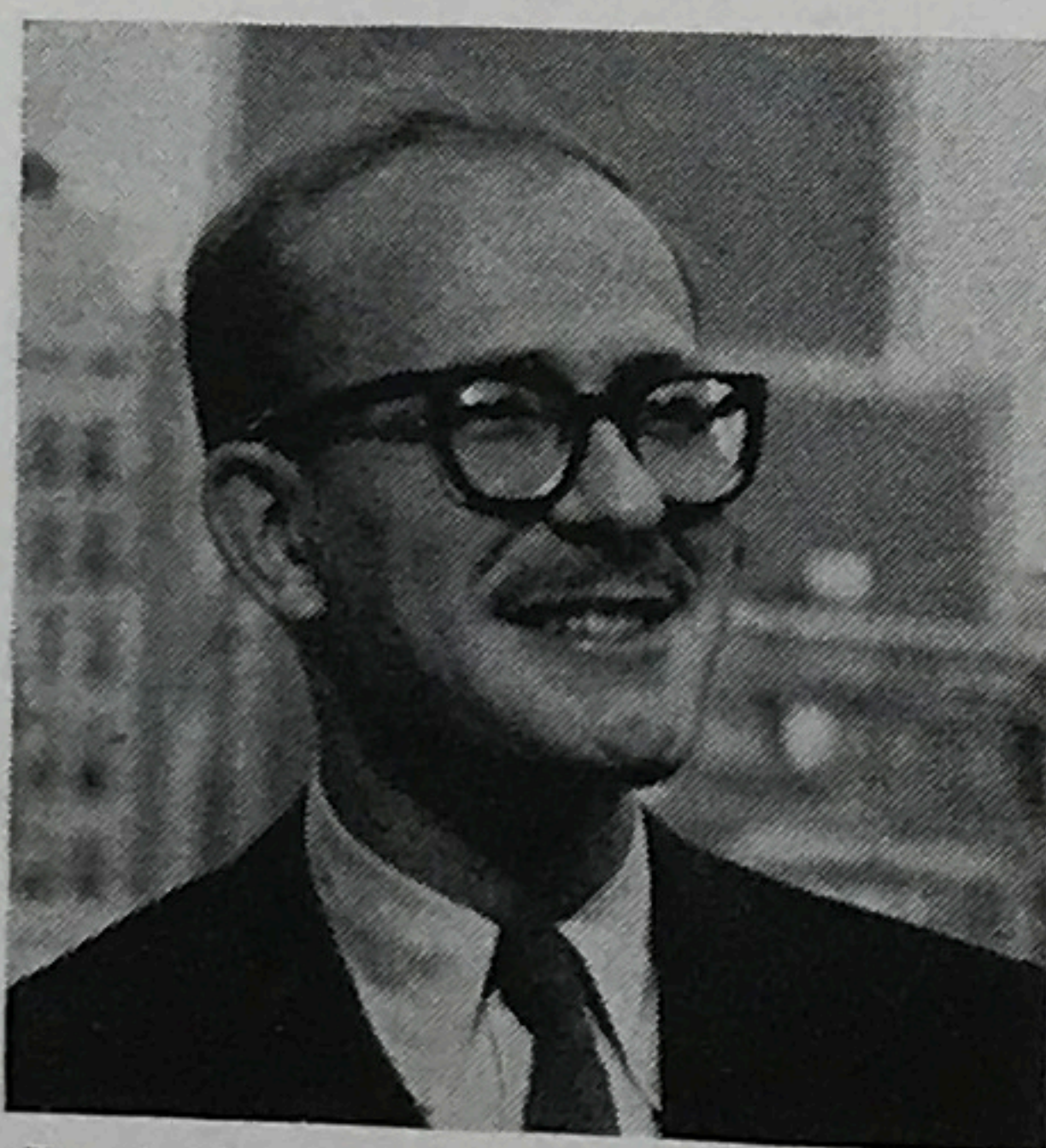




*a report on*

## THE ELEVENTH TRIENNALE OF MILAN

*by Jack Lenor Larsen*



*Jack Lenor Larsen, who not only wrote this report but supervised the photography, is best known as a weaver and textile designer and manufacturer. He is a graduate of the University of Washington in his native Seattle, continued his study of architecture and interior design at the University of Southern California and Cranbrook, opened his first New York studio in 1951.*

all triennale photographs by studio ancillotti, milan, except where otherwise noted

The Triennale of Milan has been a major subject to report in our field from the time when it first became possible to report it—that is, after the war. Obviously the fact that a foreign enterprise exerts such universal attraction requires explanation. The Triennale of Milan is a unique enterprise. To begin with, it is an international exhibition organized by Italians and sponsored by the Italian government. It is a cultural—not a commercial—exhibition; and specifically dedicated to architecture and the related arts.

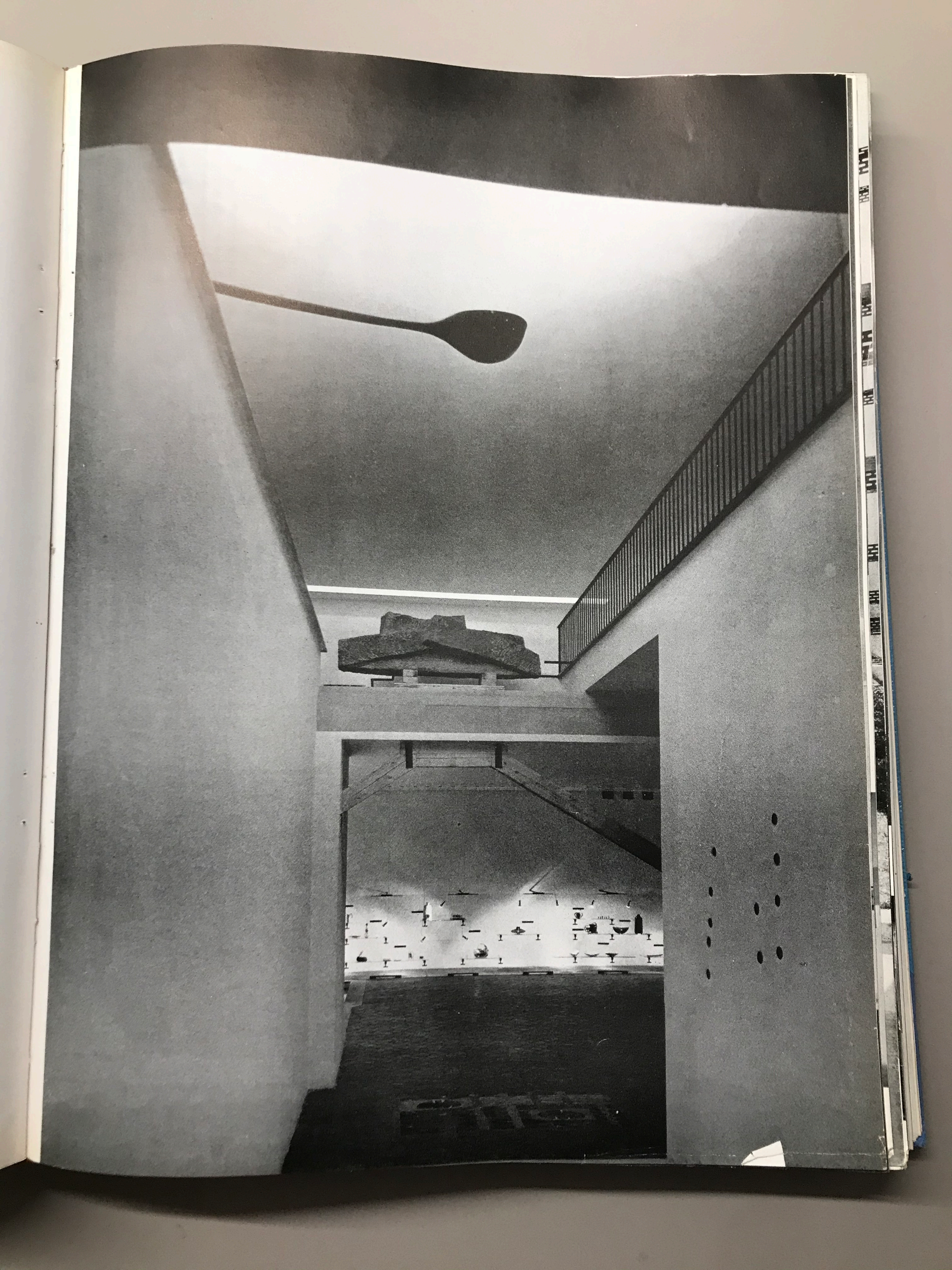
Its non-commercial nature has no significance either way from a sales point of view. There is, for example, no regulation forbidding the sale of any item. The practical effect of the distinction lies in the matter of who makes the decisions about how the Triennale will be designed and of what it will consist. The Triennale's organization differentiates clearly between the permanent administrative staff headed by the Honorable, able, peripatetic, American-speaking Triennale President Ivan Matteo Lombardo, and the Technical Executive Committee, appointed for each Triennale by its predecessor. This is the group which makes the artistic decisions about each Triennale. It consists usually of a sculptor, a painter, and two leading figures in Italy's scintillating architectural world. Members of the current Technical Executive Committee are architects Carlo De Carli and Carlo Mollino, painter Giuseppe Ajmone, and sculptor Luigi Brogini.

What they have to work with is the pleasant Parco Sempione in the heart of Milan. A huge two-story, red brick building in the park shelters most of the Triennale. This building, called the Palazzo dell'Arte, was erected in 1933 as the gift of the industrialist Antonio Bernocchi, and it is used only for the Triennale. Its great virtue is vast cubic footage of unspecialized display space, thirty-foot ceilings, ample daylight from the stairwell and many skylights. Disguising and reapportioning these generous but awkward spaces is one of the Technical Executive Committee's major decisions. It is done differently each time, and there is a spirit of competition in the performance, an effort to surprise the spectator.

Works of art are incorporated within the framework of the Committee's basic architectural conception. Again, violent contrast from Triennale to Triennale is a great part of the fun.

This extraordinarily controlled effort to achieve the most brilliant possible solution for the Palazzo's interiors—this exercise in the redesign of large, complex interiors—is one reason why the Triennale exerts such fascination for interior designers the world over. Here is a major exhibition that is not, like most, a composite for furnished cubicles; it is conceived as a whole.









Above and preceding page: entrance and stairway are natural white plaster, untreated wood, unglazed terra cotta tile. White panel in floor glass-topped, lighted through for sculpture. Another view appears on the preceding page. The sunken sculpture is shown on the next page.

#### entrance and stair hall

architects: ACHILLE and PIER GIACOMO CASTIGLIONI  
stair mosaic by painter ROBERTO CRIPPA  
sculpture by LORENZO GUERRINI

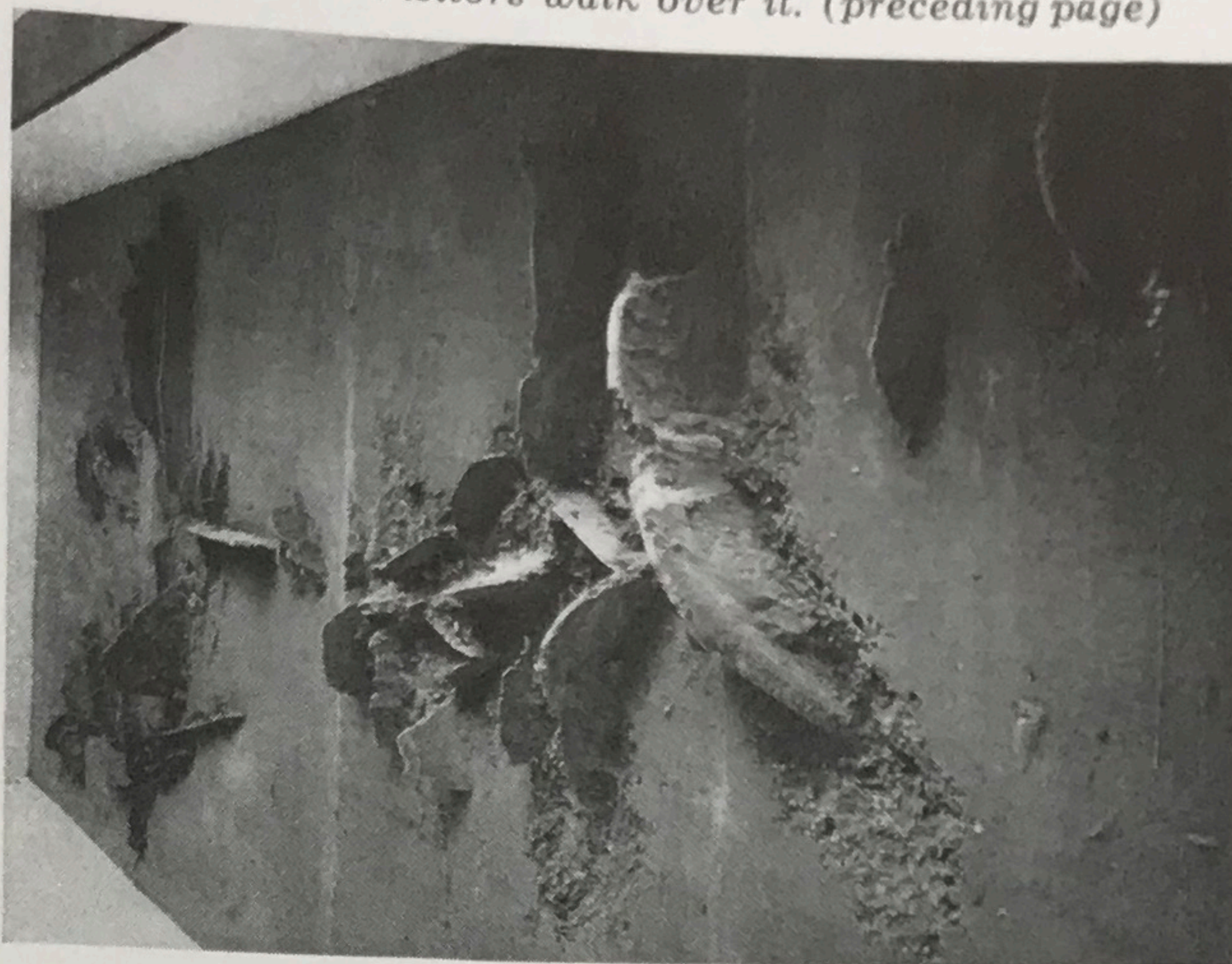
To be sure there are individually designed spaces for specific exhibitions. Each Italian section is turned over to a different committee, and the spaces leased by individual countries are of course also autonomous. But the large and important general areas of the Palazzo, and the over-all style of specific Italian-controlled areas must meet the Executive Committee's approval. Any foreign country that prefers to present its case in a separate pavilion in the Park is encouraged to do so. The United States exercised the prerogative this time. On the main floor a long wing extends from each side of the entrance and stair hall. On entering one finds the Architecture and Museum Design exhibitions to the left, crafts and industrial design exhibitions to the right. Each exhibit follows the next in a circuit several blocks long. On the right center of the ground floor, vast stairs lead to the second (or Italian first) floor. Here is the central hall reserved for conferences. Around it are the national exhibitions occupied by 19 countries, approached one through another in a continuous circling walk. All these spaces have extremely high skylighted ceilings in most cases lowered by translucent drops. The natural light is satisfying. Tone and pace of the Eleventh Triennale

are set in the great hall, staircase, and conference room by architects Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni. Their method was simple: to reduce scale, using the most basic of building materials—wood, white plaster, terra cotta. Most of the floor of the entrance, and almost all of that in the upstairs hall has been raised four feet to create a more intimate, more human proportion. Both in mood and scale this offers a striking contrast to the Triennales of 1951 and 1954, when the overwhelming effect of the monumental rooms was exaggerated by the decorative treatment. In 1951 (September 1951 *Interiors*) an enormous calligraphic swirl of slender, luminescent fluorescent tubing by sculptor Lucio Fontana floated above the grand staircase. In 1954 the eye was drawn to the very top of the lofty stairwell (November 1954 *Interiors*) by light streaming through a brilliant suspended ceiling of Venini glass discs.

