

Post Modernism

What is Postmodernism?

The word is ambiguous and notoriously difficult to define and pin down. It can mean....

- Ironic self-awareness
- Style that includes historical reference
- A return to decoration and ornamentation
- A kitsch naffness
- A clashing of unconnected ideas/objects

Postmodernism is simply what happened right after the demise of modernism – when modernism lost its top dog position as the style of Europe and America

Modern verses Postmodern

- Form follows function
- Simplicity and Clarity
- Less is more
- adherence to rules and formulas
- Forward looking



- Form over function
- Freedom of Expression
- A nod to historical visual culture
- More is good



New beginnings



Alessandro
Mellini
destruction of
Lassú chair, 1974

Image on the right
was used as a
cover photo for an
issue of Casabella

- Mendini - radical Italian designer and editor of design magazine Casabella attacked what had gone before
- He set alight a pure form
- The act of destruction announced a new age of design
- A phoenix rose from the ashes
- The phoenix was Postmodernism



Piazza d'Italia,
Charles Moore
1975-77, New Orleans

- More a stage set than a building
- An open public space lined with classically-styled fragments
- Designed to serve an Italian community in New Orleans
- Kitsch Romanesque architecture
- Fountain in the shape of a map of Italy
- Neon lit by night



- Some Postmodern designers were not inspired by history
- Inspiration came from Punk
- Ruined, smashed and torn designs became a fashion statement
- Designs were 'pre-ruined'

Ron Arad
Concrete Stereo
1983

Store bought stereo components and re-enforced concrete

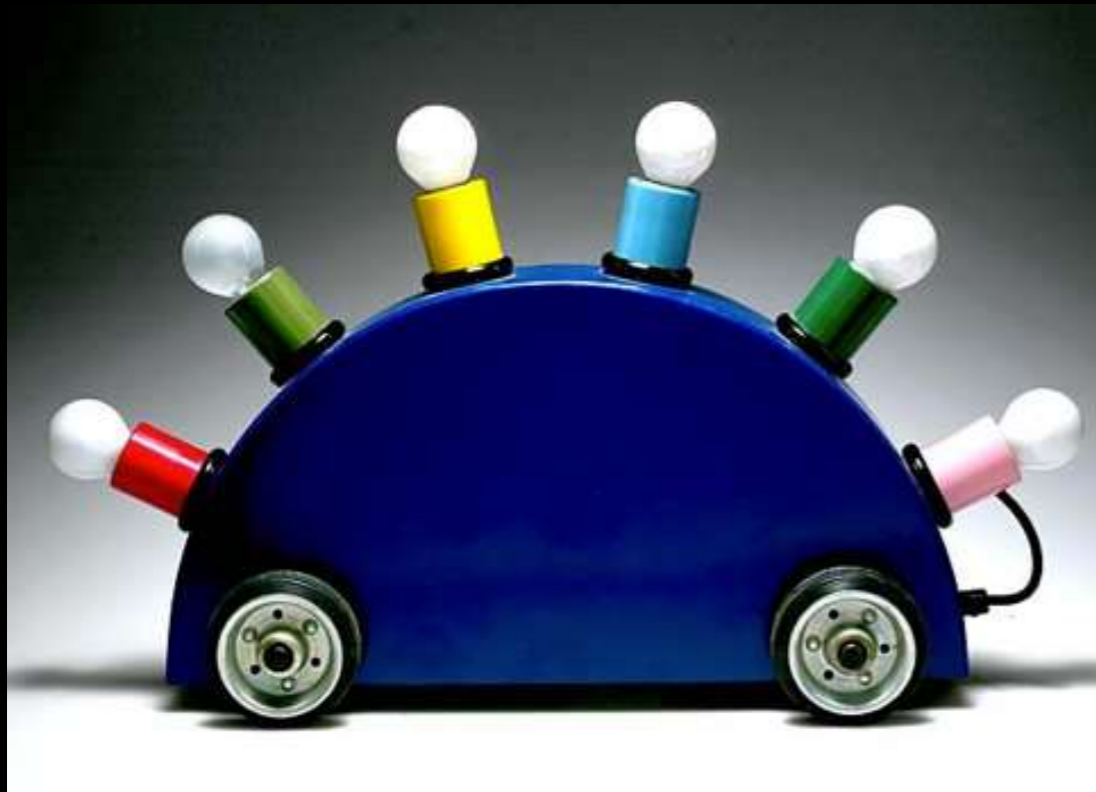


Mendini founded the design group - Studio Alchymia
The designers transformed or combined several unrelated objects into a single compelling design

Alessandro Mendini
Proust chair
1978

Proust chair - form exaggerated from an C18th Baroque design and decoration - a Paul Signac Pointilist painting
A slide of the painting was projected onto the surface of the chair and painted by hand

- The Memphis Group formed in Milan in 1981
- Led by Ettore Sottsass (also a lead designer in Studio Alchymia) they were an International bunch of designers of varying age
- Their designs had a sense of fun and vivid colour
- Their style epitomises the 1980's



