

Every important architect in Milan attended the opening of Filiale's but not all were shopping for the linoleum or rubber flooring sold there. They wanted a look at architect Zanuso's interior.

Displaying unwieldy products has stumped many a designer, and the display technique used in a linoleum showroom must necessarily be the key to its over-all design, as a brief review recalls: For Armstrong, Morris Lapidus stood huge linoleum rolls on end to make a rhythmically spaced colonnade. For Congoleum-Nairn, Reuben Sabetay vetoed standard cylindrical bulks and bin-banked walls in favor of flexible display frames and transparent partitions. But Zanuso abolishes display altogether; he uses the products.

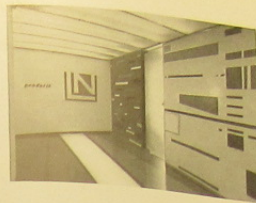
His approach is guided by their affinity to vivid-hued, sharply-incised two-dimensional designs, and on their connotations of cleanliness, efficiency, and modernity. Dramatic inlaid patterns, mostly in the more easily worked rubber, give the shop its character. Two painters, Dova and Ballocco, collaborated with the architect to achieve an integrated effect—with their two-dimensional forms, and the architect's three-dimensional solids and volumes. The bold, geometric designs move dynamically over the surfaces of the interior, focus attention where the architect wants it. They dominate the spaces, and the spaces are large and uncluttered enough to accommodate them. The sparse three-dimensional elements—furniture and stairs—repeat related angles, curves, and colors, and are emphatic enough to balance them.

No untidy pendants distract the composition; the chief light source is a glowing eggcrate ceiling, serving as a subtly-text-