This time, in addition to raising the floor, the architects have divided the great staircase with a new wall. The feature of the design is not surface enrichment with murals, reliefs, etc., as in the past, but a manipulation of space, light and shadow, and lighted planes (often natural light). It is a profoundly sculptural solution.

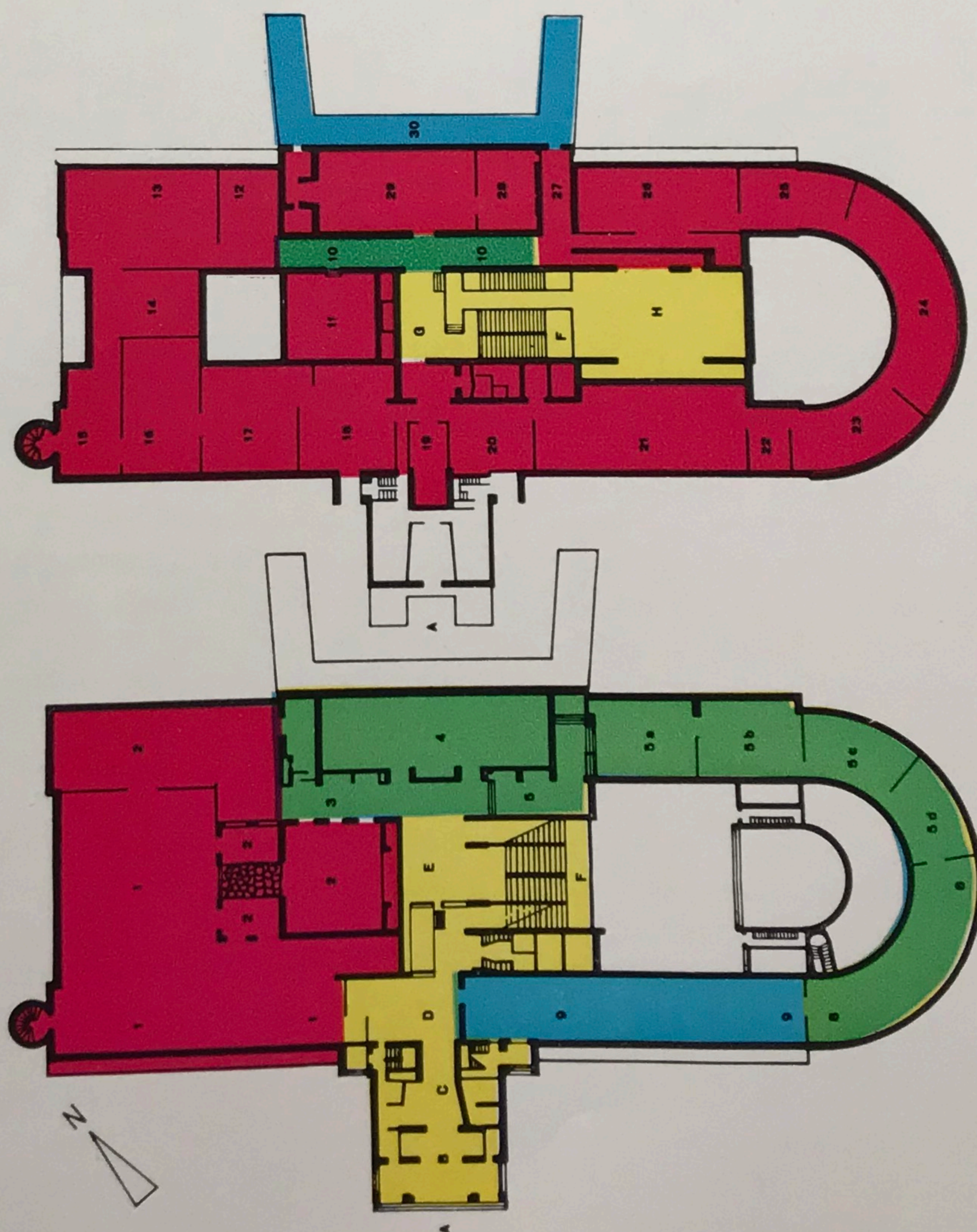


Solidified sand sculpture measuring 8 by 20 feet is laid horizontal, 3 feet below floor level. Its freedom, simplicity, and restraint typify the Undicesima Triennale. By Umberto Milani. Visitors walk over it. (preceding page)



# Plan of the Palazzo dell'Arte

- outdoor exhibition **A**
- ground floor**
- entrance **B**
- promenade **C**
- approach to international exhibition of modern architecture **D**
- main lobby **E**
- stairway **F**
- international exhibition of modern architecture **1**
- museology **2**
- Art Industries, part 1:
  - jewelry **3**
  - native Italian crafts **4**
- Art Industries, part 2:
  - metal work **5**
  - glass **5a**
  - ceramics **5b**
  - straw **5c**
  - fabrics **5d**
  - graphic art **8**
  - industrial design **9**
- upper floor**
- stairway **F**
- upper vestibule **G**
- congress auditorium **H**
- temporary exhibitions **10**
- Spain **11**
- Switzerland **12**
- Czechoslovakia **13**
- Poland **14**
- Holland **15**
- Finland **16**
- Denmark **17**
- Sweden **18**
- Canada **19**
- Romania **20**
- Germany **21**
- Jugoslavia **22**
- Japan **23**
- Belgium **24**
- Austria **25**
- France **26**
- Industrial Research Institute of Oslo **27**
- Norwegian Industrial Design Institute **28**
- Mexico **29**
- Art Industries, part 3:
  - lace, alabaster **30**





The drama of the main spaces is a quiet one. Visitors familiar with the profuse color and decoration used previously may find the monastic simplicity which now prevails a trifle bewildering. Incidentally, the fact that members which appear to perform a structural function are often only applied ornamentation must be forgiven in light of the existing building. To the Italians on the scene, this interior represents a recognizable trend already apparent in, for example, industrial villages by studio BBPR and other recent

designed—and the works of art so placed—as to isolate the work of art. Each sculptural or graphic object is built into the hall (into its wall, its floor, its ceiling, even its floor or above its ceiling) in such a way that none can be seen until the spectator comes upon it. This is true of the mosaic “carpet” at the foot of the stairs, of the lighted sculpture set into the floor, of the horizontal reliefs set below floor level (see preceding page). The only monumental and apparent sculpture—of primitive chiseled stone, at the top of the stair hall

ence area. It is composed of simple wooden benches of three heights, a table for panelists, and comfortable chairs in red velvet at the front. Additional seating may be drawn from two neat stacks of primitive church chairs. This part of a dark room is well lighted by a dead-end light shaft behind the speaker's table. At evening meetings suspended industrial fixtures define the area with warm incandescent light. An otherwise bare corner contains a sculpture of suspended clear glass light bulbs in an arrangement which



work. It is an introspective recollection of Italy's own medieval past, but it echoes this past not in the repetition of symbolic forms or decorative motifs lifted out of context, but rather in the way in which spatial elements are used.

The handling of works of art is an extraordinary innovation. As in past Triennale, it was conceived and coordinated into the total architectural conception, *but to a purpose exactly opposite to the usual one.* Usually when such works are placed in accordance with a basic architectural scheme, the idea is to exploit the architectural vistas, the approaches, passageways, rising and falling stairwells, and graduated light or shadow areas in such a way as to make the work of art the visual focus, to enhance its psychological impact as the climax of the spatial effect. In the Eleventh Triennale, on the contrary, the space was

(Lorenzo Guerrini)—is in effect a repetition of the diagonal timbers below it. The rich bloody reds in Bruno Cassinari's oil painting—the only color note in the hall—is recessed into the stucco of the upper stair wall. The only strong pattern, that of the products display (facing page) on glass shelves to the left of the hall, is unified into the wall by the way it has been supported on the transparent plane of glass.

The effectiveness of the next space one approaches is a *tour de force* of designing with light, shadow, and the placement of objects in space. It is dependent on the consistency with which the Castiglioni's unorthodox approach was carried through. Coming up the stairs, one faces a plain wall punctuated by Italian oils and a large, handsome clock. Turning back and crossing a bridge, one enters the confer-

the spectator may change by manipulating steel weights on nylon cords.

This room, by its cohesion as an unbroken volume, defies the current trend of interior designers in which interior elements are manipulated so as to express the separate



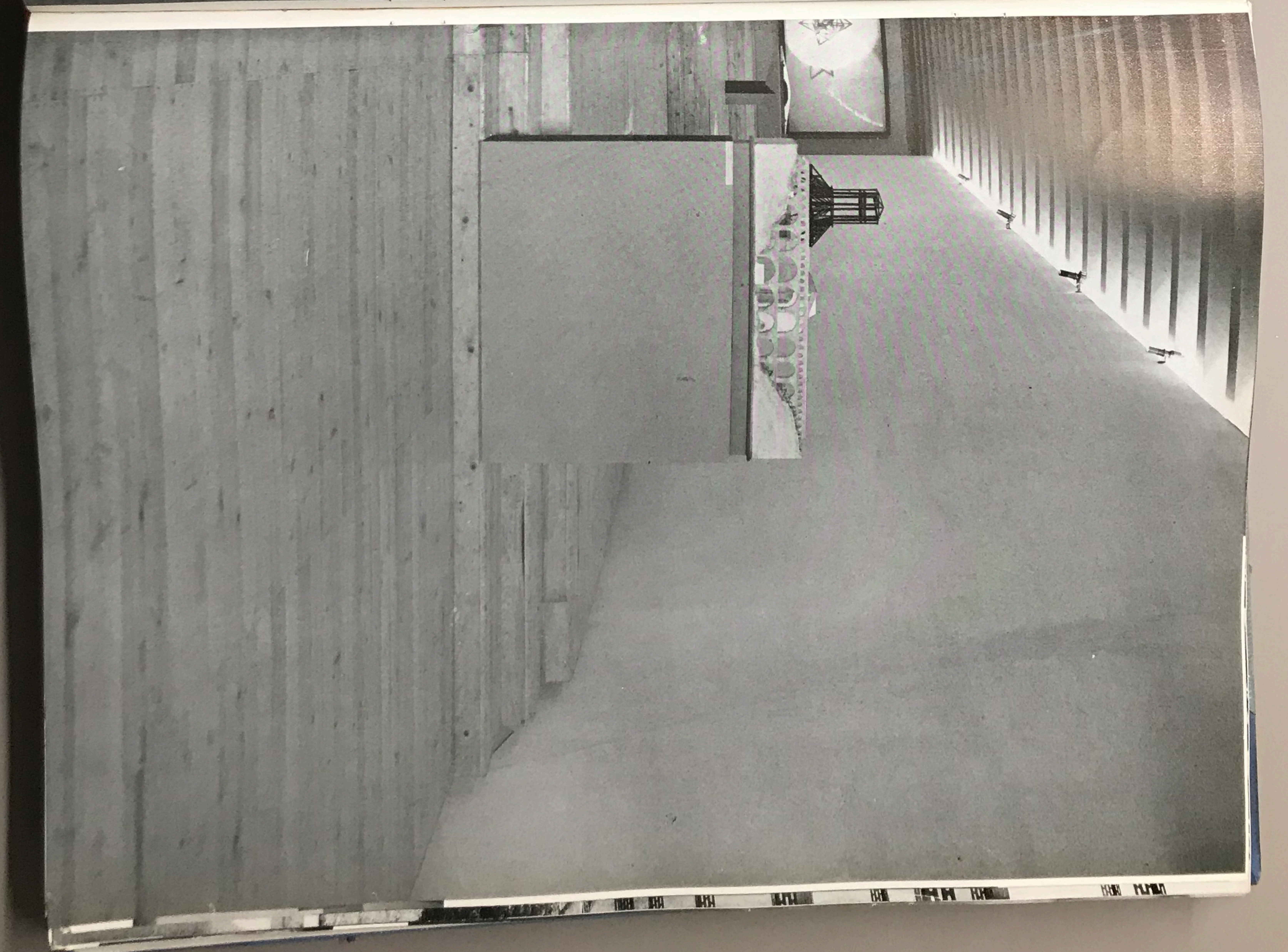
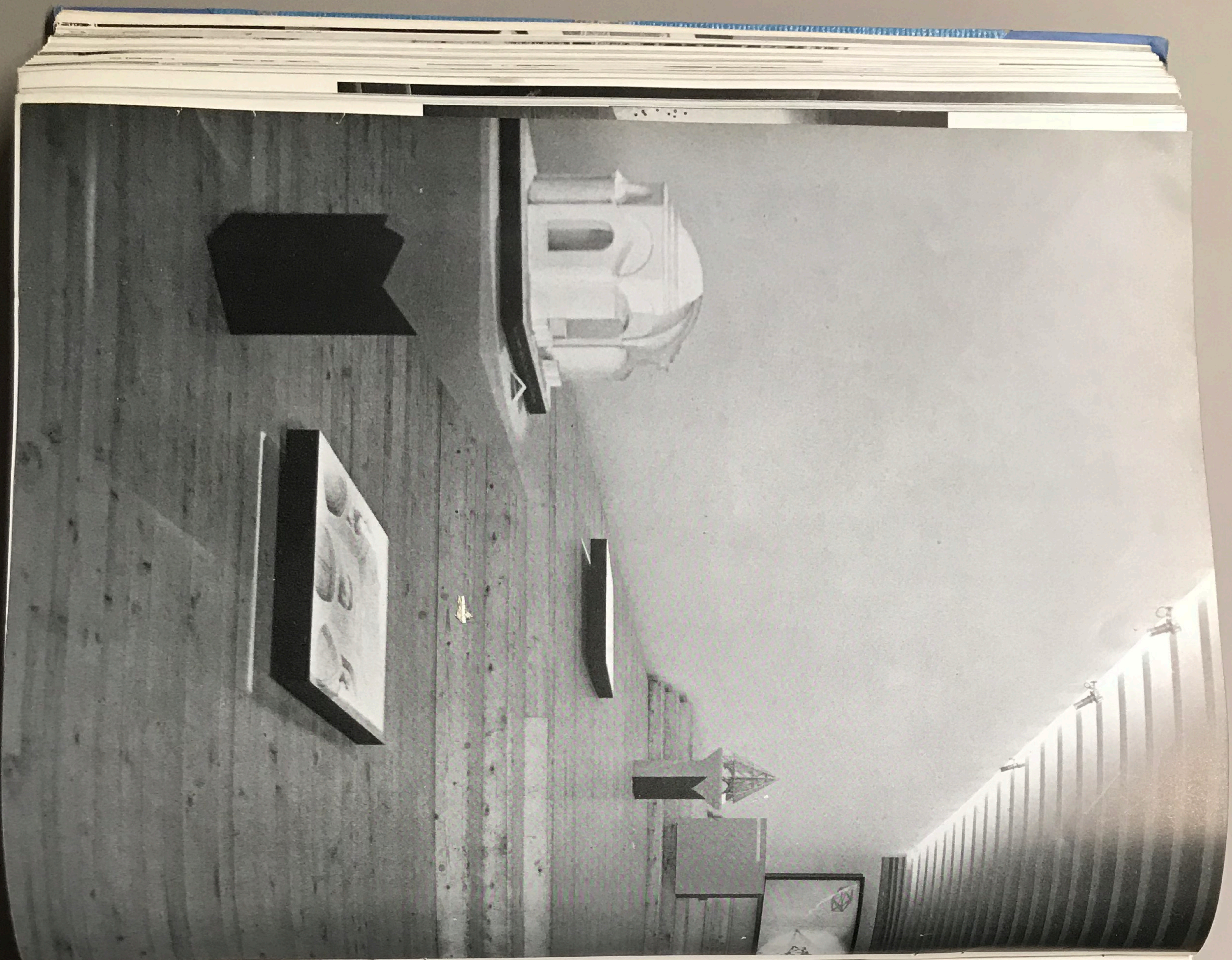
parts and separate functions, a manipulation that dramatizes floor, ceiling, conversation area, etc., to the subjugation of the

Detail of glass display wall in the great hall at the entrance to the architectural exhibition. →











← On the two pages preceding: Entrance ramp to the International Exhibition of Modern Architecture.

conscious unity of the whole. The functions of the parts of this tranquil hall are both served and expressed, but the unity of the volume remains the key to the satisfaction one feels here.