Superlamp
1981
Martine Bedin

Bedin's lamp is a great example of Memphis wit
Multi-coloured and with wheels, she said she wanted a lamp which she could take for a walk like a dog

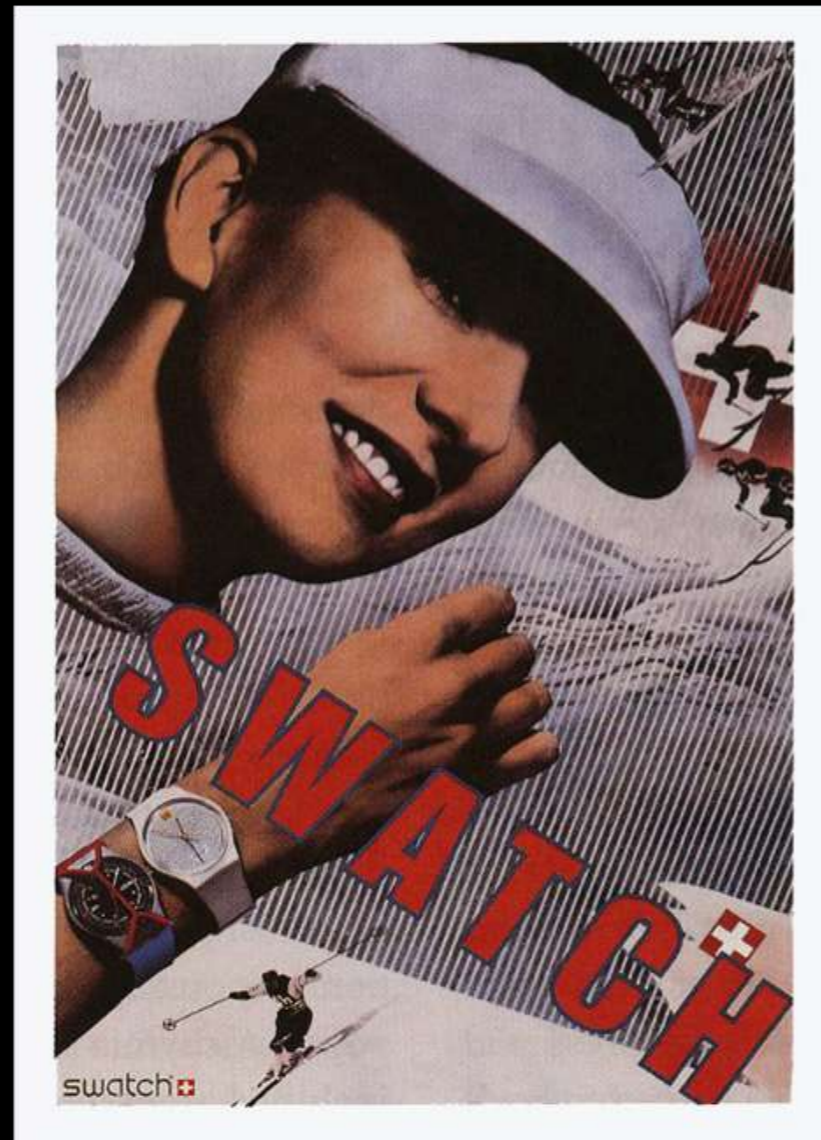


Bel Air Chair
1982
Peter Shire

With its bright colours, shark-fin back and beach ball boot, it says Californian beach



Grace Jones rocks the Memphis look in a Jean-Paul Goude andantino Lopez maternity dress in 1979



Post modern Graphic art used the same principles as other design disciplines of the time

- looking backwards
- clashing elements
- humour
- colour

The Swiss Swatch poster is a melding of two time periods. The inexpensive 1980's pop watch and Swiss skiing holiday advert from the 1930's

A copy of a sculptural bust of Louis XIV, the 'Sun King' who ruled France in the 17th century. Louis XVI was very strict about how his appearance was portrayed



Louis XVI, 1986
Stainless steel
Jeff Koons

Why copy it, especially in a 'fake' material - not silver but similar in appearance?
Because he could?

As a tease about the power of art and how Louis XVI can no longer control the way he is portrayed?

The combination of unknown or ambiguous meaning and bling is very Post modern



Jeff Koons
Balloon Dog
High chromium
stainless steel
1994-2000

A 'bouncing' of two elements

- Balloons - rubber, light, playthings, small in scale
- Balloon sculpture - metal, rigid, large, artwork(don't touch!)

Orange Balloon Dog sold for \$58.4 million in 2012
the most expensive work by a living artist sold at an auction



Frank Schreiner
(for Stiletto Studios)
Consumer's Rest chair
1990

Some designers rather than embracing 1980's consumerism were critical of it
This chair was designed as a satire of the retail experience
You could be wheeled down the aisles of a supermarket instead of walking



Ai Weiwei
Han Dynasty Urn With Coca Cola Logo
1994
Urn circa 206BC-24AD

Chinese artist Ai Weiwei painted a series of ancient storage jars with the Coca-cola logo
Part decoration, part defacement
He was acknowledging the beginnings of global capitalism in China