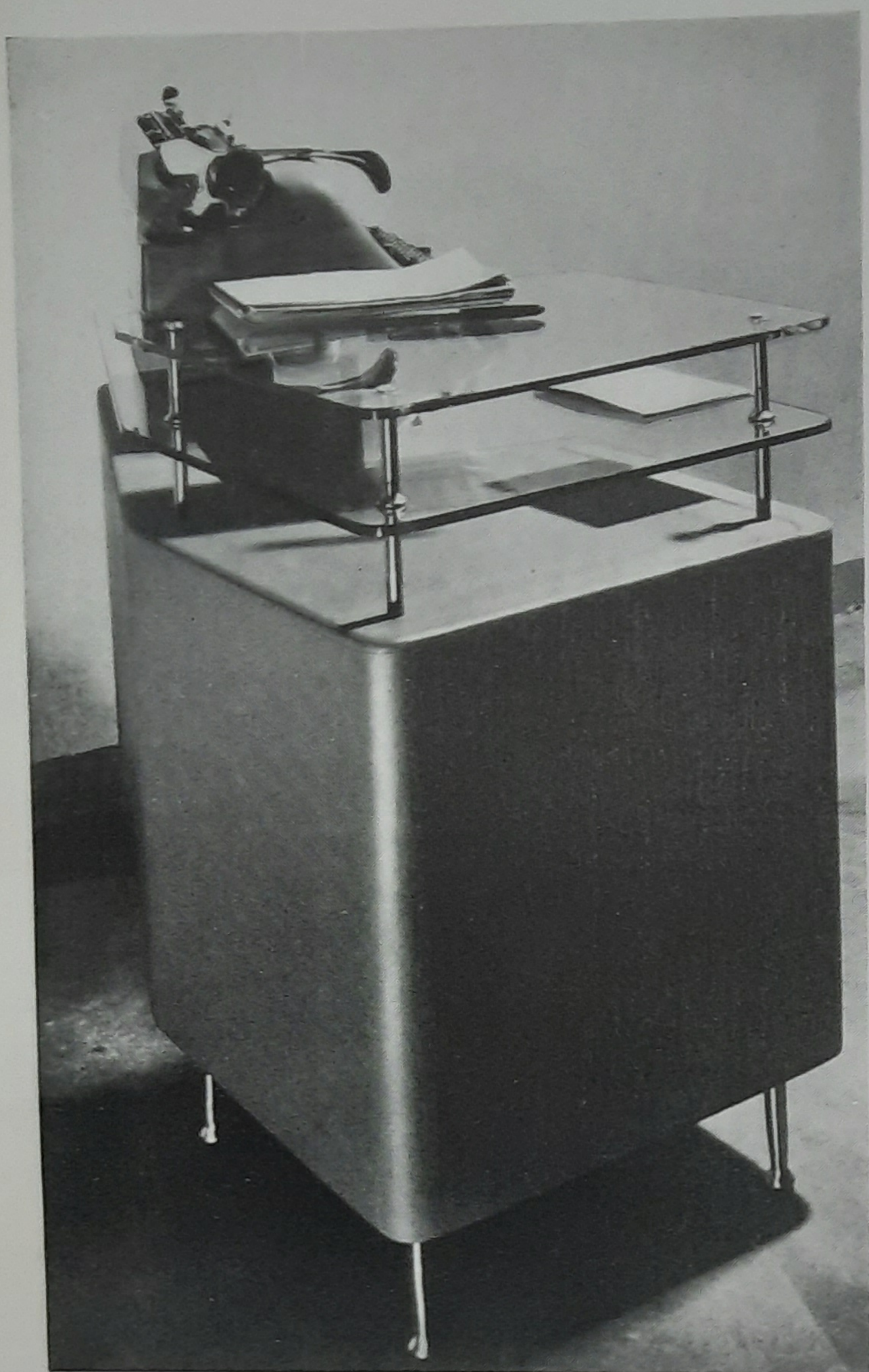
be, are of less importance than the basic idea, from which they develop logically. In most systems of this kind you start with a box-like storage unit—drawers or files—which serves as one of two supports required for a top. The other support can be a second storage unit, or a pair of legs, or a board, and sometimes a board is provided to shield *your* legs. You can go on from there, assembling elaborate fortresses for a single executive, or whole cities, with variations in height for typists, etc.

What you *cannot* do is save space with a zig-zag arrangement (a fine, simple one in the Englander showrooms was illustrated in the March issue), because rectangular units do not zig-zag gracefully, to explain the difficulty with a minimum of geometrical terminology.

Rosselli gets around the difficulty by altering the rectangular storage unit into a trapezoid, and putting the machinery for reversal in motion by giving this unit a shoulder set at an angle, to hook smoothly into any one of several other basic storage units, or into a shield or arm piece. The amorphous outlines of all parts are suitable to the irregularity of the angles, and lend themselves to molded plywood manufacture and to the tight-stretching of the vinylite afterwards. Also, it prevents awkwardness in the shaping of the glass tops, which must perforce be irregular also. Suavity of contour and detail overcomes the stiff, budgeted look expected in modular units.—O. G.



At left: For a typist: a second glass shelf enables her to keep her papers on a higher surface than her typewriter. Rounded case corners, curved brass pins, drawer pulls, free, amorphous outlines of the glass tops, and smooth vinylite sheathing produce a well-integrated stylistic effect.



Exploring the possibilities of glass for his client, Rosselli boldly supports a free-form coffee table on independent brass legs that are triangular and tapered, and also hollow inside for the insertion of a screw, as indicated in the cross-section above. A top-shield slipped over the glass hides the screw from sight. This device could be applied to an infinite variety of free forms.

sled  
no in semi  
Bentz Costanzo  
chimler Jan-Colum

Rosselli juggles three sheets of glass into a level surface 126 inches long over deerlike legs of brass.

Because really big sheets of glass are harder to handle than small ones, and also more expensive than the sum of smaller pieces, Rosselli sought a device to achieve a glass-surfaced table of regal dimensions with pieces of manageable size. He has built an extremely graceful and sturdy one 3.20 meters—about 126 inches—long, balancing the pieces over a brass-legged cradle and a strong but not awkward-looking wooden mount that remotely suggests a boat of some kind. Resting on this mount, the pieces have been screwed through, the screw heads being concealed and the pieces steadied by a long, flat brass strip that runs almost the entire length of the table over all three pieces. Side braces of the cradle-like leg structure stretch out midway between the juncture of the glass sheets, for safe balance. The final result seems a tour-de-force of elegance rather than a feat of engineering.