#### modern architecture

The large architectural exhibition is devoted to two subjects: 1. a historical survey of structure in architecture and 2. a historical survey of community planning.

In order to accommodate what is in effect a double exhibition, the designers sliced their 25-foot high space into two levels. It is not a simple slice, however. The ambulatory circuit follows an involved three-dimensional course penetrating from one level to another on very gradual enclosed ramps. Wood gives the exhibition its dominant flavor; it is used structurally for floors, ramps, and trussed ceilings.

The Historical Survey of Structure covers the period from the fall of Rome to the present day. The value of this retrospective view lies in the revelation of the validity of an old form—the great arch of the Romanesque vault. It appears in the earliest models, then straightens during the Gothic age, becomes increasingly rectangular in the Neo-Classic, industrial, and modern periods, only to reappear in recent works: the cupolas of Saarinen and Fuller, the complex vaulting of the Olivetti building in São Paulo (photo 1).

The message of the Community Planning section was the re-appraisal of the Italian village, which both the authorities and Italy's architects are giving importance to once more as desirable places for the population to live in—and therefore as significant design objectives. Italy's architects are assuming a national responsibility to give the village not merely esthetic appeal but intimate, human scale.

The architectural models were impressive in size and quality, as may be deduced from illustrations on this page. The pedestals for the architectural models are in themselves noteworthy, both dramatizing and separating the items. They are related and unified in form but varied, each one, in particular details, a fact which can be observed in the large photograph on the two preceding pages. Most of the shapes have been worked out so that the converging lines where the light gray wood overpedestals meet the black bases draw the eye sharply to the position of each model on the wood floor. More than conventional and unimaginative block pedestals, these

1

#### international exhibition of modern architecture

Organization by architect ALVAR AALTO, professor GIULIO CARLO ARGAN, architect MARCELLO GRISOTTI, architect PIETRO LINGERI, architect GIOVANNI MICHELUCCI, architect LUIGI MORETTI, engineer PIER LUIGI NERVI, professor NIKOLAUS PEVSNER, architect AGNOLDOMENICO PICA, architect JEAN TSCHUMI, architect GIUSEPPE VACCARO.

Exhibition design by architect ERBERTO CARBONI, architect MARCELLO GRISOTTI, architect AGNOLDOMENICO PICA.

2







bold geometric forms have the strength to carry their powerful exhibits.

Photograph 2 shows another excellent device, a sunken well used to place the cupola scale model below eye level, allowing a rare close up of detail and elongation.

Among other resourceful display devices in the architectural section was one used to give relief to the relatively large portion of the total that consisted of photographs—potentially among the duller of display subjects. It consisted simply of a series of brackets of various depths that brought the photographs forward from the wall. The projection separated the photographs from each other, gave emphasis to the part and rhythm, punctuation, and relief to the whole.

### **museology**

*Organization by*  
painter FELICE CASORATI, DR. FRANCO RUSSOLI,  
architect PIETRO SANPAOLESI,  
professor VITTORIO VIALE.

*Exhibition design by architect* GIULIO CESARI,  
architect PIERO DE AMICIS,  
architect PIER ANGELO PALAVICINI,  
architect FULVIO RABONI,  
architect FERRUCCIO REZZONICO.

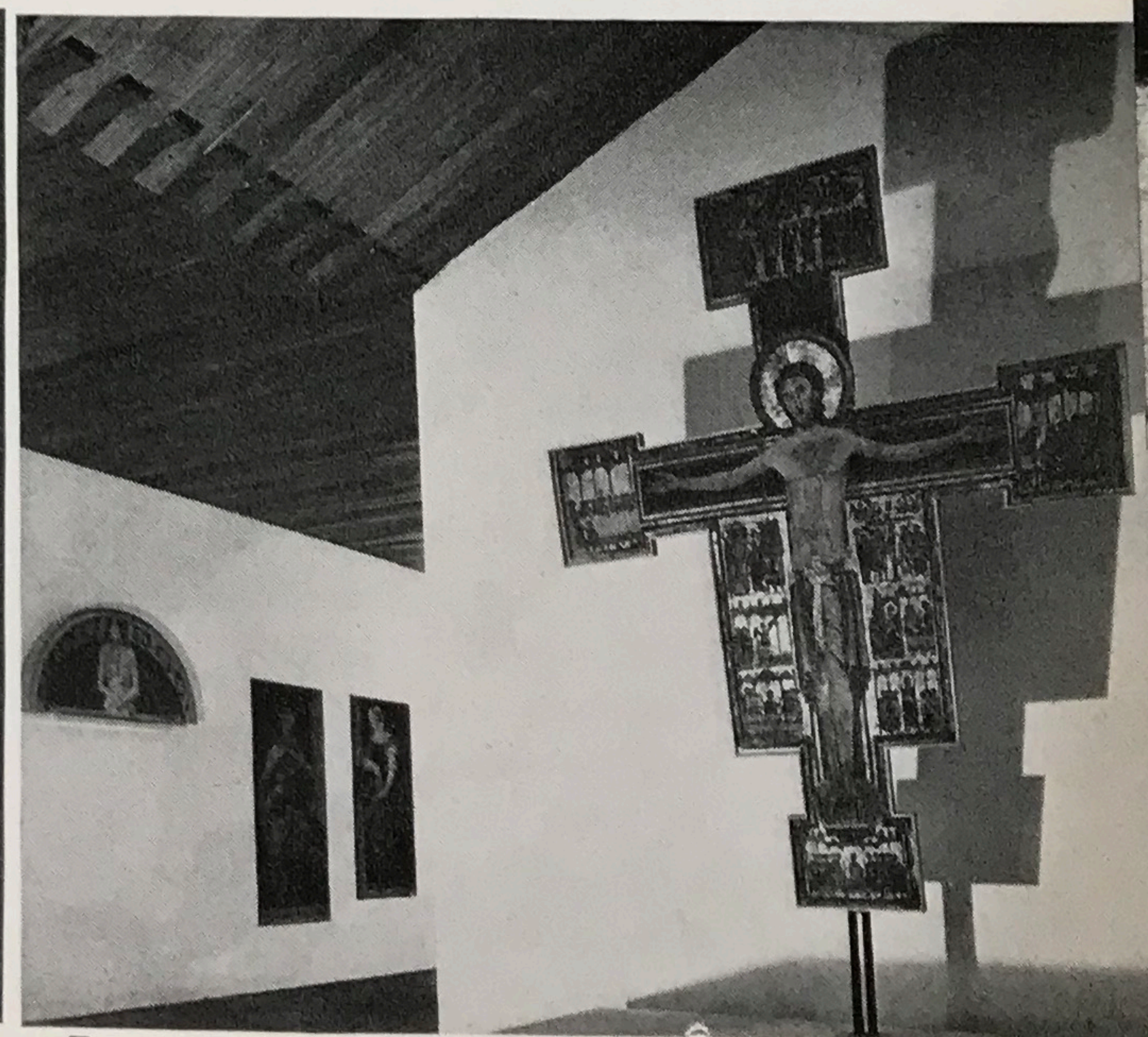
Next to the fact that the inclusion of a section on Museum Design indicates that the Italians rate museum design to be an important facet of interior design, the significant idea expressed here is the validity of theater techniques in museum display. In other words, mood and atmosphere are regarded as goals as basic as visibility and organization.

The architects brought it off without props—with hardly more than space, light, and color. Planes of color were put to use for two ends: to bring out the exhibits, forcing the delicately tinted and ancient arte-

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giornalfoto

#### **museology** continued

facts into bold prominence; and also to establish mood. As an aside it is interesting that no contemporary objects were included here—any more than in most Italian museums, since the Italians do not share our view of the museum as an exhibition hall but consider it primarily an archive. Notwithstanding, the Museum section's design has the most to offer to the interior designer visiting the Triennale in search of ideas.

Like space and color, light is made to serve for both mood and visual purpose. A sharp variation in the amount and kind of light from gallery to gallery refreshes one's sensory perceptions and counteracts fatigue. Inventive innovations worth noting include: 1. A bank of high-powered arclights placed outside the building to reproduce daylight effects after dark; they were angled so as to duplicate the

angles of rays and shadows prevailing during the day; 2. In place of the conventional good general lighting achieved by the skylighted gallery, reflecting light scoops are employed to direct light on exhibition material. Its value is two-fold. First, it directs attention, and second, it prevents glare on oil paintings. The blank marble slabs inserted on either side of entrance ways to protect the plaster walls against soil and nicking (also seen in BBPR's Castello Sforzesco museum, December 1956 *Interiors*) are a practical and handsome architectural detail. This solution of a functional problem through basic design rather than through a protective device applied later, as for example a kickplate or special wall covering, is typical of the omniscient awareness with which these architects approach their tasks. In this kind of design there is no need to resort to protective or corrective measures after the basic design has been completed.

Photograph 5 on the preceding page illustrates several effective ideas. The Gothic cross is tilted forward as in the original placement, and the ceiling of cherry wood recalls the forms and materials of the period. Like many other ideas in the section, it reminds the observer of BBPR's many innovations in the Castello Sforzesco, which, with the Etruscan Villa Giulia and Franco Albini's Golden Treasury installation, places Italy in the forefront of creative museum technique. Also in the same photograph, at its left, are two satisfactory installations of fresco: the vertical pieces plastered in flush with the wall, the half circle freely projected.

Of the photographs on this page, the one at left shows an iron swivel bracket developed by BBPR for the Castello, and which is used here to isolate a Romanesque capital. Because of the fine detail, placement is at eye level. In the labyrinth (photograph above right) leading from the exhibition of architecture to the mu-

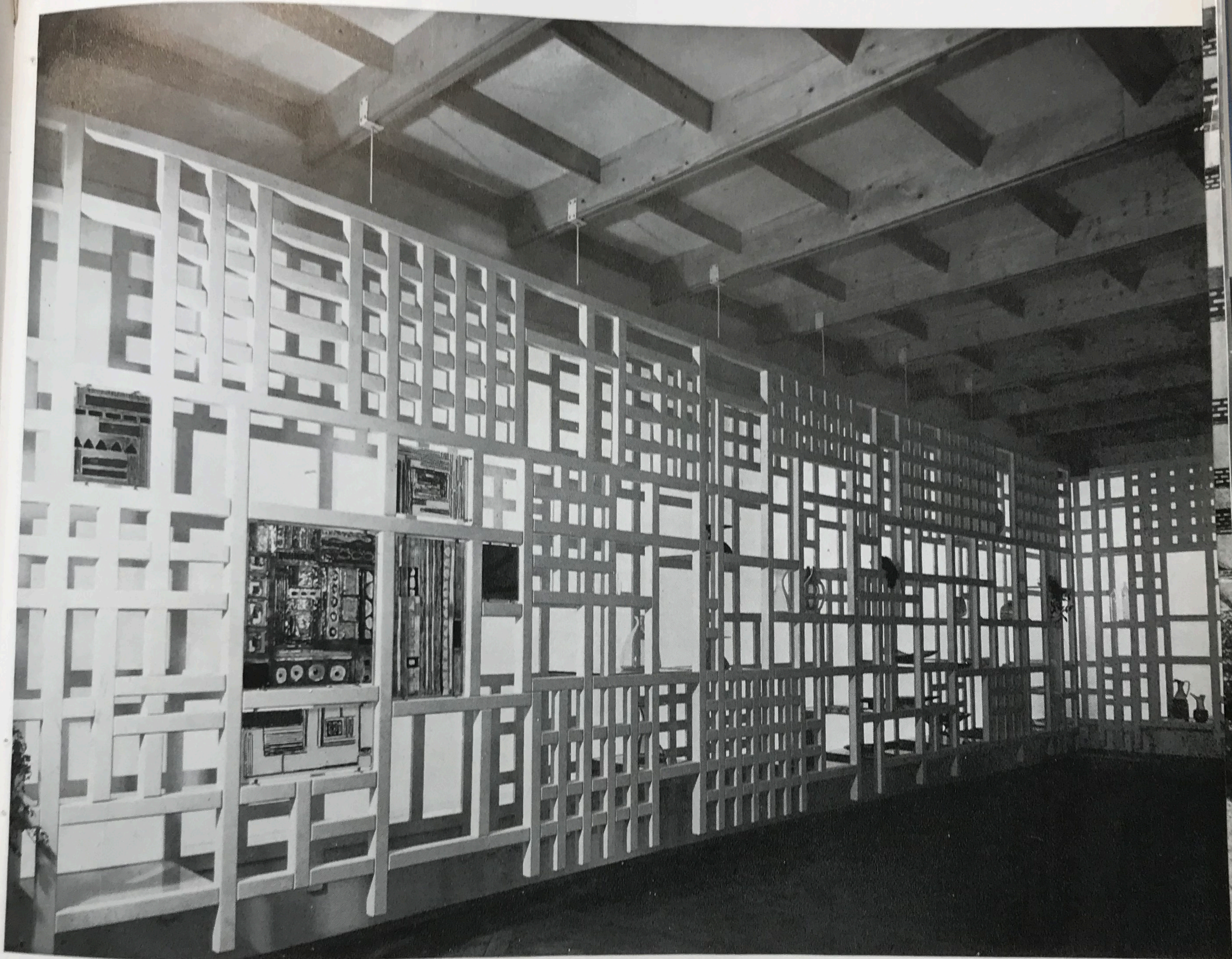


scum exhibition halls, one sees a panorama of the birth and development of museums. The ceiling pattern serves to control and direct traffic.

Photograph of the Museum exhibition at

right on the opposite page shows another of many imaginative uses of wood in the Eleventh Triennale. Another occurs below, and there are two more on the next two pages. The esthetic mood is explicit and original though not easy to define. There is a certain exquisiteness of the Finns, and yet it is not Finnish, or Danish, or Japanese. There is something of a feeling of Shaker here, some of the feeling

of the most primitive churches of earlier monastery design, and yet it is not going back to anything but is seemingly a search for a solution to basic elements. Wooden beams with white plaster, unfinished terra cotta and other interesting floors, pine floors along with finished, lodge-like wood construction, the machine-like disciplines in construction, are used without any compensation or disguise.