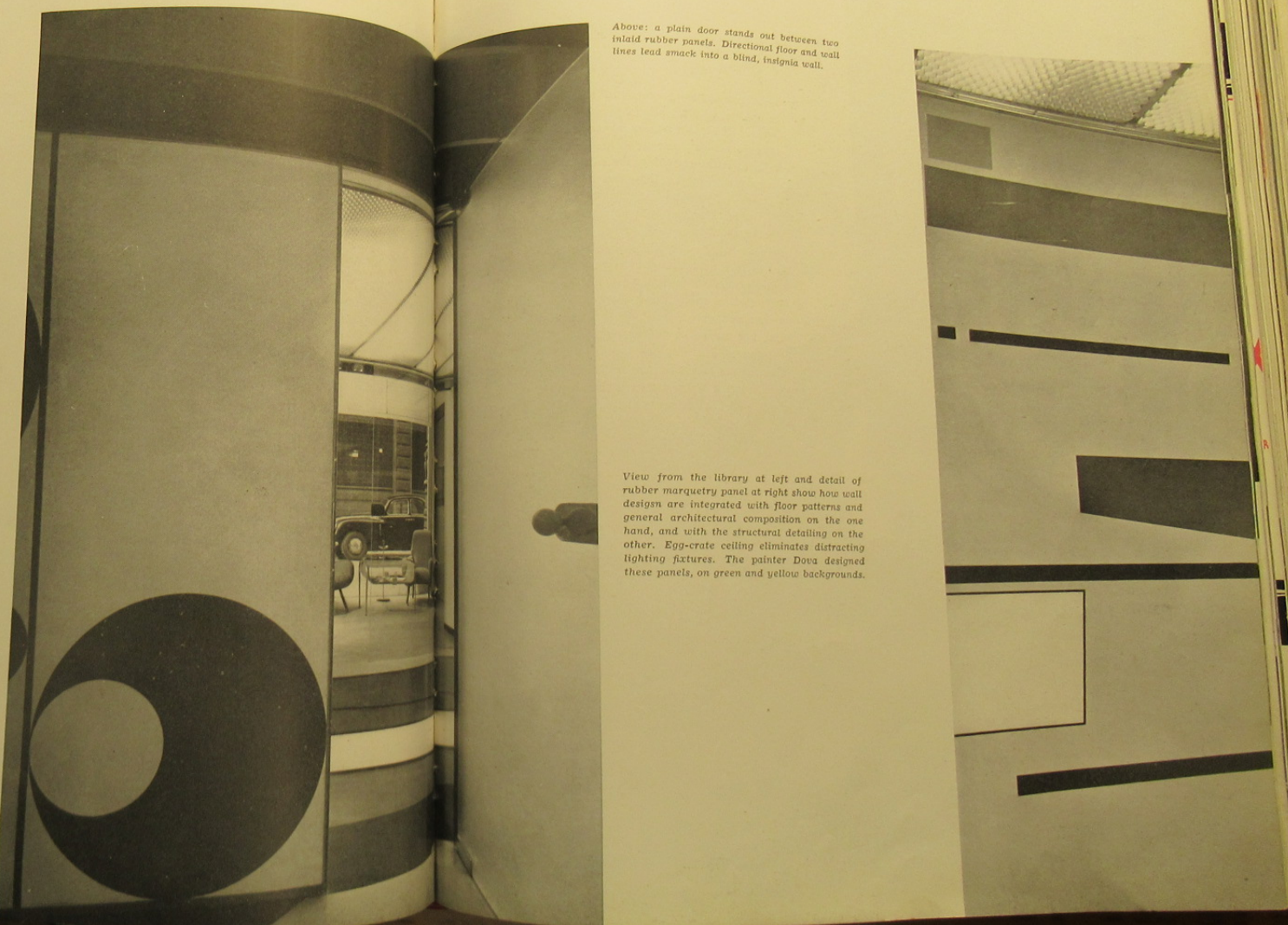
MARCO ZANUSO



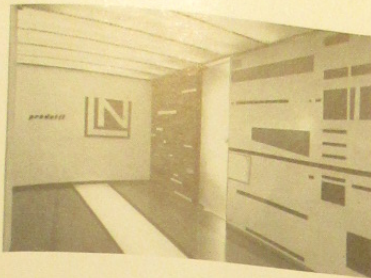
on displaying without displays



Above: a plain door stands out between two inlaid rubber panels. Directional floor and wall lines lead smack into a blind, instigating wall.