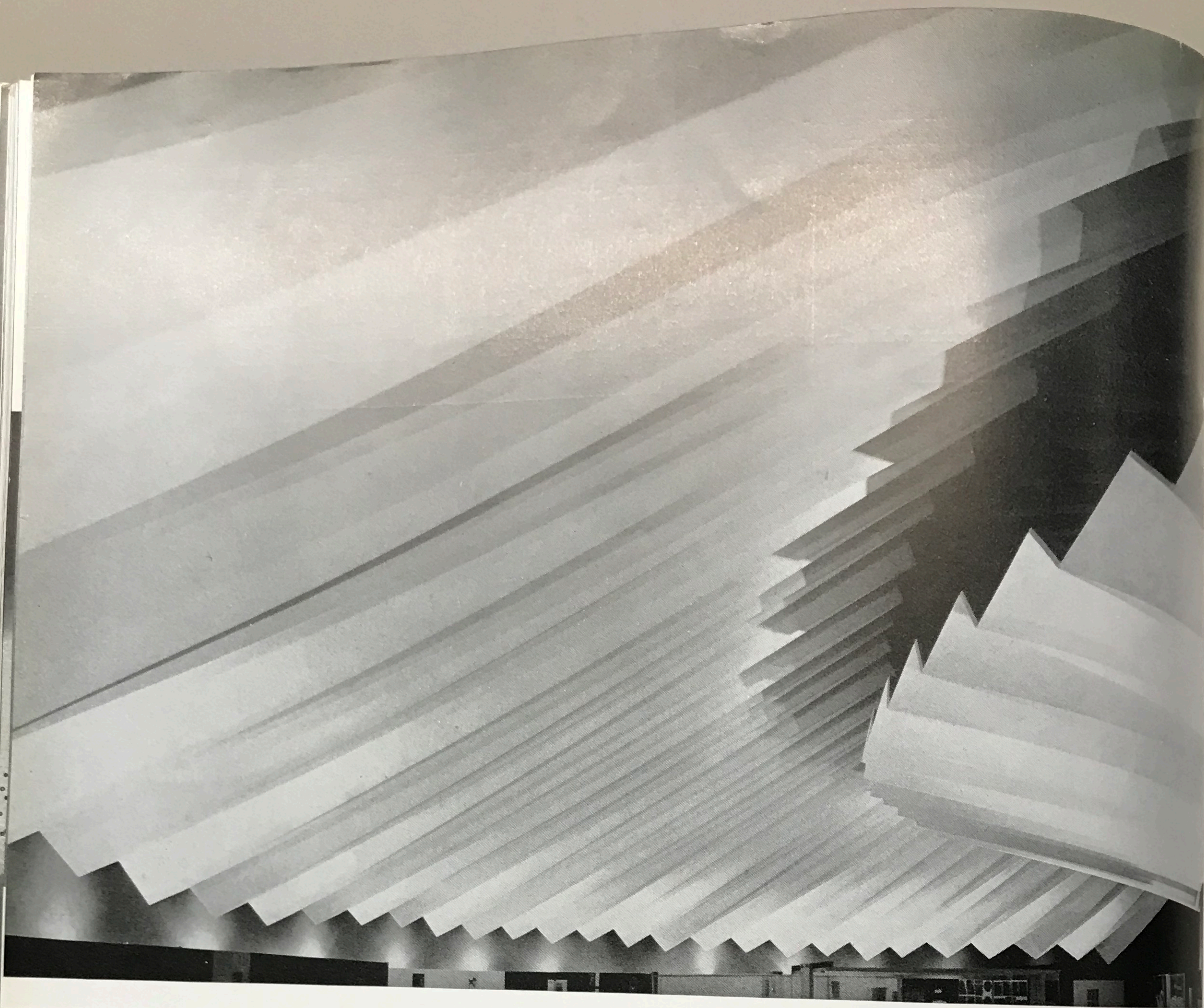
**Italian art production, part 2, glass section**

*organization by professor ENRICO BETTARINI*

*exhibition design by architect ETTORE SOTTASS, jr. and engineer GUIDO STRAZZA*

A wooden structure in the glass section combines the services of a space divider and intrinsically decorative architectural element while facilitating the display both of flat stained glass panels and of hollow glassware. As a display device this interesting construction presents the rare advantage of isolating each object for individual attention.







## Plan of the park . . .

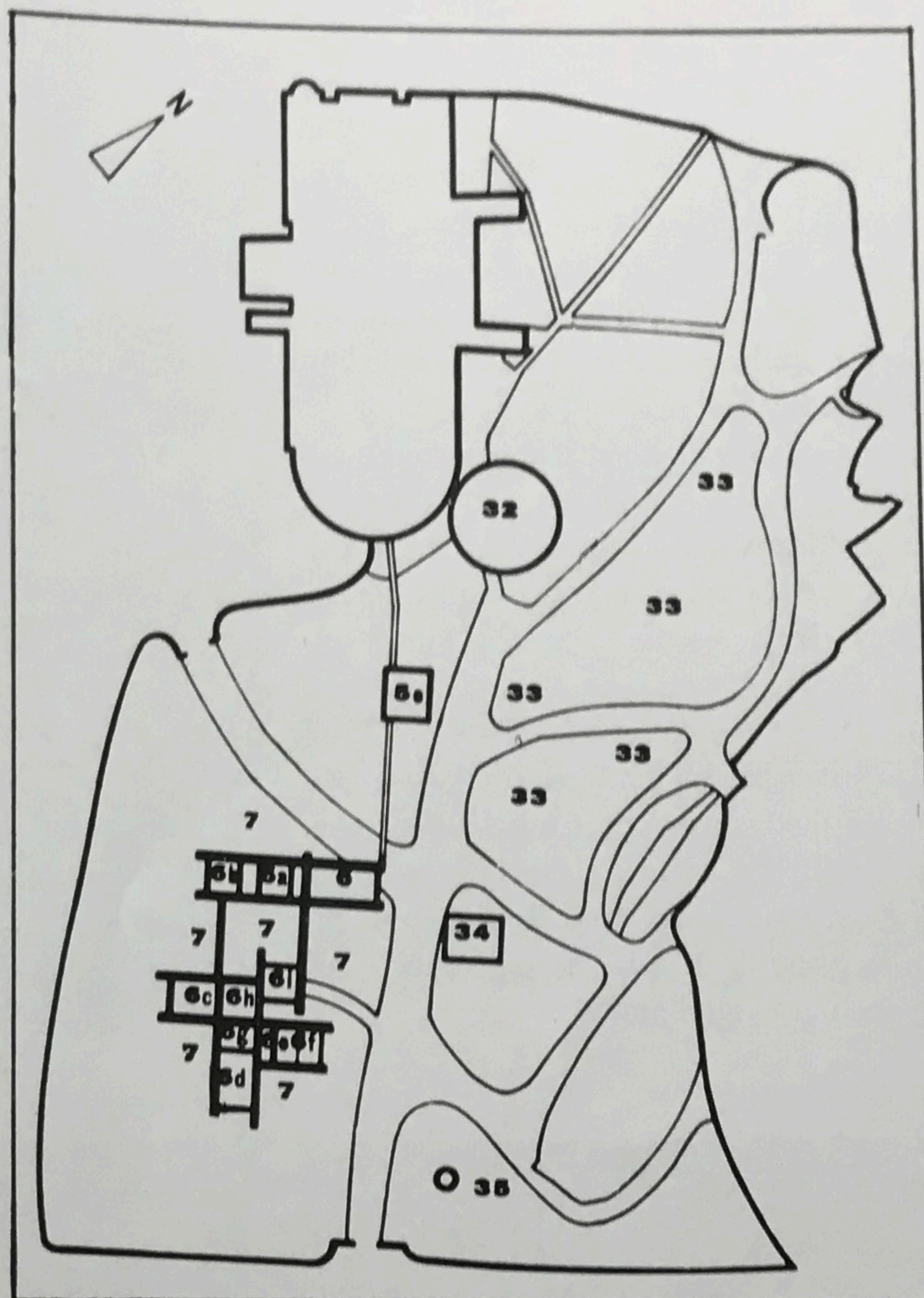
### International sections in the park

#### other ceilings . . . industrial design

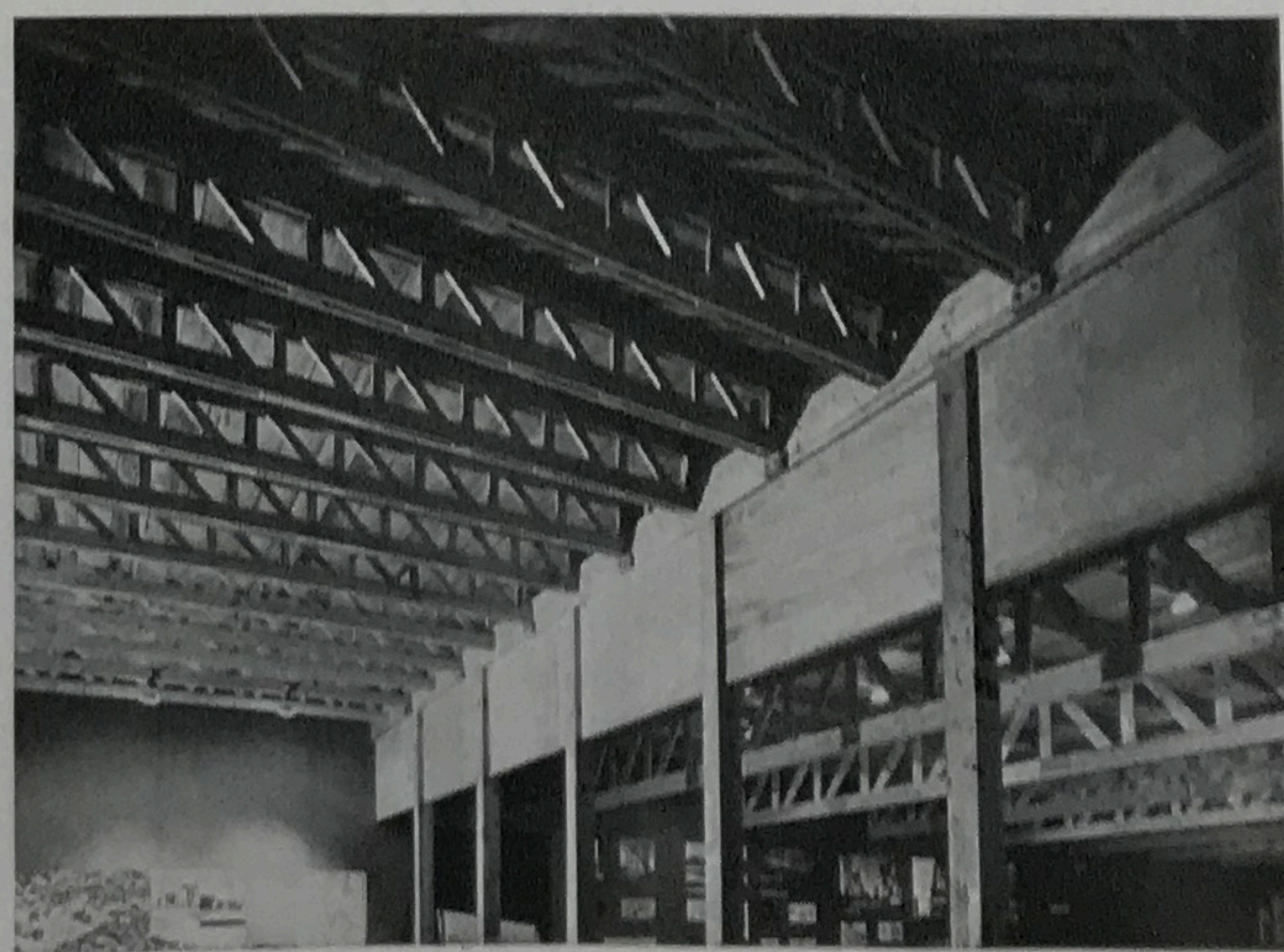
Upper photograph on the opposite page shows a ceiling detail in the graphic arts exhibition, which was designed by two painters, Egidio Bonfante and Franco Grignani. These folded wooden baffles follow the curve of the room, dramatizing that curve. Acoustically they create a static soundlessness which is especially appropriate to the examination of graphic art.

The small photograph at the bottom of this page is a ceiling detail in the lower part of the International Exhibition of Modern Architecture (shown on pages 90-93)—the part devoted to Community Planning. These soft wood trusses are what support the new pine ramp that divides the space into two uneven levels.

The photograph at the bottom of the facing page gives a ceiling view—from the tops of the partitions between the individual cubicles to the area under the ceiling occupied by the forest of hanging lamps—taken from the entrance of the immense industrial design exhibition. An enormous number of cell-like exhibition spaces are laid out beneath celestial lighting occasionally interrupted by translucent planes of suspended rope. The maze-like nature of this exhibition caused it to fail. There is no directional indication in the labyrinth, with the result that the spectator spends all his energy trying to find his way, with none left over to observe the exhibits. The design forces the spectator to preoccupy himself with a trick. It is not alleviated, either, by the fact that all the display cubicles are similar in size, in colorlessness, in lighting, and in content. There is no relief, no surprise, no excitement, no emphasis, no variety of pace.



- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 5e Exhibition of art industries: fabrics  | 6g-h Italy  |
| International exhibition of the dwelling: | 6i International dwelling   |
| 6 catalog                                 | 7 Flowers and gardens   |
| 7 France                                  | 32 The United States  |
| 6b Yugoslavia                             | 33 International exhibition of outdoor sculpture  |
| 6c Germany                                | 34 A method of building   |
| 6d Denmark                                | 35 Presentation of the design for the forthcoming turbine engine, liner the Leonardo da Vinci |
| 6e Sweden                                 |   |
| 6f Finland                                |   |





# International exhibition of homes

Organization, planning, and design of individual buildings and interiors: Yugoslavia: architect IVO PENIC; Finland: TIMO SARPANEVA; Denmark: architect FINN JUHL; International bungalow: a commission under the direction of architect MARCO COMOLLI

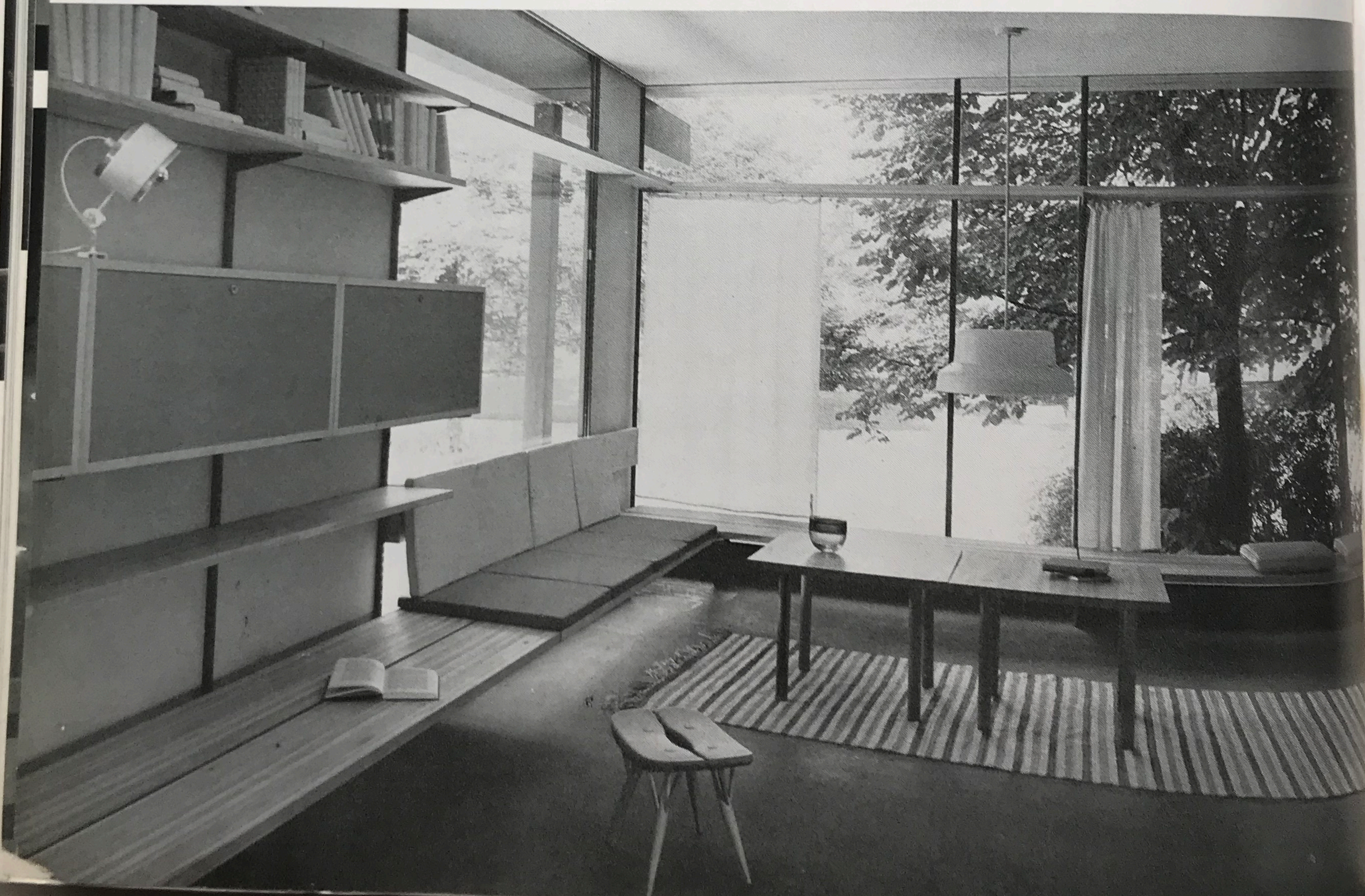
This exhibition consists of a group of low-pitched wood and glass bungalows sprawling under great trees, forming courts between. They are interconnected by boardwalks. Here was housed an Italian furniture pavilion and interiors—houses or rooms—from nine countries. They are all very nice. Yet all suffer from a similarity to each other. All suffer from an amazing similarity in kind, amount, style, and informality of furniture. They have neither the accent of color, nor that of individual accessory, nor that of time—that is, all of them are brand new and all are modern. The dimension of age—which might have been supplied by old accessories and old furniture—would have helped if only to differentiate one from the other. Also absent is the dimension of art, the character that might have been supplied by a great painting. As it is, the whole section might have been done by the same designer. All have the impersonal vagueness of space one finds in a showroom. Since America's interiors could stand up very well beside these, it is too bad we didn't take a crack at this one.

The Yugoslav living space (photograph 1) is unspecialized, the equivalent of three or four rooms. It has an open studio character. Especially notable are the new bentwood chairs and basketry techniques used in terrace furniture, lampshades, and planters. The space is well handled.



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The illustrated corner of the Finnish bungalow (photograph 2) illustrates the finely drawn and stylized space break-up which, with muted coloring, gives new Finnish design a Japanese aspect within the basic Scandinavian idiom.

Concerning the Danish bungalow (photograph 3), it is pertinent to note a trend general for all the Scandinavian countries towards greater elegance and finesse. It is simultaneous with a similar trend in the United States, but with this difference: it is not being accompanied by the nostalgic memorabilia and bric-a-brac we are using towards that effect. In the Danish space Finn Juhl has achieved it with severe straight lines softened by the elaborate parquet, walnut panels, and planting. The strong diagonal truss in the table enabled the designer to reduce the number of legs, resulted in an effect both uncluttered and powerful.

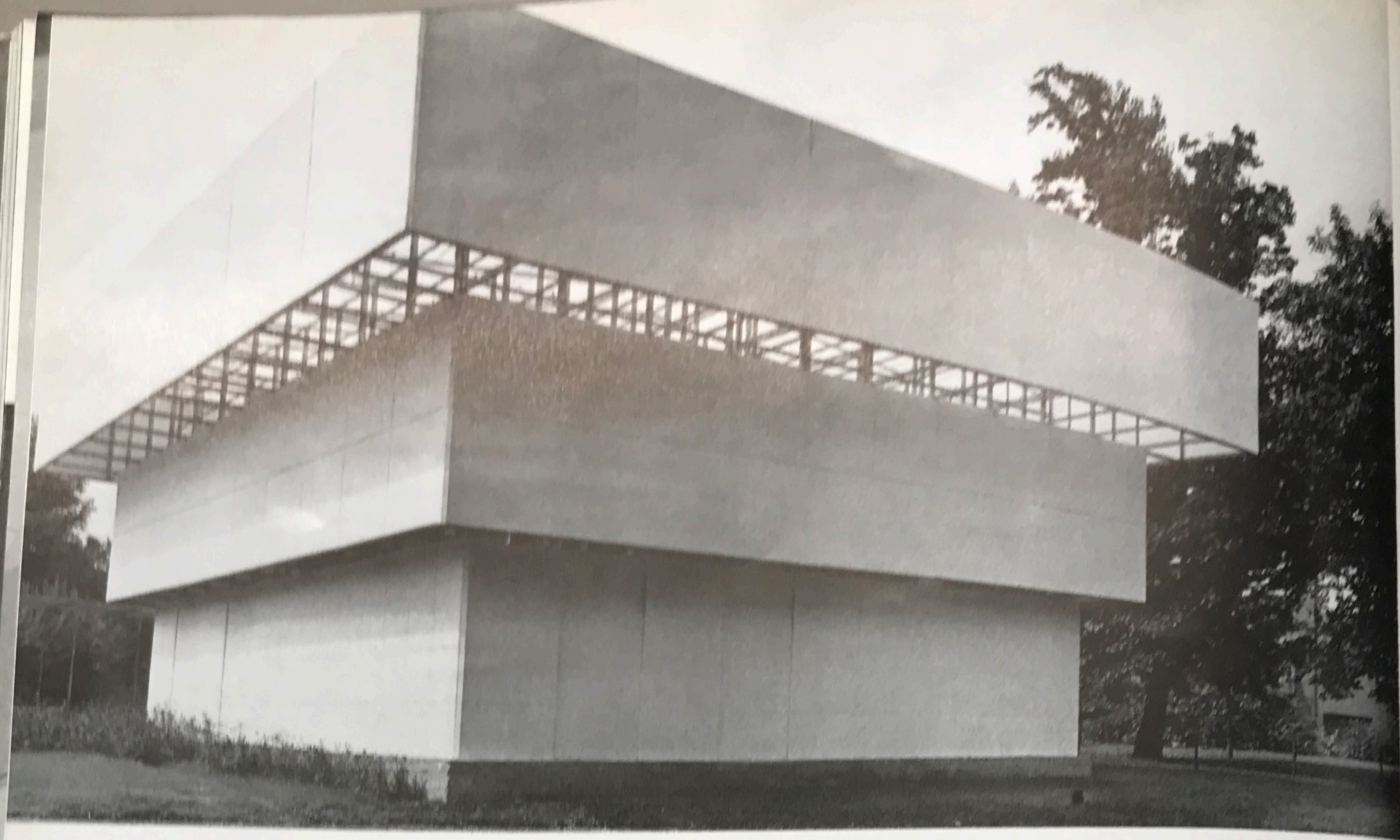
5



Outdoor photograph (4) is characteristic of the general style of the small pavilions. In Italy the low pitched roof and wide eave come as a shock.

Largest and most elegant pavilion is International House (5), rather formal and luxurious in character. It is amazing that the country of origin of individual objects cannot be discerned. Illustrated dining room group combines Swedish crystal, a Japanese paper lamp, Swiss chairs, and an American table.





### **The fabric pavilion**

*organization by painter HIERO PRAMPOLINI*

*exhibition design and pavilion by architect EDOARDO SIANESI*



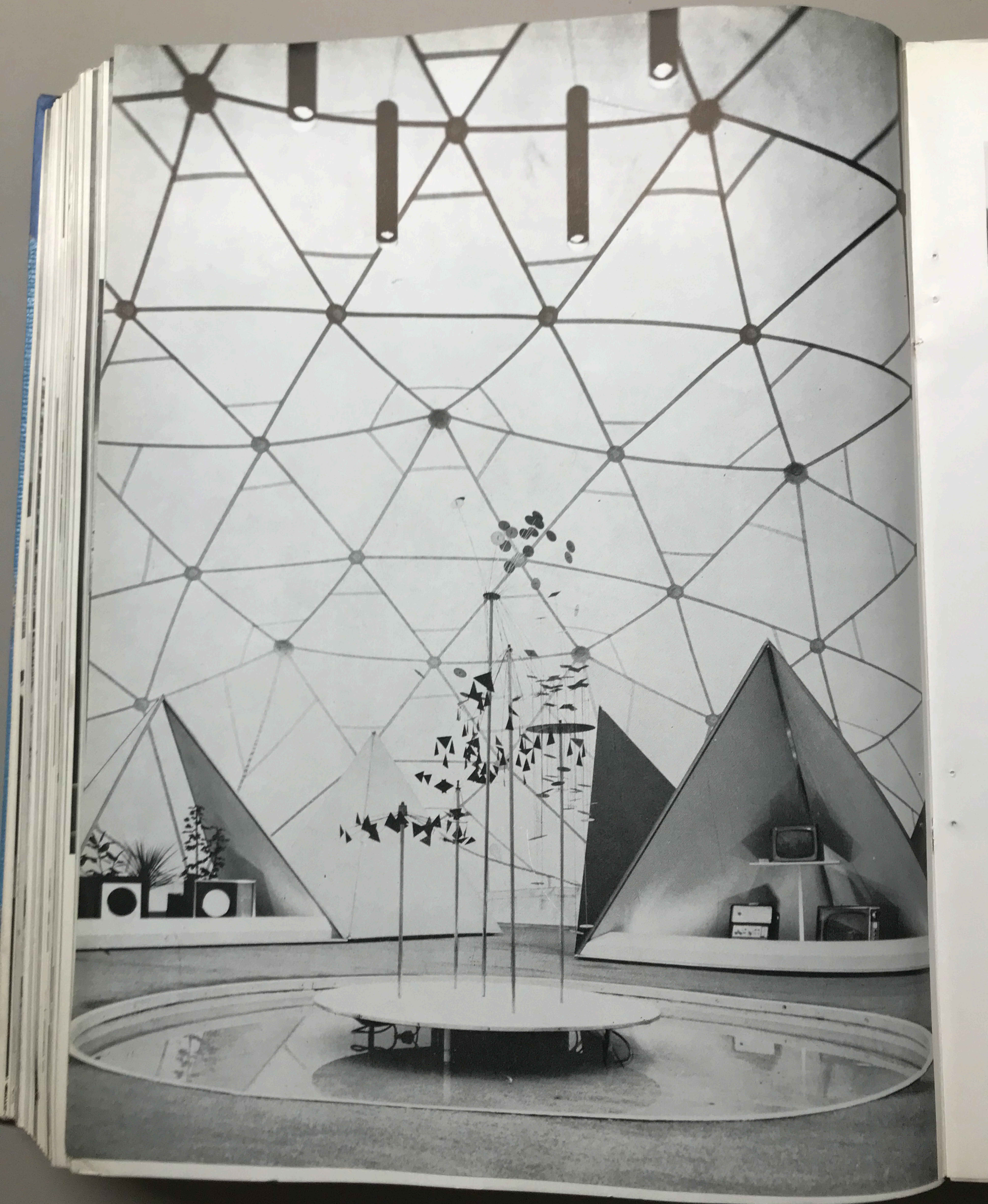
From the solidity of a tapestry gallery in the Palazzo one emerges into the full light of the textile pavilion promenade. The bridge-like structure has an airborne scale. The frail metal struts of which it is built have a lacelike lightness but also a structural effect of power. Rhythm of the repetition of the lights and members in the promenade prepare one for the textile pavilion itself, where concentric curtain walls supported on a pierced metal skeleton form a dynamic light trap. Open eaves add to the luminosity and allow circulation of air keeping the pavilion cool. This was important in the August heat (the American pavilion, for example, was frightfully hot).

In the interior (opposite page) a simple fabric cube bathed in light, isolated from all other fabrics, was made by directly wrapping the structural framework. The whole pavilion was to be a mass of these cubes of tremendously long gauzes coming from the top of the structure. Unfortunately this one alone was the only example of acquiescence by the exhibitors to the architect's display system.

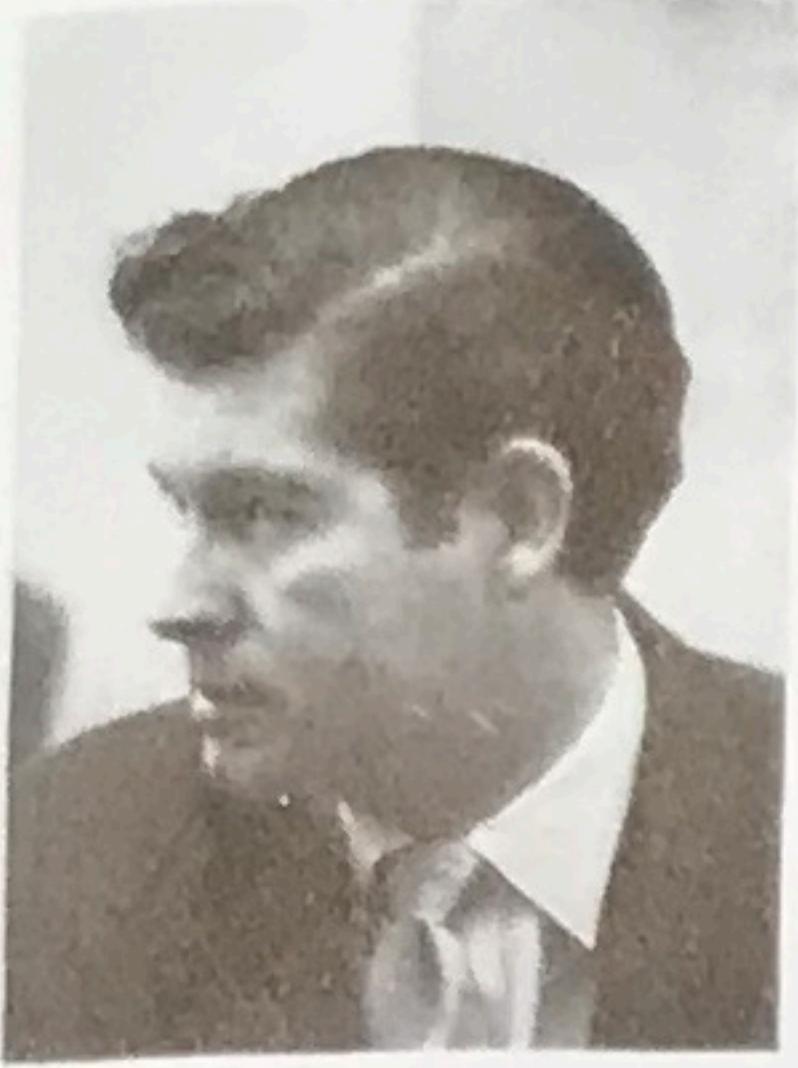












Paul McCobb, A.S.I.D., best known for his elegant but economically manufactured furniture, took over the Triennale assignment at the last minute, came up with display frames echoing the geodesic dome's triangular structural module.

### The United States pavilion

Geodesic dome designed  
by R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER  
Organization of exhibition  
by WALTER DORWIN TEAGUE  
Design of exhibition  
by PAUL MCCOBB

As in 1954 the American pavilion was a dome designed by R. Buckminster Fuller, the difference being that in 1954 there were two domes, of cardboard, each 50 feet in diameter, while in 1957 the dome measured 125 feet — relatively huge — was alone, of coated nylon suspended as a round tent from a triangulated magnesium frame, and was available for use on last minute appeal because the government was willing to lend it after its service as a shelter for the U. S. exhibition in the fair at Bagdad.