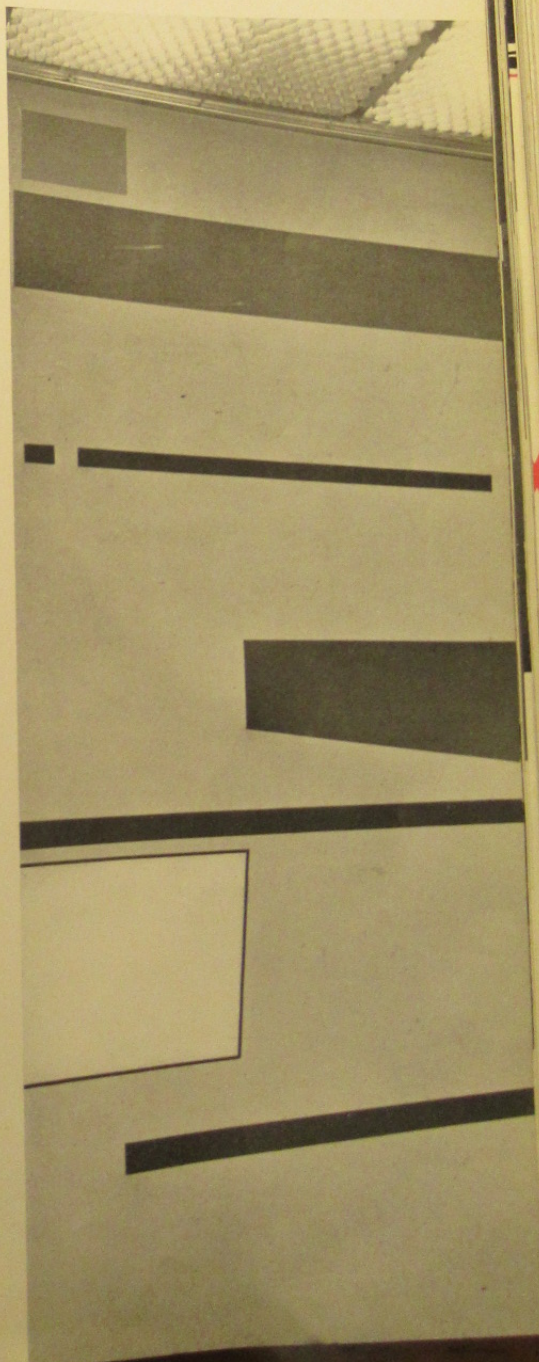


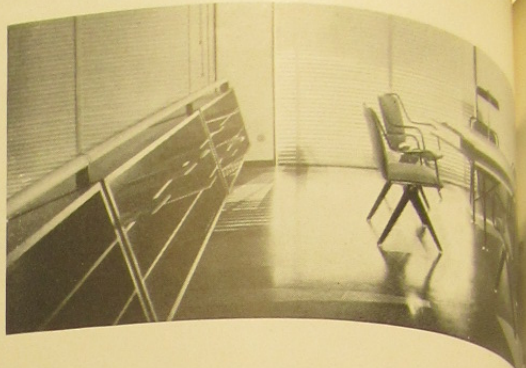
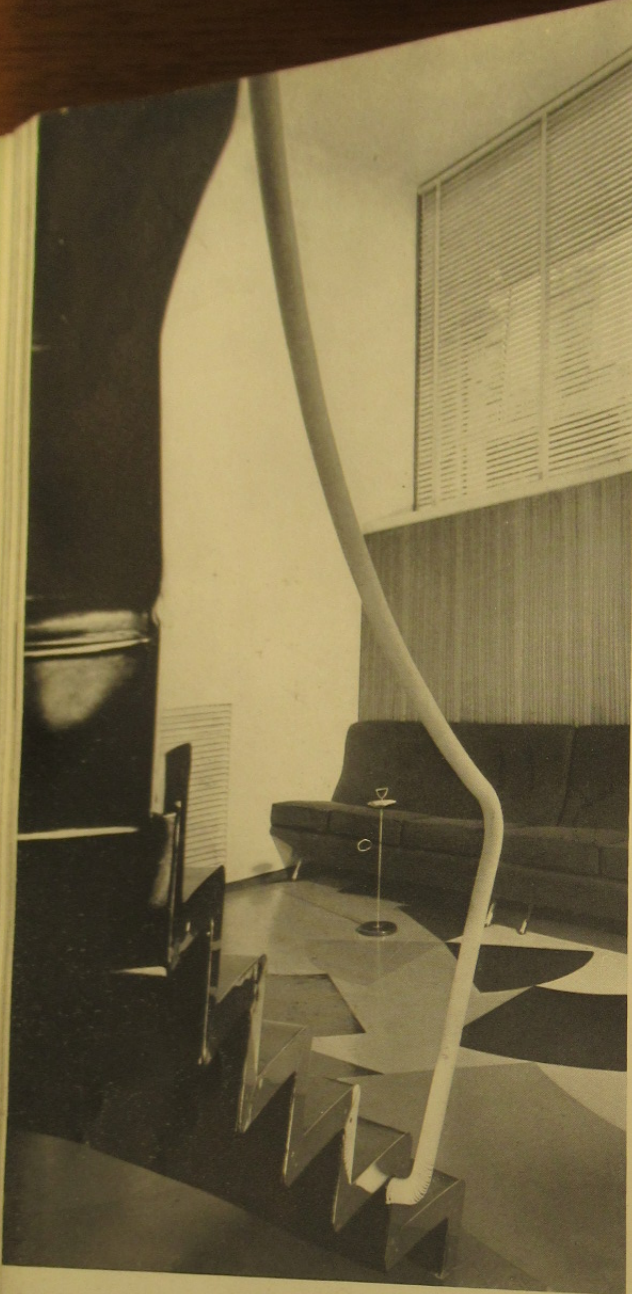
View from the library at left and detail of rubber marquetry panel at right show how wall designs are integrated with floor patterns and general architectural composition on the one hand, and with the structural detailing on the other. Egg-crate ceiling eliminates distracting lighting fixtures. The painter Dova designed these panels, on green and yellow backgrounds.



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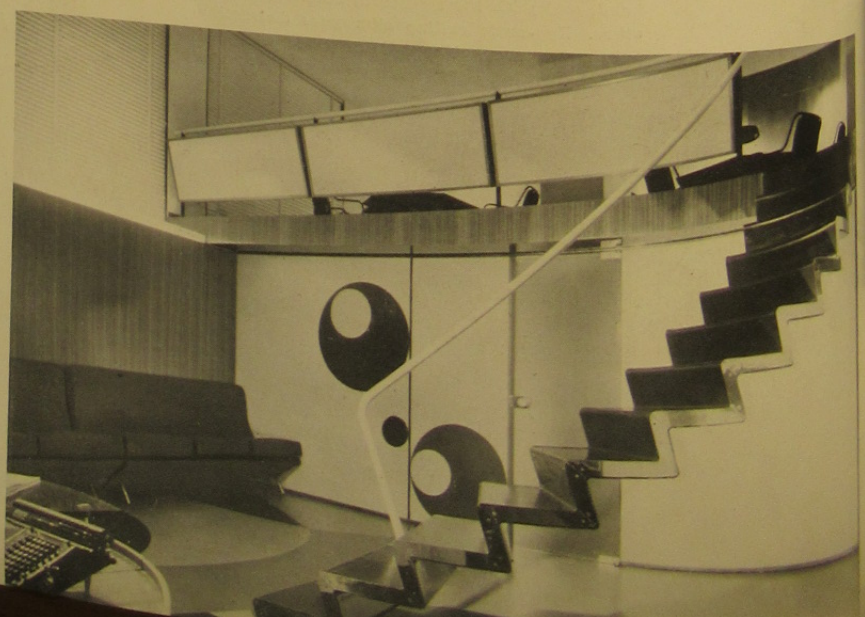
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tured plane among others of linoleum, mahogany, venetian blinds. Aerial ballet tackle such as wire and rope are conspicuously absent; so are the mysteries of lattice-screening, the softness of draped fabrics. All lines are firm, all gestures masculine. Yet the two-story interior is organized without clumsiness. The basis of Zanuso's method was to eliminate unnecessary elements ruthlessly, but to give dimensional solidity and directional force to indispensable ones. The stairs steal no space, being unencased and unsupported except by floor and mezzanine, but are solid and emphatic. Incidentally, on the way up one is apt to think the mezzanine fence a bit thick, but on arriving it turns out to be the backs of three shelf cases screwed to the perilous edge and in simultaneous service for holding samples of the product.—O.C.

Boldly zig-zagging sheet metal stair sheathed with dark green rubber has only one white rail. Metal and foam rubber armchairs in mezzanine conference space (above right) are mass produced items by Ditta Rima of Padova.





Simple sofa rests near mahogany partition in library. Sturdiness accompanied by levitation characterizes shelves as well as stairs. Curves in the colorful, inlaid rubber floor emphasize the curve of the white linoleum-sheathed desk.