The value of the geodesic dome lies 1. in the fact that it is the U. S.'s most original architectural shape and 2. that it formed a completely satisfactory in-

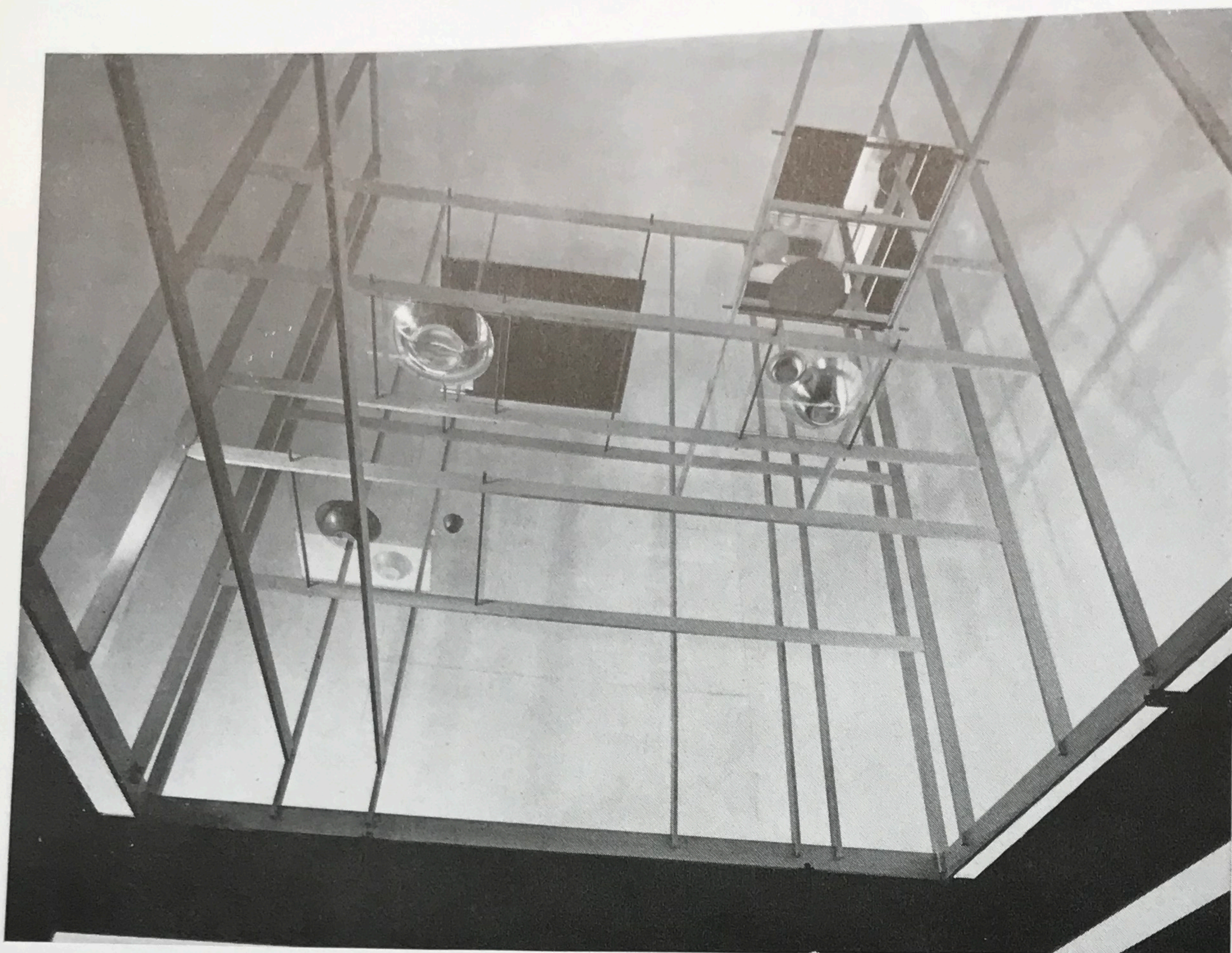
terior hemisphere. It is at once expansive, free, and buoyant. The light inside this shape was perfectly glorious. The skin turned it into a golden chablis glow. Another sensation one felt was that its horizonless, rather infinite space recalled how one feels in the Midwest of our country.

The display itself is very typically Paul McCobb in its crispness and definition. The repetition of one geometric form — the triangle — is very effective. It occurs both in the structural module of the tent skeleton and again as the enclosure for the displays. Because of this repetition there is a general vigor. Housed in the pyramidal tents is an enormous and comprehensive display of A.S.I.D. products having to do with a field in which America leads: communications. The display is exhaustive. It goes from ball-point pens to magazines, all kinds of sound equipment, office machines, etc. The fault is that although the exhibition was complete in the field of communications, it included much that was not first rate — poor as well as good phonographs, for example, went into the overwhelming phonograph census on exhibition. This is an especially serious criticism in light of there not having been space to show anything else.

Though the American exhibition was popular with visitors, many Italians felt slighted not to see the crafts, colors, and soft goods of America. America has better, richer colors than any it showed at the Triennale. Rich Eastern analogous color was absent there, as was planned color scheming in inter-related, repeated, modulated color.







**Norway  
(in the Palazzo)**

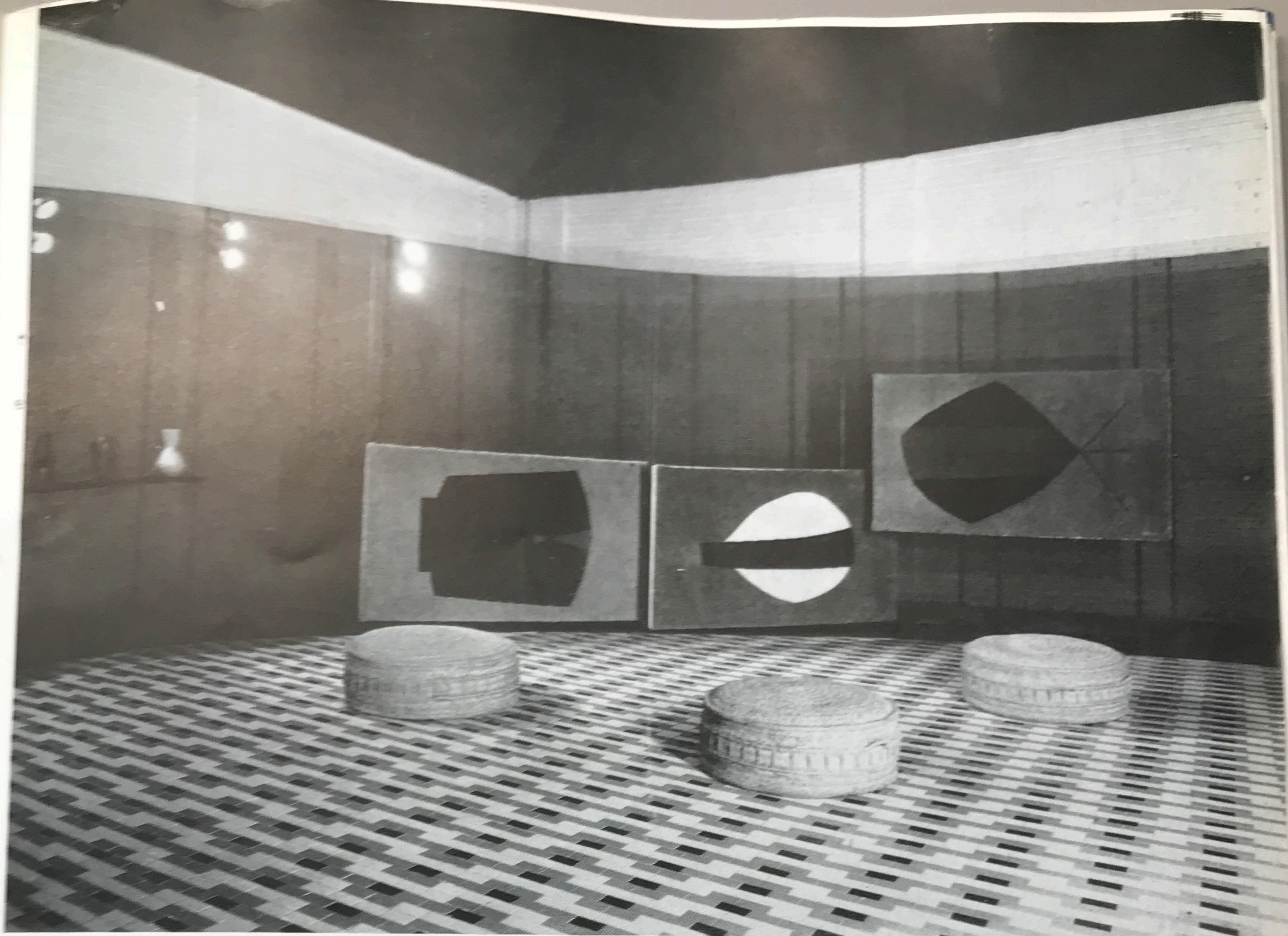
*Organized by the  
Institute of Industrial  
Research of Oslo.  
Design of illustrated  
portion of Exhibition by  
architect ARNE KORSMO*



**Belgium  
(in the Palazzo)**

*Commissioner general:  
Dr. JOSEPH HAMELS  
Organization and design  
of exhibition by  
architects LUCIEN KROLL  
and CHARLES VANDENHOVE*





### Spain (in the Palazzo)

Commissioner general: DON ANTONIO VALLACIEROS Y BENITO, *Minister Plenipotential, Director General of Cultural Publications*  
 Design of the exhibition by architects FRANCISCO JAVIER CARVAJAL FERRER  
 and JOSE MARIA GARCIA DE PARZDES

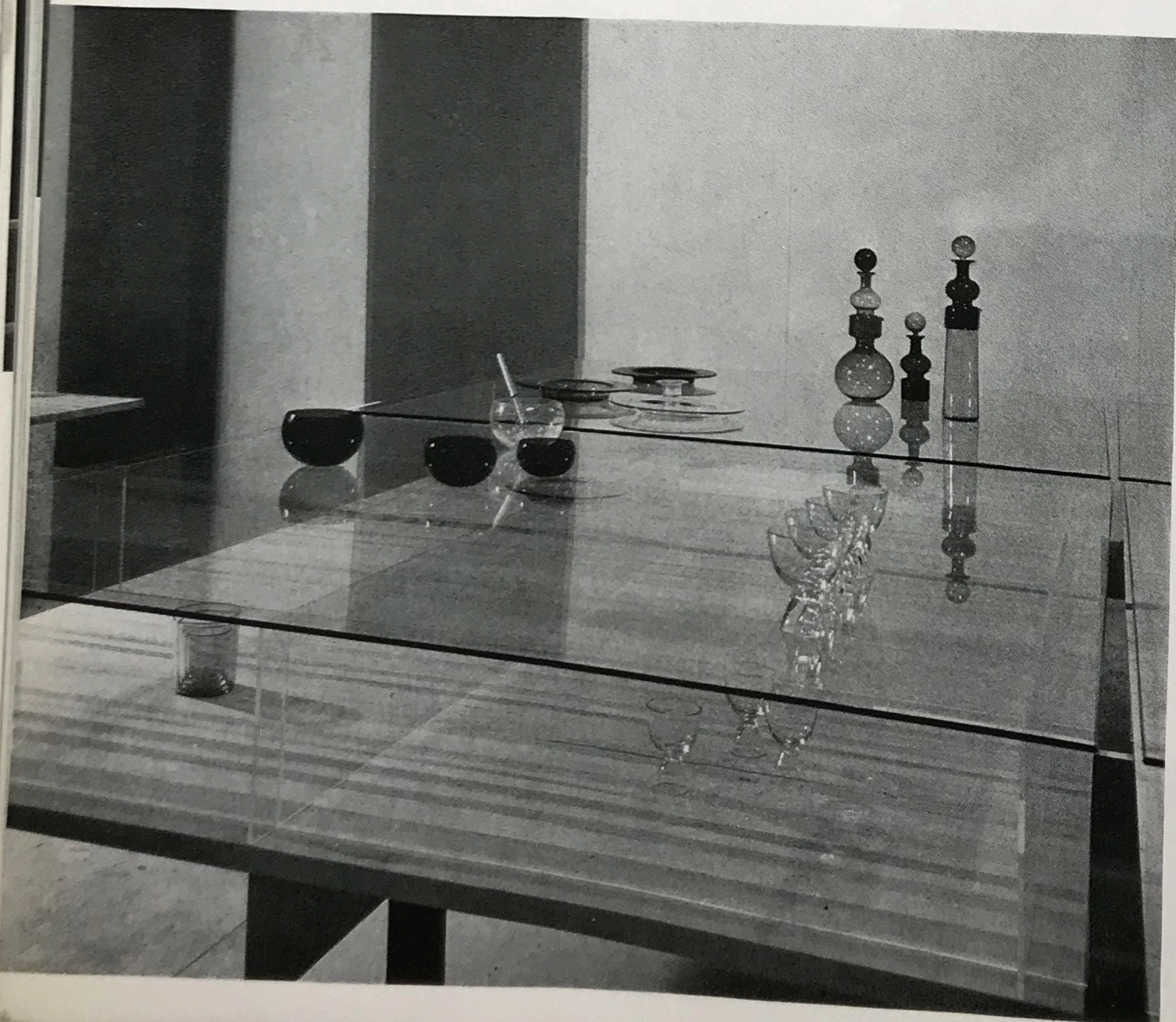
Norway, with a very small space, was the only country to utilize the extremely high ceiling space. In the photograph we are looking up into an overhead structure which displays enameled silver bowls on glass shelves. Above these are mirrors which show off the colorful interiors of the bowls. This part of the space was used by the Institute of Industrial Research of Oslo—one of the two private Norwegian institutes which took on the responsibility for a Norwegian exhibition, since the government did not. The lower part of the space was used for a model apartment consisting of living-bedroom with adjacent terrace and kitchen and was assembled and sponsored by another Norwegian Institute, the Norwegian Group for Industrial Formgiving (or Industrial Design). It has 19 members presided over by Thorbjörn Rygh, who was also one of the

four designers of the space. The others were Björn Engö, Birger Dahl, and Tore Hjertholm.

Among the dressy, monumental national exhibitions, the most impressive were Czechoslovakia (which was fantastic—a tremendous royal-blue velvet room with perhaps 5,000 yards of the material and terribly expensive crystal of the heavy sculptural kind—all of which sold); those of France and Germany, and finally Belgium. The best of these, Belgium, featured enormous photo murals. The massive and opulent but elegant furniture was generally good. There was also a very fine, light organ. However, as in the last Triennale, the emphasis was on industrial products—industrial glass and ceramics and the like. The box-like structure in the photograph is a sculpture.

Spain wasn't going to let an industrial revolution destroy human values or its traditional artistic style. Even with the change to an industrial world, Spain's flavors, hues, and spaces would remain dominant. It is this that the artists and artisans participating in the Spanish exhibition have succeeded in making clear in tangible terms with devices like tiles, Majorcan glass, the iron mesh grille wall, and the great circle symbolic of the bull ring and of the great central plain of Spain. The fish are hooked rugs. The effect, as in the 1954 Triennale, comes off dramatically, tersely, angrily, like a Spanish dance more spirited than sweet, and immensely moving.





The Finnish exhibition, again considered the finest of the national showings, is pristine in its lightness and simplicity. Yet it is rich in the quantity and the variety of work in all craft media. Fabrics are flat off the wall. Glass, ceramics, and metal-work are shown on an ingenious spruce and glass table system. Finland's best designers are all here. It was impossible to think of a Finn you'd ever heard of who wasn't.

Most important are fixtures of inter-leaved plastic light shades (upper photo). On the wall at right is Tapio Wirkkala's extremely impressive panel made up of hundreds of wood laminations. Wirkkala here has combined modern painting with magnificent craftsmanship. The thick riya rug below it, in superb bronzed colors, was one of the best rugs in the Triennale. Featured in the smaller photo are Kaj Frank's decanters, superb industrial designs, which have the richness of art glass but are actually made of production elements that fit into each other. Note that the second decanter at the rear can fit into either shape beside it—a very production-minded trick.



# Finland (in the Palazzo)

Commissioner general: H. O. GUMMERUS  
Design of exhibition by TIMO SARPANEVA

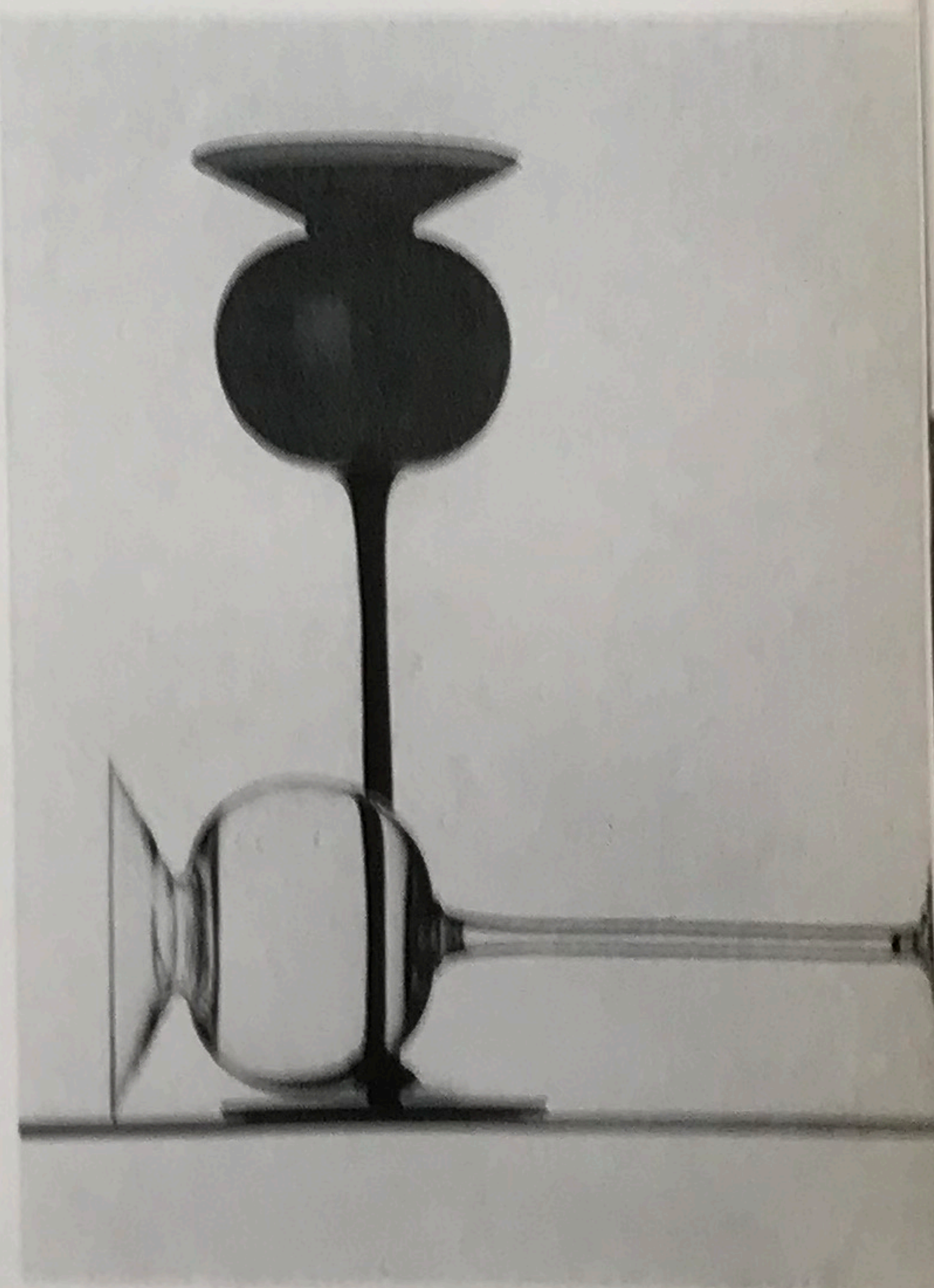
# Sweden (in the Palazzo)

Commissioner general: EVA BENEDICTS  
Organization and design of exhibition:  
Architect ARE H. HULT with the collaboration of  
architects GUSTAF ROSENBERG and SUZANNE WASSON-TUCKER

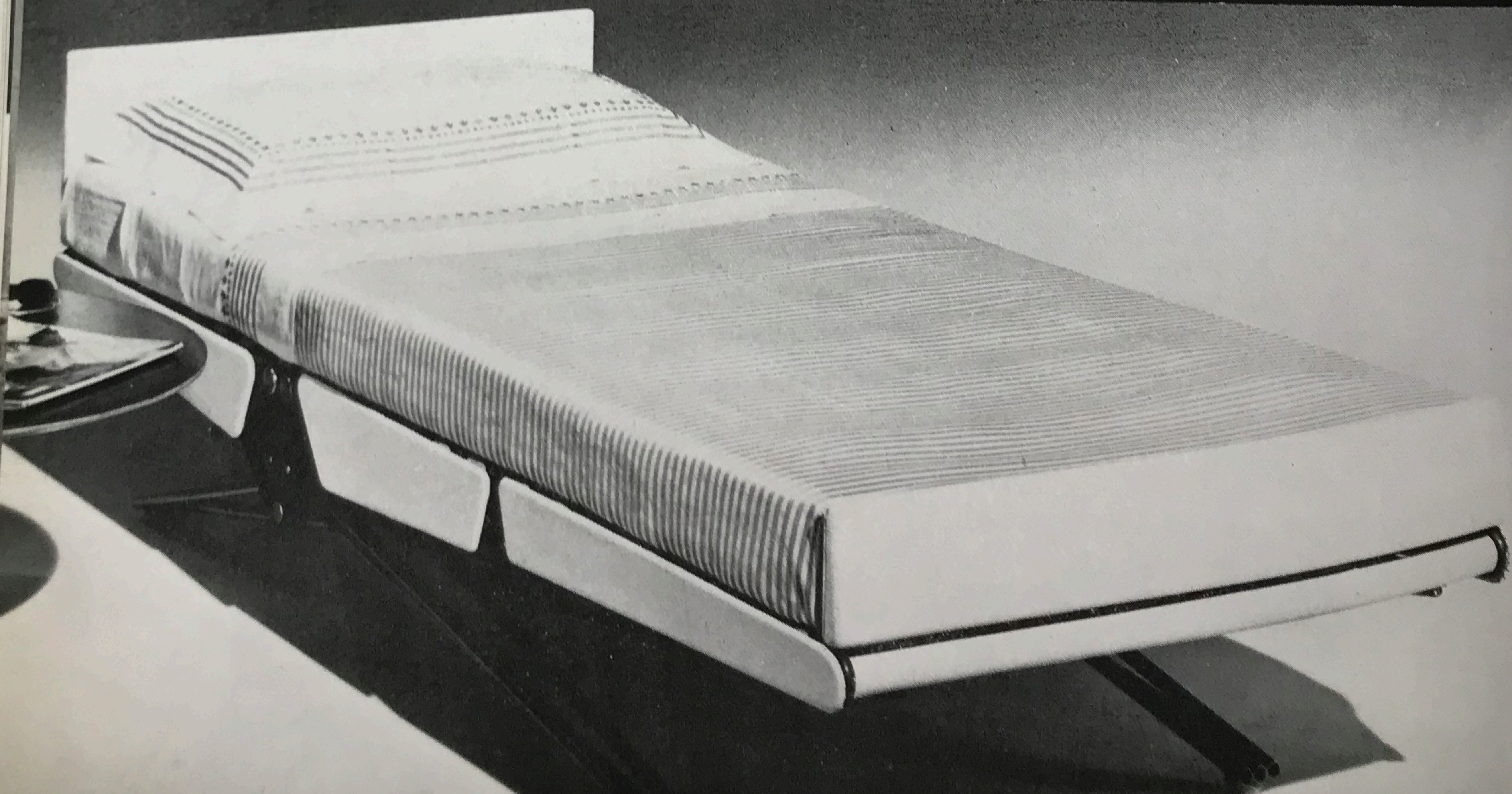
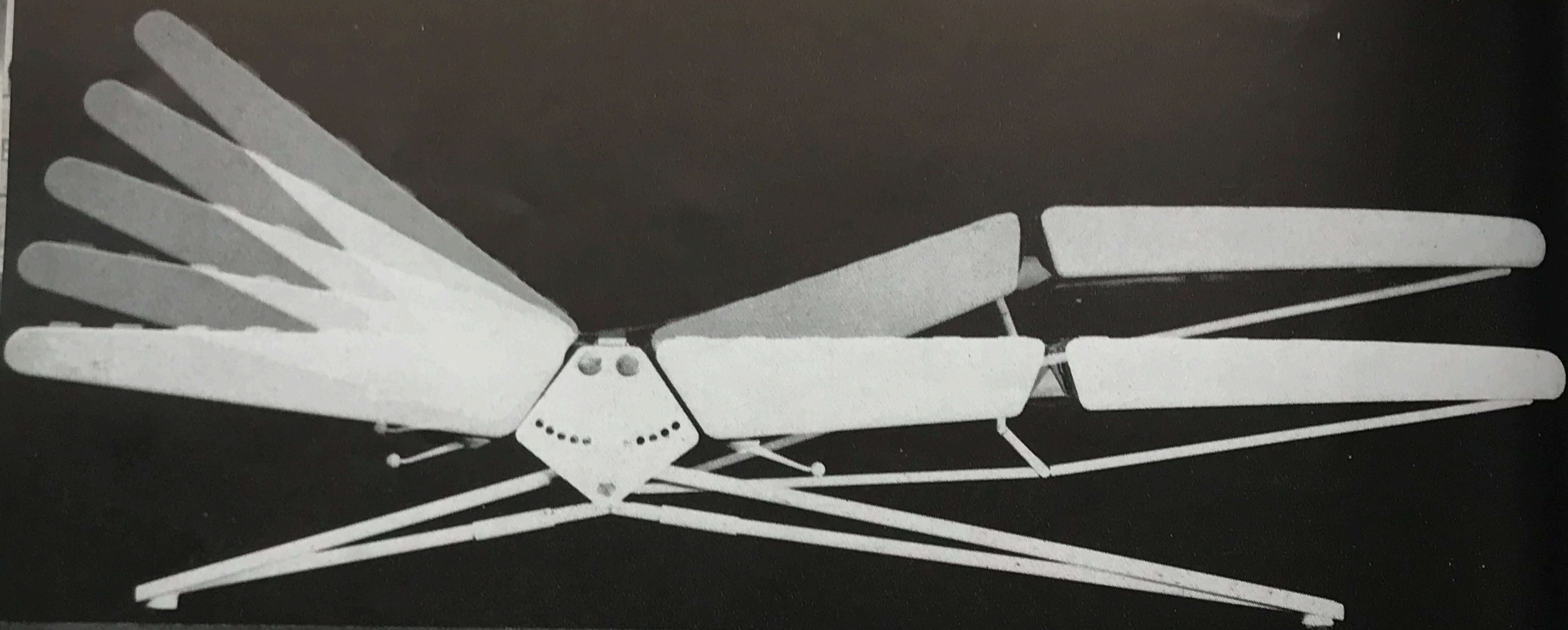
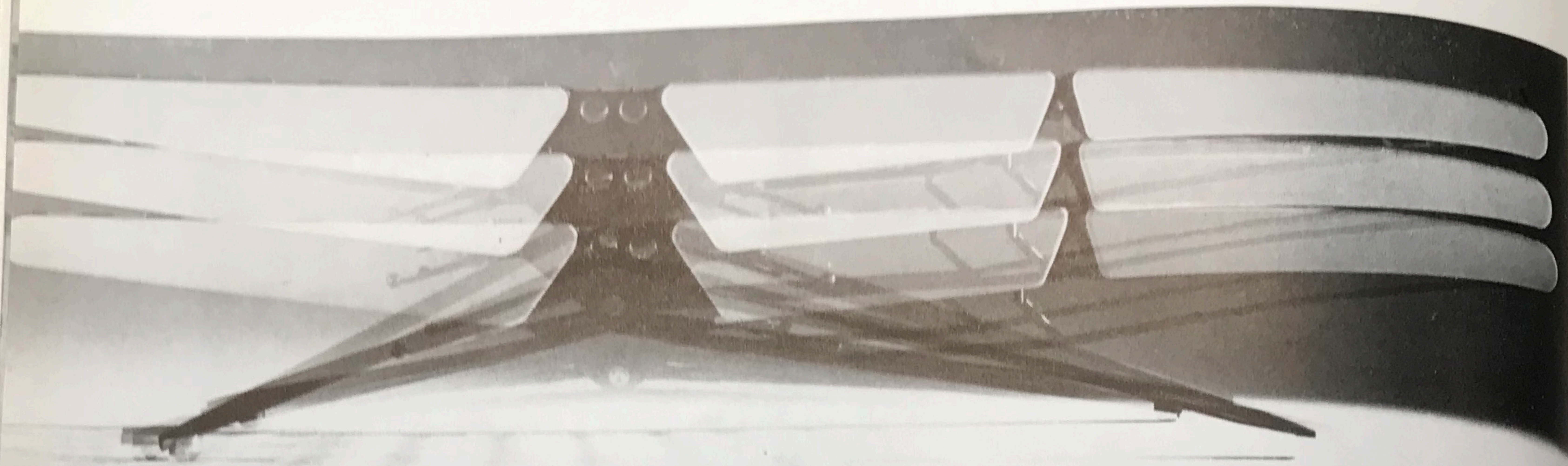


Sweden's exhibition of precision steel and crystal demonstrates further refinement and lightness in scale. Noteworthy is the plate glass room divider, the simple, suspended lighting of the impeccable glass display cases of white enameled steel. These are standard production items designed by the architect Eric Herlow, who designed the knock-down, transportable display elements for the huge "Design in Scandinavia" exhibition which toured the United States a few years ago, and were originally developed for displays in Stockholm's department store, Nordiska Kompaniet. In their perfection they represent something for our store designers to work for. Unlike most of the beautiful display cases at the Triennale, these were not sealed up (e.g., The Austrians, who also had beautiful display cases, spent almost a whole day getting at a trivet we wanted to photograph.)

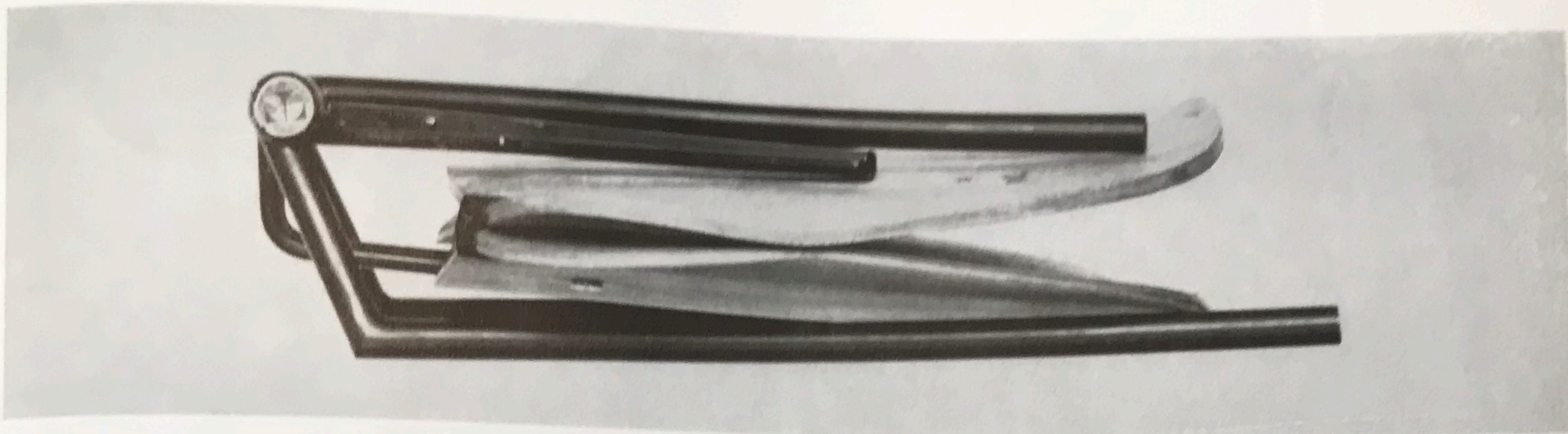
The two enormous functionless goblets shown below, irresistible expressions of robust joyousness, are twelve inches high, clear and burgundy, by Arthur Percy.











Ever since the war the Italians have been designing furniture with an overwhelming fecundity of ideas. Now they are very much obsessed with the problems of designing for mass production and selling to a larger market. They are also concerned with converting their traditional furniture factories—which are actually villages of craftsmen—to contemporary design. Evidently the market for traditional forms has broken even in Italy. Almost everyone you meet brings this into the conversation somewhere, and it has of course already led to an organized effort by the furniture industries of Cantù in the form of an annual design competition. Cantù held its own exhibition this year, at the same time as the Triennale.

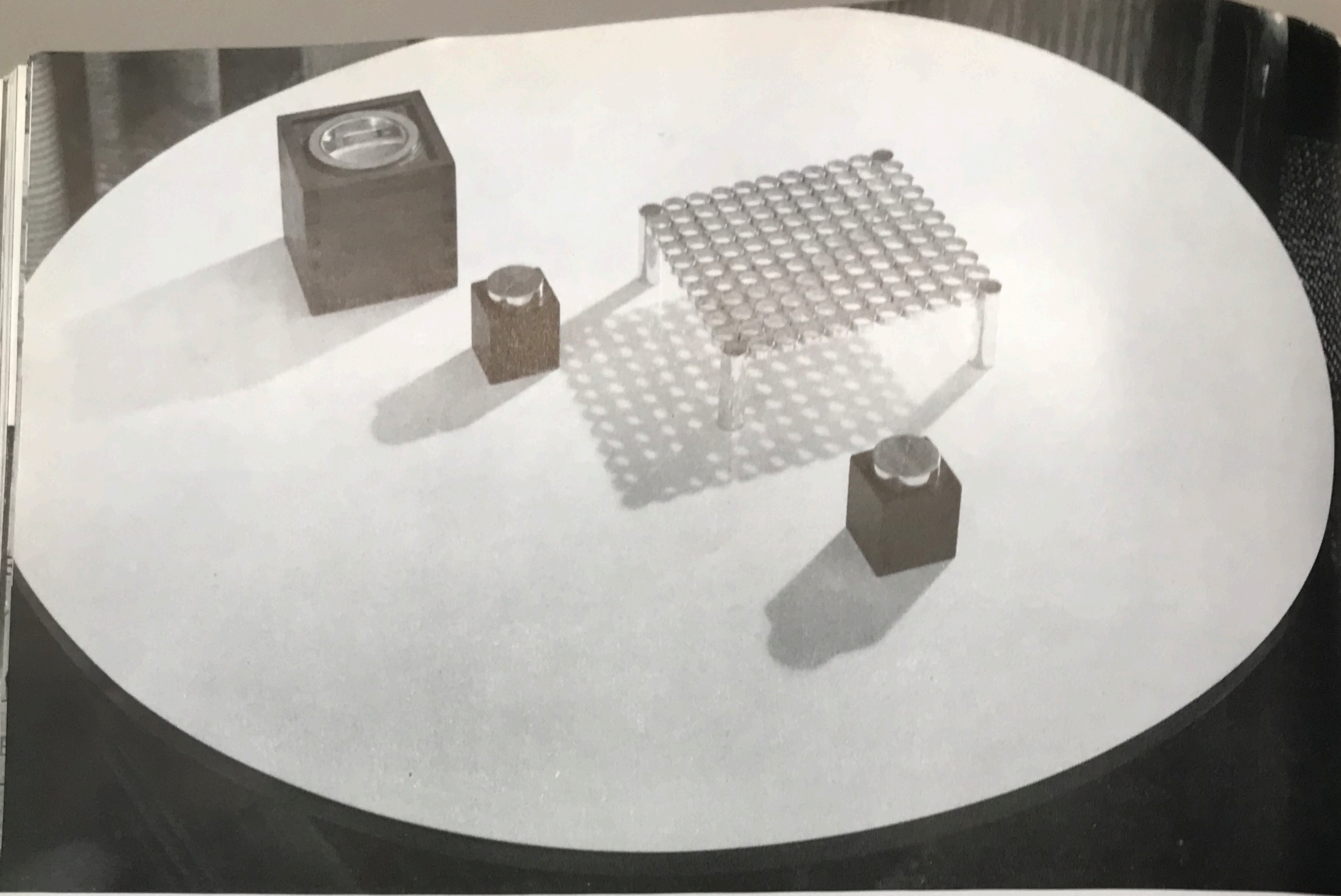
The adjustable bed on the opposite page typifies Italy's interest in mechanized furniture. It is manufactured by Tecno of Milan, an originally small but now rapidly growing firm which has a virtual monopoly on the foreign market for mechanized Italian furniture. It recalls the famous fold-flat Tecno sofa-bed of the 1954 Triennale, and like it, was designed by the scion of the firm, Osvaldo Borsani, who is an architect. Tecno, by virtue of this practical success, was with Arteluce, the lamp manufacturer, one of the dominant firms at the Triennale—with a pavilion of its own. The bed's rising motion is supposedly for ease of bedmaking. It is also very flexible for a variety of reclining positions.

The folding chair on this page (also by Tecno-Borsani) really goes small. Light weight metal would make it portable.

**The change in Italian furniture production:  
mechanization and quantity sales**

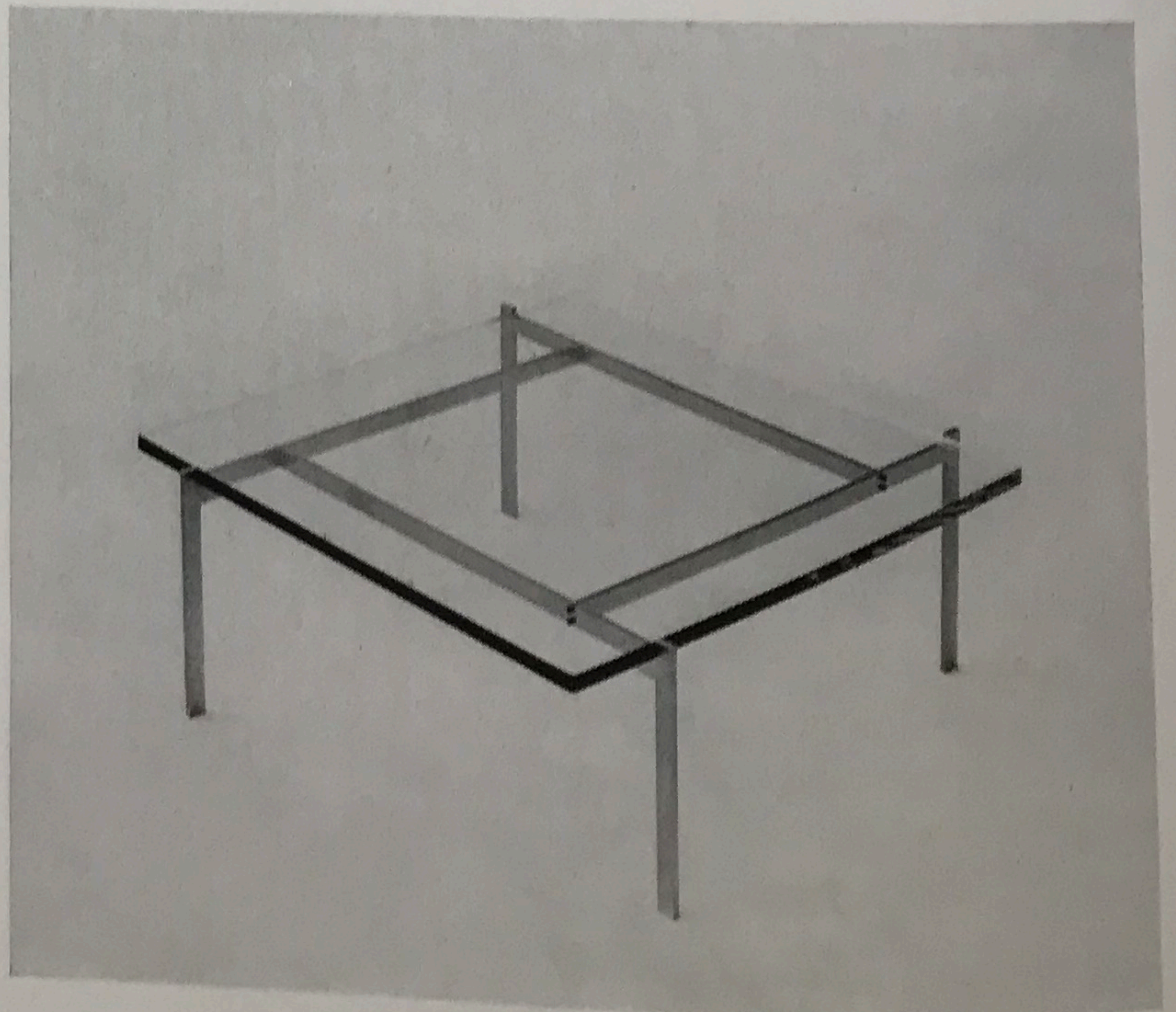
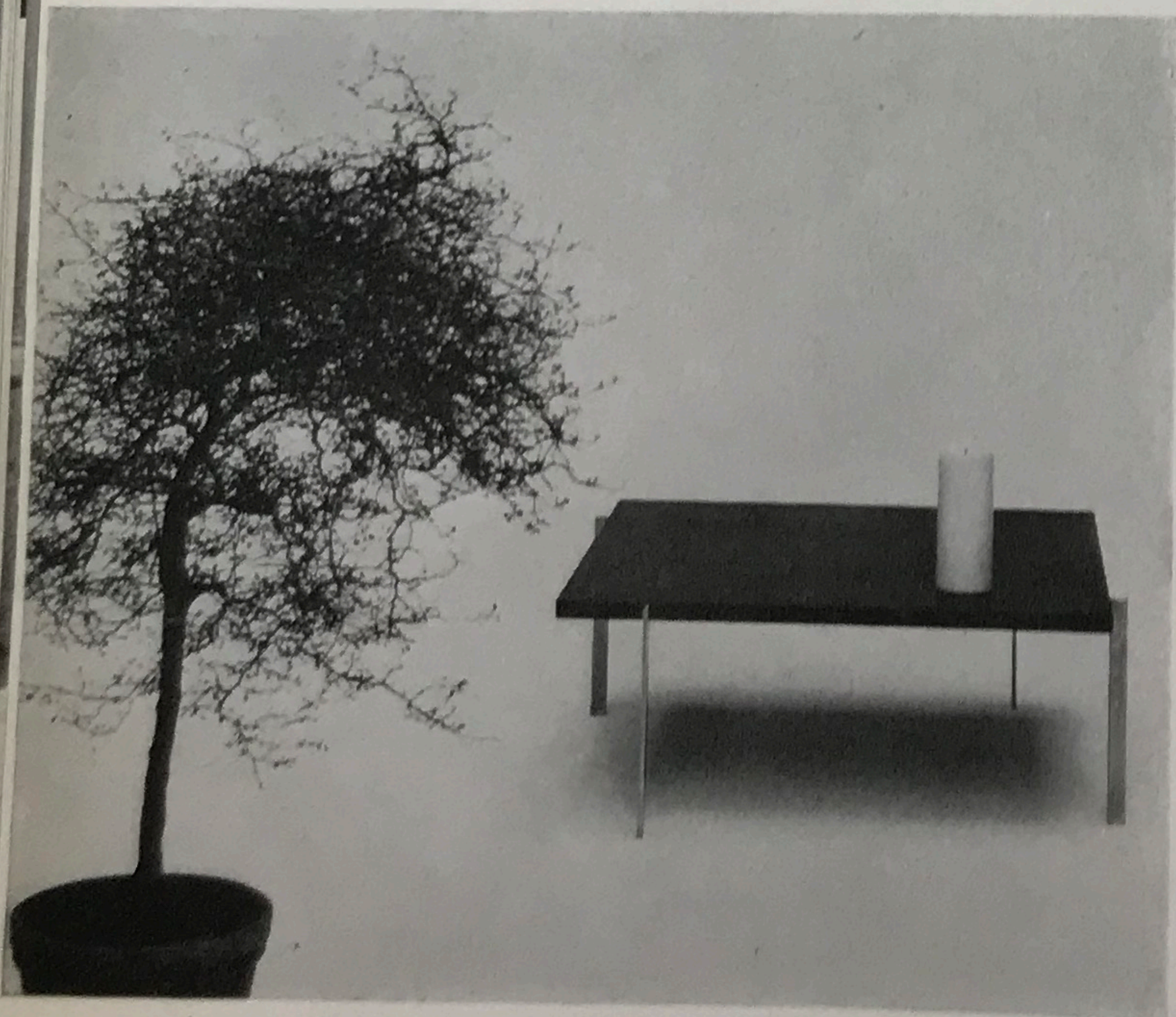






**Dominant ideas at the Triennale:**

**the international mood in crafts and furniture**







Some of the finest design at the Triennale is to be found in small objects, in the crafts. Those in the upper photographs on page 114 are typical. All are Finnish except the trivet, which is Austrian. The humidior is teak and silver, the salt shakers rosewood and silver, the trivet sterling. The sterling trivet demonstrates a classic intergration of fine craftsmanship with straightforward design growing out of construction. It is made of a single element—sliced tubing—with longer sections of tubing form the legs.

The two stainless steel tables at the bottom of page 114, and the chair at the top of this page, demonstrate a Danish trend exactly in reverse to the Danish look we have grown accustomed to. Instead of the Scandinavian warmth and informality, we have dressiness, elegance, impersonality. Instead of wood, there is metal—steel construction. Instead of the reliance on the sensitive hand of the craftsman, we see an international look. The question is whether this overwhelming success of the international style in Denmark makes sense economically in a country rich in wood and in wood craftsmanship. These pieces are designed by Poul Kjaerholm and produced by Kold Christensen, Copenhagen. The French chair at the bottom of this page has a very simple, ingenious, interlocked frame of stainless steel rod. The cradle is suede—a handsome material evident in the furniture of several different countries at the Triennale, including Denmark. Whether it has been treated to insure the practical qualities needed in a chair cover is a question that must be checked in each instance. Whatever the answer, it certainly looks very appetizing. Despite the emphasis on mechanization (illustrated on the two preceding pages) Italy's best furniture efforts were in wood and rattan. Chairs were fresh in conception, also lighthearted, gay, and whimsical, exploiting the material playfully but in a practical way. These are more accurately the economic solution to Italy's desire for mass-market design.

The new fluorescent fixture on the wall in the same photograph is from Arteluce.

